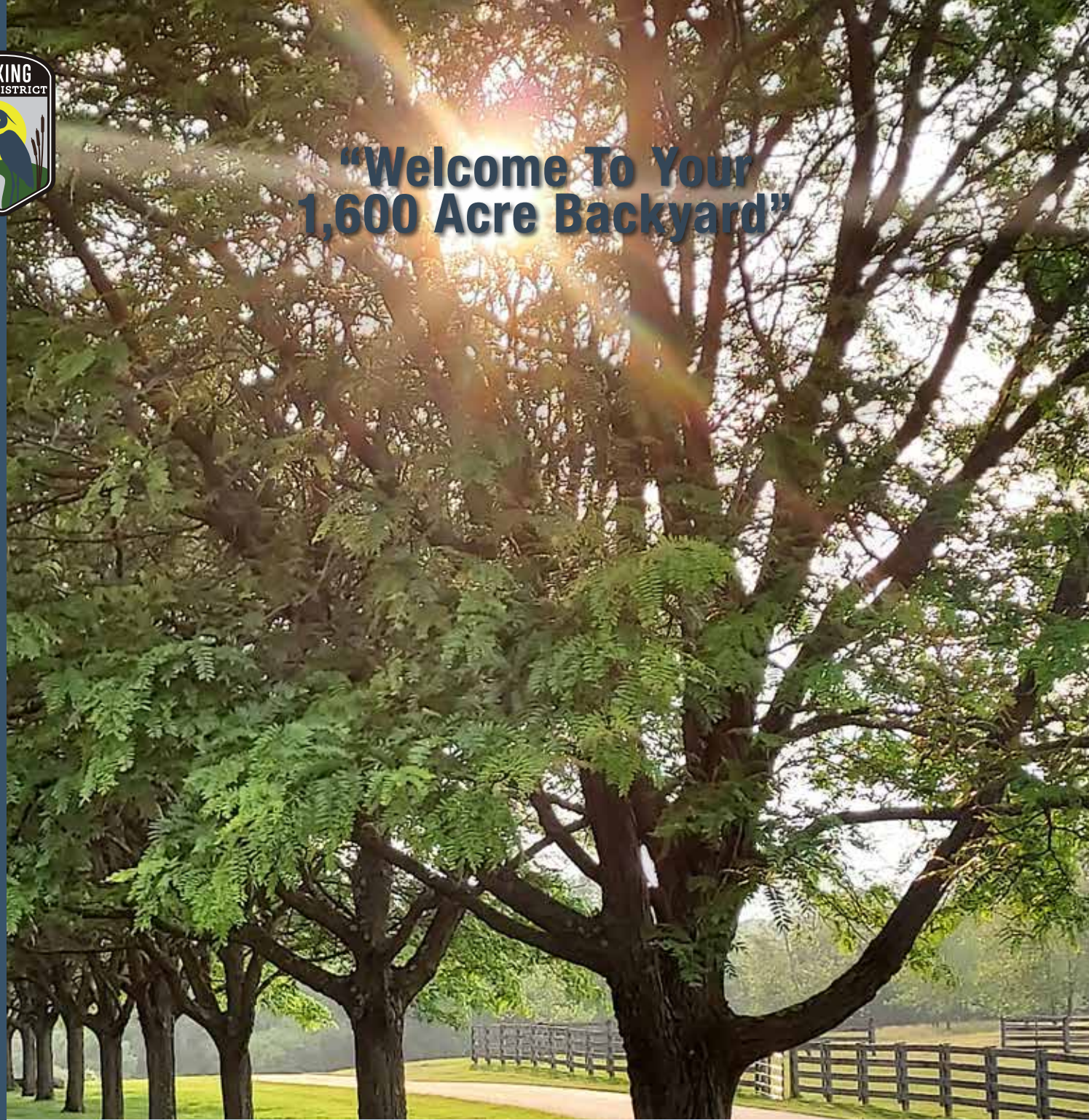




2023 ANNUAL REPORT



“Welcome To Your 1,600 Acre Backyard”



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Licking Park District is to acquire, manage, preserve, and conserve natural areas within Licking County, while protecting wildlife and local history in a manner that enriches our communities and provides access to diverse parks, educational opportunities and health and wellness activities.



Vision Statement

It is the vision of the Licking Park District to provide parks, paths, and trails of the highest quality to the residents of Licking County. Our goal is to maintain and improve existing facilities while pursuing opportunities for expansion. We provide passive recreational opportunities for the health, wellness, and education of our residents using resources that include public and private collaborations.



Programs and Special Events - 2023 by the numbers

Total number of participants across all programs	17,054
Increase in participation from 2022	29%
Total number of public programs and events offered	228
Attendance for School Programs	1,361
Attendance for Outdoor Adventures	1,100
Attendance for Harvest Moon Festival	2,360
Attendance for the Wildflower Fairy Trail	5,000+
Annual Program Budget	\$55,930
Percent of Annual LPD Budget	3.0%

Our goal is to develop and implement a “Something for Everyone” comprehensive education and outdoor recreation program that connects the community to its park system. Community engagement and outreach through in-person programs and events, virtual programs, and social media provide access for all residents of the county. Programs are provided in the arts, environmental education, citizen science, adult continuing education, outdoor skills, backyard ecology, recreation, family programming, pre-K, homeschool, teen, and school-age education, reflecting environmental education and recreation best practices and trends.



Night Hikes



Music at the Gazebo



Partner Programs



Harvest Moon Festival



Nature Explorers



School Age Programs



Licking County River Round Up



2023 Wildflower Fairy Trail



Adult Education Backyard Prairie Class



Howl-O-Ween



Eagle Walks



Backyard Conservation



Art in the Parks



Yoga Wellness Class



Fairy Trail Party



School Programs



Paddlesport Programs



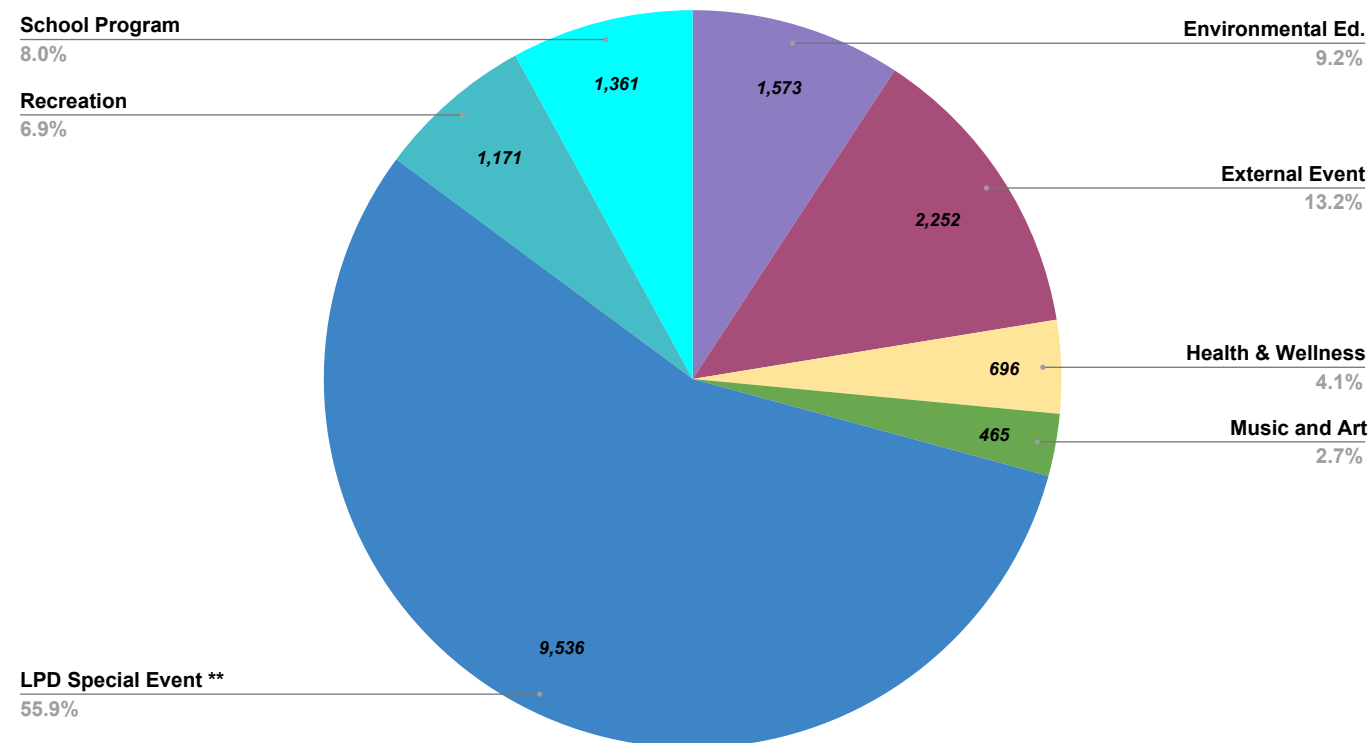
Outdoor Adventures
2023 Annual Report 5



The Importance of Partners!

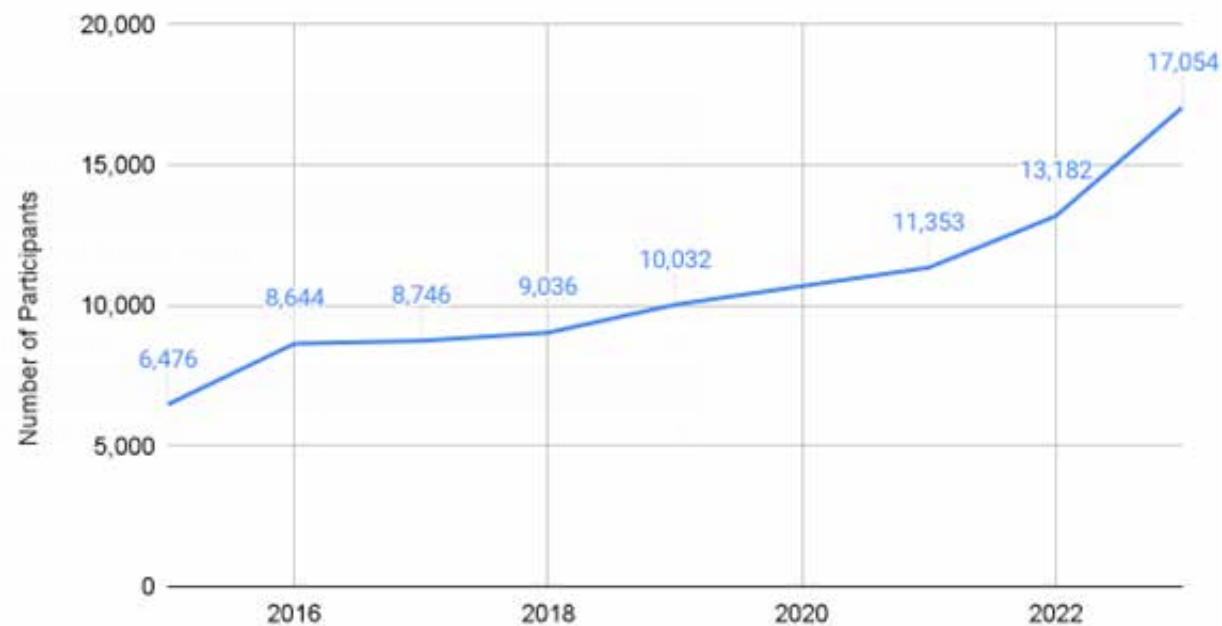
Part of our program success is due to the emphasis we put on being a positive and active community partner. In 2023, the LPD worked with over 40 partner agencies and organizations to collaborate on 62 programs.

Number and Percent of Participation Offered per Program Category



**LPD Special Events are organized by LPD and include Fairy Trail visitation of approximately 5,000. External Events are run by outside organizations.

Program Participation 2015 - 2023



Notable Programs and Events

Have You Experienced the Magic?

The Wildflower Fairy Trail at Infirmiry Mound finished its sixth season with approximately 5,000 visitors between May and September. Fairy home supply kits were again provided to staff, volunteers, and community organizations for the creation of fairy houses. Over 55 houses and three fairy wings were installed in early May and the trail opening was announced on social media on May 5. We again received over 2,600 pieces of fairy mail from the United Fairy Postal Service, where kids wrote to the fairies and LPD volunteers wrote back either by email or snail mail.



"I wasn't expecting this coming to this park for the first time but I LOVED IT. I think this is an excellent way to engage younger kids and made us more aware of our surroundings on the trail. I imagine the fairies loved putting it together too. It was a great surprise and made me want to create a fairy garden of my own at my house."

"A delightful destination for a whimsical hike."

"It was great! And we loved listening to all the birds including Scarlet Tanager and Yellow-throated Vireo."

Outdoor Adventures

After a hiatus, the annual Outdoor Adventures returned with a new date! Moving from early May to early June allowed for better weather for paddling, ziplining, and enjoying the festivities! Approximately 1,300 people attended, and we look forward to the continued growth of this event. It returns on June 1, 2024.



Harvest Moon Festival

Over 2,300 people came to experience fall fun at our annual Harvest Moon Festival, which featured community partners, free activities, and learning opportunities for the entire community. Visitors were able to try their hand at festival games, archery, rock climbing, kite flying, and more! Other activities included falconry demonstrations, live music, crafts, pumpkin painting, carriage rides, and a petting zoo. Multiple food trucks were on hand for guests to enjoy. The festival returns on October 5th, 2024.





School Programs

In 2023, a goal of our programming department was to increase the number of school programs, and we did! Student program participation jumped 254%, from 384 to 1,361. The majority of this was an increase in all-day field trips to Infirmiry Mound Park. School programs are provided free of charge for schools in Licking County.



On April 21, the Licking Park District hosted its first Arbor Day celebration with (80) second-grade students from John Clem Elementary School at Infirmiry Mound Park. Students learned about the importance of trees and how to plant a tree properly. Four trees were planted on the park property.

Pace at the Park

A hunter pace is a competitive equestrian trail ride designed to closely match the excitement of a fox hunt. The Licking Park District has an active and committed equestrian community, and this event targets that audience. There were 119 participants who rode a total of 488 miles during this event.



Adult Continuing Education

Throughout the year, the Park District offers programming for lifelong learning. In partnership with the Licking County Library - Newark, the LPD offered an Ornithology series, Plant This Not That native plant presentations, and a Landscape for Life series with the Licking Soil and Water Conservation District. We offered programs, including a native plant floral design program, for the Licking County Community Center. In partnership with the Licking Soil and Water Conservation District and The Dawes Arboretum, the LPD held its annual educator workshop series, reaching over 550 educators over the last seven years. In addition, programs such as the Backyard Conservation program series covered topics such as creating backyard prairies, winter bird feeding, and foraging.

Howl-O-Ween

The 4-acre dog park at Infirmiry Mound Park once again was the site of our annual Howl-O-Ween event, where dogs and their humans dressed up, entered the costume contest, and won some prizes! The event also featured a toy and treat scavenger hunt where owner/dog pairs competed to find the most doggy swag.



Licking County River Round Up

The Licking Park District continued to be a co-host for the annual Licking County River Round Up. This county-wide waterway cleanup event involves multiple county organizations, local government agencies, and hundreds of volunteers. In 2023, the water level was too low for paddling, so we cleaned on foot from Riverview Reserve in Newark to Staddens Landing. In total, partners pulled out 25,320 pounds of trash, 120 tires, and 1,160 pounds of scrap metal across the county.



Art in the Parks

Parks and art go hand in hand. Did you know the artist Thomas Moran was crucial in getting Congress to approve Yellowstone as the world's first national park? His paintings are what sealed the deal and paved the way for all parks. While our programs may not have such lofty goals, the Art in the Parks series does explore creativity and nature experiences through courses like wildlife photography, nature journaling, Paint the Parks, and more. Art teaches people to look at things through a different lens and helps us connect to new audiences through music, visual arts, writing, and social media.





Nature Investigators

We can't think of a better combination than reading a book and then making connections to the world outside! The LPD, in partnership with the Granville Public Library, Alexandria Public Library, and Homer Public Library, created special Nature Investigation Backpacks full of exploration tools for kids to check out. A book list, with corresponding activity cards in each backpack, allows families to read together and get outside to explore.



Nature Playscape

Phase 3 of the Nature Playscape at Infirmiry Mound Park was completed in 2023 and features a Build Zone, where one can find all sorts of natural materials to make forts, nests, or whatever can be imagined! The Climb Zone is for school-age children and involves a more challenging climb structure. It brings us one step closer to the completion of an overall playscape design created by Urban Wild in 2021. We were awarded our third ODNR NatureWorks grant for Phase 4 in 2024.



The Licking Park District received funding for Phase 3 from an ODNR NatureWorks grant and a multi-year grant from the Marguerite Halpine Heppenstall Fund of the Licking County Foundation. We want to thank the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Licking County Foundation for helping to make this phase a reality. To date, the Licking Park District has received over \$125,000 in grants from ODNR and the Licking County Foundation's Marguerite Halpine Heppenstall Fund for the Nature Playscape. The remainder of the project is supported by Licking Park District levy funds.



Natural Resources

Girl Scout Native Plant Garden

Girl Scout Troop 7509 created a native plant garden as part of the Nature Playscape. For their Bronze Award, these fifth graders decided to focus on improving animal habitats. They designed a "bee kind" native pollinator plant garden near the willow feature. The scouts measured the garden area, discussed how to design the layout, and selected native plants. They were required to partner with a resource in their community to help them achieve their goal, and we are so glad they chose us!



Land Management Continues

2023 saw a continuation of the partnership started in 2019 between the Licking Park District (LPD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners of Fish and Wildlife Program (USFWS-PFW) for managing over 50 acres of prairie habitat at Infirmiry Mound Park and the Newell Recreation Preserve (NRP). The NRP prairie underwent a prescribed burn in April of 2023 under the guidance of Jennifer Windus of the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association (ONAPA).



2023 marked the fifth year of the butterfly transect survey at Infirmiry Mound Park. The survey is modeled on a long-term butterfly monitoring project hosted by the Ohio Lepidopterists, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Ohio Division of Wildlife, and the Ohio Biological Survey. The transect is a fixed route along which walks are made. The route is not altered from the previous year. The goal is to collect long-term data to help track trends in species diversity and abundance.



"I was there last week and was so excited to find both playscapes finished. Well done staff! The park is a Licking County gem!"

"My kids LOVE it! Can't wait to see what the next phase brings!"





Infirmary Mound Park Lepidoptera (Butterfly) Monitoring Results

In 2023, volunteer monitoring occurred from April through October. In total, 21 species were observed.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Aphrodite Fritillary | Pearl Crescent |
| Black Swallowtail | Question Mark |
| Cabbage White | Red Admiral |
| Clouded Sulphur | Silver-spotted Skipper |
| Eastern Comma | Silvery Checkerspot |
| Eastern Tailed Blue | Spicebush Swallowtail |
| Eastern Tiger Swallowtail | Summer Azure |
| Meadow Fritillary | Viceroy |
| Monarch | Zebra Swallowtail |
| Northern Pearly-eye | Zebulon Skipper |
| Orange Sulphur | |

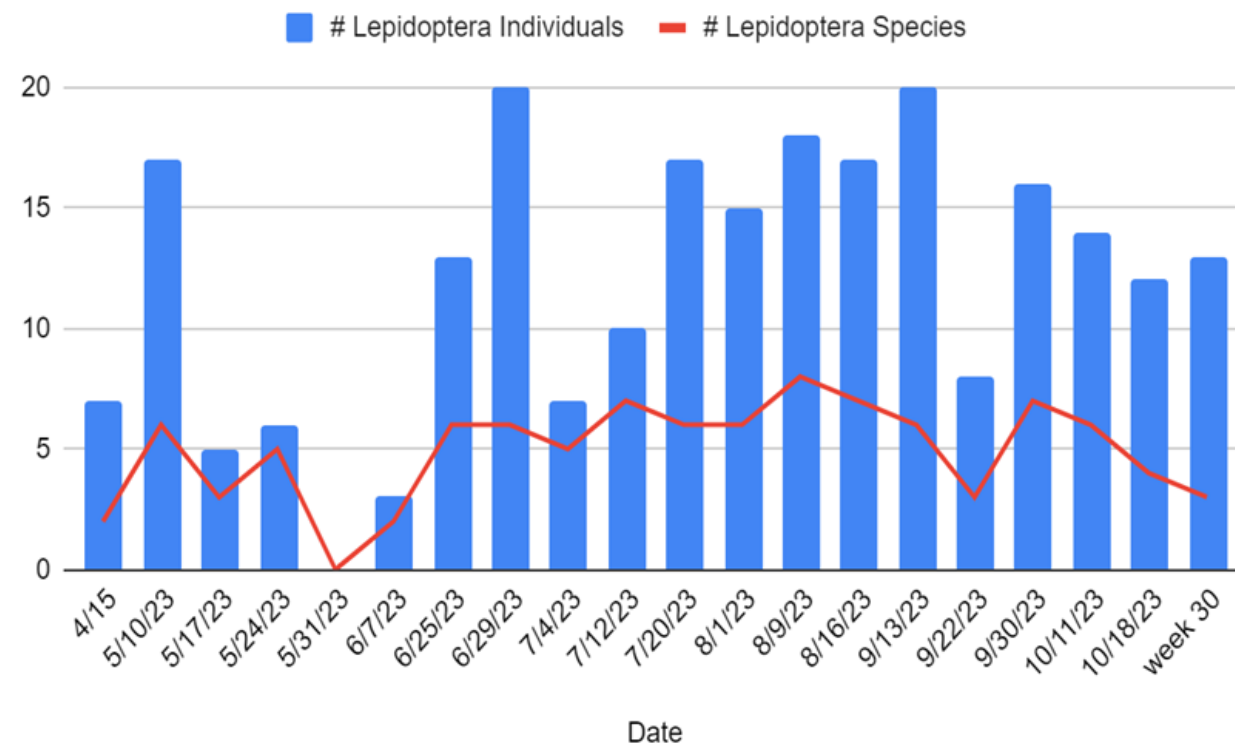


Eastern Bluebirds on Camera

Bluebird boxes continued to be monitored for nest success at Infirmary Mound Park. In March, the LPD received a mini-grant from the Ohio Bluebird Society. The grant for \$345 covered two nestboxes modified for camera installation, two Ring cameras, and mounting equipment. Two nestboxes outfitted with WIFI enabled cameras were installed close to our office in April. The videos and photos were used on program materials and social media to increase awareness and appreciation of Eastern Bluebirds and other cavity nesters by giving the public a “close-up” view. A pair of bluebirds successfully fledged three nestlings.



Lepidoptera Individuals and # Lepidoptera Species





"I volunteer for the park district because I think having local beauty and pride in your community is very important. I want our kids to have more available to them than we did. One of my favorite memories of volunteering is seeing a disc golfer from New York comment on how well-kept Lobdell Reserve is."

— James Lawrence, Licking Legends Disc Golf Club, Adopt-A-Park Volunteer

Many Parks and Trails. One Dedicated Volunteer Base. We Love Our Volunteers.

We've had a fantastic year of volunteerism with the Licking Park District. Volunteers donated thousands of hours serving our community by helping with our programs and events. They also worked to protect our natural resources, trails, and parks. The thousands of hours volunteers donated cannot add up to the love and dedication they show the Licking Park District daily. Our volunteers are the beating heart of the Licking Park District.

Year of Growth

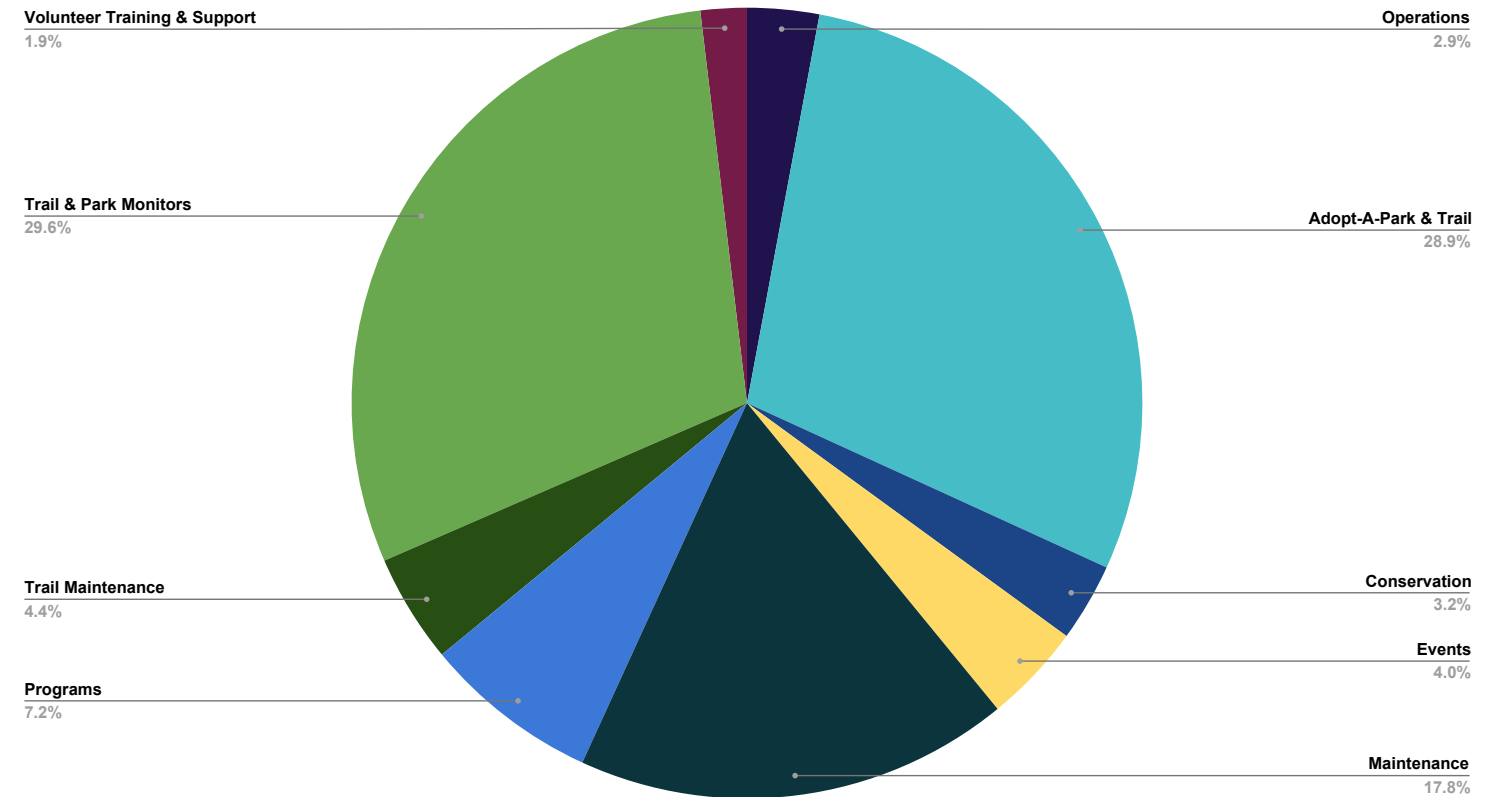
Volunteers contributed 10,275 hours in 2023, a 41.2% increase from 2022! The Independent Sector currently values one volunteer service hour in Ohio at \$29.17. The total value of 10,275 hours of volunteer service equals \$299,721.75. There is no way we could ever put a dollar amount on the value of our volunteers and everything they give us. Their love and commitment to our community, trails, and parks are measured by all they accomplished in 2023, the smiles they put on children's faces, the people they inspire in our programs and events, the many trails they monitored, and the parks and facilities they helped to maintain and protect. Our volunteers' passion, dedication, and love for our parks, trails, and community are invaluable.

Volunteer Program Highlights

Volunteers of all ages serve the Licking Park District through diverse independent and scheduled assignment opportunities. We are honored and proud to celebrate and share the accomplishments of all individual and group volunteers in 2023.

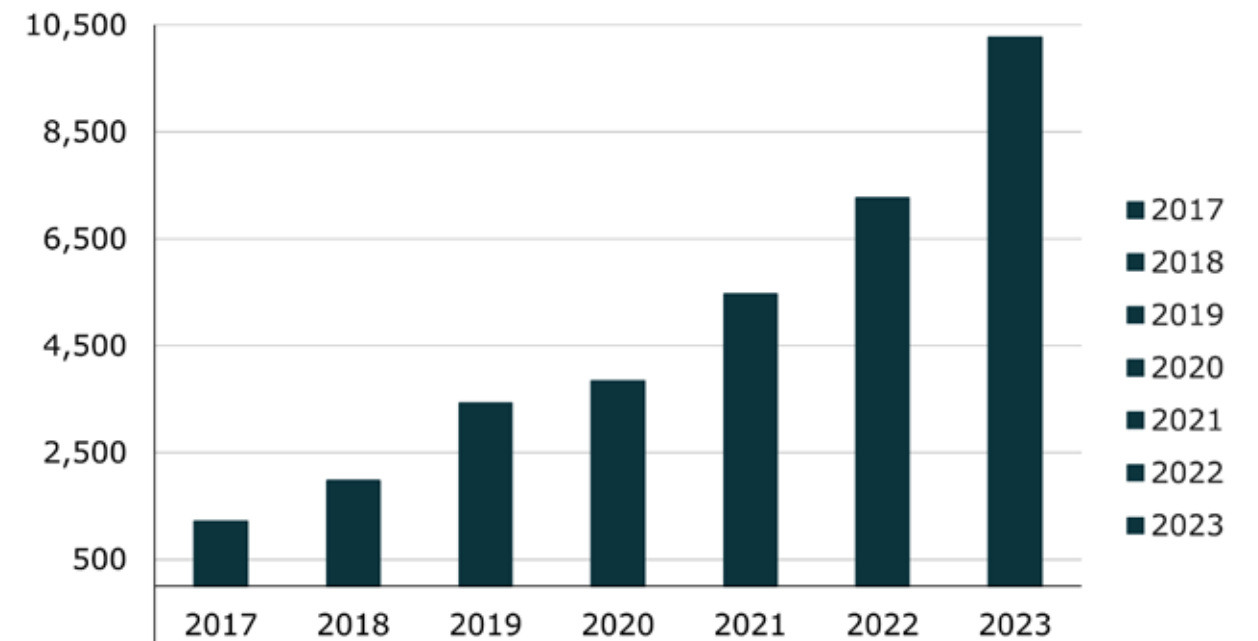
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SERVICES
Adopt-A-Trail & Park Program
"CIA" Conservation In Action
Citizen Science
Events & Community Outreach
Heritage Restoration Projects
Operations & Administrative Support
Park & Facility Maintenance
Paws 2 Play Dog Park Stewards
Photography
Programs
Trail & Park Monitor
Trail Maintenance
Volunteer Training

2023 Volunteer Service Hours by Assignment



"Leave the roads; take the trails." — Pythagoras

2017 - 2023 VOLUNTEER HOURS





Adopt-A-Trail/Park Program

Our Park and Trail Adopters volunteer their time to a dedicated segment of their chosen trail or park, assist with maintenance, and complete various projects throughout the year. Our adopters are individual volunteers or groups of families, businesses, schools, and community organizations. Their service helps us maintain our beautiful parks and trails for our community.



“One of my favorite memories is trimming trails at Lobdell on horseback with my sister! It reminds us of when we were children with our horses, and being able to ride together at our Licking Parks is a true treasure.”

*— Gloria “Mitzi” Gerber,
Trail Troopers Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer*



2023 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Memorial Bench installed by family volunteers.



Volunteer Vince Alessi



Photo credit: Volunteer Beth Little



Volunteer Ron Lohrman



“I volunteer with the Licking Park District because my service helps people of all ages and all walks of life, to connect with green space, fresh air, exercise, and fun where they enjoy the benefits that can only come from their being out in a natural setting.”

— Vincent Alessi, 2019 LPD Volunteer of the Year



Volunteer Matt Thompson



Photo credit: Volunteer Beth Little
2023 Annual Report



Trail Monitors

Our Trail and Park Monitors are daily hikers, runners, bikers, and horseback riders. They observe conditions, report maintenance issues, pick up litter, and clear debris. Our Trail Monitors also cut back vegetation and low-hanging branches that may impede the trail corridor, ensuring a pleasurable experience for all who visit.

*"I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees."
— Henry David Thoreau*



2023 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Trail, Park & Facility Maintenance

Did you notice the beautifully mowed Paws 2 Play Dog Park all growing season, the newly painted office porch, and the split and stacked firewood ready for the next Night Hike Campfire program? Volunteers did that and a lot more, saving hundreds of hours of maintenance that would need to be completed by staff. Volunteers allow us to focus more time on current projects and help us manage various preventative maintenance.

*"Come to the woods, for here is rest. There is no repose like that of the green, deep woods. Sleep in forgetfulness of all ill."
— John Muir*



Goodwill Service Group

The Goodwill Service Group contributed to daily maintenance tasks, allowing staff to allocate more time to ongoing projects. Our Goodwill crew painted an outdoor restroom, washed and detailed LPD vehicles, assisted with Pace at the Park jump course set-up, and much more.





Conservation in Action “CIA” Volunteers!

Our “CIA” volunteers protect our parks’ ecosystems and native habitats by identifying and removing invasive plant species. “CIA” volunteers are trained to identify and learn each invasive species’ removal protocols. Our volunteers understand that invasive plant species can cause native plant extinction, threaten and destroy delicate ecosystems, and reduce biodiversity. Our volunteers were in our prairies removing Canada Thistle and Common Teasel, cutting Amur Honeysuckle and Oriental Bittersweet growing along our trails, and pulling Garlic Mustard wherever they saw it. As you can see in the reduction of Garlic Mustard growing at Infirmary Mound Park, our volunteers make an impact.

Licking County League Volunteer Group

Kurt Snyder featured Volunteer Service Day in The Newark Advocate’s April 26th article.

Volunteers helped remove invasive Garlic Mustard, built fairy houses for our Wildflower Fairy Trail installation project, and removed large limbs, litter, and debris from our open space, streams, and trails.

Fanatics Service Group

The Fanatics service group worked all day at IMP to remove invasive species in our prairies.



Photo Credit: Kurt Snyder, The Advocate



Photo Credit: Kurt Snyder, The Advocate



Granville High School Service Group

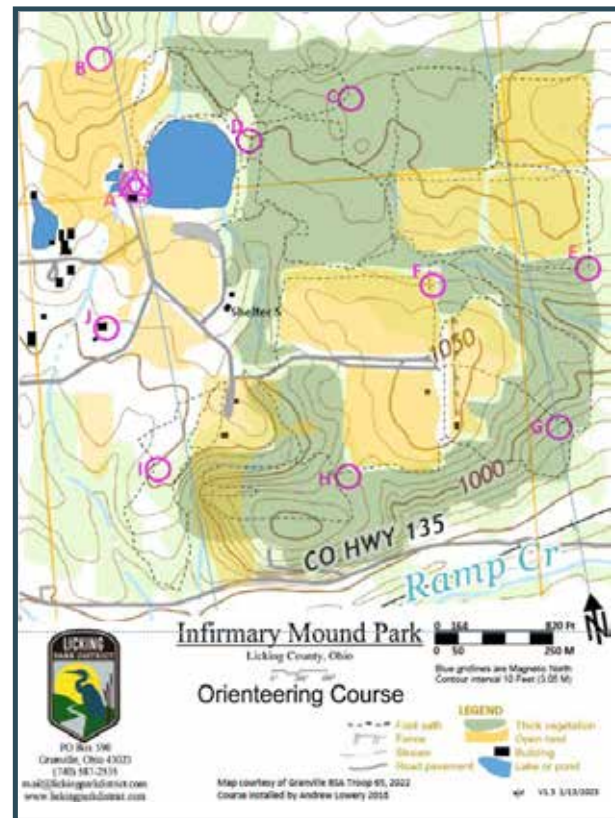
Granville High School students came to Paws 2 Play Dog Park to apply the first coat of protective weather seal to our two gazebos.

Rotary Club of Granville Service Group

The Granville Rotary Club applied the second coat of weather seal to our Paws 2 Play gazebos and spread mulch in our playgrounds.

Eagle Scout Project: Orienteering Course Update

In 2018, Eagle Scout Andrew Lowery from Troop 65 installed orienteering placards and did the original mapping as his Eagle Scout Project at Infirmary Mound Park. After Andrew’s initial project, Troop 65 worked to develop an orienteering course revised map and re-checked the coordinates in the park. Troop 65 has also hiked the course as a group to verify coordinates and accuracy.



“I have several great memories of volunteering with LPD, including the annual Harvest Moon and PACE events and various park trail maintenance projects.”

—Jack Lyon, Volunteer



“One of my favorite memories is when I was doing some fairy house ‘maintenance.’ I was on the fairy trail early in the morning when it was quiet and serene and a little foggy. A woman brought a young girl into the area. I don’t think they knew I was there, and I could hear the girl’s exclamations of awe and wonder at the houses. It was very sweet, and it embodied the intention of the trail, which is to touch children (and adults) in a magical way.”

—Kim Vohs, Volunteer





United Way Week of Caring Volunteers

United Way of Licking County brought together volunteers from area businesses, schools, and organizations to work for the greater good of our community. Volunteers made an impact by reducing the number of invasive species in our prairies, picking up litter, and clearing trip hazards from our trails.



Wildflower Fairy Trail House Build & Installation

This highly anticipated annual Fairy Trail tradition is built by volunteers, staff, and community partners. Volunteers build, refurbish, and install fairy houses on our Wildflower Trail at Infirmiry Mound Park, monitoring and sprucing up throughout the season, and even taking on “fairy duties” by responding to “fairy mail” fan letters. Our volunteers help create a fantastic experience for people of all generations when they stroll through our fairy trail.

Citizen Science Training: Bluebird Nest Box and Butterfly Transect Monitoring

Trained volunteers collect and contribute data to ongoing scientific survey projects that help conserve butterflies and biodiversity. Training began in a classroom setting at the James Bradley Center, learning about Ohio bluebirds, butterflies, and the Citizen Science program. The field training includes visits to Infirmiry Mound Park’s butterfly transect to practice monitoring.



Programs, Events, and Park Watch Volunteers

If we want a successful program or event, we need our volunteers! Volunteers help build fairy houses, set up tables and tents for our festivals, manage event parking, educate at our information and craft tables, and assist with archery and paddlesports programs. Our special-assignment Park Watch volunteers are on duty during public events to help ensure safety in our parking lots. Behind every successful event stands a large number of our dedicated volunteers who helped to make it happen. Our volunteers serve, so everyone in our community enjoys every event and program.



LPD Volunteer Debbie Pound (2018 Volunteer of the Year) proudly displays her Licking Park District Volunteer badge while volunteering for Yellowstone National Park!

Photography

We are fortunate to have a volunteer base filled with talented artists. Our photography volunteers capture photos of wildlife, wildflowers, scenic landscapes, creeks, trees, trails, and our events. We use their images to create beautiful greeting cards and for publications like our 2023 Annual Report!

Volunteer Recognition

Our volunteers give us so much, and we are grateful for every effort and hour spent serving the Licking Park District. We are proud of all our volunteers, and it is an honor to share their 2023 accomplishments.

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

Every April, the Park District holds an open-house-style event during National Volunteer Appreciation Week. We were honored to celebrate their fantastic year of service.





2023 Volunteer of the Year - Sigrid Batten

The Licking Park District established the Volunteer of the Year award in 2015 to acknowledge outstanding representatives of our dedicated volunteers. This award recognizes individuals who exhibit enthusiasm for their volunteer service, leadership characteristics for the projects they lead, and their willingness to promote volunteerism in others. The Licking Park District is proud to name Sigrid Batten as our Volunteer of the Year for 2023!

Sigrid has been an active Trail Monitor volunteer since 2020. On horseback, she rides our trails while monitoring conditions, cutting back vegetation, and reporting fallen trees across the treadway. Sigrid's volunteer service has helped us locate and quickly clear fallen trees before they negatively impact trail users. Thank you, Sigrid and Ruby!

What motivated you to become a Licking Park District volunteer?

"I always enjoyed riding the LC parks, and I felt I should do my part in keeping them nice!"

What do you like most about volunteering with the LPD?

"The feeling of accomplishment in having helped provide a safe and nice place for everybody to enjoy nature."

What volunteer activities have been most memorable for you?

"Every activity is memorable, but especially when I am involved in clearing a new trail. It is a great feeling to take my horse on it and know I was part of creating it."

Favorite LPD park or trail?

"Taft Reserve is my favorite. I spend the most time there volunteering and enjoying it on my trusty steed, Ruby."

Do you have a wish list for a volunteer project?

"As an equestrian, I have to say any new bridle trail for horses would be greatly appreciated and welcomed."

Do you have any advice for anyone considering volunteering with the Licking Park District?

"Go ahead and become a volunteer. You won't regret it. The satisfaction you feel when you look in the mirror, or the joy you see in the faces of children or visitors as they enjoy our parks, is indescribable."



"Sigrid is a regular user of our equestrian trails and has been a strong advocate of the Licking Park District for many years. Her love of our parks is evident in her enormous amount of volunteer time on our trails. Along with volunteering, Sigrid brings many horseback riders into our parks through organizing rides and activities for members and guests of the Ohio Horseman's Council - Licking County Chapter."

— Tami McAdams, Licking Park District

Our Gratitude and Well Wishes to Dr. Steven Parsons

"We wanted to recognize Dr. Steven's amazing service as he is retiring out of state. Dr. Steven volunteered for almost everything! Trail monitoring and maintenance, events and programs, and conservation projects. I've had the pleasure of working alongside Dr. Steven many times over the years.

His clever wit, unwavering energy that just doesn't quit, authentic insight, and kind consideration of others made him irresistibly likable from day one. We are so grateful to Dr. Steven and wish him the very best in everything that lies ahead."

— Karen Jennings, Licking Park District



VOLUNTEER MILESTONES LIFETIME HOUR AWARDS ACHIEVED IN 2023		100+ HOURS OF SERVICE IN 2023		20+ HOURS OF SERVICE IN 2023		
1,000+ Hours		Vincent Alessi		Wyld Life Young Life Christian Volunteer Group	Richard Martos	Granville High School Senior Service Day Volunteer Group
Matthew Montgomery		Lobdell Reserve Trail Adopter Group Trail Troopers		William & Linda Cornell	Paul Christensen	Fanatics Volunteer Group
Craig Washka		Sigrid Batten		United Way of Licking County	Pam Barnett	Riverview Reserve Park Adopter Group Elliot Family
Vincent Alessi		Nancy Daughtery		Tim Gilbert	Mort Guiney	Staddens Landing Park Adopter Group Dixon Family
500+ Hours		Licking/Knox Goodwill Industries, Inc.		Thomas Englehart	Michael Rees	TJ Evans Bike Trail Adopter Group Denison University Women's and Men's Lacrosse
Debbie Pound		Lobdell Reserve Park Adopter Group Licking Legends Disc Golf Club		Theresa Nikodym	Maxwell Hunter	Debbie Pound
Sigrid Batten		Licking County League Volunteer Group		Steven Parsons	Mark & Jan Raymond	Dave Ryckman
Bill Fleitz		Kenneth Apacki		Scott & Missy Harris	Marc Monnin	Cub Scout Pack 4004 - Newark
Birgit Nazarian		Jack Long		Licking Park District Board Members Jim Kiracofe Adam Jenkins Richard Moseley Sam White Ashley Campbell	Taft Reserve Trail Adopter Group Mara Squared	Charlie & Jude Hall
400+ Hours		GSA Troop - Lakewood		Richard Moseley Sam White Ashley Campbell	TJ Evans Bike Trail Adopter Group Kiwanis Granville	Bill & Linda Bering
Nancy Daughtery		East Central Ohio Beekeepers Association		Ashley Campbell	TJ Evans Bike Trail Adopter Group Astronomy Club Sadie Landry	Morris Woods State Nature Preserve Park Adopter Group Barlow Family
Kenneth Apacki		Craig Washka		TJ Evans Bike Trail Adopter Group Granville High School Astronomy Club Sadie Landry	Kitty Guinsler	Barbara Long
Jack Long		Lobdell Reserve Park Adopter Group Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club		Ruth Meyer	Kim Vohs	Armen Nazarian
The Trail Troopers		BSA Troop 65 - Granville		Ronald Forgrave	Kelly Pertee	
Kelly Pertee		Birgit Nazarian		Rockett Morgan Friends & Family Volunteer Group	Ohio Canal Greenway Trail Adoper Group Karen Bailey Elemental Art Studio	
John Yohman		Bill Fleitz			Joseph Windholtz	
Kim Vohs		Beth Litter			Janiqua Simon	
Lee & Nelly Barlow		AmeriCorps			Jack Lyon	
Dave Ryckman		Infirmary Mound Park Trail Adopter Group Matthew Montgomery "Walk & Talk"			Granville Rotary Volunteer Group	
Jack Lyon						
300+ Hours						
Tom Stone						
Scott & Missy Harris						
Mark & Jan Raymond						
200+ Hours						
Steven Parsons						
Jeffrey Yohman						
Beth Litter						





ADMINISTRATIVE

Strategic Plan

For a number of months, the Licking Park District Board of Park Commissioners discussed future goals and capital projects to include in its Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023–2027). The strategic plan is designed as a planning tool to guide future improvements to parks, facilities, and programs offered by the Licking Park District over the next five years. The plan will be reviewed and updated regularly to account for changing circumstances and evolving issues, needs, interests, and resources. The plan is also a living document, constructed with the understanding that the ability to complete projects is predicated on the availability of both financial and personnel resources. The plan can be found on the park district’s website.

As part of its Five-Year Strategic Planning Process, staff developed a Community Survey. A total of 398 completed surveys were received. The Licking Park District would like to thank all of those who took time out of their busy schedules to complete the survey. The survey revealed that 76.6% of the respondents had visited a park district facility or trail within the past year.

During the Five-Year Strategic Plan development, covering the years 2023–2027, the Board of Park Commissioners and staff identified the need for additional programming staff. A position description was developed for a new Program Coordinator position. Staff hopes to have this position filled in the first quarter of 2024.

State of Ohio’s Capital Budget Request

In December of 2023, the Licking Park District applied for two projects via the State of Ohio’s Capital Budget request for fiscal year 2025–2026. The first project was identified as “Improvements to Public Kayak/Canoe Launch” at Riverview Reserve. The second project was identified as a “Nature Education Center” at Infirmiry Mound Park. The Licking Park District is competing against all other municipal-type projects across the state of Ohio for available funds totaling approximately \$700 million.

Government Partnership Fund

The Licking Park District Board of Park Commissioners has allocated \$150,000 annually to fund parks and recreation-related projects with cities, villages, and townships in Licking County. This program will be funded from 2023 through 2027. The projects must meet the Licking Park District’s mission and goals and the needs of the local communities.



“The Gallman Road Bridge, on the west end of Newark’s T.J. Evans Trail, needed some serious rehab. After assessing the damage and contacting all involved parties, the Licking Park District suggested applying for funding through the Government Partnership Funding Program. Having never utilized this program before, I was amazed at how straight forward the process was and how quickly the project was completed. I am so grateful for the Licking Park District’s support and look forward to more exciting collaborations in the future.”

— Chance Patznick,
Parks & Recreation Superintendent, City of Newark



In 2023, the City of Newark - Parks and Recreation Department applied for assistance from the fund to rehab the Gallman Road Iron Bridge, located on the bike trail near Thornwood Crossing. The Park District’s Government Partnership Fund provided \$5,325 toward the project. The total cost of the bridge repair was \$10,650. Several new applications are expected to be received in 2024 from other agencies across the county.

ODOT / Metro Park Funds & TAP Grants

Metro Park Funds

The Park District Board of Park Commissioners passed a resolution in 2023 that permitted the Park District to continue to be eligible to receive funds from the Ohio Department of Transportation through the Ohio Parks and Recreation Metro Park Fund Program. This program provides funding for materials and contract labor necessary for the construction or reconstruction of park drives, park roads, new or replacement bridges, park access roads, and parking lots.

The maintenance team installed a gravel lot off the Infirmiry Mound Park arena drive to improve access to our event parking grounds. This improvement has allowed easy access and parking for hundreds of vehicles during events.

In early August, our maintenance team added several parking spaces to the Staddens Landing kayak/canoe launch parking lot as use of the launch has increased from years past. A large dumpster was also added to the site in an effort to keep litter from entering the Licking River waterway.





Ohio Canal Greenway Trail Paving and Buckeye Scenic Trail Extension

Over the past few years, the Park District has been approved for two Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grants from ODOT. The first will fund the paving of the Ohio Canal Greenway Trail in Hebron. This three-mile trail runs from Canal Park to Route 79, and the paving project will be completed in Summer 2024.

The second TAP grant project will create a one-mile extension of the Buckeye Scenic Trail from US 40 to Cristland Hill Rd. In late 2022, the Licking Park District began working on the Buckeye Scenic Trail Extension project, which runs from just south of Lakewood High School to Cristland Hill Rd. The Park District contracted with GM General Contracting to excavate and remove the old railroad tracks and clear trees from the railbed, and with RK2, LLC to remove and dispose of the cleared railroad ties and tree debris from the trail. The clearing project was completed in early spring 2023. The total cost of the project was \$57,125. This extension is expected to be completed in 2025.

BIKE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

The Park District has continued to make significant improvements to the multi-use paved trails to ensure durability and longevity.

Buckeye Scenic Trail - Crack Fill & Sealcoat

The Buckeye Scenic Trail between Route 40 and Irving Wick Drive received a “face-lift,” with the staff arranging for the trail to be crack-filled and sealcoated. Xtreme Sealcoat was hired and performed the nearly four-mile stretch of work for \$18,236.24.

Panhandle Trail - Repaved 1+ Miles

The Licking Park District awarded Breck’s Paving a contract for the repaving of an approximately one-mile section of the Panhandle Trail between Long Drive and Felumlee Rd, at a cost of \$82,315. Paving was completed in September.

Panhandle Trail - Chain Link Fencing Repairs and New Sections

Capitol Fence was hired to address safety concerns on the Panhandle Trail. Their work included repairing damaged fence sections along the railroad line and installing new fence sections by Legacy Park and above the old Hanover Tunnel at Main St. The total cost was \$21,700.



Trail Signage

Trail signs are continually monitored, and replacements are installed when necessary due to damage or theft. These signs enhance safe and efficient navigation and provide additional traffic controls for all bicycle operations on roadways and shared-use trails. With few exceptions, motor vehicles are not allowed on the multi-use paved trails. A new sign was added in 2023 to advise of the exceptions, including Class 1 and 2 eBikes, ADA mobility devices, and emergency and maintenance vehicles.



Bicycle Repair Station Installations

Bicycle repair stations were installed on the Buckeye Scenic Trail at US Route 40 and on the Panhandle Trail at Licking Valley Road, near Marne United Methodist Church. Each station includes all the basic bike repair tools needed for simple maintenance, like changing a flat tire and adjusting brakes and derailleurs. It also comes equipped with support arms to hang the bike, allowing pedals and wheels to spin freely while making adjustments.

Bike Trail Flailing

Our maintenance team’s flailing schedule helps to maintain our bike trails by clearing and slowing overgrowth. Trails can easily become overgrown with vegetation during growing seasons, creating visually obstructive and unsafe conditions.



Panhandle Trail Wood Fence Repairs

The maintenance team repaired and replaced several damaged sections of wood fence along the Panhandle Trail.





Clean Up Project – Riverview Reserve

In early 2023, the Park District became aware of non-traditional homesteads at Riverview Reserve. As environmental stewards of the property and in service to all who use our parks, we were responsible for directing immediate remediation.

Non-traditional homesteads operate with insufficient support and present a risk to the residents, park visitors, staff, and volunteers. With respect, empathy, and privacy, non-traditional residents were offered community resources during the obligated transition and migration. Bio-One was contracted to clear an enormous amount of debris and hazardous materials that had been left behind. Several large dumpsters of debris were removed, tires were properly disposed of, and plastics and metals were collected for recycling. The Park District will continue to expand the goal of making the area safe, with increased access for all. A disc golf course will open at the site in the summer of 2024, with assistance from the Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club.



damage. The utilization of special duty sheriff's deputies for targeted enforcement details has greatly reduced off-road vehicle activity.

Removal of SUV

In a joint effort between the Licking Park District and Licking Soil & Water District in early September, an abandoned SUV was removed from the river bank at Riverview Reserve. The Park District cleared trees to create an extraction path from the river to the power line (between the Don Edward's Ball Complex and the Newark Water Plant) and made removal arrangements with Jae's Towing. The towing service utilized two skid steers, a large winch, and a flatbed truck. The River Round Up Committee paid for the tow service (\$1,600). It took approximately four-hours to remove the vehicle from the property.



"The collaboration between the Licking Park District and Bio-One began with a telephone call placed by Tami McAdams, Operations Administrator at LPD, to Marc Joslyn, Director of Operations at Bio-One. The call was immediately earnest and filled with concern for all parties involved. I felt compelled to partner on this necessary project. And with compassion, intelligent design, and efficiency, it has been our honor and privilege to aid LPD in their achievement of benevolent stewardship of this gorgeous property."

– Marc Joslyn, Bio-One

"The Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club is excited to once again be partnering with the Licking Park District on a new disc golf course. Riverview Reserve is the future site of a championship-level disc golf course. With an expected par of around 68, three sets of tee pads, and ranging from 8,000 to 10,000 feet, it will be challenging for players of all skill levels. Work is underway, and the expected opening is in the summer of 2024."

– Kristy Moore, President-Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club



Brush and Invasives Clearing

After the initial debris was removed, the maintenance team cleared dense, mature, non-native invasive Honeysuckle and Oriental Bittersweet, dead trees, and remaining debris from meadows and fields along the railroad track area of Riverview Reserve. Access points were constructed for future trailheads and temporary trails were installed to assist with mobility for the future construction of a disc golf course.

Vehicle Barrier Gate Installation

A series of bollards and signs were installed at Riverview Reserve in an attempt to deter off-road vehicles from utilizing the public park property. Motor vehicles are not permitted on the property, and illegal riders have caused serious



Disc Golf Course Construction

The Columbus Flyers Disc Golf Club has begun the layout and installation of a new 18-hole disc golf course at Riverview Reserve. The Flyers assist with the maintenance and upkeep of the Park District's Lobdell Reserve Disc Golf Course in Alexandria, making them the perfect partner for developing the course at Riverview. The club's volunteers began working at the property in November and have the fairways for holes No.1 and 2 cleared. They expect to have at least nine holes open for play by summer 2024.





Memorial Bench

Although the Licking Park District has sold commemorative benches to residents in the past, there needed to be promotion and a formal application. Staff developed an application and detailed information can be found on the Park District's website (www.LickingParkDistrict.com). The Licking Park District's Commemorative Bench Program gives individuals, families, and groups an opportunity to commemorate loved ones and friends (past and present) and special events (i.e., weddings, anniversaries, graduations, birth of a child, etc.). A formal Commemorative Tree Program will be forthcoming in 2024.

A memorial bench in memory of Michael D. Turner was placed on the TJ Evans Trail at the eagle's nest observation spot west of Granville. The location holds many memories for the Turner family. They spent many hours there annually, observing the nest and documenting the progress of young eagles. The bench was purchased with funds provided by family and friends. LPD volunteers installed the bench with Mrs. Turner present.



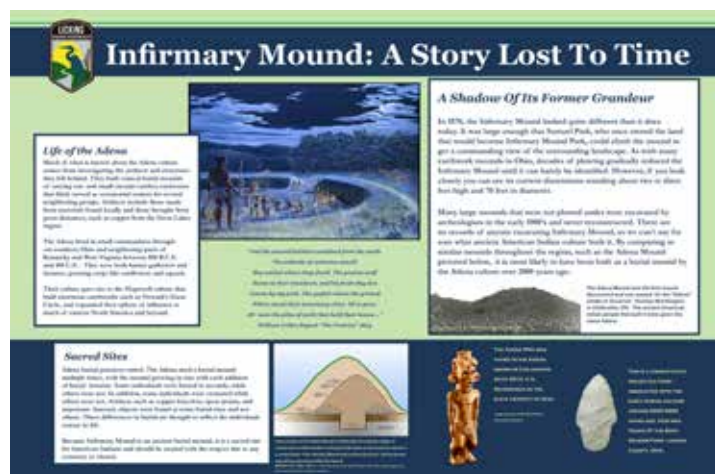
PARK and TRAIL PROJECTS

Nature Playscape

Shock-absorbing rubber mats were installed under the Playscape's slide feature to improve comfort and safety.

Interpretive Sign Installed at Mound

Infirmary Mound Park's name comes from a combination of two historical features: the site of the first hospital (infirmary) in Licking County and the location of an ancient native american burial mound—The Infirmary Mound—near the arena area. An interpretive sign was installed near the mound's remains to provide visitors with historical information. An interpretive sign will be installed at Taft Reserve's Tippett Mound in 2024.



New Footing Was Added to the Equestrian Sand Arena

The Licking Park District made long-needed improvements to its Equestrian Sand Arena footing at Infirmary Mound Park. A contractor was hired to provide minor grading and install 240 tons of concrete sand (two-inch depth). The project cost was \$7,900. The Licking County equestrian community much appreciated this improvement. The arena is used for horse shows and other equestrian events.

Arena Bleachers Restored

The bleachers at Infirmary Mound Park's horse arena area were restored with new treated-lumber seating.



Lobdell Reserve Trail: Horse Mounting Steps and Hitching Post

The maintenance team constructed off-trail horse mounting steps and a hitching post near a memorial bench overlooking beautiful Lobdell Creek.

Poison Hemlock/Wild Parsnip Control

Our maintenance team increased efforts to control non-native toxic Poison Hemlock and Wild Parsnip growing along trails and high-use park areas with mechanical and herbicide applications.





New Mounting Steps at Taft Reserve South

The maintenance team installed new mounting steps at Taft Reserve South for our equestrian trail users. Equestrian Liz Shiplet of Granville generously donated the steps.



Fire Breaks

In preparation for the prescribed burn held in April, the maintenance team cut in firebreaks at the Newell Recreation Preserve to create separate burn units. One of the most essential elements of a properly conducted prescribed burn, firebreaks are constructed by removing vegetation and exposing the ground. This keeps the fire from creeping across the firebreak and escaping from the burn unit.



Safety Fence Installation at Mirror Lake Dock

At Mirror Lake in Infirmiry Mound Park, Legend Lawn and Landscape was contracted to install a safety fence alongside the new ADA ramp to the fishing/kayak launch dock.



Fish Habitat Structures Added to Mirror Lake

In June, high school students of the Granville High School Fishing Club (GHSFC) constructed and installed fish habitat structures in Mirror Lake. These structures become a critical component of the lake's ecosystem, providing essential habitats for fish to feed and breed, and for young fish to hide from predators. The Park District enjoys a rewarding partnership with GHSFC, resulting in projects such as the habitat structures, assistance with youth fishing events, consultation, and planning for numerous improvements to enhance Mirror Lake as a fishing destination for the community.



Rainbow Trout Release with ODNR

In partnership with ODNR Division of Wildlife, Infirmiry Mound's Mirror Lake received a Rainbow Trout release for the first time! A Youth Fishing Day event, held with assistance from the Granville High School Fishing Club, gave young anglers first access to the newly released fish. With approximately 300 attending the three-hour event, nearly 200 youth were actively fishing.



Parking Lot Improvements

Parking lots at Riverview Reserve and Taft South received much-needed attention during the summer of 2023. Xtreme Sealcoating & Asphalt was contracted for both projects. Both parking lots received crack-filling, sealcoating, and re-striping for a total cost of \$10,606.81.



Commemorative Plaque Installed: Newell

A commemorative plaque was installed by Grand Monuments at the Newell Recreation Preserve, honoring the Newell family and providing a history of the property.



New Restroom Installed at Disc Golf Course

In April, Norwalk Concrete installed a new vault restroom at Lobdell Reserve Disc Golf Course in Alexandria. The course sees hundreds of players yearly, and the new restroom has been a much-appreciated addition. The total cost of site preparation and the new restroom was \$35,845.





Paved Multi-Use Trail Maintenance

We aim to have unobstructed, safe multi-use trails for all to enjoy. The maintenance team regularly works on the removal of berm material that collects on the outer edges of the trail, the removal of visually obstructing vegetation growing around trail signage and intersections, and all trip hazards and debris that has fallen on the trail surface, from branches, trees, and rocks, to litter. Other maintenance tasks include removing roots, filling wildlife burrows, repairing sinkholes and large cracks that have damaged the surface, and repairing and replacing signage. After every storm with high winds and heavy rain, maintenance crews drive each of our paved bike trails to clear trees and blow debris from the trail.



BEFORE



AFTER



Trail Improvement Projects

The Park District is developing standards and best practices to enhance the overall sustainability of our natural surface trail system and reduce the deferred trail maintenance backlog. These standards will be consistent with the USDA Forest Service's framework for sustainable recreation trails.

Our trail improvement efforts targeted trail segments needing culvert repairs and areas that were heavily eroded, muddy, and holding water. With newly installed trenches, swales, and turnpike elevation designs, these trails now shed water and withstand heavy multi-use traffic. Native seeds are planted to reduce erosion and sediment in the swales and trenches. One trail received a footbridge, while some trails were completely rerouted.



BEFORE



AFTER



Coming in 2024

Rent Fun Kayaks/SUPs

The Licking Park District signed a contract with [Rent.Fun](#), a company that offers an app-driven self-service kayak/SUP rental program with no lines, paper forms, or reservations (first come - first served). The program will run seven days a week, from sunup to sundown. A solar-powered smart locker will house six kayaks and two standup paddleboards. Inside each locker is a kayak or SUP, lifejackets, and paddles. The app also offers a tutorial with water safety instructions for beginners. Prior to check-out, the user must digitally sign an electronic waiver. After use, the user returns the gear to the locker, takes a photo, and then uploads the image to the app. The vendor then charges the rental amount.

Users will be charged \$25 for a minimum 2-hour rental. The lockers will be housed next to Mirror Lake at Infirmiry Mound Park, but users can also take watercraft to a local river, lake, or pond for use. The service is expected to begin in mid/late May 2024.

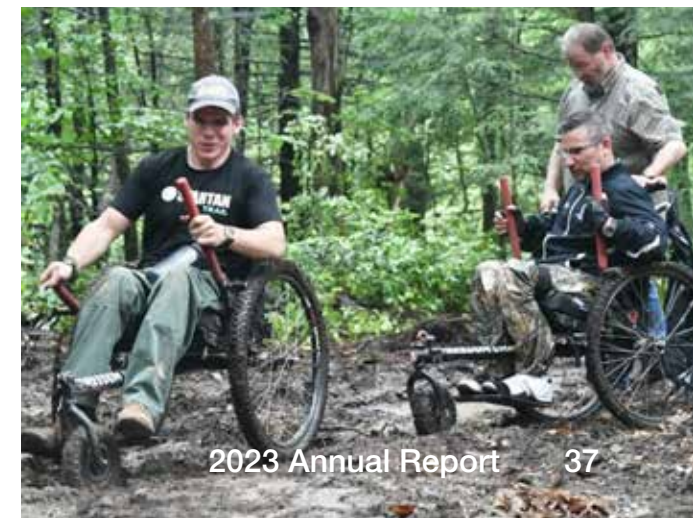


Grit Freedom Wheelchair

The team at the Licking Park District recently learned of a wheelchair that can tackle obstacles such as dirt trails, tree roots, rocks, and uneven terrain. The GRIT Freedom Chair is an all-terrain wheelchair equipped with levers that make propelling it easier, so people can get the leverage they need to conquer obstacles. The chair has push bars so a friend or loved one can provide an extra push when necessary. The chair has a rugged three-wheeled frame, which keeps the user stable and in control. Equipped with mountain bike tires, it can easily handle rough terrain. If you have a few free moments, we encourage you to visit [GoGrit.us](#) to learn more about the GRIT Freedom Chair. Be sure to check out the videos and testimonials.

The all-terrain wheelchairs will be housed at Infirmiry Mound Park. The Park District is purchasing two units at a total cost of \$9,446. These units should be available for public use in Spring 2024.

The Park District is seeking to partner with local philanthropic individuals, organizations, and businesses to fund expansion of the all-terrain wheelchair program from the initial two units to a fleet.





Community Support

The residents of Licking County again supported the Licking Park District by passing a five-year replacement levy in November 2021, and 2023 was the first year of funding from this replacement levy.

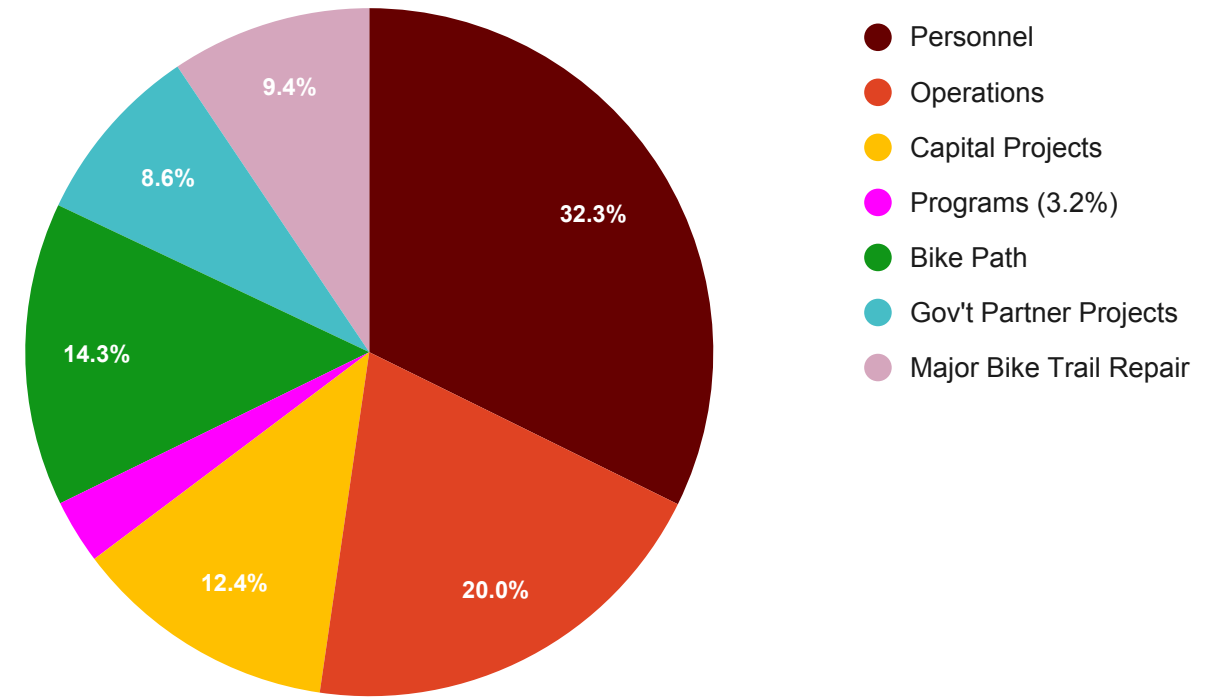
Two new funds were created this year. The first new fund is the Major Bike Trail Repair fund, which is partially funded by the Licking County Commissioners. This fund is intended to be used for major bike trail repairs, including bank stabilization, bridge replacements, or asphalt repairs and paving.

The second fund created was the Government Partner Projects fund, which is fully funded by the Licking Park District. These funds are available to municipalities in Licking County to be used on parks and recreation-related projects, which the Board of Park Commissioners preapprove.

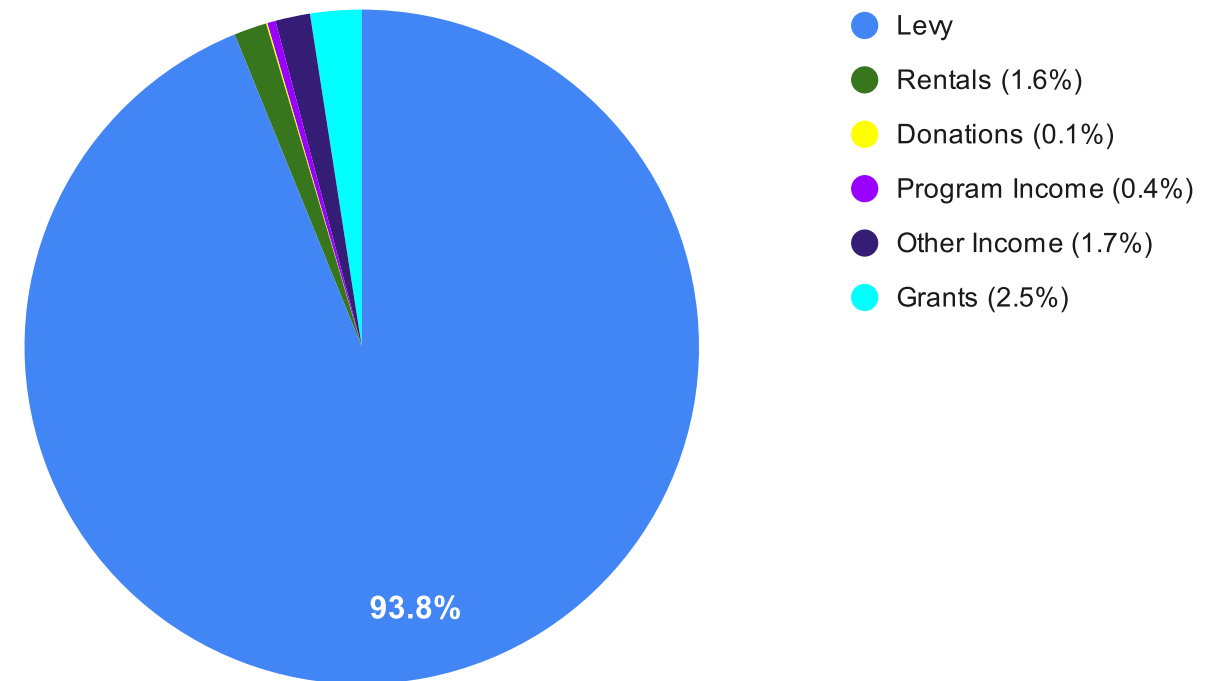
We are thankful for the community's continued support and look forward to continuing our mission and extending our reach into Licking County communities.



2023 General Fund Expenses \$1,752,514.91



2023 General Fund Revenue \$2,255,022.19





The Licking Park District Extends Our Appreciation to Richard E. Moseley, Jr. for His Many Years of Service

Dick Moseley was appointed to the Board of Park Commissioners of the Licking Park District on January 1, 2015, and served through December 31, 2023. His expertise and guidance in the area of natural resource management have been a great benefit to the district. During his tenure as a board member, the park district has seen the passing of two park district levies and the ability to expand its facilities and staff, grow its offerings of programs, park and trail accessibility, and make advances in the district's land management goals.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Moseley served as the first Chief of the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and managed the program for 20 years. The Natural Areas Act of 1970 allowed the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to purchase and administer state nature preserves and protect natural areas through dedication, in both public and private ownership. On May 20, 1970, ODNR Director Fred E. Morr handpicked Richard E. Moseley Jr. to assemble this new program.

Under his leadership, the division acquired and dedicated 103 nature preserves, and the Ohio Natural Areas Program was nationally recognized as one of the outstanding natural areas programs in the country. In 1990, Mr. Moseley became Deputy Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. He retired from the department on November 30, 1993, and moved to Colorado, where he volunteered for the U.S. Forest Service in the San Juan National Forest for 15 years before returning to Ohio. Mr. Moseley is a member of the Ohio Conservation Hall of Fame.

In August of 1990, ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (DNAP), published an excellent publication entitled Ohio Wildflowers, with the tagline "Let Them Live in Your Eye, Not Die in Your Hand," which was authored by Mr. Moseley. Though long out of print, it is still remembered and requested.

In 2012, Mr. Moseley, Guy Denny, and Bob McCance decided that they would try to form a "friend's group" to help the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves manage the state's preserves. Thus, the process of creating the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association (ONAPA) began, which helps ODNR properly manage these unique areas around the state.

From this humble beginning, ONAPA has grown now into a vigorous statewide organization with over a thousand members and an active program of stewardship of Ohio's State Nature Preserves, as well as sites managed by other organizations that have sought their help and expertise in managing their natural areas.

The Licking Park District Board of Park Commissioners and staff will always be appreciative and mindful of his leadership, knowledge, friendship, guidance, passion, and dedication to the preservation of our state's natural resources.





Governance

The Licking Park District was formed under ORC 1545 and is governed by a five-person Board of Park Commissioners. The Board meets the third Wednesday of every month at Infirmity Mound Park, and the public is invited to attend.

- Jim Kiracofe, Chair
- Adam Jenkins, Vice Chair
- Richard Moseley
- Sam White
- Ashley Campbell

Staff

The Licking Park District has seven full-time employees and manages 12 sites, over 1,600 acres, 46 miles of paved multi-use trails, and 30+ miles of natural surface trails. We provide year-round programs and special events.

- Kyle Lund, Director
- Tami McAdams, Operations Administrator
- Kris Lohrman, Fiscal Officer
- Anne Balogh, Program Manager
- Karen Jennings, Trail and Volunteer Program Manager
- Mike Evans, Maintenance Specialist II
- Erick Arthurs, Maintenance Specialist I

Thank You

The Staff and Park Board of the Licking Park District would like to thank our committed volunteers and supporters who helped us make these projects and programs available to the community. Your ongoing support allows us to continue enhancing the lives of all of our residents.



Board of Park Commissioners



Jim Kiracofe



Adam Jenkins



Richard Moseley



Sam White



Ashley Campbell

Licking Park District Staff



Kyle Lund



Tami McAdams



Kris Lohrman



Anne Balogh



Karen Jennings



Mike Evans



Erick Arthurs



4309 Lancaster Road, P.O. Box 590 • Granville, OH 43023
740.587.2535 • www.LickingParkDistrict.com