



Volunteer News & Views

THOUSANDS OF ACRES AND MILES OF TRAILS. IT ALL BELONGS TO YOU! – JANUARY 2023

Greene County Parks & Trails welcomes the New Year – 2023

Another successful year has passed with GCP&T programming, park upgrades, and new construction taking place in our Greene County Parks! A big thank you to all of our GCP&T Teammates, our Volunteers, and to our Greene County community for working together to get more people in our Parks.

GCP&T Teammates are looking forward to beginning the new year with the calendar of events and programs

completed. Please continue to follow us and participate/volunteer in our GCP&T programming!

One of the new programs planned for this year is to provide programming, events, and activities in our Greene County parks for seniors in our community! Please stay tuned for information about upcoming programs planned for 2023. We look forward to seeing you there!

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FOR NEW VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITIES

GCP&T ACCOMPLISHMENTS – FOURTH QUARTER 2022

Greene County Parks & Trails has been busy this past quarter upgrading and completing new construction at some of our Greene County Parks! We are proud to share the following accomplishments with you:

- **Hobson Freedom Park** – opened a Dog Park; added a new restroom (ribbon cutting planned in the Spring)
- **Caesar Ford Park** – phase one of the campground is approximately 75% completed; a bridge connecting the rear of the Park to the property located off New Jasper Station Road was completed
- **Spring Lakes Park** – new metal siding and roof were installed on the storage pole barn
- **Karohl Park** – a new 30'x50' shelter was erected
- **Russ Nature Reserve** – a new 30'x60' shelter was erected; a new park entrance sign was installed
- **Crooked Creek Sanctuary** – the bridge to the cabin was rebuilt
- **James Ranch Park** – new roof, window sills, and concrete porch were completed; fascia was painted



Shelter at Russ Nature Reserve

- **Ohio to Erie Trail** – brush/tree cutting was completed on both sides of the trail; the trail was re-paved
- **GCP&T Headquarters** – new sign was erected outside the entrance
- In connection with Center Point Energy and their pipeline work at the **Fairground Recreation Center**, we now have a walking path connected to the path at the rear of the Park that runs along the tree line behind the tennis courts to the shelter



Great Job Team GCP&T!

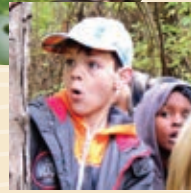


PARKS TOOLKIT: LISTEN UP!

by Jared Merriman, GCP&T Naturalist

In our efforts to provide awesome places and unique experiences for our park guests, we spend a lot of time looking for problems to solve or searching for neat wildlife. Our eyes tell us a lot about what is going on in our parks and help us do our job, but sometimes things are happening in our parks that we can't see. In those situations, we have to use our ears to help fill in the gaps in our knowledge, especially when it comes to land management, leading programs, and event planning. Many of the species we manage our land for are nocturnal or secretive which means we rarely get to watch how they use the land. One of the most impactful examples of this is beavers. Beavers are rarely seen during the day and even though they leave visible signs like slides, chews, and dams, they aren't always active in areas we can easily walk through. So, sometimes we have to listen for water running over their dams. If that dam is in a place that can cause damage to habitat or trail systems, we have to dissuade them from using that location. If we don't keep an ear out for them, and they are allowed to work on that dam for a longer time period, we end up with more work to do when we remove the dam.

Another example of the value of listening to our parks is the use of our ears during programs. When we are leading a



group of kids through the woods, we stand a much better chance of finding frogs, birds, and mammals if we are listening for them as we hike. I've been able to catch frogs along the river after hearing them splash, point out Scarlet Tanagers after hearing their call, and spot a herd of deer after listening to their hooves crunch the leaves. But perhaps the most important role listening can play in leading interpretive programming is by

offering the opportunity for participants to hear the woods, rivers, and creeks for themselves. Hearing a group leader talk about wildlife and wild spaces can be informative, but having a group listen for themselves can be transformative.

Finally, being good listeners in our parks doesn't only mean listening to nature. For our team to be successful, we also have to listen to our guests. Even when we have staff and volunteers spread throughout an event space, there is no way we can see and hear everything going on. Our guests each have a perspective on the relative quality of an event. When they share their experiences with us, both good and bad, it helps us to hone our craft.

So, while you are volunteering in our parks, we invite you to use your ears. Listen for changes in the landscape, listen for amazing wildlife, and listen to the people we serve. With your ears tuned in to our parks we stand a lot better chance of meeting our goals.



INTRODUCING LIGIA HUELSEMAN, NEW GCP&T VOLUNTEER

We would like to introduce Ligia Huelseman who is one of our newer GCP&T Volunteers!

Ligia was born in Romania and moved to the United States in 2011

to be near her parents and siblings. Ligia studied theatre (stage directing) in Bucharest, Romania; and, business administration at Sinclair Community College.

Ligia worked in retail for eleven years and is currently a realtor with Howard Hanna Real Estate Services. Ligia has been married to her husband, Nathan, for the past five years and they adopted two fur babies – cats – named Cheese and Fireball!

Ligia loves to travel, especially cruising with her husband, Nathan, and exploring all of the islands around the U.S. So far, they have been on seven cruises and have another cruise planned for the end of January 2023. In addition, they are avid Cincinnati Bengals fans and season ticket holders, and they are hoping to go to Arizona this year WHEN the Bengals make it to the Super Bowl again!!

Ligia states that she has always loved to volunteer her time. In the past, she has volunteered for the American Cancer Society, Relay for Life, Crayons to Classrooms. She currently volunteers with Walk MS as she states that she is affected by the disease and it "means a lot" to her "to raise awareness about getting diagnosed early".

Ligia loves spending time with her family, especially her Mom as they go on walks every morning when the weather permits. Ligia is also an avid reader of books and is currently reading *The Happiness Project* by Gretchen Reuben to prepare a vision board for the New Year (2023)!

Welcome to our GCP&T Family of Volunteers, Ligia! You are doing a super job volunteering your time with GCP&T!

Welcome, Hunter!

My name is Hunter McIver. I am from Yellow Springs, Ohio. I am currently 18 years old and am a senior at the Greene County Career Center studying Digital Design.

I enjoy to hunt, fish, trap, hike, and camp. I am also a proud member of the Archaeological Society of Ohio. I am fascinated with the American Frontier life and love to learn as well as teach about early traditions/ways of the past.

In addition, I like to attend Black Powder Rendezvous where I have the opportunity to connect with our old traditional ways and surround myself with lessons about history. There is always more to learn about the world around us, especially what lies beneath our own backyards.

My favorite hobby is to hunt for arrowheads in plowed cornfields with my buddy, Azel! There is nothing more relaxing than hiking endless cornfields with just yourself or with a friend, all while searching for relics of the past.



I hope to carry on this way of life with my own children in the future, as well as new generations to come. I believe that it is crucial to remember, and to appreciate our past, to fully appreciate our present.

I am happy to volunteer with Greene County Parks & Trails. They have

really welcomed me to the Team and have shown me some of the ends and outs of what they do to prepare for the awesome events that they hold. I hope to continue to help in any way(s) that I can!



Clockwise from above: Pumpkin Glow, volunteers preparing for Park Lights, Park Lights at Caesar Ford Park, Santa's Workshop participants, Santa and Mrs. Claus, Wiggle Worms' Magical Mythicals program, Ohio Owls Naturalist Program.



GCP&T Volunteer Opportunities

January through April 2023

To sign up to VOLUNTEER for any of these events, please contact Amy at 937-562-6442

01/31	Discovery Hike	Narrows – Canoe Launch	9:15-11:45am
02/11	Bluebird Box Building	GCP&T Headquarters	12:30-3:15pm
03/03	The Great Pancake Pick-Up	GCP&T Headquarters	8:00-11:30am
03/07	Discovery Hike	Narrows – Canoe Launch	10:15-11:45am
03/08	Discovery Hike	Narrows – Canoe Launch	9:45am-12:15pm
03/24	Fowl Play 2	Caesar Ford Park	4:30-10:00pm
03/25	Fowl Play 2	Caesar Ford Park	4:30-10:00pm
04/04	Discovery Hike	Narrows – Canoe Launch	9:15-11:45am
04/06	Examining Ecosystems	Pearl's Fen	9:15-11:45am
04/06	Examining Ecosystems	Pearl's Fen	11:45am-2:45pm
04/07	Extreme Egg Hunt	Caesar Ford Park	Egg Hiders: 3:00pm Prize Room: 6:30pm
04/17	Cold-Blooded Critters	Russ Nature Reserve	10:00am-12:45pm
04/20	Wiggle Worms Earth Day	Russ Nature Reserve	5:30-8:00pm
04/25	HSD: Amphibians	Russ Nature Reserve	9:30am-12:15pm
04/29	Twist, Tie, & Dye	Parks Headquarters	12:30-3:30pm



PLEASE NOTE: Egg Hunt stuffers needed!
March 1 through March 31, 2023

8000 eggs need candy and tickets stuffed inside them.
 This can be done at the GCP&T Headquarters!

GCParksTrails.com/volunteer • 937-562-6442
 635 Dayton-Xenia Rd., Xenia, OH 45385

