Celebrating 90 Years
Caroline Witta, Content Marketing Coordinator

2020 is a big year: It’s the start of a new decade, the Olympics are in Tokyo this summer and Great Parks has been serving Hamilton County residents for 90 years.

That’s right, 2020 marks Great Parks’ 90th birthday! There have been a few name changes, a multitude of picnics in parks and countless nature education programs, but from day one, our guiding principles focused on preservation and conservation. These were considered forward-thinking in 1930, but are no-brainers in the 21st century. We continue to put natural resources, nature education and outdoor recreation first.

We’re celebrating our 90th birthday in a not-so-traditional way. Each month, we’ll be delving more into the history of the park district, including parks and preserves and fun facts about what makes Great Parks, GREAT! That’s where you come in. Do you remember when artist John Ruthven created his piece “The Future’s In Your Hands” for the park district? Were you the first Katniss Everdeen back in the day at the Winton Woods archery range? Can you recall when Fernbank Park used to be the site of Dam 37? You may even remember beloved Great Parks’ mascot, Parky’s glow-up.

Whether these all ring a bell or you have a different memory, we want to hear from you. You are also a part of Great Parks’ history. Share your Great Parks story with us. We may feature it in future blog or social media posts! Submit your story via email at webmaster@greatparks.com. We look forward to hearing from you and your memories of Great Parks!
Name – Ashley George
Years of Service – 1

What might we be surprised to know about you? I was born the first in a set of fraternal triplets, with two brothers each a minute younger than me!

What’s your favorite outdoor activity? I enjoy hiking. Simply getting a break from life’s craziness is just so refreshing.

What are you looking forward to right now? I plan on attending the Ohio State University in the fall for chemistry and am looking forward to calling myself a Buckeye.

What is your specialty dish? Cheese quesadillas are an absolute favorite of mine. A tortilla, cheese, and sour cream are instant ingredients for perfection. All you need is a microwave to make one of the greatest dishes in your life.

If you had a superpower, what would it be? This isn’t exactly what most think of by “superpower”, but I would love to have a photographic memory. I tend to forget information quickly after learning it, so recalling information in great detail would be absolutely amazing.

Volunteer Spotlight

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Volunteer Spotlight

Special Riders Program at Winton Woods
Recurring Mon, Wed, Sat: 3/2–5/23
Mon 6:15–7:15 p.m.
Wed 6:15–7:15 p.m.
Sat 10:15–11:15 a.m.

Volunteers are needed to lead or walk beside horses ridden by Special Rider students during this therapeutic riding class. Your support can help alleviate the long waiting list of potential riders. No experience necessary. Training is provided at the Riding Center. To volunteer, contact Margie Rennie at mrennie1@icloud.com or phone 513-931-3057. For volunteers ages 14 and up. SRP [Riding Center\Guest Exp Central]

Miami Whitewater Forest Campground Cleanup
Mon 3/2, 9–noon

Help us get the campground ready for the upcoming year! Before the leaves pop and flowers bloom, a lot of “hidden treasures” are to be found around the Miami Whitewater Forest Campground left from the previous camp season. To volunteer, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4626. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Miami Whitewater\C&P West]

Kroger Hill Invasive Removal
Wed 3/4, 9–noon

We will be going into some high-quality woods rarely seen by the public to remove invasive honeysuckle. The terrain is not the easiest to traverse but the sights and opportunity to help protect such a wonderful place makes it worth it! Meet at 8612 Wooster Pike. To volunteer contact John Walker at jwalker@greatparks.org or call 937-302-7717. For Volunteers 14 and up. Stew Crew [Kroger Hills\C&P East]

Sharon Woods Invasive Removal
Wed 3/4, 8–11 a.m.

Come out to help control invasive shrub species. We will be removing invasive species along the hike-bike trail at Sharon Woods. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are recommended, and tools will be provided! Meet at the Lakeside Lodge on Kemper Rd. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at jbarkley@greatparks.org or phone 724-814-1008. For volunteers 14 and up. Stew Crew [Sharon Woods\C&P East]

Little Tykes
Wed 3/4, 11 a.m.

Join the fun and help youngsters jump into the world of meteorology to explore clouds, rain, sunshine and all things weather related. Volunteers will assist children, ages 3–6, and their families with these activities. Meet at the Winton Centre auditorium. To volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Winton Woods\Education & Events]

Farbach-Werner Invasive Removal
Sat 3/7, 9–noon

Come out to Farbach-Werner to help control the invasive species. Learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. Meet by the fire pit. To volunteer, contact Paul Steuer at psteuer@greatparks.org
Wildflowers in the Preserves—Richardson Preserve
Sun 3/15, 1 p.m.
If you can’t smell it at home, come out and join a nature interpreter as we sniff around for skunk cabbage, a rare plant with unique features. Volunteers will help as trail follow-ups. This is a strenuous hike on uneven terrain. To volunteer, contact Paul Seevers at pseevers@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Program [Richardson]

Francis Homestead Invasive Removal
Thu 3/19, 8–11 a.m.
Come out to the Francis Homestead to help control the invasive species found there. Volunteers will assist in the removal and treatment of invasive plant species to help create better habitat for our native plants and wildlife. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are recommended! We will meet at Francis RecreAcres and then drive to the Francis Homestead. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at jbarkley@greatparks.org or phone 724-814-1008. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Francis RecreAcres]

Glenwood Gardens Invasive Removal
Thu 3/19, 9–noon
Get ready for the Glenwood Gardens honeysuckle hunt and removal! We’ll be removing this invasive species to improve native wildlife habitat. Meet in the parking lot near the service road in the back of Glenwood Gardens. To volunteer, contact Shaun McClary at smclary@greatparks.org or phone 513-869-9525. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Glenwood Gardens]

Embshoff Woods Spring Fling
Sat 3/21, 10–noon
Join us for a fun-filled afternoon of adventure and strategy. Assist guests on their quest to explore the forest to find and complete various challenges. Volunteers will help with station set-up throughout the trail and give instructions to participants. Meet at the River Mount Pavilion. To volunteer, contact Brit Wilson at brwilson@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Embshoff Woods]

Woodland Mound Invasive Removal
Wed 3/25, 9–11 a.m.
Join the Woodland Mound Conservation & Parks team in the ongoing fight against invasive plants. Your support in removing these invasive plants will give our native trees and woodland flowers new life and open a view into the forest. Meet at the Chipmunk Shelter parking lot. To volunteer, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or phone 513-250-0925. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Woodland Mound Park]

Summit Center Hog Log Nature Jog: Animal Olympics
Sat 3/28, 11 a.m.
With Tokyo 2020 just around the corner, our animal ambassadors are limbering up. Help guests experience animals up close to see how their skills stack up against our very own animal Olympics. Volunteers will help facilitate this program by directing guests and leading various group activities. Meet at The Nature Center at The Summit. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-869-9527. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Interpreter Programs [Summit Center]

Kilby Road Cleanup
Mon 3/30, 9–noon
Join the Miami Whitewater Forest crew to clean up one of our lesser known areas along Kilby road. Safety vests will be provided. Meet at the Kilby Parking area next to Weber Farms along Kilby Rd. To volunteer, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4626. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Miami Whitewater]

greatparks.org/volunteer
Park & Facility Master Plans Update

Becky Osinski, Regional Planning Coordinator

Park and Facility Master Plans are about to get a bit more complicated. We’re at the point in the project timeline where regions start to overlap. Region highlights are:

**West Region**

Feedback from the public, stakeholders and staff wrapped up in December. Our consultant, MKSK, is using the data collected – along with initial findings from building audits and natural resource management framework plan meetings – to develop plan concepts for West Region parks. The West Region team will review these in mid-February.

**East Region**

Engagement began on December 26 at Walk the Lights at Sharon Woods. While the majority of public input events will take place in March and April, an online survey will be open to the public the entire time. A kickoff meeting for East Region staff will be held in mid-February.

**Central Region**

Scheduled to begin in summer 2020. A big thanks to everyone who has given their time and input so far! It’s so important for our consultants to hear from a wide variety of perspectives, backgrounds and areas of expertise within the park district.

If you have any questions or would like to be involved in Park and Facility Master Plans please visit [https://mygreatparks.com/](https://mygreatparks.com/)

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**Lake Isabella Invasive Removal**

**Tue 3/31, 8–11 a.m.**

Come out to Lake Isabella to assist in the removal and treatment of invasive shrub species. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are recommended, tools will be provided! Meet at the Boat house. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at [jbarkley@greatparks.org](mailto:jbarkley@greatparks.org) or phone 724-814-1008. **Stew Crew [Lake Isabella]C&P East**

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**Farbach-Werner Nature’s Babies Field Trips**

Help students explore spring changes and why many animals have their young at this time of year. Volunteers will assist with teaching, craft set-up, and presentation. No experience is necessary, training can be provided. There are no set days or times yet; field trips will vary in March and April. To volunteer, contact Stephanie Morris at [smorris@greatparks.org](mailto:smorris@greatparks.org) or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. **Interpreter Programs [Farbach Werner]Education & Events**

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**Impromptu Programming and Docent Roles**

Our interpreters are looking for volunteers who are interested in facilitating impromptu programs for the public throughout the West Region parks. The programs will be free and are for anyone interested in participating. These impromptus will have topics with plans and supplies ready to go in bins. If you are interested, contact Luke Ogonek at [logonek@greatparks.org](mailto:logonek@greatparks.org) or phone 513-367-4774. Training will occur in late April or May.

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**East Side Parks Survey**

What do you think about our east side parks? How would you rank improvement ideas for Sharon Lake? Public engagement for Park & Facility Master Plans has begun in the East Region. Great Parks’ staff and volunteer input is just as important as the public’s. Click the link below to answer a few questions to help plan for the future of our east side parks.

**TAKE THE SURVEY**