

# PORTAGE PARK DISTRICT

## Monthly Newsletter



photo: Ken Christensen

---

April 6 | 2023

Greetings!

Welcome to Spring! We are ready to head into our busy season working on park projects, exploring nature through programming, and seeing all of you in the parks!

This month, don't miss opportunities to hike in a group with Hike Club, Senior Hikes, or programs! Join the Education Team in April, our [Things to Do page](#) is packed full of spring adventures.

---

## In the Parks



## What's next for the Headwaters Trail?!

After years of effort, the Park District is ready to request grant funding for the next phase of the Headwaters Trail in Mantua Township. **Headwaters Trail Phase VIII** is the 1.37-mile section of the former Erie Lackawanna Railroad corridor between Diagonal Road and Chamberlain Road. It will be constructed as a multipurpose trail similar to the existing limestone-surfaced Headwaters Trail between SR 82 in Garrettsville and Mennonite Road in Mantua, with parking at a trailhead on Chamberlain Road. The City of Aurora is also proceeding with grant seeking for their portion of the trail along the same corridor, on a trail easement obtained from First Energy, starting on the west side of Chamberlain Road and extending 2.84 miles to SR 82 in Aurora.

The Headwaters Trail project has been under planning and development for over 25 years and is included in multiple local, State, and National trail plans. Multipurpose trails such as this, provide many health, social and environmental benefits, and are enjoyed by thousands of people every year for healthy recreation, alternative transportation, and as a place for quietly enjoying the beauty of nature.

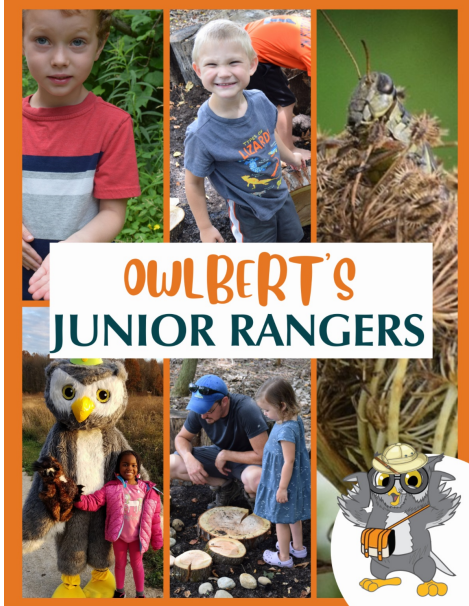
Portage Park District will submit a grant application to the Clean Ohio Trails Fund this month requesting the majority of funding, with the total project cost for its section estimated to be approximately \$700,000. The public is encouraged to [submit comments on the project by taking this survey](#), submitted by April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

[Read more about this project and Headwaters Trail history here.](#)

## Coming Soon! Owlbert's Junior Ranger Program

Thanks to the amazing Nancy Smith, we are proud to announce that soon the Portage Park District will be launching a Junior Ranger Program.





## OWLBERT'S JUNIOR RANGERS

The Junior Ranger program is primarily self-guided and intended for ages 5-12 but is fun for any age! Junior Rangers will receive a booklet and then work to complete all 16 activities to earn a wooden Junior Ranger Badge. Once all the activities are complete, Junior Rangers can register for a badge-pinning ceremony with a Portage Park District Ranger.

[Learn more here!](#)

## Spring is here and so is a new story at Dix Park

Special thanks to our partners at **Reed Memorial Library** for providing a new story for spring at Dix Park. Your new story is: *When Spring Comes* by Kevin Henkes.

Plan your next visit to Dix Park and check out the new story, the nature play area, and Bunting Trail.

[Learn more about Dix Park.](#)



## See you on the Trails!



### A heartfelt see ya later

When I came on board with PPD in 2017, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to get to work in a world I loved dearly! I was welcomed by the community and we got to work doing great things and growing quickly. Looking back on the past six years, it's hard to imagine all the work our staff has accomplished together.

Your Portage Parks have grown so much - these are just a few highlights of the last several years: we've opened a new park, added several family-friendly amenities to Dix Park, created a robust volunteer program, established nature programming, and engaged with so many of YOU!

Now I am on to my next adventure. I can firmly say, I will miss Portage Parks and all that comes with working here dearly. My wish for you all is that you continue to help PPD grow. Get out to those programs and events (and bring your friends!) and learn from the greatest team on earth. I hope to see you all on the trails and at programs soon!





I leave you with some words to live by created by Jennifer White and me a few years ago -  
**Show Up. Clean Up. Care and Share.**

**-Andrea**

## Partner News

### Regional Planning is requesting public comment

Portage County Comprehensive Plan final draft is open for public comment through April 6. Visit the regional planning [webpage to download the plan](#) and find information on how to share your input.

## Upcoming Programs



### Owlbert's Adventures: Turtley Awesome!

It's turtle time! Join Owlbert's friends for a turtle story and craft as we learn about these native reptiles together. Many of our turtles will look for mates during spring and lay their eggs as the weather warms. Owlbert's Adventures are designed for children ages 3-6 and their families to participate in, but all ages are always welcome! photo: Jennifer Robinson

[Register here.](#)

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 and learn about the natural world around us.

#### Upcoming Senior Hikes:

[Senior Hike - April 13](#)

[Senior Hike - April 27](#)

Visit our [YouTube channel](#).





### Spring Ephemeral Wildflower Hike -

Join us on a hike down the Headwaters Trail as we look for the first flowers of the year.

This will be a slower paced hike as we will have to look closely at the leaf litter to see who is popping their little heads through.

photo: Fred Skok

[Register here.](#)



### Shout out to Salamanders-

Salamanders may not stand out in the amphibian world next to the noisy frogs and toads, but they are just as interesting. Spend the evening with us from the comfort of your own home as we investigate these subtle creatures.

photo: Robby Delvaux

[Register here.](#)



### Poem in your Pocket Day-

National Poem in Your Pocket Day is an event promoted by the Academy of American Poets that showcases how much poetry matters to us as a culture. You can bring your own poem to share with visitors to the trail or read the poems we will have posted around the Osprey loop.

[Register here.](#)

## Portage Park District Foundation



### Environmental Conservation Awards Dinner - Awardees Announced!

#### 2023 Awardees

**Lifetime Achievement:** Nancy Smith

**Environmental Activism:** Rev. Renee Ruchotzke

**Environmental Education:** Tom Franek

**Environmental Stewardship:** Kristen Pool

**Green Business:** Bibury & Company, Ann Ellis

**Green Business:** Popped, Gwen Rosenberg

**Green Building Development:** The Davey Tree Company: Third Wing Addition

**Kent Environmental Council Edith Chase Award for Conservation:** Beth Buchanan



#### Attend the dinner on April 22, and celebrate with us!

The event includes Reception, Silent Auction, and Raffles, with music from the "Great American Songbook" provided by Jay Byrne. Fundraising proceeds will benefit the Portage Park District Foundation's mission to support Portage Park District in its effort to conserve Portage County's natural heritage.

[Register to attend](#)

# HEADWATERS



## Adventure Race



Learn more about the Headwaters Race and register  
here!



## Wild Hikes Challenge

Our **2023 theme is The Year of the Wood frog!** You'll even find some Wood frog facts on your hiking form this year.

To participate, download your [Wild Hikes form](#), and complete hikes before December 31st to earn a hiking staff and/or a 2023 Wild Hikes medallion. Dogs can earn rewards too!

Our office is open for rewards pick-ups. [Email Eric](#) to schedule a time to get your rewards.

Visit our website

