

# PARK DISTRICT OF OTTAWA COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 2024



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# LEADERSHIP

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## **Board of Park Commissioners:**

Michael Shadoan, Chairperson

Judy Indorf, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary Assistant

Trish McCartney, 2nd Vice-Chairperson

Jack Madison, Compliance Officer

Elizabeth (Betsy) Slotnick, Board Member

## **Executive Director-Secretary:**

Jannah Wilson

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Park District of Ottawa County is to connect, enhance and protect the natural, scenic, environmental and cultural resources of Ottawa County for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.



*Jannah Wilson, Executive Director*

## **BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**



*Michael Shadoan, Chairperson*



*Judy Indorf, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary Assistant*



*Trish McCartney, 2nd Vice-Chairperson*



*Jack Madison, Compliance Officer*



*Elizabeth (Betsy) Slotnick, Board Member*

# 2024 PARKS AND TRAILS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

## 2022 projects completed:

- Put-in-Bay Township Park District Massie Cliffside Driveway \$20,000.00
- Port Clinton Portage Park Playground \$15,000.00
- Danbury Township Meadowbrook Marsh Improvements \$15,000.00
- Catawba Township Cedar Meadow Trail Improvements \$20,000.00
- Ottawa County Fairgrounds Kayak Launch \$8,665.87

## 2023 projects completed:

- Genoa Veterans Park/NCIT Restroom (2022 and 2023 grant cycle) \$172,295.00
- Genoa Veterans Park Storywalk \$5,082.30
- Oak Harbor Library Storywalk at Fox Unit \$6,026.00
- Clay Center Playground Updates \$7,000.00
- Village of Marblehead Outdoor Musical Instruments \$6,604.00
- Put-in-Bay Township Park District Duff Homestead Acquisition \$50,000.00
- Danbury Township Meadowbrook Marsh Improvements \$16,975.00

## 2024 projects completed:

- Clay Center Mower \$7,900.00
- Put-in-Bay Township Park District Duff Homestead Improvements \$44,336.50
- Danbury Township Meadowbrook Marsh Improvements \$19,985.00
- Village of Genoa Pickleball Courts \$40,000.00
- Ottawa County Fairgrounds Picnic Shelter \$23,318.45



Put-in-Bay Township Park District Duff Homestead Improvements



Village of Clay Center Mower

## 2022/2023/2024 projects slated for completion:

- Oak Harbor Riverwalk (slated for completion in 2027) \$141,000.00
- Oak Harbor Friendship Park (slated for completion in 2025) \$50,000.00

**Total Grant Funds Distributed**  
**2022-2024: \$478,188.12**

## **DID YOU KNOW...**



The opening of the Village of Genoa publicly-owned pickleball courts inspired nearly 30 Genoa high school students to start a Pickleball Club with the intent of forming a varsity team.



# GRANT AWARDS TO PARK DISTRICT AND OTHER AWARDS

- **North Coast Inland Trail ODOT TAP Grant** - \$1,119,000.00 (funding will be distributed for construction in 2026/2027)
- **Clean Ohio Funding for Islander Woods Addition** - \$648,929.00 (funding will be distributed in 2025)

**Total Grant Funds Awarded to the Park District 2022-2024:**  
**\$2,080,273.00**

## 2022:

OPRA Foundation Grant for Bike Safety Camp: \$2,500.00

## 2023:

- Destination Development Grant for Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study: \$6,459.00
- OSS Solid Waste District Competitive Grant for Genoa Restroom Sign: \$885.00
- Clean Ohio Funding for Islander Woods: \$302,500.00

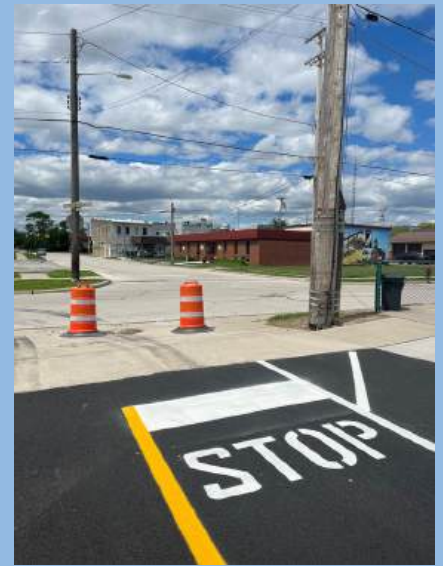
**2024 OCIC Economic Development Partner of the Year**  
**2024 Genoa Chamber of Commerce Community Service Project of Year Award.**



The Park District of Ottawa County was the recipient of the 2024 Economic Development Partner Award from the Ottawa County Improvement Corporation.



In November 2024, the Genoa Chamber of Commerce recognized the Park District with the Community Service Project of the Year Award.



ODOT funding will extend the North Coast Inland Trail (NCIT) from its existing terminus at Washington Street in the Village of Genoa, over Packer Creek, finishing to Ninth Street.



Public Open House Event for the Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study

## DID YOU KNOW...



Every October, members of Girl Scout Troop 1125 carve more than 60 pumpkins for the Park District's annual Sunset Pumpkin Walk event.

# PARK DISTRICT PROJECTS

## North Coast Inland Trail

- Contracted Kleinfelder to complete engineering for Martin Willison Rd separate multi-use path. Project to be completed in 2025 in tandem with the County road improvements.
- The Village of Genoa ODNR Recreational Trails Grant was utilized to complete the NCIT extension through Veteran's Park. The Park District provided the cost share funds on the project. A ribbon cutting for the trail extension was held on May 30, 2024.



*The North Coast Inland Trail extension through Veterans Memorial Park is a win for northwest Ohio bicycling enthusiasts and users of the Trail.*

## Portage River Water Trail

- Water Trail Workshop with all partner agencies facilitated in March 2024
- Signage - ongoing project to have signage re-fabricated so it can be properly installed
- Social media campaign and website updates
- New picnic shelter at Ottawa County Fairgrounds kayak launch



*Harry Witty Memorial Park, Portage River Water Trail, Village of Elmore*

## Catawba Islander Trail and Greenway

The Catawba Park Areas Master Plan developed a conceptual plan for the trailhead area and first segment of Phase One through the Islander Woods and Trailhead.



*Development of Islander Woods is underway. The site will open to the public by Fall 2025.*

### DID YOU KNOW...



*The Portage River Water Trail traverses through three counties and flows northeast for 36 scenic miles.*

# PARK DISTRICT PROJECTS

## West Harbor Property

- On December 21, 2023, the Black Swamp Conservancy donated a 12-acre parcel in Catawba Island Township to the Park District.
- The donation of land has provided the Park District with its first area of park land for future habitat restoration and development for passive recreational activities.



*West Harbor Preserve  
Catawba Island Township*

## Park District Strategic Plan

- Environmental Design Group was contracted to complete a Strategic Plan for the Park District. The Strategic Plan included a public survey, public open house, stakeholder meeting, financial review and planning, establishment of goals, updating mission and vision, and marketing plan.
- The Strategic Plan will be completed by March 2025.



*Public survey results,  
Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study*

## Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study

- The Feasibility Study kicked off in Fall of 2023 and is anticipated to be approved in February 2025.
- The Feasibility Study will include a robust implementation plan for prioritized active transportation routes throughout the Marblehead Peninsula.
- Throughout 2024 two public open houses were held at the Shores & Islands Ohio Visitor Center, two public surveys were conducted, several special interest group meetings were held, and the steering committee met several times to discuss plans.



## DID YOU KNOW...

The Friends of Ottawa County Parks meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Park District office in Port Clinton.



Their 2024 holiday donation campaign benefitting Islander Woods & Trailhead has garnered more than \$6,000.00 thus far.



# PARK DISTRICT PROJECTS

## Port Clinton Recreational Amenities Plan

- Completed and approved October 2024
- The Plan includes an active transportation chapter in order to preliminarily lay out plans for future trail connecting routes through the City and to connect parks within the City.

## Oak Harbor Parks and Recreation Plan

- The Park Board approved cost share funding to assist the Village of Oak Harbor with a Parks and Recreation Plan.
- The Park District is actively participating in steering committee meetings for the Plan.

## Park District Operations

- Rules and Regulations completed, and board approved
- Policy development
- Signage installation - Islander Woods, West Harbor Preserve, and North Coast Inland Trail



The Park District has a vendor booth at numerous community events throughout the year.



The Park District has hosted several open house events at The Arts Garage in Port Clinton, home to talented working artists.

## DID YOU KNOW...



The Park District's annual Outdoor Hiking Challenge program is a successful partnership between several entities including The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the communities that comprise Ottawa County.



# 2024 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- Hot Cocoa Walk, North Coast Inland Trail, Elmore (55 participants)
- A Tweet Treat Program with Ida Rupp Public Library (25 participants)
- Bike Fix-It Workshop (20 participants)
- Total Solar Eclipse Backyard Viewing Kits (105 participants)
- A Sweet Ride (12 participants)
- Bike Safety Camp at Hopfinger Zimmerman Memorial Park (35 students)
- Outdoor Hiking Challenge (117 participants)



*A Tweet Treat Program, Ida Rupp Public Library*



**Guided Walks:** Waterworks Park 9/4/24 (8), Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Marinewood Unit 9/7/24 (10), Birding Series with Danbury Township Trustee Dianne Rozak at Meadowbrook Marsh 9/8/24 (2), 10/14/24 (4), 10/19/24 (5), 11/9/24 (7), Restricted Access Area of Lakeside Daisy SNP 9/13/24 (42), Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Fox Unit 9/21/24 (23), Turkey Burner Walk at Veterans Memorial Park 11/27/24 (9)

**Guided Walks TOTAL: 110 participants**



*Sunset Pumpkin Walk, Meadowbrook Marsh*

- Sunset Pumpkin Walk (250 participants)
- CIC Boat Show, Catawba Island Township
- Portage River Festival, Village of Elmore
- Marblehead Perch Festival, Village of Marblehead
- Apple Festival, Village of Oak Harbor



*Bike Fix-It Workshop at Shores & Islands Ohio Welcome Center West*

## DID YOU KNOW...



*In March of 2025, the Park District will introduce a new Volunteer Program with various opportunities available.*

# PARK DISTRICT MARKETING INITIATIVES

- E-Newsletters (Delivered 5,292 emails with a 59% open rate)
- Facebook (1.8K followers)
- Press Releases (Featured 20 times in local newspapers in 2024)
- Website Updates [www.ottawacountyparksoh.org](http://www.ottawacountyparksoh.org)
- Logo-printed items for distribution at events

**Friends of Ottawa County Parks, a nonprofit organization (501(c)(3)) that supports the Park District through financial contributions and volunteer efforts.**

- Financial Policy
- Regular Meetings
- Assisted with Park District events
- Recipient of Ottawa County Community Foundation Bike Safety Camp Award
- Apricot Festival event
- Holiday season mailing

**Other:**

- Assistance with the Put-in-Bay Township Park District Duff Homestead Phase 3 Acquisition



In July 2024, our *Sweet Ride* event featured a scenic bicycle ride on the North Coast Inland Trail in the Village of Elmore, informative talks with park and conservation leaders, and a complimentary ice cream cone.





# 2024 GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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- Facilitate Parks and Trails Improvement Grant Program.
- Purchase property, gain funding, construct, and improve the North Coast Inland Trail through Ottawa County.
- Develop and improve the Portage River Water Trail with partnering agencies.
  - Develop Catawba Islander Trail trailhead location.
  - Develop Master Plan for the West Harbor Property.
  - Complete Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study (slated for completion February 2025).
- Develop Park District operational and maintenance plans and policies.
  - Create Park District strategic plan.
- Conduct informational programs and events throughout Ottawa County.
  - Facilitate Park District marketing initiatives.
- Develop a volunteer program in conjunction with Friends of Ottawa County Parks.
  - Develop plans for Park District headquarters.



# 2025 GOALS

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**Facilitate fourth round of the Parks and Trails Improvement Grant Program.**

**Continue to purchase property, gain funding, construct, and improve the North Coast Inland Trail through Ottawa County.**

**Complete NCIT Martin Williston Rd. separated path improvement.**

**Continue development of the Portage River Water Trail.**

**Improve the Islander Woods and Trailhead, plan for public opening.**

**Continue plans for the Islander Woods addition.**

**Take next steps with the implementation of the Marblehead Peninsula Trail Feasibility Study.**

**Finalize Park District Strategic Plan and begin implementation.**

**Build upon current Park District program and event offerings.**

**Activate the Park District marketing plan (part of the Park District Strategic Plan).**

**Roll out Park District volunteer program in February 2025.**



“When we see land as a community in which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

*Aldo Leopold*

[www.ottawacountyparksoh.org](http://www.ottawacountyparksoh.org)