



Spring E-Newsletter March - May 2009

Pancakes in the Park
Saturday March 14
8:00-11:00 am
Pattison Park Lodge



Ticket Prices

for breakfast only, sugar bush tours are free
Adults \$5.00
Seniors \$4.00
Children (8-12) \$2.00
Children (0-7) Free

Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance by calling 513.732.2977 Cash or check only please.



Sycamore Park is Expanding

On December 29 Sycamore Park officially grew by 105 acres with the addition of the James L. and Frances Wilson Nature Preserve. The total acreage of the park is now 158 acres, making it the largest park within the Clermont County Park District. The Park District received an \$845,000 Clean Ohio Fund Grant to make the purchase. The Wilsons worked with the Park District through the grant process and generously donated 40% of the land value in order to meet the grant's local match requirement. Thanks to the Wilsons, the citizens of Clermont County will have a beautiful area to hike along the East Fork of the Little Miami River. Hikers will also be able to hike up 200 feet above the river to a ridge top and look out over the river valley.

Preparation work on the hiking trails has begun, and later this spring the nature preserve will open to the general public. A special sneak peak hike will be held on Sunday April 19 at 2:00 pm for visitors to hike the nature preserve with a naturalist. Visit www.parks.clermontcountyohio.gov or watch for updates in the local newspapers for the official grand opening date.

James and Frances Wilson are handed a check to complete the sale of their land to the Park District. The 105 acre James L. and Frances Wilson Nature Preserve will be the newest addition to Sycamore Park.

Pictured L to R
Dave Anspach (Park District Board Member), Bill Stearns (Park District Board Member) James L. Wilson, Ken Stewart (Park District Board Member), Frances Wilson.



Park District News
Chris Clingman, Director

OKI Regional Council of Governments recently awarded the Williamsburg to Batavia Hike Bike Trail a Transportation Enhancement Grant. The grant will fund the construction of the trail segment that runs from the East Fork State Park Campground to the lake overlook on old Williamsburg-Bantam Road. Construction of this segment is scheduled for 2010.

The Park District recently awarded the construction of the Cain Run Pedestrian Bridge to the David Langenheim Company of Cincinnati. The bridge is scheduled to be installed in early summer 2009. Once the bridge is in place you will be able to travel approximately 2.5 miles from Williamsburg to the lake overlook. The bridge construction is funded through a grant from the State of Ohio's Capital Projects Fund.

As 2008 wrapped up, we looked back at a very busy year for the Park District. We had record attendance at our naturalist programs. 175 programs were offered through out the year for schools, general public, and special interest groups. 5454 people attended these programs. A record 7496 people visited the Chilo Lock 34 Park Visitor Center and Museum to learn more about living and working along the Ohio River. We also had near record levels for picnic shelter and lodge rentals. Call now to reserve your space for your event in 2009 or 2010.

Plan Your Summer Picnic Now

It's never too early to start planning your next picnic or family gathering. Available dates go fast, so call the Park District main office at 513.732.2977 to check the availability of our picnic shelters for your next gathering.



2009 Clermont County Park District Picnic Shelter Rental Fees

Location	Capacity	Fee
Chilo Lock 34 Park	50	\$50
Pattison Park	150	\$75
Sycamore Woods	50	\$50
Sycamore #2	150	\$75

Like what you see?

In an effort to keep costs down while providing more information, welcome to the Park District's first electronic newsletter. This version of our newsletter is available on our website, or can be e-mailed to you. The e-newsletter contains more information than the newspaper version that you may receive in your mailbox and is in full color. If you would like to be added to the Clermont County Park District electronic newsletter mailing list, send an e-mail to ParkDistrict@co.clermont.oh.us and type "newsletter subscribe" in the subject heading. If you would like, we can also remove you from the hard copy mailing list, so you will only receive a copy via e-mail.



A Special Thanks

To Bob Eubanks of Eubanks Construction for donating time and equipment in the removal of the boat docks at Chilo Lock 34 Park.

To the Midwest Astronomers for hosting a stargazing Program at Chilo Lock 34 Park on February 20.

Return of the River Otter

Keith Robinson, Naturalist

River Otters (*Lutra canadensis*) were recently spotted swimming in the mouth of Crooked Run Estuary, part of Crooked Run Nature Preserve. This sighting was exciting for the Park District, as it was the first reported sighting of these aquatic mammals in any of the Clermont County Parks. The presence of River Otters in Crooked Run Creek and the Ohio River marks another successful comeback of one of Ohio's native wildlife species.



Ohio Division of Wildlife

River Otters are a medium size aquatic mammal belonging to the family *Mustelidae*, which also includes weasels, badgers, and skunks. Their fur is dark brown, thick, oily, and waterproof. They can reach sizes of up to 50 inches in length, including their completely fur covered tail, and on average weigh about 20-25 pounds. They prefer tributaries of large river systems with wooded riverbanks, away from human developments. Their bodies are well adapted for life in the water. Otters have entirely webbed feet and a strong muscular tail, both of which make them excellent aquatic acrobats. They are carnivorous, preying mainly on fish but will also eat crayfish, frogs, snakes, small mammals, and birds. Being well adapted for life in the water, otters are excellent swimmers and are able to submerge themselves for up to four minutes before having to surface for air. River Otters live in dens (often abandoned beaver or muskrat dens) along river banks and will occasionally den in rock crevices along the shoreline.

Their primarily nocturnal or crepuscular (active at dusk and dawn) lifestyle makes observations of otters difficult. However, they can occasionally be seen during the day sunning along a shore, or playfully swimming in the water. Otters are social animals that are often observed as having playful behaviors. This behavior includes wrestling with other otters, releasing their prey only to catch it again, and possibly the most notable behavior, sliding on their bellies. River otters utilize belly slides as a form of land transportation. Being well adapted for swimming, their short legs do not allow them to move very fast on the ground. When traveling over land particularly in the winter, otters will get a running start and then slide on their bellies for up to ten or more feet. Oftentimes, they will slide down riverbanks and into the water.

Prior to European Settlement, River Otters inhabited most of North America from Florida, northwest to Canada and Alaska. During the settlement of North America, much of the original forests were cleared to make room for agriculture. This loss of habitat, combined with unregulated hunting practices, led to the demise of Ohio's wildlife diversity. In addition to River Otters, Beavers, White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkeys, Black Bears, Bobcats, and even Mountain Lions and Grey Wolves were all gone from Ohio by the early 1900's. With the exception of Mountain Lions and Grey Wolves, the rest of these animals have made a comeback and all can now be found living in Ohio.



Photo: Ohio Division of Wildlife

The repopulation of Ohio's River Otters began in 1986, with the Ohio Division of Wildlife's River Otter re introduction program. Otters were trapped in Arkansas and Louisiana, where their populations were still high, then released into the Grand River, Killbuck Creek, Little Muskingum River, and Stillwater Creek in Ohio. Over the course of the seven year project, 123 otters were released into Ohio waterways. Since the program stopped in 1993, River Otters have been so successful at reproducing in the wild that they are no longer on Ohio's Endangered Species List. Though the majority of Ohio's otter population

is in the heavily forested southeastern part of the state, they have expanded their home range westward. Other otter sightings have been reported in Hamilton and Warren counties. They are now abundant enough in Adams County that it is now legal to trap them. Even though they are more abundant, they are still difficult to observe because of their nocturnal nature. Often the best evidence of their presence is to search for their tracks along riverbanks.

River Otters are another example of how resilient wildlife can be. Once extirpated from the state, they are now successful throughout Ohio, because their habitat has been restored. On your next visit to Crooked Run Nature Preserve, Sycamore Park, or Kelley Nature Preserve, make sure to stop and take a look in the river, and search for the playful aquatic acrobatics of the river otter.

Spring Naturalist Programs

March — May

Pancakes in the Park Saturday March 14 8:00-11:00 am Pattison Park Lodge

Celebrate the end of winter with a delicious pancake breakfast, complete with 100% pure Ohio maple syrup. The Park Naturalists will lead guided tours through the sugar bush to demonstrate the process of making maple syrup. We'll follow the process step by step, then head to the sugar shack to keep warm as you watch our evaporator in action. Members of the Grassy Run Historical Arts Committee will also be demonstrating primitive ways of making syrup.



Ticket Prices

for breakfast only, sugar bush tours are free
 Adults \$5.00 Seniors \$4.00
 Children (8-12) \$2.00
 Children (0-7) Free

Marsh Madness Friday March 20 7:00 pm

Chilo Lock 34 Park

As March brings the arrival of spring, no animals are more eager about spring than the tiny frogs in our wetland. The small, but vocal Spring Peepers and Western Chorus Frogs will be loudly announcing the arrival of spring as they eagerly search for mates. Follow the naturalist as we explore the pond for breeding salamanders, and the wetland for chorusing frogs. Bring waterproof boots and a flashlight. Meet at the visitor center.



Spring Peepers

Welcome Spring Walk

Saturday March 21

10:00 am

Kelley Nature Preserve

Welcome spring with a naturalist led walk through Kelley Nature Preserve. Look for blooming



wildflowers and listen for singing songbirds as you celebrate the long awaited arrival of spring. Meet at the information kiosk.

Habitat Help Day

Saturday March 21

11:00 am

Kelley Nature Preserve

Winter is over and its time to do a little spring clean up. Pitch in and help the Park District improve the habitat at Kelley Nature Preserve. We'll be removing unwanted invasive plants and allowing our more desirable native plants to move in. Lunch will be provided to all volunteers following the clean up.

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday April 4

10:00 am

Sycamore Park

Children 10 and under are invited to bring their baskets to the park to search for hidden candy filled eggs, and meet the Easter Bunny. One lucky winner in each age group will receive a special prize basket to take home. The Easter Egg Hunt is sponsored by the Batavia Rotary Club.



Hypertufa Planters

Wednesday April 15

6:00 pm

Pattison Park

Create your own hypertufa planter! This ancient art is easily recreated using a few simple ingredients. The natural looking planter can be used for any plants and reused year after year. Each participant will make a planter to take home. Due to the materials involved, a \$10.00 per planter fee will be charged. Call 513-876-9013 to reserve your spot and for further details. A minimum of 5 participants must sign up for the class to be held. Class size is limited so call today!



Earth Day 2009 Chilo Lock 34 Park Saturday April 18

Celebrate Earth Day 2009 early with the Clermont County Park District!



Volunteers pulling garlic mustard

Garlic Mustard Pull 10:00 am

Do your part to help the Earth- pull Garlic mustard! A highly invasive species, garlic mustard is detrimental to our native wildflowers and tree saplings. Hand pulling these distinctive plants is the best way to remove them and protect native flora growing nearby. All are welcome to participate. Light refreshments will be provided after. Call 513.876.9013 to sign up.

Nature Hike 2:00 pm

With woodland wildflowers in bloom and migratory songbirds returning to the area, spring is the perfect time for a hike. Join the naturalist and explore Crooked Run State Nature Preserve to see what spring has in store. Trails are flat, grass or gravel, and well maintained so bring the whole family to enjoy some time in the park!

Sneak Peek Hike

Sunday April 19

2:00 pm

Sycamore Park

Sycamore Park is growing again! After doubling in size in 2005, The Park District recently purchased 105 acres of land adjacent to Sycamore Park, known as the James L. and Frances Wilson Nature Preserve. The acquisition brings the total acreage of the park to 158 acres. The official date of the grand opening of the new nature preserve is not set yet, but you can join a naturalist to get a special sneak peek at the new land. The hike will be moderately strenuous with several steep hills to climb and will last about 2 hours. Meet at the pedestrian bridge.



Virginia Bluebells



Sycamore Park pedestrian bridge

Wildflower Walk

Monday April 20

6:00 pm

Wednesday April 29

6:00 pm

Sycamore Park

Enjoy the spectacular showing of spring wildflowers at Sycamore Park.

Late April is when many of the early spring flowers are at their best. Hike the loop trail with a naturalist to discover the diversity and beauty of wildflowers that this park has to offer. Meet at the pedestrian bridge.



Celandine Poppy

River Trail Walk

Sunday May 3

11:00 am

Kelley Nature Preserve

Spring is in full swing and Kelley Nature Preserve is a great place to enjoy the sights and sounds. Follow a naturalist along the scenic Little Miami River as you search for Great Blue Herons, kingfishers, Wood Ducks, and many other creatures that call the river home. Meet at the information kiosk.



Great Blue Heron



Creek Hike

Sunday May 3

2:00 pm

Sycamore Park

Creeks are full of life in the spring. Grab your boots as we explore one of the small creeks in Sycamore Park. We'll flip rocks and search for salamanders, crayfish and other aquatic critters. Meet at the pedestrian bridge.



2nd Annual Matt Maupin Memorial Kid's Fishing Tournament

Saturday May 9

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Pattison Park

Join the Park District and the East Fork Bass Anglers for a day of free fishing fun. Tournament is free and open to anyone 15 years of age and under. Prizes will be awarded in several categories for each age group. A free lunch will be provided to all of the kids participating.



Spring Garden Planting

Saturday May 16

10:00 am

Chilo Lock 34 Park

Spring means planting time! Help fill the beds of the expanded Victory Garden and Butterfly Patch. Get your hands dirty and learn how to start a Victory Garden of your very own. All ages and experience are welcome to participate. Preregistration is required. call 513.876.9013 to sign up.

New for 2009 are herb and native prairie plant beds!



Intro to Hiking

Thursday May 21

6:00 pm

Sycamore Park

There are many reasons to hike: for exercise, to relax, to explore nature. Pick up some pointers on safety, what to pack and how to dress, then hike through the new addition at Sycamore Park. Dress for the weather, bring a water bottle and small pack, and wear sturdy shoes (preferably hiking boots).



Beginner Birding

Saturday May 23

9:00 am

Chilo Lock 34 Park

Bird watching has grown to become one of the most popular hobbies in the country. Learn binocular and field guide use and pick up some tips on bird Identification before heading out on the trail to put those new skills to use.



Eastern Meadowlark

2009 Winter Bird Count Results
Thanks to all of the volunteers who participated in the annual Park District Winter Bird Count. A total of 45 different species were observed during the day at Crooked Run nature Preserve, Kelley Nature Preserve, and Sycamore Park. Visit our website at parks.clermontcountyohio.gov to view the complete results.

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME

All Preschool Story Time programs will be held at Sycamore Park on the second Wednesday of the month at 1:30 pm, March- October.

Preschool Story Time: Tracks

Wednesday March 11, 2009 at 1:30 pm

Though many animals live nearby, we do not usually see much of them. Instead we look for what they have left behind- tracks! Bring your preschooler to the park for the first preschool story time of the season. We will listen to a story with Angie from the Batavia Library and look for tracks on the trails. Each child will cast a track to take home.



Preschool Story Time: Wake Up Woods!

Wednesday April 8, 2009 at 1:30 pm

After a long winter, spring has finally arrived! Explore the park with the naturalist and discover the forest reawakening. Preschoolers will also listen to a story with Angie the Librarian.



Preschool Story Time: Wildflowers

Wednesday May 13, 2009 at 1:30 pm

Preschoolers will investigate the beautiful colors of spring wildflowers with a walk in the forest, books with the library and a craft.

Special thanks to the Batavia branch of the Clermont County Public Library for partnering with the Park District for these programs.

Pattison Lodge and Gazebo & Hartman Log Cabin Now Taking Reservations for 2010.

Call 513.732.2977 to make your reservation.



Pattison Lodge and Gazebo Rental Rates

In Season (May 15— October 15)

Monday through Thursday \$200

Friday and Sunday \$475

Saturday \$550

Out of Season (October 16—May 14)

Monday through Thursday \$200

Friday and Sunday \$425

Saturday \$500



Hartman Log Cabin Rental Rates

In Season Rates (May 15-October 15)

Monday through Thursday \$100

Friday through Sunday \$150

**Includes the use of the picnic shelter*

Out of Season Rates (October 16—May 14)

Monday through Sunday

\$100

Chilo Lock 34 Visitor Center and Museum

If you haven't been to the Chilo Lock 34 Visitor Center and Museum recently, start planning your trip now. We've been busy adding new displays. We have added a complete Wildlife Along the Ohio River display featuring many a diorama of many animals that can be found within Chilo Lock 34 Park and Crooked Run Nature Preserve.



Spring Hours of Operation

March and April

Thursday—Sunday 12 pm to 5pm

May 1st—May 24th

Wednesday—Sunday 12 pm to 5 pm

May 25th—Labor Day

Monday—Saturday 11 am to 5 pm

Sunday 12 pm to 5 pm

Become an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist



Do you have a passion for the natural world and wish to attend training so that you can use your knowledge by giving back to the community through volunteer service? The Ohio State University Extension Office of Clermont County, Clermont County Park District, Cincinnati Nature Center, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District are partnering to bring to you the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program. This program's mission is to promote awareness and citizen stewardship of Ohio's natural resources through science-based education and community service.

The program will run from April 7th-May 19th every Tuesday from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. The cost of the program will be \$150 which includes the training manual and supplies. Program topics include: Ecology, Forests, Watersheds, Stewardship, Soils, Plants, Herpetology, Ornithology, Mammals, and Nature Interpretation. Participants will be required to attend 40

hours of combined classroom and field instruction and 40 hours of approved volunteer service projects in order to attain certification.

If you have questions or you would like to register please call the Ohio State University Extension Office at 513-732-7070.



Sponsor A Bucket

The Park District is hosting the fourth annual Pancakes in the Park event on Saturday March 14th. This year the Park District is providing the opportunity for park visitors to sponsor a sap bucket along the sugarbush trail. For \$25.00 visitors can have their name placed on one of the sap buckets along the trail. Each bucket sponsor will also receive two complimentary tickets to the pancake breakfast and two spiles to collect their own sap. All proceeds will benefit the Park District's Naturalist Programs.



Sponsor A Bucket Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

E-mail address _____

Description for sponsor sign—Limit 4 lines of text, 15 characters per line
(Please Print)

Please return application along with \$25 check payable to Clermont County Park District.
All applications and checks must be received by Friday March 6th.

Send Check To:

Clermont County Park District
2228 US Highway 50
Batavia, OH 45103



NATURE NOTES

Laura Seals, Naturalist

Spring is a time of reawakening and rejuvenation in nature! Clermont County's Parks are the perfect place to welcome the warm weather and sunny days. Watch for these spring events while you enjoy your time in the parks.

Early March

Rainy nights send salamanders on treks to woodland ponds in search of mates. Warmer weather also brings out the Spring peepers, tiny frogs with a big voice. Listen for the songs of Spring peepers and chorus frogs at Chilo Lock 34 Park.



Spotted Salamander

"Timberdoodles" (American woodcocks), normally shy and elusive birds, emerge from their wooded habitat to open areas as the sun sets for free falling courtship rituals.

March

Tree buds swell larger and larger as the days get warmer. Soon they will pop open, revealing rapidly growing miniature leaves and flowers for insects to pollinate.

Late March- early April

Warm sunny days lure out butterflies like Mourning Cloaks and Question Marks from their winter hiding places.

April

Winter migrants are heading north as the days get longer. Bird species not seen since last summer are again returning to the trees as the leaves grow larger and larger. Insects are emerging from larvae and hatching from eggs providing food to fuel these birds on their long flights.

Woodland wildflowers are in full bloom in forested areas throughout the county. Enjoy a walk through Sycamore Park to see this amazing exhibition, with flowers like Sessile Trillium and Jack in the Pulpit creating a carpet on the forest floor.

May

Green Frogs, Grey Tree Frogs, Bullfrogs, Pickerel Frogs, and American Toads have joined in the spring chorus at Chilo Lock 34 Park. Common snapping turtles begin emerging from their aquatic habitat looking for warm sandy soils to lay eggs. Sometimes, the females will travel up to a mile away from water looking for a proper location.

Chilo Lock 34 Park
521 County Park Road
Chilo, OH 45112

39 Acres

Features a three story visitor center and museum in an old lock and dam building along the Ohio River. The park has picnic shelters, playground, and a boat ramp and dock with public access to the Ohio River.

Crooked Run Nature Preserve
77 Acres

Adjacent to Chilo Lock 34 Park is Clermont County's only state dedicated nature preserve. Crooked Run attracts a diversity of wildlife, including birds, making this a popular bird watching spot.

Pattison Park
2228 US Highway 50
Batavia, OH 45103

45 acres

This park is home to the Pattison Lodge and Gazebo, a popular wedding and reception site. A fishing lake, picnic shelter, playground, paved walking trail, hiking trails with interpretive signs are also found at Pattison Park.

Sycamore Park
4082 State Route 132
Batavia, OH 45103

158 acres

Sycamore Park recently expanded to 158 acres, making it the largest park within the Clermont County Park District. Picnic shelters, tennis courts, sand volleyball courts, and two playgrounds make this a popular park for summer picnics. Hiking trails and fishing access to the East Fork of the Little Miami River are available.

Kelley Nature Preserve
297 Center Street
Loveland, OH 45140

42 acres

This nature preserve features hiking trails and a canoe access to the Little Miami River, designated as a state and national scenic river.

Each spring the forest floor comes alive in full color with a spectacular display of wildflowers. Make sure to visit Sycamore Park this spring to enjoy the colorful show before it's gone.



Hepatica
Hepatica acutiloba



Bloodroot
(Sanguinaria Canadensis)



Squirrelcorn
Dicentra canadensis



Virginia Bluebells
Mertensia virginica

Wildflowers of Sycamore Park



Rue Anemone
Anemonella thalictroides



Wild Geranium
Geranium maculatum



Celandine Poppy
Stylophorum diphyllum



Dutchman's Breeches
Dicentra cucullaria



Toad Trillium
Trillium sessile



Drooping Trillium
Trillium flexipes



White Trout Lily
Erythronium albidum

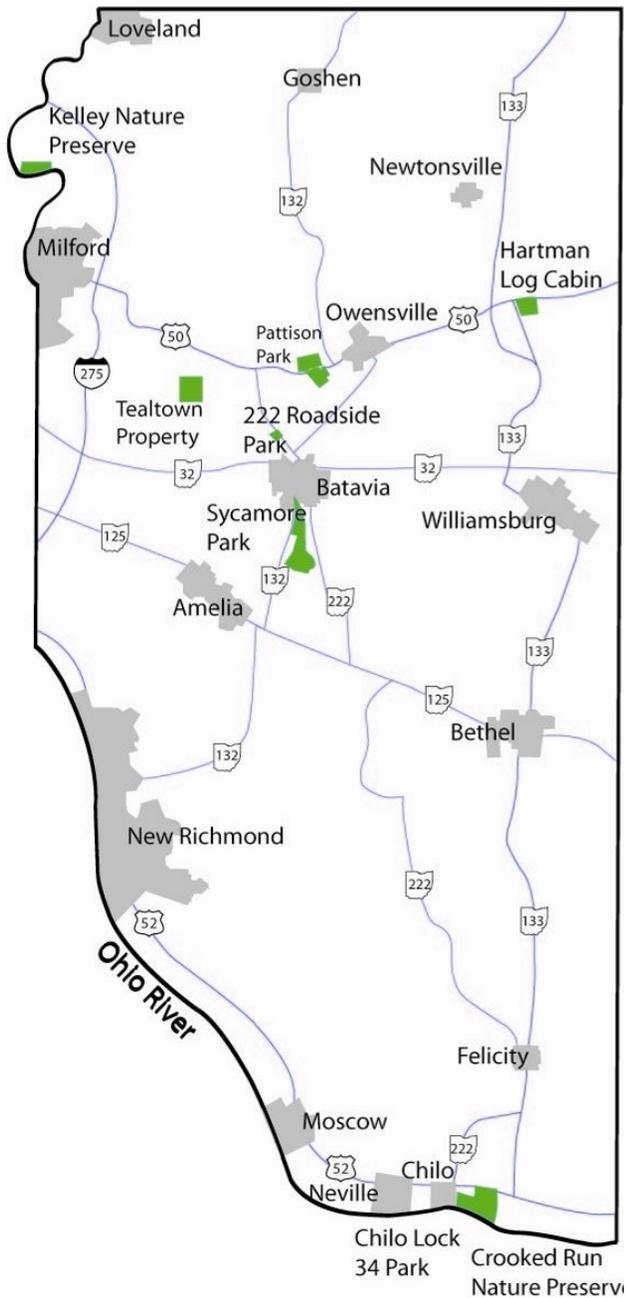


False Rue Anemone
Isopyrum biternatum



Mayapple
Podophyllum peltatum

The Clermont County Park District operates five parks, three green spaces, and two nature preserves totaling 449 acres.



Mission Statement

To acquire, plan, develop, program, and maintain park property in the county for residents and nonresidents alike. To secure the preservation of open space and places of scenic or historical value.

Board of Park Commissioners

William Stearns, *Chairman*
Kenneth Stewart
David Anspach

Chris Clingman, *Director*

Monthly board meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 12:00 pm in Pattison Park Lodge. All meetings are open to the public. For more information call 513-732-2977.

Contact Information

Administrative Office
Pattison Park
2228 US Highway 50
Batavia, OH 45103
513-732-2977
parkdistrict@co.clermont.oh.us

Naturalist Office
Chilo Lock 34 Park
PO Box 106
Chilo, OH 45112
513-876-9013

www.parks.clermontcountyohio.gov