

Park Column 11/28/2009

While the beautiful days of fall have ebbed away with the crisp days of winter yet ahead, the many volunteers of the Ashland County Park District will take time on Monday December 7 and celebrate a great year with their annual Holiday Dinner. Friends of the Park District, the Ashland County Park Commissioners and special guests will gather at 6 p.m. in the lower level of the Trinity Lutheran Church bringing a salad or desert to share.

The evening provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievement of the district for the year, to commend special efforts and to support each volunteer. Reports on the matching gift program offered by Keith Bowles through the Ashland Community Foundation will be shared as well as the announcement of the grand prizewinner of the weekend at the Cooke Family Wildlife Conservation Park Lodge or gas card fundraiser.

"This year we opened two parks," Park Commissioner Tom Kruse shared. "This has been a great year and this evening we will reflect and celebrate the work of the year. It is also a time to look to the future as well as we continue to research new opportunities for additional parks and activities at the ten already in the district."

The volunteers will continue in their quest to provide the people of the area special places to visit and enjoy nature in its fine array year round. They realize the value of them being near a majority of the populace takes a set of special people with a variety of gifts and abilities ready to share and willing to do so. The set of volunteers are as varied as the tasks they undertake and each is part of the network that has received commendation from many state officials and visitors of the parks. More volunteers are sought and encouraged to join in the regular monthly meetings held the first Monday of the month, barring a holiday.

Many in the area were able to take advantage of the Fall Hiking and the guided walks, looking into January the public is welcome to participated with the family for a Family Nature Club Winter Drawing. Steve Huber, artist and art teacher, will lead a nature drawing class on Saturday, January 23 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The class will meet at the Dale Roy School and dressed for the weather will start out with an inspiring nature walk through Freer Field. They will then return for refreshments and the drawing class. Children must be accompanied by an adult, be pre-registered before January 20 and include \$5.00 to cover the cost of materials provided per participant. Please mail the materials fee written payable to Friends of the Ashland County Park District along with names, ages, and contact information for each person, to Tim Leslie, Treasurer, Friends of the Ashland County Park District, 1619 State Route 60, Ashland

OH 44805.

At the end of this year are you one of the "few" people interested in a tax-deductible place to put some money and invest in the future? The Park District always puts the donation of stocks, land and money to good use.

Works of service by Boy Scouts working on projects, has been valuable to all involve and in the new year would be a good time to investigate on additional projects that could help achieve awards in their program while adding value to the parks with bridges, resting areas and more.

"This is an awesome a bunch of people we work with and oh, how dedicated we-they are to our cause and mission, also we are quite environmentally concerned, it's the in thing," stated artist and park volunteer Steve Huber. "Yes, we are a bunch of dreamers but how else do dreams come true without putting forth a vision and letting God's people run with it? My New Year's wish is that we had something that is an Indian site for the county. I wish there was someone in the county who knew the old books and maps of the county and find the sights and see if there is any trace of something still there. Well, I'm of the "biggest dreamers" and thankfully with us dreamers there are people that then pick up the ball and keep it moving."

Check out the web site for additional information on the park, maps and contacts at [www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com](http://www.ashlandcountyparksdistrict.com).