

Park district purchases more land

SUNBURY — Amid rapid development, Preservation Parks is continuing to purchase land to increase park acreage and expand existing parks, furthering its mission to protect and conserve natural spaces and inspire outdoor exploration and learning. Thanks to community support and the successful 2021 park acquisition and development levy, the park district has added more than 580 acres across Liberty, Delaware, Trenton, and Orange townships over the past two years.

On Nov. 13, in Orange Township, Preservation Parks finalized the purchase of 17 acres from DelCo Water Company east of Bale Kenyon Road to expand McCammon Creek Park along Alum Creek. This acquisition will enhance this future park site that is currently undergoing ecological restoration.

A portion of this park, McCammon Creek Park – North Area, located at 3675 E. Orange Road, Lewis Center, opened earlier this year. This 54-acre site features the 1.25-mile Red Fox Trail, a hammock area, and a parking lot. Visitors may also access the park from the multi-use trail along Orange Road.

In Liberty Township, along Bunty Station Road, the park district purchased an additional 50 acres of property from the DeWitt family. This future park, to be known as Deer Haven Park North, now totals 99 acres, and when combined with neighboring Havener Park and Deer Haven Park, will offer over 300 acres of green space for public enjoyment. Reforestation of former agricultural fields and trail building on this property will begin in 2027. The expanded trail system is tentatively scheduled to open in 2028.

Finally, nearly 30 years after Walter and Kathy Sandel donated the park district's first property for what is now the Sandel Legacy Trail, Preservation Parks has completed the final acquisition of the future Perfect Creek Park from Kathy Sandel in Trenton Township. This newest purchase includes a 65-acre life estate, to be known as the Perfect-Sandel Farmhouse.

The future Perfect-Sandel Farmhouse features several carefully restored historic buildings, horticultural gardens, a pond and walkways. When this future area is opened to the public, it will give visitors a glimpse into Delaware County's early history with educational programs, a curated museum and other history-related opportunities. Until then, this area of the park will remain private with no public access.

With this latest addition, the future Perfect Creek Park spans 478 acres and includes the historic Perfect Schoolhouse, which will undergo renovation in 2025, enhancing the park's educational and cultural significance. It is tentatively scheduled to open for special program use only in 2026, while the remainder of the park, minus the life estate, is tentatively scheduled to open in 2027.

These acquisitions bring Preservation Parks' total land managed to nearly 2,400 acres, with more on the horizon.

"We are deeply grateful to Delaware County residents for their commitment to conservation," said Mary Van Haften, executive director of Preservation Parks. "Their support allows us to expand our parks and protect the county's natural and historical landscapes, providing green space and wildlife habitats that contribute to our community's quality of life."

Submitted by Preservation Parks of Delaware County.