Greenspace

Ottawa County Parks Foundation
Annual Newsletter

FALL 2024

Connecting with Nature Series

How do you connect with nature?

Immersing oneself in nature has scientifically been linked to numerous physical and mental health benefits such as improved attention and reduced stress and anxiety levels. One of Ottawa County Parks' greatest assets is the diverse recreational opportunities offered throughout Ottawa County.

This year, we have been featuring a "Connecting with Nature" series in our e-newsletter. Every month, we highlight a new nature-based activity and encourage our readers to explore new ways to connect with nature. From popular activities like mountain biking, hiking, skiing, swimming, and fishing to less traditional ones like forest bathing, artistic endeavors, and volunteering, there's something for everyone.

During this series, we will be highlighting nature-based activities and encouraging you to explore new recreational opportunities. It is a great way to spend more time in nature and reap its rewards.

Series Highlights

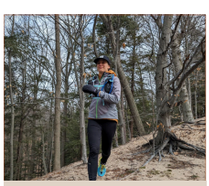
When I guide a Parks program, I'm not simply taking people out into the parks, I'm helping to uncover and connect them, and myself, to belonging in a place that is living, in the deepest, most expansive sense of that word. - Ria VandKlok

Ria VandKlok

I grew up in West Michigan, so the Big Lake, the Grand River, the dunes and the back-dune forests are landscapes I'm drawn to. They make sense to me and I find them calming. I strive to capture that sense of calm in my landscape paintings. I love the quiet these park settings offer. - Lynne Boezaart

Lynne Boezaart

Trail running helps me connect to nature and to myself in a way running on pavement never allowed. I get to be with nature and watch every season unfold and flourish. I get to feel the ground change beneath my feet; from sandy dunes that work my muscles as I climb in the heat of summer, to the fallen leaves that crunch beneath my feet with every step, to the snow that works its way into my trail shoes and clings to my running tights as I trudge through trails no one else has after a snow storm. - Kayla Webber



Kayla Webber

Bench Sponsorship Makes a Difference

As numerous studies have shown us, spending time in nature is important for our physical and mental health. Park benches are important for accessibility and help people of all ages and abilities spend time in nature. The benches offer a place to rest, converse, contemplate, and observe wildlife and views of natural settings

Park benches are also a meaningful way to commemorate a special person or occasion.

Bench Sponsorship Makes a Difference continued from front

For the sponsor, benches provide a spot to honor memories of a special person or remember a special moment with the added benefit of being surrounded by nature. For the public, they can share a glimpse of someone's life and what was important to them.

Park benches are available in all Ottawa County Parks and open spaces. Some of the best locations are available along the Idema Explorers Trail and the paved lake loop at Ottawa Sands.

Here are some plaques you may come across in an Ottawa County Park.

PARKS FOUNDATION THANKS OUTGOING FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER

The Ottawa County Parks Foundation Board of Directors is deeply grateful to our Board member Pete Esser for his service to the Parks Foundation. Pete joined the Foundation Board in 2018. He served as Vice President from 2019 to 2020, and has served in the role of Treasurer since mid-2020.

Support the parks you love!

Learn how you can get involved by scanning the QR Code.

PARKS FOR LIFE

Parks supporters who include the Ottawa County Parks Foundation in their planned and estate giving are members of Parks for Life. Gifts can include wills and bequests, appreciated stock, bond, mutual funds, charitable trusts, retirement accounts, and life insurance. Parks for Life members are ensuring that future generations will be able to enjoy our wonderful parks.

Additional information: ottawacountyparksfoundation.org/parks-for-life/

BECOME A PARK SUSTAINER

The Park Sustainers Club (https://ottawacountyparksfoundation.org/park-sustainers-club/) is a group of donors whose monthly investment allows us to complete special projects that can't be accomplished within the County Parks budget, like building trail connections, adding land, and upgrading facilities.

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