

Winter days in the park provide the observant wanderer a view of the underpinnings of nature like no other season. Deciduous trees without their leaves strike a distinct dark contrast against new fallen snow. Red and purple berries on barren bushes can be seen. Evergreens provide cover for the creatures that scamper and fly between the branches in search of their next meal or a place to rest. The woods and fields seem to be at rest, but not entirely so, renewal is actively in process.

The Ashland County Park District reflects this same seasonal cycle. Barren of the duties of mowing grass and other spring and summer chores, the members of the park district are planning, scheduling and renewing their passion to continue to reach their goals. They continue to monitor the condition of the walking paths, parking lots, kiosks and work to complete upcoming event details. Many brave the elements, dressed for the weather and strike out on a winter hike with a like-minded buddy.

Dave Howe, a volunteer with Ashland County Park District, will lead a winter hike to Big Lyons Falls at Mohican State Park on Sunday, February 21. Hikers will meet at the dam at 2 p.m. This winter hike is rated as strenuous. The trail will be slippery. Appropriate footwear will be required for safety.

In March, the Park District's Family Nature Club has scheduled the Spring Fling for Saturday, March 20 from 2:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. at the Kroc Center in Ashland. Each participant will receive a passport that can be stamped at the many activity stations offered. Observation walks, animal plaster casts, flower crafting, touch a rock and bird identification tips are among the stations scheduled. The free and open to the public event will hold some of the events outside.

For those who prefer to wait for warmer days, the winter months provide an opportunity to search more of the parks on the web site at www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com to take a stroll into the parks with the click of a keystroke. There are maps, pictures, events, news, contact numbers, helpful links and more. Other users can check out the parks at www.flickr.com/groups/acpd/ for picture sharing and check out the <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ashlandcountyparkdistrict/> when a searcher is looking for general communication or questions and forums.

Friend of the park and committee chairman, Eric Boyer offers, "If people use yahoo groups, they can also search within and the same goes for Facebook. Please contact him by email at treeguy79@yahoo.com for additional information on your web and computer searches, if needed.

The Ashland Park District is pleased to announce Cody Grizzell of New London has achieved Eagle Scout and was awarded during the Eagle Court of Honor held by the Firelands District Troop # 217 on February 8, the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts. Scoutmaster Terry Knudsen, of the Heart of Ohio Council, welcomed those gathered to honor the Huron County resident. The Eagle Scout completed his final project with two foot bridges for walking trails along the southern most part in Crall Woods of the Pine Hill Park of the Ashland County Park District's Pine Hill Park.

"Cody has achieved this honor many days of concerted labor," Knudsen shared. "As a young lad he completed his work as a Cub Scout, learning the skills to achieve independence, self-sufficiency and to demonstrate leadership. As a Scout, he has made the journey to become a mature adult, one level at a time overcoming many challenges. We honor this special guy with this highest level of achievement."

This young man has joined three others, to undertake their projects within the boundaries of Pine Hill. The scouts have planned and built a trail shelter, two sets of walking path bridges and a set of trail markers. It is reported, under the leadership of Scoutmaster Knudsen, yet another young man has stepped up to the task to complete his work with tree identification markers.

If all goes well, the markers may be in place for the April 18 or May 9 Wildflower Walks to be held in Crall Woods of Pine Hill from 2:00-4:00 P.M. led by Sam Weyrick. Another Wildflower Walk will be held

on May 2, but at Sandusky Hollow. A Bird Walk will be held on May 1 at the Cooke Family Wildlife Conservation Center from 9-11 A.M. with Tim Leslie and Louise Fleming leading.

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, March 1 at their new office location, gathering at 6:30 P.M. within the walls of the new county office complex, the former Heartland Home on State Route 60 south of Ashland. A brief program and refreshments will be a part of this meeting.

For additional information on the Ashland County Park District, please check out the web site or contact one of the three Park District Commissioners: Tom Kruse, 419-962-4389; Bob DeSanto, 419-289-1710 or Sam Weyrick at 419-289-0463.