

PORTAGE PARK DISTRICT

Monthly Newsletter



Owlbert's Adventures at Seneca Ponds, photo credit: Joe DeFuria

September 2 | 2021

Greetings!

This past month has been filled with great programming, engaging events and exciting park news. We hope you'll take the time to read through each section to enjoy these triumphs with the Portage Park District!

Park News



Welcome Board Commissioner - Kurt Ruehr

On Thursday, August 26, Kurt Ruehr, executive director of Leadership Portage County was sworn in as a Portage Park District Commissioner. The Board of Commissioners is appointed by the County Probate Court Judge, Judge Patricia J. Smith. The five members of the Board oversee the Executive Director and are responsible for setting policy, developing rules and regulations, and approving the budget. They serve as volunteers for a renewable 3-year term.

Kurt Ruehr has been a supporter of the Portage Parks for many years serving on the Foundation Board, acting as emcee for the Environmental Conservation Awards Dinner, talking about the parks to colleagues, friends, and family and so much more. Kurt shared his thoughts on becoming a park commissioner, "I am honored and excited to begin this next chapter of service to the citizens of Portage County through their parks. My dream is that someday long after I am gone a child will go to the park and run and laugh and discover nature." Welcome to the board, Kurt, the Portage Park District is honored to have you.

Challenge Accepted!

If you were visiting a park on Thursday mornings in Portage Park District this summer, there's a good chance you may have seen a large swarm moving about the parks. It wasn't birds or insects, but they certainly had a buzz about them. Chances are you ran into the **Streetsboro Parks & Recreation Summer Camp!** This year the camp joined the Wild Hikes Challenge in celebration of our 30 year anniversary.



"We wanted to give our campers an opportunity they might not have otherwise taken advantage of. Being outdoors and exploring has numerous benefits - we are always looking for new and exciting activities to add to our summer camp." says, Craig Barger, Recreation Programmer at Streetsboro Parks & Recreation. 30 Campers visited 8 different parks, hiking nearly 20 miles over the course of summer. Two of their favorite parks were Dix Park and Shaw Woods. Barger added, "One of our hopes was for campers to tell their families about the Wild Hikes Challenge and encourage their family members to start exploring the parks." Campers received a medallion for finishing the challenge, and Streetsboro Parks & Recreation Department purchased a walking stick to add more medallions in the years to come.

The Wild Hikes Challenge is a year-round activity - so there is still time for you to complete your challenge! Click here to [learn more](#).



Your Parks, Your Stories!

We are asking our park patrons to share their Portage Parks experiences. We will share these on social media and in upcoming newsletters!

Use our form to share:

- Your favorite memory in the parks
- Tell us how parks help you stay healthy physically or mentally
- Tell us which park is your favorite to visit and why
- Upload your favorite park photo

Submit your park story today!

You can also share your photos on social media using [#myportageparks](#)

Environmental Conservation Awards Benefit

Awardee Open House - a Great Success!

Approximately 170 attendees visited the Morgan Operations Center on August 28 to celebrate the Portage Park District Foundation Board's 2021 Environmental Conservation Awardees, the 30th anniversary of the Portage Park District, and the Kent Environmental Council's 50+ anniversary.

Guests were invited to tour the Operations center, chat with PPD staff members, watch a video of awardees' contributions to the environment, and a [Portage Parks update video](#). They enjoyed a gourmet boxed meal while listening to the music of Jay and Greg Byrne. The event served as a fundraiser for the Portage Park District Foundation to benefit of the Portage Park District.



Thank you to all who attended! Links to videos below:

Awardee Videos

- Lifetime Achievement Award: [Allan Orashan](#)
- Environmental Activism: [Rhonda Boyd/Chimney Swifts Project](#)
- Environmental Activism: [Lorraine McCarty](#)
- Environmental Education: [John Lang](#)
- Green Business: [Emily's Soaps](#)
- Stewardship: [Al Barber](#)
- Stewardship: [Ken Christensen](#)
- Kent Environmental Council Edith Chase Award for Conservation: [Doria Daniels](#)
- Honor Roll for Land Conservation: [Carlisle Family](#) (Jane Hill, Stan Carlisle and Gale Lane on behalf of Gary Miller)

Environmental Conservation Awards [full video](#).

Portage Park District 2021 Update Video - [click here](#).

Upcoming Programs



photo credit: Ian Marshall

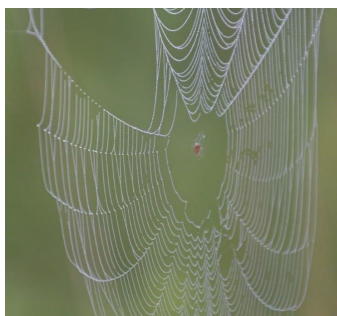
Sunset Photography

Park volunteer and photographer Denny Reiser will share his insight and experience with photographing sunsets. Trail Lake Park is a great location to view and practice capturing that beautiful sunset glow. Bring your camera and learn how to adjust the settings for the best result. Sunset watchers are also welcome to join us! [Register to attend.](#)

Our education programs require registration - this helps us keep an optimal staff to participant ratio. Please register for programs you would like to attend! Join us for virtual and in person programs and learn about the natural world around us.

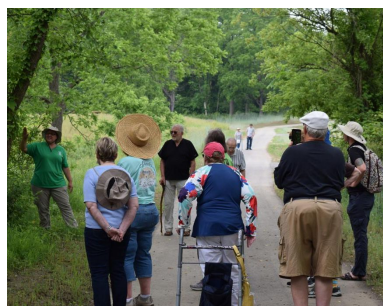
Don't miss out on these awesome programs - see the full calendar - Visit our [Things to Do page](#) to register today!

You can also visit our [YouTube channel](#) to view past programs you missed or want to hear again.



Web Wonders -

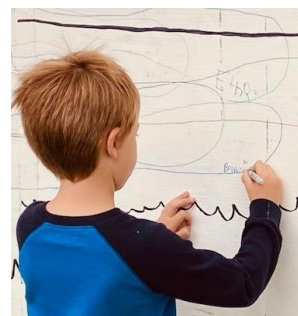
Have you ever marveled at the intricate spider webs in your yard? This is a great time of year to learn about and explore the spiders that inhabit our natural areas. We will be hiking a new meadow trail at Dix Park, looking for spider webs, and learning about the valuable creatures that weave them! All ages are welcome. Photo: Ken Christensen
[Register here.](#)



Senior Hikes -

In partnership with the Portage Senior Center, we are excited to offer a series of guided hikes for seniors - all ages and abilities are welcome!

Turtle Hikes will be slow-paced on accessible trails. Rabbit Hikes will be faster-paced and longer distanced (still under a mile). Park staff or volunteers will share information about natural treasures we see along the trail. Join us for some fresh air and fellowship!
[Register here.](#)



Owlbert's Adventures -

Explore the colors of fall with us as we observe the changes a new season brings. We will get curious about the changing colors of the leaves and what animals are doing to prepare for winter. Aimed at ages 3-6, this program will feature a short hike on an ADA accessible trail.

[Register here.](#)

Portage Park District Foundation News

Hoot Scoot Virtual Race

Complete 5k or 10k between Oct. 1-15

Runners and walkers, grab your best shoes and head out onto the trails.

How it works:

- **Register**
- On September 30, 2021, we will send you an email with your race bib, virtual medal, and directions to submit your results.
- You will have from 12:05 am on Friday, October 1 through 11:55 pm EST on Friday, October 15, 2021, to complete your 5K or 10K.
- Submit your time.
- After the race has wrapped up, look for your hard-earned finisher socks and collectible race medal in the mail.
- Be sure to post pictures of your journey using #hootscoot and tag us!!!



Wild Hikes Challenge

To participate, download your **Wild Hikes form**, complete 30 hikes or 30 miles before December 31st to earn a hiking staff and/or a 2021 Wild Hikes medallion.

Dogs can earn a green Wild Hiker bandana for the 2021 challenge!

Need more information? View this [short video](#).



Yappy Hours at North Water Brewing

Join the Portage Park District Foundation at North Water Brewing on August 17 to support our parks. \$1 per beer sold will be donated to the foundation.

Leashed pets are welcome to join their humans on the patio!

Visit our website

