

Public Relations for the Directors of the Ashland County Park District

Joyce L. Ritchie

[joycelritchie@juno.com](mailto:joycelritchie@juno.com)

419-929-2803/419-651-1600

Park District Column for April 18 2009

It was an awesome sight at Cool Springs Park to watch the Wood Ducks fly off the ponds through the rising of the sun on a recent Saturday so reported Tim McMillen, Advisory Committee Chairperson of Cool Springs. "What a great site! So beautiful."

The Ashland County Park District is pleased to continue the work with an all-volunteer force. It takes many hands to accomplish the tasks for the parks, but the fruit of the labor is sweet. Walkers are taking to the paths in all seasons and hunters are excited to have access to the lands through the lottery program put in place. Fishermen are glad to through a line in at Cooke Family Memorial and are content to participate in the small fee to keep the pond well stocked and in good condition.

Some have discovered the beauty of the lodge at Cooke and want to hold a weekend for their family or group by being an Eagle Club member for the donation as has been determined by the ASPD. Considering the price of lodging for eight over a weekend, the memories created and the value of supporting the park district, the price is no object.

The winter winds have passed. The spring flowers and vernal pools are reborn. The trails are back in order and are open for walkers and some

for turkey hunters until noon. Each and every time a visit to the park is on your schedule, please check out the kiosk for the current information of that park for that day. Turkey hunting season will soon be in full swing and some of the parks will have scheduled hunters on the grounds.

The Audubon Wetlands, 161 acres of marsh/swamp/wooded wetlands, is home to an array of common and rare wildlife. This new addition to the park district is located near the I-71 and State Route 250 interchange has a 270-foot boardwalk spanning the burr reed marsh. Advisory Committee Chairman Brian Golias and the committee are pleased to announce they will be hosting the Grand Opening of the park on Saturday, May 16, 2009. The day will begin an early walk at 9:00 a.m. and dedication slated to begin at 10:00 a.m. Additional guided walks are also slated to be following the program. The park will then be open to the public and offer deer hunting in the fall. Watch for additional information on the web and in print as the special day approaches. This will be the 9th park open to the public since the district's inception.

The pinewoods of Freer Field sustained significant wind damage and will be evident to even the most casual viewer. The downed trees have been tended and the path areas cleared and soon the new growth will help cover the scars of time. In keeping with cost awareness, the Advisory Committee is working to seed a southern portion of the park into seasonal grasses and sprinkle it with wildflowers. This will cut the costs of mowing and provide a stretch of beautiful habitat for birds of the area. The district is hoping to secure some additional donations to help cover the initial cost of the planting.

Spring Wildflower Walks are scheduled to be on Sunday, April 19 and Saturday, May 16 from 2-4 p.m. at Crall Woods/Pine Hill Park. Walk Ashland has scheduled participants to meet at 2 p.m. at Byers Woods on April 26, Crall Woods on May 10, Black Fork Bottoms on May 17, Cool Springs on May 24 and Riverwalk on May 31. In June walks will be at the Audubon Wetlands on June 7, the Gilliom-Cherp Nature Park on June 14, Cooke Family Wildlife Area on June 21 and on June 28 they will be at Hazel Willis Woods of the Ashland County Soil and Water Conservation District. Each Sunday of the summer a one-hour walk is scheduled through August 17 with the last one held at the Cooke Family Wildlife Area.

Please be sure to check out the active website for additional information, giving opportunities and driving directions to the parks at [www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com](http://www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com) . Many have found the treasure of memories created with a visit to one of the parks, others have found the satisfaction of volunteering and others the friendship of others who share the goals and mission of the parks. Check out the next meeting of the Friends and Directors on Monday, May 4 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Trinity Lutheran Church at the corner of Maple and Center Streets in Ashland.