

Where do dragonflies, hot air balloons, antique tractors, heritage apples, hiking, hunting, rare plants, unusual trees and history come together? These were only a few of the topics during the most recent Ashland County Park District and Friends of the Park monthly meeting.

The gathering of volunteers, bent on a stated mission - to conserve natural areas of forest, woodland, farm and field for the enjoyment of the people and to promote multiple uses - heard of the successful grand opening of Hopkins Landing, the displays and activities at the Polk Strawberry Festival and of the most recent BalloonFest offerings. Plans were also set for the display and for guides for the tree farm and Byers Woods tour for this weekend's Yesteryear Machinery Show. With a simple show of hands and a sign-up sheet for the three-day event at the Career Center south of town the plans were set.

Park Commissioner Sam Weyrick announced there yet another rare plant has been discovered in one of the ten parks. The threatened 'Robust Smartweed' has been discovered in the Audubon Wetlands Preserve a confirmation of one of the four goals to protect areas of unique natural of historical significance.

In keeping with a portion of a second goal, to organize and promote educational programs, the program committee announced that Saturday, July 17, will be the Dragonfly Festival. Gathering at 10 a.m. in Room 171 of the Ashland University's Schar College of Education will be participants for an instructional time with Mr. Bob Glotzhober, Senior Curator of Natural History for the Ohio Historical Society and Mr. Steve Chordas, Senior Lecturer in Biological Sciences at OSU. The team will share the natural history of dragonflies and damselflies. The group will take the drive to Cool Springs Wildlife Conservation Park to net and identify '*Odonata*'. Each participant will need to bring a bag lunch. The registration fee of \$5.00 may be paid on site the day of the program. Checks should be made out to Friends of the Ashland County Park District.

Park Commissioner Tom Kruse opened the committee reports with the selection of Saturday, August 21 for the date of the Grand Opening for Sauers Farm of Pine Hill Park. Slated to begin at 10:00 a.m., the 136 acre portion in Ruggles Township has grassy meadows, young trees, a memorial woods, farm pond, two barns and an established apple orchard with heritage varieties. The initial program is expected to offer variety of activities for all ages, including an historical interpretive, a video display, children's crafts, walking tours and the planting of a Memorial Tree to honor the late Jim Saurer. Watch for additional updates and information on his much-anticipated addition to the acres opened to the enjoyment of the people.

Click onto www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com for additional information, driving directions, contact numbers and more upcoming events. Volunteer Tim McMillen is preparing the fall hunting lottery for the hunting parks of the district, an opportunity sought out by many in the community for a day in August.

As always, check the kiosks at each opened park for the latest information on that particular park. Dress for the weather and take a friend with you and share the memory together.