

## THE KATHRYN STAGGE-MARR PARK MOVES FORWARD

Thanks to the leadership of Park Board President, Jeff Schedler, a gravel road and parking have been constructed to create access from the driveway to the meadow picnic area and trails.

After consulting with the Clermont County Building Inspector and other government agencies, Jeff got the “go ahead” to begin construction.

Volunteer have been working on the interior of the house in hopes that the house can be used by the local Boy Scouts as meeting space. In exchange, the Scouts have agreed to not only help maintain this structure, but also to work on other park development projects.

As part of the house renovation, some of the trees around the building were deemed to be unsafe to the structure itself and to park visitors. The root systems of the trees were also interfering with the house’s plumbing system and needed to be removed. The Park Board will be planting new trees that are being donated by local individuals and a local nursery.

What’s next? “We have some preliminary designs in place, but funding is our biggest issue,” said Vice President Brian Fick.

“We don’t want a cookie cutter park. We want something that the Community will enjoy and be proud of and help the economic growth of the community. That means we have to offer something different, something that can’t be found at Miami Meadows or other neighboring parks. We have to be creative in our design and our thought process,” said Fick.

“We want to promote Goshen,” said Secretary Lisa Seifried, “but we need for it to be something that the schools can use, too.”

“This property can provide more than just playgrounds, picnic areas and hiking trails,” said Seyfried. “Building a lake that can be used for fishing also creates an ecosystem that students can use for field studies in their science classes.”

Bird blinds, wildflower meadows, wet/dry prairies, wetlands, stream beds and forested area are all ecosystems that provide students with study sites that can be incorporated into their curriculums and meet the requirements for their achievement tests.

“Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and American Heritage Girls will also benefit from the use of the park for their badges,” said Board Member Jennifer Mohler-Geary.

Specific examples, just to name a few, are Cub Scouts: “Sharing Your World with Wildlife”; Webelos: “Naturalist”; Boy Scouts: “Nature”, “Environmental Science”, “Reptile and Amphibian Study”; Brownies: Eco-Explorer Try-It”; Girl Scouts: “Wildlife”, “Plants & Animals”, “All about Birds”; and American Heritage Girls: “Nature and Wildlife.”

“We don’t have specific programs designed at this time, but we have someone that is experienced in doing these programs that can help guide you,” said Seyfried.

Frisbee Golf is another aspect that is in the preliminary plans for the property. Mohler-Geary has been working with a local organization that is interested in building a competitive course on the property. This has the potential to be an income generating proposition as well.

Some of you may have heard mention of “horse trails” in the park. With a relatively large population of horse owners in this area and with the high (one of the highest) probability of government funding for the construction of horse trails, the Board is looking into this aspect of recreation as a possible feature for this park.

The horse trails would be separate from the hiking trails in the rougher terrains of the park, but may in some areas run parallel to the hiking trails. We are aware that horses will tear up hiking trails and might pose a threat to foot traffic so we want to keep them separate from pedestrian trails.

Depending upon how the grants are written, the funding may not only cover the construction of the trails, but it could include paved parking and roads thru the park as well as restrooms and other infrastructure improvements that would benefit this recreational activity and others. Another use for these trails could be cross-country skiing in the winter months, so they would be multi-purpose.

Of course, the Park District is currently limited to developing only its property, but right now the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) wants to create a horse trail system through Ohio. If Goshen Township thinks about it, they could possibly be a critical link between Stonelick Lake and the Loveland Trail, reaping the economic benefits such as experienced by stagecoach stops in the early days of Ohio’s history.

Still, it will be up to the other entities, besides the Park District to step up to the plate to accomplish such a system.

“Don’t expect any of this to happen overnight. We still have a long way to go,” said Sheadler.

“We are in the process of hiring a professional Project Manager, recommended by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) to help us with the strategic planning, fundraising, information gathering, cost analysis and grant writing aspects of the development. It’s not as simple as taking a vote and then building whatever gets the most votes,” said Sheadler.

“It’s like building a house,” he said. “You need money, plans, engineering, infrastructure, permits, a foundation, framing, etc. before you can put up the walls and the roof. Then you still have the siding, windows, plumbing, electric, sewage and the like before you even get to the fun stuff of painting and decorating. Then how are you going to take care of it, and sustain it? Building a park is all that and more. “