

# Welcome to the Wood County Park District!

## Your Natural Places For Fun!

**Remnants of our Ohio Natural Heritage** such as the Black Swamp Woods, Maumee River Floodplains and Wildflower Meadows can be explored in the Wood County Parks. Beautiful Oak Savannas and Prairies await visitors to discover the unique variety of flora and fauna that reside within. Encompassing 1,193 acres in 21 separate areas, these parks are open 365 days a year for folks to enjoy and have fun!



Dedicated citizen volunteer naturalists have been established in the parks to help with educational outreach and stewardship activities. In 2012, a collaboration formed between personnel of the Wood County Park District and personnel of the Wood County OSU Extension Office to create the partnership necessary in order to offer the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program (OCVN) to residents of Wood County. Two OCVN training classes (2012 and 2013) have been completed, certifying 23 volunteer naturalists. These folks have made a huge impact and perform invaluable services at the WCPD. They have assisted and worked alongside the park staff to promote the WCPD as "Your Natural Places For Fun". Many activities are supported including invasive plant removal, native prairie seed collecting and cleaning, native nursery plantings, pumpkin carving, Heritage Days, STEM in the Park, Campus Fest, Bowling Green Holiday Parade, Folklore and Fun Fest, frog monitoring, day camp, bluebird trail monitors, paddling the pond, fishing derby and butterfly monitoring. The OCVNs have volunteered throughout the WCPD but, also lend a helping hand to many other organizations and locations in the State including: Black Swamp Conservancy, Sandusky County Parks, Maumee Bay State Park, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Kitty Todd Preserve, Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve in Greene County and Springville Marsh State Nature Preserve. In 2013, 996 volunteer hours were donated by Wood County OCVNs with an additional 245 hours of Advanced Training classes which will further enhance their knowledge and skills. The value to the WCPD for this volunteer service is \$21,702 (IRS 2013 Value for each volunteer hour is \$21.79).





**2012 Wood County OCVN Class Graduates**



**2013 Wood County OCVN Class Graduates**

The Wood County Chapter is currently co-sponsoring the 2014 OCVN State Conference to be held at Camp Miakonda, in conjunction with the Lucas County Chapter.



**Lori Parratt with Hal Brown Wood County OCVN (2013)**

*"The impact of the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist program has made an impact on me both professionally and personally. I truly believe this certification process can really make a difference in individual's lives, in the lives of others who OCVN's share with as well as improving natural resources. I went through the first OCVN class held in Lucas County in 2008. At the time, I was a volunteer at the Wood County Park District. I was convinced, as a volunteer, this would be a great program for Wood County as well. I was hired as the volunteer administrator for the Park District in 2009 and began tossing around the idea to anyone who would listen. In 2011, Craig Everett at the Wood County OSU Extension office contacted me to discuss the program seriously and the program was launched in 2012.*

*Having trained volunteers who are interested in the natural resources has resulted in growth of the Wood County Park District. As the program grows, the Park District has been able to expand the opportunities available. As a result of the program, we are now recording data about butterflies, plants and frogs and have increased our bluebird monitoring sites. We are attending more fairs, festivals and outreach programs. We are also expanding educational, stewardship and outdoor programs. A great example is the first year of the program we began a program once a month where the public could borrow a canoe and paddle around one of our ponds. This program was run by OCVN volunteers. This year, we have expanded it to one night every week!*

*I am truly blessed to have been a part of the OCVN program on all levels. The volunteers we work with are amazing people and I am humbled by their generosity and dedication. "*

**Lori Parratt - OCVN Coordinator for the Wood County Chapter**



## Wood County OCVNs share their perspective as to "What the OCVN Program Means to Them"



*"Becoming a naturalist has always been a dream of mine since I was a little girl collecting rocks from the creek in our backyard. So I jumped at the chance to become a Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist. My reward has been the looks of wonder and joy on the faces of the children when they see an owl's skull for the first time or correctly guess which fur is that of a coyote. At nature camp, some children had never been fishing or handled a canoe before so, that was another reward for me to help them enjoy their first experience doing those things. Now, I look at nature with a new set of eyes and my childhood dream has been fulfilled."* **Sue Frankforther, Wood County OCVN (2013)**

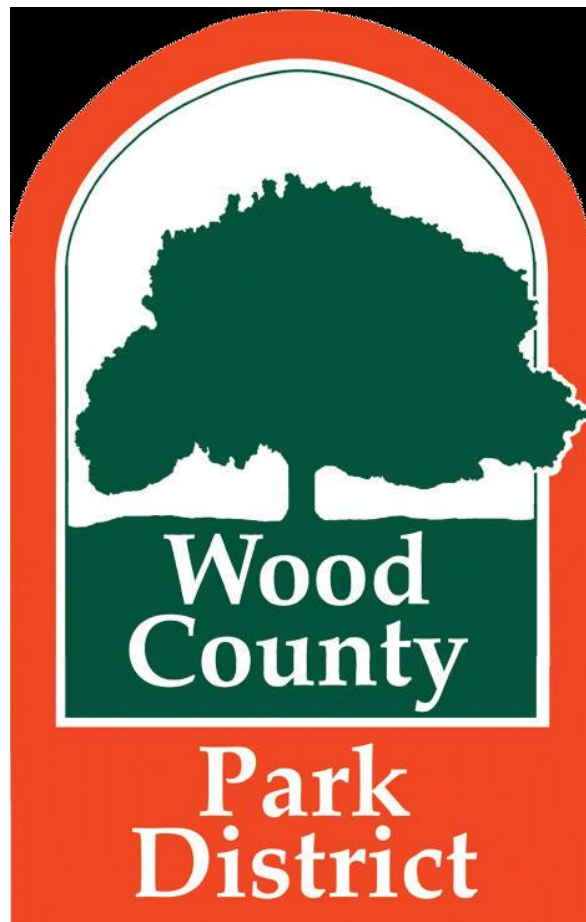


*"The OCVN program has personally been a game changer for me! Where so much in life drains you, the OCVN program has recharged me with new friendships, learning, volunteering and expanding my "horizons". Spending time with Nature whether I am learning, giving back, or simply enjoying has positive mental and physical benefits. Seeing enjoyment in the faces of*

*others whether watching them canoe the pond, showing a child a stream insect or discussing the parks with others is truly priceless! "Randy Huber, Wood County OCVN (2013)*



*"OCVN has opened my eyes to many of the natural things around me in Wood County and provided an opportunity to meet people with similar interests. Native plants have become a special interest and I never thought I would do stream monitoring, let alone learn why the macro invertebrates found there reveal the health of the stream. Lots of learning left to do and lots to share with others." Harold Brown, Wood County OCVN (2012)*



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## **Natural Description of Wood County, Ohio**

Wood County was once part of the Great Black Swamp. Murky waters, deep mud, and dark forests seemed endless. Rising out of the swamps and threaded throughout this area was sand. Washed up onto shores to become beaches and dunes of the ancient glacial lakes, it was left high and dry by receding water levels, including that of our present day Lake Erie. Huge tracts of treeless wet prairies also covered the landscape. Dense forest thinned to open woods then to oak savanna and prairie with seas of sun-loving tall grasses and wildflowers. Ditches were dug, roads raised, and fields drained. The sand is still here and, of course, plenty of mud.

These words, quoted by Van Tassel, are from Private William's journal written as General Hull's army passed through this area forging Hull's Trace during the War of 1812, "The country we yesterday passed through is the most delightful I have ever seen. Our journey was, most of the day, over natural plains of many miles in extent, as level as the ocean, seemingly bounded only by the distant horizon ...covered with a most luxuriant growth of grass and herbs, and an endless variety of beautiful wildflowers ... representing all the hues of the rainbow and loading the atmosphere with their perfume ...."

Wood County is located in the NW corner of the state. The county was [named](#) for Captain [Eleazer D. Wood](#), the engineer for General [William Henry Harrison](#)'s army, who built [Fort Meigs](#) in the [War of 1812](#). Its county seat is Bowling Green. The county has an area of 621 square miles and a population of 128,200 (2012). : [Bowling Green State University](#) is located here.

## Wood County, Ohio



Location in the state of [Ohio](#)



Ohio's location in the [U.S.](#)

**Founded** April 1, 1820<sup>[1]</sup>

**Named for** Captain [Eleazer D. Wood](#)

**[Seat](#)** [Bowling Green](#)

**Largest city** Bowling Green

### Area

- **Total** 620.49 sq mi (1,607 km<sup>2</sup>)
- **Land** 617.20 sq mi (1,599 km<sup>2</sup>)
- **Water** 3.29 sq mi (9 km<sup>2</sup>), 0.53%

### Population

- **[\(2010\)](#)** 125,488
- **Density** 203.3/sq mi (78/km<sup>2</sup>)

**[Time zone](#)** [Eastern: UTC-5/-4](#)

**Website** [www.co.wood.oh.us](http://www.co.wood.oh.us)

More information at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wood\\_County,\\_Ohio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wood_County,_Ohio)