

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve March 2026 Report

Although TLC has continued with its work helping to keep the park clean and welcoming, many of the Friends proposed projects in the park are on hold due to RJRD's tool insurance concerns. Nonetheless, planning and research continue off-site.

1. **Mold inspection for Kirby's Mill** is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18. The Friends will be paying for this as well as for any needed remediation as part of their commitment to preserve the mill.
2. Research continues regarding the **tool insurance** question. The insurance agents of both groups are working to schedule a meeting time. Representatives of the groups may also attend.
3. The **Friends' Annual Meeting** will take place **Wednesday, April 8 at 7:00 p.m. in The Lodge**. The Keynote speaker is Deb Yandala, recently retired President of the Conservancy for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. ALL are welcome to attend; Friends of RHP membership is not required.
4. The Friends are sponsoring a **Guided Wildflower Hike** on **Sunday, April 26 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.** Led by plant ecologist Jennifer Windus, Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association President and the Ohio Invasive Plant Council Vice President, the loop trail hike will travel through one of the most scenic sections of the park. The event is free and open to the public. Meet at the south parking lot kiosk near Kirby's Mill
5. A summary of the **Friends' 2025 Invasive Plant Report** is being sent in conjunction with this letter.



Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve March 2026 Report

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve - Invasives RHP 2025 Report Submitted by Lynn Scholle Richardson, Friends' invasives crew

The Invasive Plant Management Program is the responsibility of the RHP staff.

The Friends' crew is one component of the program that assists.



Ironweed on Lake Jinelle shore nourishing a Tiger Swallowtail butterfly - August 2025

This year we reported to Maintenance Supervisor Chris Moore until his resignation on June 12th. Afterwards, we discussed proposed work with the Park Director and Volunteer Coordinator and notified them by text whenever we arrived on site. Inquiries for guest group projects were referred to the Volunteer Coordinator unless there was a personal connection or specific request to work with one of the Friends.

We had hoped that with Chris' herbicide licensure, we'd have been able to resume effective stump treatment for woody plants. Twice I made arrangements with staff for access to the park office sink for post work handwashing, but both times fell through d/t unanticipated scheduling changes. We adapted to accommodate for this uncertainty. Woody stems have been cut higher than normal in anticipation that staff will obtain herbicide certification in the future.

TRIALS

1. This year we tried scheduling projects at regular days and times, hoping to get more "drop in" help. We were there every Thursday at 11 a.m. to pull Japanese knotweed out of Kirby back garden – an easy walking distance from the south parking lot; and 12 noon for invasives work elsewhere in RHP. Unfortunately there were no drop in volunteers. Next year's plans are still to be determined.

2. After cutting back buckthorn all around Lake Jinelle shoreline, it made sense to also cut it back on the island. As it turned out, the island is so inundated that we could not move across it safely. Nor could the canoe maneuver easily though all the gunk in the water. It's still a problem.

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve March 2026 Report

SUCSESSES

- 147 lbs garlic mustard
- 1.5 gallons barberry berries / At least 75 barberry bushes
- Several heaps of multiflora rose
- Copious amounts of buckthorn
- 3 construction trash bags of purple loosestrife
- 4 dozen yellow flag pods
- Repeated suppression of Japanese knotweed sprouts seems to have cleared it from vase of Kirby House
- Incidental privet and autumn olive



Formerly suppressed, native cardinal flowers at the edge of the lake.

107 volunteer hours on site.

Uncounted hours reporting & planning

AREAS IMPROVED *Names are not “official” but evolved for quick reference while working*

Lake Ledge northeast shore of Lake Jinelle, its topography suggests it was artificially formed by Kirby. Once the buckthorn trees were removed, cardinal flowers and other wild flowers appeared

Bench Beach west shore alongside main trail now hosts a profusion of summer wildflowers including a large stand of milkweed. The high-cut buckthorn stems could be visually jarring to hikers going by. Could possibly benefit from a “habitat restoration” sign?

Delta Swamp wetlands still forming from sediment carried downstream over the secret waterfall. We were just starting to work in this area when the season ended. Thick growth of what appeared to be comfrey, elderberry. Also infected with several barberry (removed) and thick stands of MF rose (for next year)

The Hedgerow between the south parking lot kiosk and the mill meadow. This once large, native grey dogwood hedge was severely pruned back a few years ago, which allowed multiflora rose and other invasives to colonize. With permission from the Park Director three years ago, we were able to plant native fall perennials donated by Lynne Johnson.

Sumac Grove / Applenook between the winter barn and the long berm left from the dam restructuring. This formerly inaccessible area held a dense concentration of garlic mustard which we could see from the top of the berm but couldn't reach due to the cover of thick multiflora rose. The plan, discussed with Chris Moore last March, is that we would remove the briars so that we could reach the garlic mustard. In doing so, we found two good-sized staghorn sumac saplings surrounded by a multitude of seedlings. We agreed to mark them with orange flagging tape so that Chris would not mow them down. In the middle of the area is a majestically ancient apple tree. It may have been planted by the Girl Scouts, or even have been part of Kirby's orchard.

Friends of Richfield Heritage Preserve March 2026 Report



Venerable old apple tree between the Winter Barn and dam debris berm inspired the nick name "Apple Nook" May 8, 2025. Photo by Clive Fetzer