

Cycling in Portage County – May is Bike Month

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I have lived in Portage County for over twenty-five years, moving out to Garrettsville from Cuyahoga County like many have for the peace and beauty of the area. The roads are winding with many beautiful sights and cycling is a great way to slow down and experience this beauty. There are many roads to travel on, and the Portage Park District has several rideable bike trails to connect the various towns and hamlets in the area. This enables one to travel without using fossil fuels that contribute to green-house gas emissions and in turn reduces pollution while also reducing traffic congestion. Cycling a 10 mile round trip, five days a week for a year would save 124 gallons of gasoline.

One of my favorite rides is on the Headwaters Trail from Garrettsville to Mantua where one can view several small waterfalls, historic markers, local flora and fauna, then take in lunch at either end with several local restaurants to choose from. There are other rides as well, such as the Portage Hike and Bike Trail that connects Ravenna, Kent and Kent State University where one can get refreshments at the beginning or end of the trip.

The month of May is known as National Bike Month, established in 1956 and sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists. If you are not already cycling in Portage County, May could be just the time to start. National Bike to Work Week is May 14-18 and Bike to Work Day is May 18. Try biking to work for just a day or perhaps the entire week and encourage others to do the same. What a wonderful opportunity to get out and explore while benefiting your health and the environment.

If you are interested in discovering opportunities beyond cycling for recreation and health in the parks, look for a new program from the Portage Park District launching in May. The program is part of a national initiative, *Park Rx*, which includes hiking and cycling and other activities in the parks that hope to benefit those that participate. The Park Rx initiative is made up of agencies dedicated to using nature and public lands to improve individual and community health. Portage Park District's Park Rx program is open to anyone interested in exploring the Portage Parks while working to improve their overall health and wellness. The goal for Portage Park District's Park Rx program is to encourage our community to get healthy and stay healthy while enjoying Portage Parks. Walk or bike to take care of your heart, rehabilitate after surgery, or simply relax in the beauty and peace of nature in Portage Parks.