

Parks and Recreation Director's Report

September 2023

Outreach/Partnerships

- Met with Plaster Creek Stewards to discuss opportunities for partnership. Difficult to find projects for partnership because only a small portion of the watershed is within Cascade Township, but potentially could apply for “landscape level” grants.
- Kent Conservation District (KCD) staff held an invasive bittersweet training and removal at Burton Park. KCD staff continued to foliar treat bittersweet at Burton and Peace Park.
- Participated in Watershed Jamboree.

Volunteer Program

- Hosted two volunteer workdays at Burton Park removing autumn olive with South Christian High School and Calvin University's Streetfest.
- Upcoming public workdays include trail building & native plantings at Wycliffe Park; planting at Tassell Park; and bittersweet removal at the library.
- Launching Tuesdays at ten as a regular volunteer event. Planting at Tassell will be the first event on Tuesday 9/19/23.

Committees

- Continuing to work with Thornapple SAD to contract the relocation of large debris from the Thornapple River. Report with water tests and aquatic nuisance plant surveys are expected soon.
- Aric Thorne, Cascade Township engineer, reported to the Pathways Committee that Buttrick Rd. pathway is complete. Also, pedestrian pathways on Cascade Rd. across the Thornapple River are scheduled to begin spring 2024.
- Board of Trustees passed both resolutions proposed by the Parks Committee including the creation of Friendship Park and the improvements to Wycliffe Trailhead Park.

Park Updates

- **Burton Park**
 - Kent Conservation District and Jeanine Heibel continued foliar herbicide treatments of invasive bittersweet.
- **Cascade Park**
 - Planted the remainder of the trees as part of the DTE grant. A total of 51 trees and 20 species were planted compared to the 25 trees and 7 species in the grant's scope of work.
 - Worked with Community Officer from Kent County Sheriff's Department on recent car break-ins at pickleball court. Flyers posted at each park kiosk.

- Selected contractor to replace gazebo and small picnic shelter rooves. Will be installed this fall.
- **Tassell Park**
 - Beginning the design of the bathroom improvements.
 - Replaced pathway lighting with higher lumen LEDs that are designed to minimize light pollution.
 - Continued to seek mason to make repairs to the brick structures throughout the park.
- **Wycliffe Trailhead Park**
 - Continued to work on the initial improvements to the park.
- **Peace Park**
 - Installed three more water bars at Peace Park.
 - Held two workdays removing autumn olive (see above).
 - KCD foliar treated invasives.
- **McGraw Park**-no updates at this time.
- **Memorial Park**-
 - Buildings and Ground staff continue to clean up the landscape beds and museum as part of Heritage Days.
 - Securing contractor to paint the building before winter. Carpentry work still needs to be completed.