



Photo Credit: Knox County Park District



Ohio to Erie Trail

Spring/Summer 2020

Newsletter #61

The Power of Friends Groups

Ohio to Erie Trail wouldn't be nearly as wonderful as it is today without the multitude of friends groups that support it. Each quarter, our board meets to vote on requests for funding the work being done by these local friends groups. Your donations are often used to provide matching funds when a community applies for grants, or it is given to local groups that need it when completing a segment of the trail. Fundraising isn't all the friends groups do. Friends groups provide the "elbow grease" for the trail. Not only do they install benches, restrooms, picnic tables, bike racks, signs and other amenities, but they also clear trees, plant flowers, remove roots,

now, and sometimes, they even provide the maintenance needed to keep the trail open.

Friends of the Little Miami State Park (FLMSP) has raised over \$300,000 and donated 40,000 volunteer work hours on the 50 mile section from Terrace Park to Spring Valley. They work with ODNr to maintain the State Park that hosts 1,200,000 trail users per annum.



Friends of the the Little Miami State Park

This group of dedicated trail enthusiasts first met in 2008 to discuss the state of the 15 wooden bridges along the trail. Covered with algae and deteriorating, the surfaces of the bridges had become dangerous for trail users. After three serious accidents involving these bridges, there was

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Using Trails and Outdoor Spaces Safely in the Wake of COVID-19

This article was first published on Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's TrailBlog on March 24, 2020. For resources about maintaining physical activity while social distancing during COVID-19, visit railstotrails.org/COVID19.

Trails and outdoor spaces are seeing major spikes in usage across the country, as individuals and families look to these assets for daily physical activity and mental respite in the wake of COVID-19. As America's business, social and cultural hubs shutter their doors to weather the coronavirus pandemic, many public health experts have discussed the importance of being active in the outdoors—as long as we maintain a safe social distance.

Dramatic increases in visitation are being recorded across the United States; an analysis of 31 trail counters for the week of March 16–22 by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC)

found a nationwide trail usage increase of nearly 200% from that same week in 2019. This surge in trail use is forcing trail managers to take fast action to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among their constituents while encouraging careful and conscientious trail use.

To ensure that people are adhering to social distancing and being safe in the outdoors, some trails and parks are closing, while others are limiting their services. Some are limiting motorized access to entrances and trailheads to minimize crowds. Others are pushing significant public education efforts encouraging people to “keep your park open”

“When you get out to a trailhead and it's packed—don't go on it. If you are out there, and you realize you are not able to maintain that safe social distance of 6 feet, turnaround. If you start to feel unsafe at any point, turn back.”

— Gabriel Avila-Mooney, King County Parks in Washington

New Merchandise Available



New this season - Patches, moisture-wicking t-shirts and luggage tags!

We also have our cotton/poly blend t-shirts,

jerseys, and stickers for you or a cyclist friend!

Become a Friend of the OTET and save \$5 on your Tour Guide order.

<http://ohioerietrail.org/shop/>

by maintaining a safe social distance.

It's vital that people find ways to engage in physical activity during this time; the benefits to our immune systems and our mental health are significant. But it is critical that we do so in ways that will keep us safe and minimize the spread of the pandemic. In response, communities are grap-

pling with how best to create outdoor spaces for people to engage in physical activity while keeping 6 feet of distance from others.

While trails continue to serve as significant sources of health and wellness for Americans, RTC is urging everyone to practice safe and responsible trail use and self-care at all times.

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even fear the trail might be closed because of safety concerns.

In its first year, FLMSF raised over \$15,000 in memberships and donations, securing over \$18,000 in State of Ohio funds, paved 11 of the 15 bridges, replaced the boards on the remain-

ing 4 bridges, and, most importantly, reduced the number of reported serious injuries on the trail from three in 2008 to zero in 2009.

Then in 2010, due to the limited resources of park management, FLMSF started Adopt-a-Trail, a program providing

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volunteer teams for designated sections of trail. Over the years they've fixed many fences, bagged lots of litter, dug out drainage ditches and culverts, and cleared miles of encroaching brush. Several



and convenience along the trail.

Sometimes, groups become "friends" that aren't "official" friends

groups, as is the case of the Columbus Westside Running Club that supports the **Camp Chase**



or dying trees along the trail as well.

Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails

(FMCPT) are especially proud of helping acquire the

Deercreek Bridge property. This was a strategic property and bridge along the trail. FMCPT worked

their family member has passed.

In the Mount Vernon area, the **Kokosing Gap** segment is supported by a

group of volunteers who were busy this mild winter. In early March, volunteers completed trimming the entire length of the 13.5 mile trail, their 20th day on the trail with pole saws. Cyclists should be free of low hanging or leaning limbs for some time.



Randy Cronk pictured with his chainsaw-on-a-stick, used for clearing low hanging limbs

While working on this task, the volunteers took the opportunity to remove hundreds of dead

with a local owner that owned the current trail corridor from Spring Valley Road to the east including the Deercreek Bridge.



Photos are from the most recent litter pick up along Camp Chase by the Columbus Westside Running Club on January 25, 2020. Photo Credit: Carl Voellmecke

chainsaw teams cleared downed trees and limbs after storms, and volunteers assisted state park staff in clearing over 2,000 dead ash trees. Other projects address beauty

Trail located in Franklin county. Members and area service organizations hold regularly scheduled fourth Saturday Litter Cleanups on the Trail. This is the fourth year of the monthly cleanups and the third year for their signature Hilltop U.S.A. 5K held each year in July. The funds raised from the 5K event benefits the Veterans of the Hilltop, specifically the Honor Guard who serves the families of Veterans when



Volunteers tackle all jobs, no matter how difficult!

London Trailside Camping area is also a source of pride for FMCPT. They coordinated with the Park District Commissioners and Senior Center Board to allow clearing and

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Two Friends - One Trail

The 326 Club

Two friends joined together to ride the Trail June 12 - 15 last summer. Here's their story -

Angela Dotson -

Hometown: Lodi, OH

Age at time of trip: 55

Month of Trip: June 12 - 16

Direction: North to South

Model/Type of Bike:
Trek checkpoint s1s

Occupation: Dog Trainer

Challenges on the trip:

We had two late afternoon /evening storms. We actually took shelter behind some shrubbery during one of them!

Tips for Riders: Carry a small bike trunk with

maps, rain jacket and snacks. On bike rack, carry bike tools and panniers for clothing.

Emily Quade -

Hometown: Wadsworth, OH

Age at time of trip: 51

Model/Type of Bike:
Trek Checkpoint ALR-4

Occupation: Speech-Language Pathologist

According to Emily, it was their first real multi-day trip, although they rode two days of a 4-day ride in Greene County the previous summer. She said, "We decided to do the whole OTET In one trip because it sounded like fun, and we both like challenges!



We stayed at hotels and one AirBnB; camping would have been fun, but the weather was so bad we were really happy to be warm and dry instead of in a tent. The weather was really the biggest challenge, with lots of rain and wind, although the hills around Millers-

burg were pretty challenging as well!"

I really enjoyed the trip, and would love to ride the trail South to North sometime soon, taking more than four days so that we could sightsee a little bit. I thought it was a great way to see Ohio!"

Interested in becoming a member of the 326 Club?

The only requirement is to travel the entire trail (326 miles) in one trip.

You can travel north to south or south to north. You can leapfrog (travel along one segment one way and another segment the other way). Take a

photo of yourself (ideally at Lake Erie or at the Ohio River) and e-mail it to us at ohioerietrail@gmail.com along with your name and hometown.

We'll put your photo on our Club 326 webpage at ohioerietrail.org/326-club/



(Friends cont. from page 3)

construction of the rustic camping area and shower facility.

FMCPT Volunteer Jerry Miller developed the root ripper machine, and tested it on the Madison County

trail corridor to make sure it worked, before sharing the technology of it with other groups along the trail to solve expensive root damage problems on asphalt trails.

Do you know a volunteer that has had a positive impact on the Trail? Send us their information to have them featured in an upcoming publication or on our social media. Please

include their name, contact information, what type of volunteering they've participated in, and a photo if you have one.

Funding Commitments and Trail Progress

OTET Board committed funding to the following projects at the March board of directors meeting.

Homes County: \$15,000 was committed towards a segment between Glenmont and Killbuck. This section is currently in the engineering phase.

Delaware County: \$20,000 was committed to Preservation Parks of Delaware County (PPDC) towards matching funds needed for an Ohio Department of Natural Resources Clean Ohio Trail Fund grant. This grant will be used for 1.4 miles of trail construction north of Sunbury (Hartford Road) in Trenton Township. Project cost is \$428,000.

PPDC received a \$500,000 ODNR COTF grant to pave 2.25 miles of the trail from Meredith State Road southwest toward Sunbury. Engineering is in progress. Plan to bid this spring and construction between July and November. Completion by Dec 2020.

The on-road OTET's directional signage between Galena and Sunbury is being relocated/removed since the multi-use trail is now constructed in this area, replacing the roadway route. The online map has been updated.

PPDC plans to install two trailside primitive camp sites at Char-Mar Ridge Park in 2020. Amenities will include raised gravel tent pads, picnic tables,

signage, bike racks, and gear hanging posts.

Franklin County: Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park new trail segment 1 mile, officially opening 4/18/2020. This section replaces the trail route that was on the park road.

NOTE: This project does not replace the short, narrow crushed stone segment joining the east and west rail-trails. The stone segment is next to Big Darby Creek and is subject to closure during high water. (Project partner: Franklin County Metro Parks)

Hamilton County: The Mayor of Cincinnati, the City Solicitor and hired outside railroad consultants are working with Genessee

& Wyoming Railroad and their new owners to resolve issues that will allow a coalition of bike trail groups (Ohio River Way and Wasson Way) to complete fund raising for the last 4.75 miles to complete the OTET to its southern terminus. It will be \$6M funding with a 20% match. Board approved a commitment of \$20,000 once original funding is approved and match is needed.

This spring, construction is planned for the Beechmont Connector which joins the OTET/Little Miami Scenic Trail (LMST) to the Lunken Trail.

Completion is scheduled for Summer 2021.



Moffitt Memorial Update

The seven-day, six-night Moffitt Memorial annual ride is still set for September 19-25, 2020. Go to ohioToErieTrail.org for more information

Tour Capacity:
45 riders

Daily Mileage:
Distances range from 30 to 67 miles. Shorter days allow for a more leisurely ride or site-seeing along the way.

Terrain:
Trail surfaces are fine for road bikes, hybrids and mountain bikes. While 90% of the trail is essentially flat, there are some hills along the way that are typical for Ohio cycling.

Overnight Lodging:
Riders stay at hotels at special rates.

SAG (Support and Gear):
This ride is fully supported with luggage transfers, on-route vehicles, a

mechanic and OTET staff. Participants only need to carry what they will need for the day. Support water and snack stops are about every 15 miles.

Pricing:
The cost is variable, depending on the date of registration, ranging from \$700 to \$800.



A unique aspect of this ride is that much of the cost is considered to be a tax-deductible DONATION. Food and lodging are paid for by the participants.



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Funds are currently being raised to install a memorial along the trail for Dr. Tom Moffitt, who led the board of the Ohio to Erie Trail for 15 years. Dr. Moffitt passed away in 2017 and is greatly missed by friends, family, and the cycling community. The memorial will include a bronze plaque with an engraved image and words commemorating his leadership and service to OTET.

To donate, use the enclosed envelope or go to www.ohioerietrail.org/product/custom-donation/