

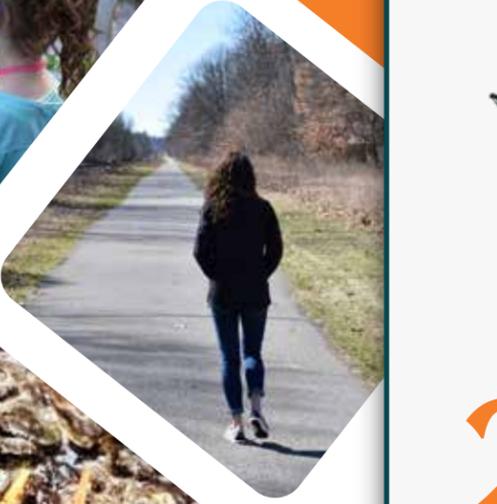
Your Portage Park District For Fun, For Health, For LIFE!

The Portage Park District is an independent political subdivision of the State of Ohio formed in 1991 with its jurisdiction covering all of Portage County. Although it is independent of County government, the Park District utilizes the services of the Portage County Auditor, Treasurer, and Prosecutor. It is governed by an unpaid, three to five-member Board of Park Commissioners appointed by Portage County Probate Judge according to Ohio Revised Code Section 1545.

Portage Park District

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Sign up for our newsletter!

The mission of the Portage Park District is to conserve Portage County's natural heritage and provide opportunities for its appreciation and enjoyment.



**PARK
DISTRICT**

**2018
ANNUAL
REPORT**

THANK YOU



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Parks provide places for people to connect to nature and interact with each other in a shared environment. In 2018, the Park District developed a consistent brand, increased outreach through various media outlets and recruited new volunteers for a variety of needs.

ENGAGEMENT OUTREACH

We work to reach as many of our constituents as possible through various means. In 2018 we connected with the following numbers of individuals:

- 2,488 - Special Events and Community Fairs
- 99 - Educational programming
- 100 - Public Planning
- 43 - Volunteer orientations
- 132 - Speaking engagements



Mascot Owlbert and friends



NEOMED volunteer work day



Jane Preston Rose and Kurt Ruehr



Rangers Shepard and Steele

VOLUNTEERS

Over 65 active volunteers donated 138 hours of their time and talent to the Park District. This equates to \$3,407 in volunteer time donated.

RANGER PATROL

Our rangers are out in the parks hiking and biking to monitor and respond to safety and security issues. In 2018 they logged:

- 572.5 hours of patrol
- 545 Visitor contacts
- 13 warnings issued

Dear Park Friends,
Wow, what a terrific year we've had! Ever mindful of our 2014 levy campaign promises, we maintained and improved our existing parks, expanded our trails system and conserved more park land -- leveraging those levy dollars with private donations, grants and volunteer contributions along the way.

The eight miles of Headwaters Trail between Garrettsville and Mantua received a much-welcomed upgrade to make it more safe, comfortable and accessible for all to enjoy. We added permanent restrooms to four parks, added an accessible walking trail to Morgan Park. We invited the public to participate in park site planning for our new 130-acre Trail Lake Park in Streetsboro and our 215-acre acquisition next to Kent Cooperrider Bog State Nature Preserve in Brimfield. With the 40-acre addition to Morgan Park, we're setting the stage for the future of Portage Parks as we create an Operations Center near the center of the county with easy road access and buildings for maintenance and stewardship field offices and workshops. And creative public engagement efforts are expanding our network of partners, supporters and park users that are learning about and connecting with our beautiful and diverse natural areas.

Portage Park District is especially fortunate to have such talented, dedicated and caring park staff, park commissioners and Portage Park District Foundation trustees and volunteers who are essential to the success of your parks. We're in it to protect our natural heritage for the health, well-being and enjoyment of our communities, now, and for generations to come.

Thank you!

Christine Craycoft
Executive Director

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2018

ALL FUNDS

Beginning Cash Balance	\$1,830,304		
REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
Levy (1/2 mill property tax levy)	\$1,718,880	Personnel	\$538,270
Donations	\$3,228	Contract Services	\$136,466
Grants and ODOT allocation	\$231,274	Materials & Supplies	\$79,826
Interest	\$24,885	Land Purchase	\$805,750
Rentals & Royalties	\$10,130	Construction	\$660,133
Fees, Services & Sales	\$1,556	Equipment & Vehicles	\$87,183
Refunds and Insurance Settlements	\$71,980	Property Assessments	\$13,190
TOTAL	\$3,892,247	TOTAL	\$2,320,816
		Ending Cash Balance	\$1,571,431

CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL

Non-native invasive plants are weeds in our natural areas that can out compete our native species and imperil the health of the ecosystem. With the help of volunteers and partners we were able to manage 17 species of invasive plants on 315 acres at 11 park sites, including removing over 1000 pounds of garlic mustard from high quality woodlands.

HABITAT CREATION AND RESTORATION

As part of our conservation mission, we strive to restore native ecosystems where possible. In 2018:

- 2 acres of native meadow was seeded at Morgan Park
- 170 plants comprised of 19 species of flowers and grasses were planted by staff, volunteers and Portage County Master Gardeners to establish a pollinator garden at Morgan Park
- 75 trees and shrubs were planted by staff and volunteers



Pollinator garden at Morgan Park



Pollinator garden



Pollinator garden

KSU CONSERVATION BIOLOGY STUDENTS

Portage Parks is pleased to partner with KSU to provide places for hands-on learning and research that benefits both the students and the parks. Several new research projects were started at the "Kent Bog Expansion" property, including earthworm surveys and design of nature education opportunities. Work also continued studies that began in 2017 for tracking growth of mature forest areas, monitoring invasive plant control effectiveness and evaluation of stream and wetland quality. Research by local academia on park lands is invaluable to our efforts to manage our natural resources.

MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS

Providing safe, clean parks and trails for all to enjoy

HEADWATERS TRAIL

Constructed in phases over 20 years, the Headwaters Trail was resurfaced from end to end with fresh limestone, thanks to financial assistance from a federal Recreational Trails grant. The Park District also acquired a parcel in Garrettsville at the site of the former Erie and Lackawana Railroad depot. The site was developed into a new parking lot and trailhead, with more room for the trail and a safer road crossing.



Headwaters Trail



Headwaters Trail



ADA Trail at Morgan Park



ADA Trail at Morgan Park

MORGAN PARK

The Meadow Trail was redesigned and paved with limestone to provide over .8 miles of ADA accessible trail. A gathering area and pollinator garden were also added for education and enjoyment. Thanks to the Burton D. Morgan Foundation who provided most of the funding for this improvement.

MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS

RESTROOM FACILITIES

We heard you! Handicapped accessible concrete restroom buildings with vault toilets were installed at Headwaters Trail (Route 700 trailhead), Shaw Woods, Dix Park and Morgan Park. These roomy facilities are easy to maintain and virtually odor-free.



Double restroom facility

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS

RED FOX BOAT ACCESS

Scout: Eric Jackson; Troop 4262, Garrettsville
To improve this access to the Upper Cuyahoga State Scenic River, part of the Cuyahoga River Water Trail, Life Scout Eric Jackson cleared debris and non-native undergrowth and prepared an area for a picnic table.



Red Fox picnic area



Red Fox picnic area



Bench on PORTAGE Hike and Bike Trail



Bench on PORTAGE Hike and Bike Trail

THE PORTAGE HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL

Scout: Jacob Kulig; Troop 177, Tallmadge
To provide more opportunities for rest and relaxation along the trail, Life Scout Jacob Kulig built and installed seven new benches along the trail. The benches are approximately every 1/2 mile.

CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

Conserving and restoring our natural areas helps protect water quality and protect native habitats for the health and enjoyment of our communities into the future.



Addition at Morgan Park

NEW PARK ADDITION

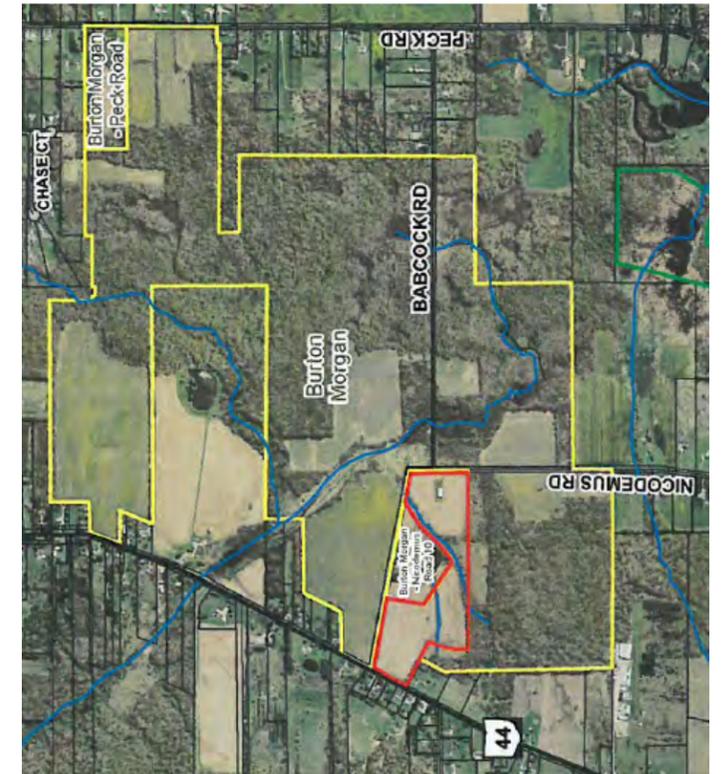
With financial help from a Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Fund grant, the Park District was able to acquire a 40-acre addition to Morgan Park in Shalersville. This parcel is surrounded by over 500 acres of Morgan Park and includes four former agricultural buildings that will be converted into the Park District Operations Center for field staff offices, workshops and educational programs.

MORGAN PARK BIOBLITZ

Members of the Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership for Biodiversity (LEAP), along with other partners, volunteers and staff conducted a "bioblitz" at Morgan Park—a concentrated effort by experts to identify as many species of plants and animals in a short period of time. Over 30 people participated in documenting 282 species of living organisms, with all appreciating the significance of the large expanses of high-quality forest and wetlands with diverse ecological communities.



Bioblitz at Morgan Park



SPECIES TYPE	SPECIES COUNT
Woody Plants	31
Herbaceous Plants	61
Ferns, Allies and Bryophytes	23
Fungi including Lichens	92
Animals	75