

PORTAGE PARK DISTRICT

Monthly Newsletter



Io Moth & Luna Moth - Eagle Creek Greenway Preserve

May 2, 2024

Happy May from your Portage Parks!

We are thrilled to welcome our new staff members - you'll meet them in this issue and may see them on the trails! People are the heart of the park and we work together to conserve our natural resources and improve your park experience.

This has been an unusual spring ephemeral wildflower season, with many flowers blooming ahead of their usual time. Watch our [Spring Bloom Report](#) through May and share your park wildflower sightings with us!

The [Spring Program Guide](#) is available online and posted in our park kiosks. [Register](#) to join us for May guided hikes, educational programs, and virtual webinars! Please note that our [Three Feet of Nature Discovery](#) at Shaw Woods has moved to Wednesday, May 8.

Meet Our New Park Staff

Nick Moskos

Planning & Development Manager

Thank YOU for your support of the parks, caring about the planet and its inhabitants, and the opportunity to allow

me to serve. I am a graduate of The Ohio State University, a licensed Landscape Architect and LEED Accredited Professional with over 30 years of experience. My wife, Sujata, and our 7 kids, are huge fans of the outdoors. I am an avid skier, backpacker, and runner. I enjoy a daily meditation practice, traveling and connecting with friends and family. I have been in awe of the Portage Park District since I first worked on the Franklin Connector Trail design in 2000. It is impressive to see how much can be achieved by a small group of people who are passionate about their work. I hope to carry that great legacy forward, arm in arm with my coworkers and those whom we serve.



Wesley Newbury

Maintenance Worker II

Hello, my name is Wesley Newbury. I'm from Clinton Ohio, and moved to Kent last year. I like to go back packing and play golf in my free time. I'm excited to be a new employee of the Portage County Park maintenance team.

Chris Poling

Natural Areas Steward

Greetings park friends! I am a graduate of Kent State University, having earned both a bachelor's degree in biology in 2020 and my master's in environmental biology in 2024. I am an absolute fanatic about botany and conservation. During my schooling I worked for several land management agencies in northeast Ohio and West Virginia, searching for and protecting rare plant species. I greatly look forward to continuing this work for the Portage Park District, in addition to maintaining and enhancing the park district's many beautiful natural areas. In my free time I enjoy exploring new parks with my dog Lucy, biking, native plant gardening, and reading.



Diane Sperko

Volunteer Coordinator

Hello Park Friends! I'm very happy to be a part of the Portage Park District family. I've been an avid hiker, bird watcher, and park volunteer for over 20 years. I feel fortunate that our county has so many beautiful natural resources available to the public. I've lived in Portage County for many years; love the outdoors, our park systems, and also the rich history of Ohio. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone and getting to know more about our Portage Park District.

Wilder Hritz

Seasonal Natural Areas Specialist

Hello everyone! I am a lifetime resident of Portage County and have been a huge enjoyer of Portage Parks ever since my parents took me hiking at Towner's Woods when I was very little. I interned at Portage Park District in the summer of 2021 and loved my time here so much that I knew I would love to work for Portage Parks if the opportunity ever came to me. I graduated from Kent State University in 2022 with a bachelor's in environmental studies and a minor in geology. I worked at Davey Resource Group as an Environmental Technician in 2023. This position allowed me to hone my skills in stewardship, natural areas restoration, invasive and native plant identification, and much more. In my free time I love backpacking, hiking, and herping. I am so excited to be able to protect and better the natural areas of the parks that I and many others love!



Upcoming Programs

Moth Night & Bee Bonanza!

It's all about the amazing insects this month. Park volunteer and moth expert Joe DeFuria will be sharing his moth knowledge and help identify the moths on May 10. Volunteer



Pollinator Specialist Bob Heath will introduce us to the early season bees at Morgan Park on May 11. Plan to join us for these fan-favorite programs and get an up-close look at the flying creatures that are foundational to our ecosystem. You never know what we will see on the moth sheets or in the bee net. Register today!

Moth Night - Friday, May 10 at 9pm

Spring Bee Bonanza - Saturday, May 11 at 12pm

Try our **self-guided hikes** at Trail Lake Park and Seneca Ponds!

All programs and events can be found on our **Things to Do page**. Make sure you check out all the great ways to engage with nature!

Our education programs require registration - this helps us keep an optimal staff to participant ratio. Join us to learn about the natural world around us.

Upcoming Senior Hikes:
Senior Hike - May 2
Senior Hike - May 16
Senior Hike - May 30

Visit our **YouTube channel**



History Hike May 4 @ 9 PM

Come walk and learn about local history from the Portage County Historical Society and Reed Memorial Library along the Portage Hike & Bike Trail.

[Register here](#)



Ride with a Ranger May 6 @ 6 PM

Enjoy a 2.6-mile round trip ride with Ranger Kevin Nietert along the Franklin Connector. This quick trip is great for seniors and families!

[Register here](#)



Mosey for Mushrooms May 14 @ 5:30 PM

Natural Areas Steward Emmet Roberts will lead us through the woods to look for a variety of specimens, sharing interesting facts and identification tips.

[Register here](#)

Portage Park District Foundation

Lifetime Achievement: Virginia Shaw
Environmental Activism: Sandra Engle
Environmental Education: Herbert "Guy" Gillespie
Environmental Stewardship: Russ Fletcher
Green Business: McKay Bricker Framing and Black Squirrel Gifts
Green Business: North Water Brewing
Green Building Development: Wright Family Farms
Kent Environmental Council Edith Chase Award for Conservation: Jeff St. Clair
Volunteer of Distinction: Fred Skok (posthumously)
Volunteer of Distinction: Brad Bolton
Honor Roll for Land Conservation: Ron Echelberry



We celebrated these environmental heroes at the **2024 Environmental Awards Dinner** on Saturday, April 27! Thank you to our attendees, sponsors, donors & volunteers for a wonderful evening!



06.29.2024

BUCHERT PARK
MANTUA, OHIO

Wild Hikes Challenge 2024

The 2024 Wild Hikes Challenge is the **Year of the Eclipse** to honor the historic total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. Portage County was in the path of totality and the next total solar eclipse in Ohio will not happen again until 2099! Download



Park Partners

Family Fun Day with Leadership Portage County

The Portage Park District is excited to partner with Leadership Portage County to host the first LPC Family Fun Day at Trail Lake Park on Sunday, May 19! There will be lots of family friendly activities and community resource tables to visit. [Register](#) today!



Wick Poetry Center
College of Arts and Sciences

FAMILY FUN DAY

SUNDAY MAY 19
1PM TO 4PM

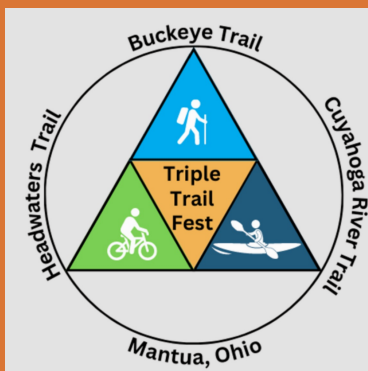
TRAIL LAKE PARK
605 RAVENNA RD
STREETSBORO, OH

FREE FOR ALL
Registration is required by car.

ACTIVITIES:

- Guided Hikes
- Fishing
- Wick Poetry Center
- Activity tables
- Light food options

REGISTER:
LEADERSHIPPORTAGECOUNTY.ORG



Triple Trail Fest - June 1

Visit Mantua on for a day of outdoor adventure and community celebration at the annual **Triple Trail Fest**. Set against the stunning backdrop of the Headwaters Trail, Buckeye Trail, and the picturesque Cuyahoga River Water Trail, this event offers a diverse range of activities for all ages and interests. Come be a part of this memorable day filled with exploration, relaxation, and the joy of being together in the great outdoors.

Park Reminders

- Share your ideas and suggestions for our future park properties and improvements by joining us for a [Virtual Listening Session](#) on May 16.
- Tick season has arrived! Be tick smart and follow these [guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health](#) to keep yourself and your pets safe while enjoying the trails.
- We love dogs in the park! Please obey the park rules and always keep dogs leashed and pick up dog waste.
- Are you getting regular doses of nature? Here's [why it matters](#) for your health!

Visit our website



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