



Nature Education:

Past, Present, and Future

Carol Vigorito
Recreation & Education Director

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The presentation will address four eras of “Nature Education” in MCMP:

- 1891~1933
- 1933~1972
- 1972~2016
- 2017~Beyond

1891~1933

- 1910's -20's
 - Community walks – not park sponsored
 - Local organizations/ individuals
 - George Fordyce – ornithologist - lecturer
 - Audubon Christmas Bird Counts
 - H.W. Weisgerber – nature writer – nature enthusiast
 - Youngstown Chapter American Nature Study Society
 - Wildflower Preservation Society
 - Encouraged community to visit and enjoy MCP

■ Early 1930's

- Occasional walks with staff & organizations
- Ernest W. Vickers - 1929 Botanist/ Forester
- Lindley Vickers ~ 1930 Naturalist
- Very informal
- Newspaper or Bulletin announcement



1933 ~ 1972

■ Old Mill Museum

- Established 1933
- Vickers' personal collection, then community donations
- Live snakes & other creatures
- Interpretive displays/ exhibits helped educate

Historical artifacts

Flora

Fauna

Geology

"Oddities"



■ Publicly Offered Programs

○ Hiking Series

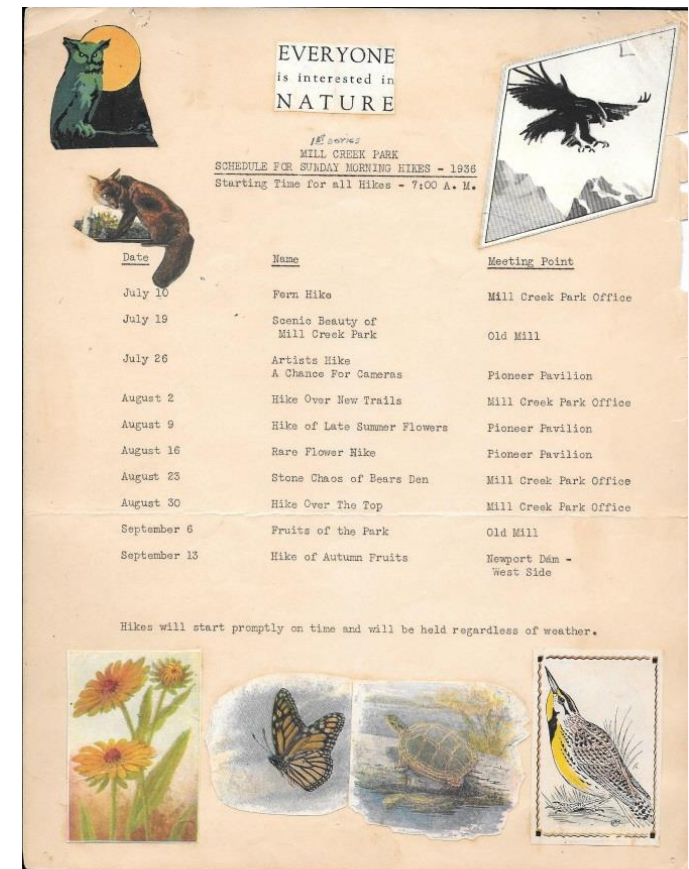
- Well established by 1936, by both Vickers
- Early morning Sundays, later evenings added
- Suspended mid 1950's – mid 1960's
- Favorite topics: trees, flowers, geology, ferns, seasons, mushrooms, insects, MCP beauty, etc.

○ Other Programs

- Campouts
- Campfires
- Boat tours
- Car trips
- Camera Hikes/Programs

○ Indoor Programs

- Lectures
- Slide presentations (Kodachrome)
- Guest Speakers



■ Schools & Other Groups

- Hikes with groups of all kinds
- Field trips to tour Museum
- Lectures/ slide presentations (by 1945)
 - History
 - Geology
 - Wild flowers
 - Ferns
 - Trees & Shrubs
 - Insects
 - Amphibians & Reptiles
 - Birds & Mammals
 - Art Appreciation
- Loaning of Museum specimens to teachers



■ Mill's Last Years

- Transfer of Nature Program to FNC in 1972
- Ongoing but reduced programs
- Changeover of exhibits to historical
- Sporadic closings for repairs/ weather
- Eventual plans for renovation into working grist mill/ education facility.



1933 ~ 1972

1972~2016

■ Ford Nature Center

- Opened 1972
- William Whitehouse, Naturalist FNC & Old Mill
- Early Interpretive Displays/ Facilities

Mounted birds/ animals

Geology Exhibit

MCP Relief Map

Rotating exhibits of seasons, flora, fauna

Meeting/ Lecture Room

- **Current Interpretive Displays / Facilities**

Habitat Room

Discovery Room

Live Animal Room

Bird Viewing Area/ Library

Meeting Room

All People's Trail



■ Publicly Offered Programs

○ Initial offerings 1972

- Hikes & walks
- Slide presentations, lectures, guest speakers
- Nature Movies
- Junior Naturalist (Summer Camp)
- Adult Naturalist programs & Teacher workshops

○ Typical offerings today

- Offerings / themes similar to past years
- Guided hikes, walks, kayaks, bikes, trolleys
- Children, family & adult programs, activities & workshops
- Summer camps

○ Ongoing traditions

- Nature Photography Exhibit
- Special Nature Programs, Events & Speakers



1972~2016

■ School / Group Programs

- Initial school field trip format
 - Guided tour of natural history displays & nature walk
 - Lectures & slide presentations on natural history topics
- Activity based programs added beginning early 1990's
 - Experiential, using new interpretive displays, activities such as Project WILD
 - Oriented on school curriculum needs, grade levels

Sensing Nature

Seasons Go Round

Forest Friends

Discover Wildlife

Nature in Winter

Habitat is Home

Minibeasts

Trees

Dipping into Wetlands

Endangered Species



■ School / Group Programs

- Updates to field trip offerings since ~ 2002
 - Correlated & realigned to 2002 Ohio Content Standards
 - Correlated, but not realigned to 2011 Ohio Learning Standards
 - Added Biodiversity Basics
 - Added Extreme Streams
 - Added Hi Honey
 - Geology Program in progress
- Badly in need of realignment & updating
- FNC School/ Group Program participation
 - High of 12,861 in 2000
 - Low of 3,091 in 2011
 - In 2016: 5,994 individuals participated, slight uptick



1972~2016

2017~Beyond *Challenges & Opportunities*

- **Action Plan Summary for Recreation & Education Department:**

Goal:

Create broader recreation and education programs that inspire more users to experience MCMP for the value it provides to the community.

Objectives :

Identify gaps in recreation and education services in the community, and develop programs to fill those needs.

Determine the current standards in place for educational programs and make changes to those programs to provide consistency across MetroParks departments.

- **More about the MCMP Board approved 2013-2023 Strategic Master Plan and Action Plan:**

<http://www.millcreekmetroparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Mill-Creek-MetroParks-Strategic-Master-Plan-FINAL.pdf>

http://www.millcreekmetroparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Action_Plan_Summary-1.pdf



2017~Beyond

millcreekmetroparks.org

2017~Beyond *Challenges & Opportunities*

▪ *Our staff has been challenged to:*

- Meet objectives and goals set forth by the Strategic Master Plan adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners in 2013.
- Work in a proactive manner to be as efficient and organized as possible.
- Address outdated practices, improve long-range planning, better identify needs.
- Be responsive to community needs identified in the Strategic Plan.



■ ***To Meet these Challenges,
we are excited to tackle the following priorities:***

- Evaluate public program offerings against public needs, and fit to mission.
Adjust public programming accordingly.
- Evaluate school program offerings against state standards and the needs of community educators and students.
Adjust school program offerings accordingly.
See: <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards/Science/ScienceStandards.pdf.aspx>
- Implement a comprehensive, park-wide, coordinated approach to interpretive (education) programming and staffing.



- **“Nature Education” & “Interpretation” in a park system.**
 - “Nature education” is part of a larger effort called natural heritage interpretation.
 - Interpretation is more than education.
 - Interpreters provide park visitors opportunities to experience, understand, and develop appreciation for all park features – historic, cultural, agricultural, horticultural or natural features.
 - Interpretation is done park-wide.
 - As an example, our trolley tours won an award for natural heritage interpretation.

■ Other MCMP Interpretive Offerings

○ MetroParks Farm

- Monthly public offerings in season- family activities , classes, events
- Multiple barns to explore and learn in - including the Adventure Barn
- School program offerings and educational group tours

Happiness is a Cow

Coming to America

Chick Quest

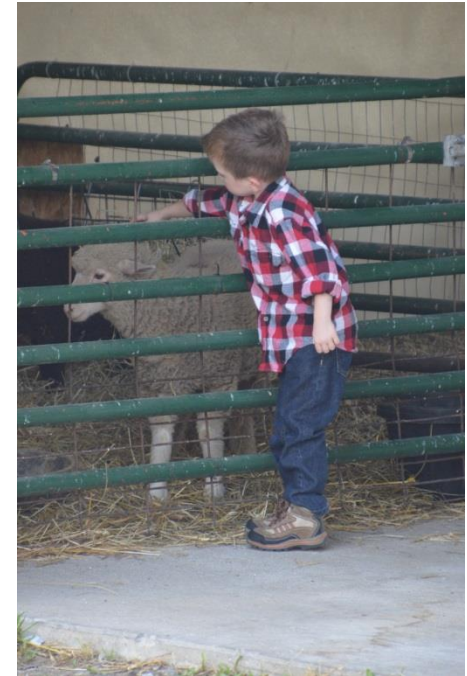
Barnyard Buddies

Food Power Tower

Little Red Hen

Captain Cornelius

Woolly Critters



■ Other MCMP Interpretive Offerings

○ Lanterman's Mill

- Five levels of working grist mill,
plus nearby Mill Creek Gorge to explore and learn in
- Interpretation on-site for visitors most days
- School program offerings and educational group tours and Gorge Walks



■ Other MCMP Interpretive Offerings

○ Fellows Riverside Gardens

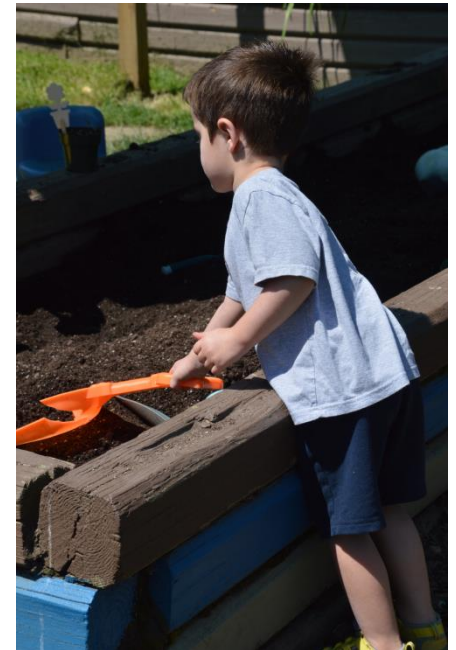
- Monthly public offerings - *Botanical classes, lectures, walks, events, exhibits*
- 39 programs | 217 participants in January 2017
- Multiple individual gardens to explore and learn in - including a Family Garden and an Ohio Woodland Garden
- School program offerings and educational group tours

Super Seeds

Leaf it to Us

Botanical Discoveries

Educational Tours



Questions or Comments?





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