

Morrow County Park District

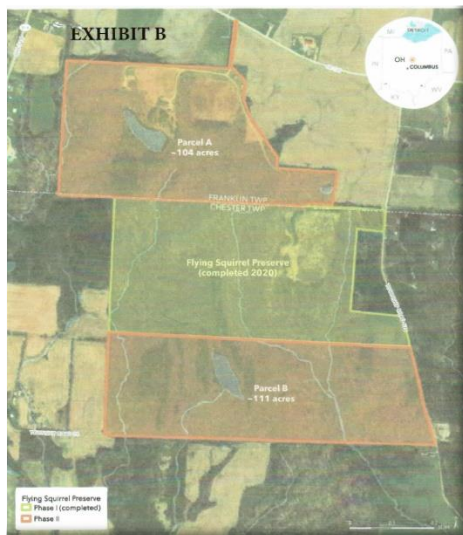


July 14, 2021

MORROW COUNTY PARK DISTRICT OBTAINS 214-ACRE ADDITION TO FLYING SQUIRREL PRESERVE THROUGH CLEAN OHIO GRANT, OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND PRIVATE DONATION

Preserve of Exceptional Biological Diversity Grows to 339 Acres

(Mount Gilead, OH) – Thanks to a \$1,270,000 Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant obtained through the Ohio Public Works Commission, and a \$300,000 allocation from the Ohio General Assembly, the Morrow County Park District recently added 215 acres of high-value conservation land to the 124-acre Flying Squirrel Preserve obtained just last Summer.



Updated map of Flying Squirrel Preserve in Chester and Franklin Townships.

“We are proud to announce that the Morrow County Park District working cooperatively with conservation experts at the Trust for Public Land, state and local officials, and through private donations, obtained more than \$3 million in contributions towards obtaining this jewel of a new county preserve,” said Bill Loebick, Morrow County Park District Chairman. “I’ve worked in natural resources and conservation for more than 40 years and this new county park represents exceptional biological diversity. It truly is an historic and generational gift to the people of Morrow County.”

Loebick thanked the Ohio General Assembly for allocating \$300,000 through the State Capital Budget process for the property acquisition, as well as the Morrow County Commissioners for their support in obtaining that allocation, and in making a recent \$25,000 commitment to creating new trails at the Flying Squirrel Preserve in support of county wellness efforts.

The preserve includes 104 acres in Franklin Township with the remaining 234 acres in Chester Township. The total, 339-acre, contiguous block of forested land lies south of Township Road 121 and west of Township Road 176. The property was part of the former Buckhorn church camp.

More than 11 acres of wetlands are onsite, two, two-acre ponds, and a significant stand of mixed, mesophytic woodlands dominated by combinations of beech, tulip, maples and oak with some species

of hickories, black walnut and cucumber trees. This property provides a protective buffer for the headwaters of the Kokosing State Scenic River and offers habitat for a variety of terrestrial species.

“Over the next several months we will be focused on preparing this great new county resource for public opening and enjoyment,” said Loebick.

The Morrow County Park District now includes six county parks and preserves located throughout Morrow County totaling more than 740 acres under permanent protection and available for recreational opportunities.

Anyone interested in supporting the park district through volunteer efforts are encouraged to attend public meetings held on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Flying Squirrel Preserve.

###

For Further Information Contact:

Bill Loebick, Morrow County Park District Chair
(740) 358-9114

-or-

Dixie Shinaberry, Morrow County Park District Secretary
(419) 512-5644