

# PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

## 2015 Year in Review

### *Your Community Parks – Discover...Play...Celebrate*

There is no doubt that our community parks are valued and appreciated. We know that from both the comments we receive and the consistent use of our parks and trails. Our community values their parks, and park staff and the Park Board are committed to the continued improvement of our park assets and programs. The park system includes the J.W. Denver Williams Memorial Park, David Williams Memorial Park, Galvin Park, Southeast Community Park, Point Park, the Lytle Creek Nature Preserve, the Luther Warren Peace Path, the 4-C Bicentennial Trail, the tennis courts located at Wilmington High School, and most recently we have added Xidas Park and Stuckey Farm Park.

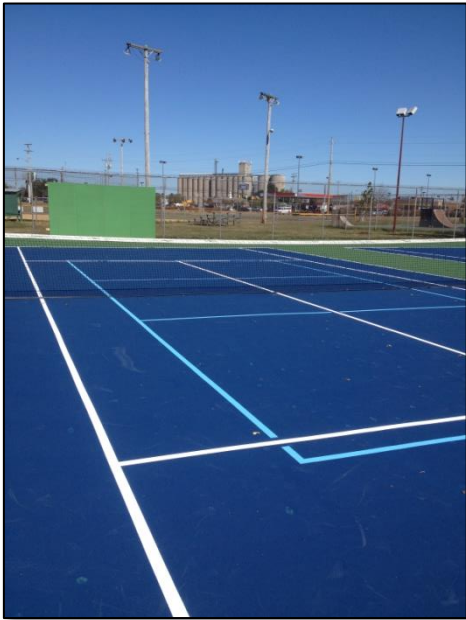
2015 saw many firsts for our community's park system. We celebrated the grand opening of the dog park on June 6. This new amenity was made possible by a small, but mighty group of volunteers who were involved in site planning, public awareness and fund-raising for that project. We were able to take an overgrown-with-brush area and turn it into an acre-plus site for fun. The project was made possible in large part by a grant from the ODNR NatureWorks Program, as well as many donations and countless hours of volunteer effort, including landscaping and concrete work by Laurel Oaks staff and students, Randy Tong, and Clinton County Master Gardeners.



One of the last projects of 2015, but another first, was the creation of a handicapped-accessible fishing area near the park pond. A partnership with Oberfields, the Wilmington Wastewater Department, volunteers and an Aquatic Education grant from the Ohio Division of Wildlife fueled that project. The Aquatic Education grant also permitted us to stock the pond with fish, and have a Passport to Fishing program, as well as a new program, "Fishing With Mom", which provided education, fishing gear, healthy food and fun in August.



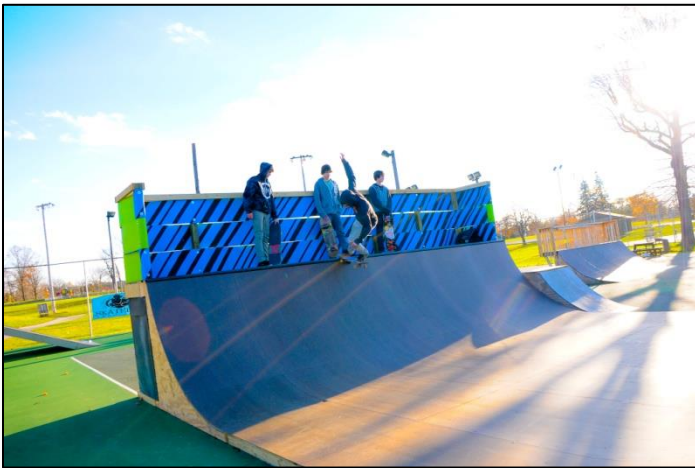
The center basketball court and tennis courts were patched and repainted in autumn with assistance from the ODNR NatureWorks Program and the Park Legacy Fund. We also added pickleball lines and will introduce Wilmington to that sport with programming next spring and summer.



In 2015 over 40 trees were planted in city parks, thanks in large part to the Wilmington Tree Commission and volunteers.



The skate spot located on a re-purposed tennis court continues to be a popular venue for athletes. New rails were installed and other features were improved.



At the Southeast Community Park, the old shelter was completely rebuilt, thanks to volunteer labor from Rick and John Stanforth and a donation from the Cornerstone Foundation. The tile art created by Wilmington City Schools 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders and artist Jennifer Furrier was installed.



At Galvin Park a unique and very popular new swing was installed thanks to the Chad Conner Memorial Fund. Galvin Park continues to be the best venue for winter sledding, and No Child Left Indoors volunteers provided sleds to ensure no one missed the opportunity.



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While there is continued pressure on the local economy, there is a general feeling that we are on the rebound. We are optimistic that better days are ahead and the Park Board and staff will be on the leading edge of the effort to ensure the best amenities and services that we can for our community.

Continued resourcefulness with regard to utilizing volunteers, creating alliances and partnerships, and securing sponsorships and grants will be the key to our continued progress.

2015 partners have included the Clinton County Master Garden Volunteers, Wilmington Garden Club, Clinton County Skatepark Association, United Way of Clinton County, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Division of Wildlife, Cornerstone Foundation, Clinton County Foundation, Wilmington Baseball Association, Wilmington High School Interact Club, Wilmington College, Laurel Oaks Career Center, Southern State Community College, Friends of K-9 Carson, Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs, Polaris, HealthFirst for Clinton County, Wilmington Tree Commission, American Legion Riders and many others.



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## ATHLETICS

The year 2015 was another great year for athletics at the park. Our online registration continued to be a big plus for all parties involved. Our numbers continued to grow in all sports this year. Park leagues included 210 adults, 1170 youth and over 90 volunteer coaches who dedicate their time to make our programs successful.

Basketball numbers were consistent to numbers from previous years. New rules were put in place this year to help improve overall play. Clinics were done for both girls age groups this year and with the help of some former varsity basketball players, the clinics were a big hit. All age groups were very competitive and picked up new rules very quickly.

Spring Soccer numbers continued to grow this year with over 280 kids signed up. We also had our first spring pre-school soccer program with over 30 kids registered. The pre-school program was very successful with the help of great instructors. Spring Soccer season ran very smoothly with the cooperation of the weather and officials who do a great job.

Baseball/Softball for the first time since 2011 had over 500 kids signed up. 530 kids played in what had to be the wettest season ever. There were two full weeks in a row where games were cancelled. With all the rainouts this year we were still able to finish before July 4th holiday. Overall game play continued to improve this year. Umpiring duties once again were done by current and former high school players who continue to do an excellent job.

Adult sports continued to be a big part of our success this year. We saw an increase in volleyball numbers this year with two very competitive leagues. Adult softball continued to play on Sunday nights this year playing doubleheaders each week. Even with all the weather issues softball season was finished in a timely manner.

Fall Soccer saw our highest numbers ever with 209 youth playing this year. A few new rules were put into place that improved game play. Unlike summer, fall weather cooperated this season. Games were very competitive and many leagues came down to last games for championships. Pre-School Soccer program was run once again with over 30 kids in program. Instructors did a great job teaching the young kids the game and making for some their first experience to sports enjoyable.

We look forward to 2016. As our numbers continue to grow we look to make improvements in all of our programs to make our sports the best experience possible for our youth.



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## Looking Forward



In 2016 we again have a full slate of opportunities. Work will continue toward the eventual splash park and skate park at **David Williams Memorial Park**. We will pursue the goal of a handicapped-accessible restroom and new playground in **J. W. Denver Williams Memorial Park**.



Work will continue at **Stuckey Farm Park**, as we develop the first local “playscape” – a play area using natural materials.



Thanks to the hard work and generosity of many, we have wonderful park assets. We must be determined in our resolve to care for the park legacy that was formally begun with the 1950 dedication of the **J. W. Denver Williams Memorial Park** and to continue to improve the facilities and natural resources in our care.

These are your parks - let us know how you would like to get involved. Parks do indeed build community!

*Submitted by:*

Lori Kersey Williams

Parks and Recreation Director