

Richfield Heritage Preserve

Richfield, OH

A Peer Consultation

Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA)

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Table of Contents

A Word about ANCA	3
A Word about Peer Consults – A Service to the Profession	3
Introduction	4
Process for the Consult	4
Observations and Recommendations	5
General Observations	5
Priority 1: Communication and Relationship	7
Key Issue Identified By Richfield Heritage Preserve:	7
Observations	7
Recommendations	9
Priority 2: Community	10
Key Issue Identified By Richfield Heritage Preserve:	10
Observations	11
Recommendations	12
Priority 3: Planning	14
Key Issues Identified By Richfield Heritage Preserve:	14
Observations	14
Recommendations	15
Other observations/recommendations	16
Conclusion	17
Appendix A – Consult Team Bios and Contact Information	18
Appendix B – List of Documents Reviewed by Consult Team	20
Appendix C –Consult Agenda	21
Appendix D –Focus Group Participants	22
Appendix E – Organizational Growth Chart	25
Appendix F – Process of Change	26
Appendix G – Roles and Responsibilities	27
Appendix H – Program Impact Worksheet	28

A Word about ANCA

The Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) is an international non-profit organization that promotes and supports best leadership and management practices for the nature and environmental learning center profession.

The goals of ANCA are:

- To maintain an international network for nature and environmental learning center directors and administrators;
- To promote the identity and professional stature of nature and environmental learning centers as educational facilities;
- To provide nature and environmental learning center administrators with products and services that will improve their performance on the job.

ANCA is a private nonprofit organization that was founded in 1989 to create a professional association solely of and for leaders in the nature center profession—directors, managers, senior administrators, and board members. It is the only such organization in the U.S.

Among the services that ANCA offers to the profession are Peer Consults for nature centers and similar organizations that are seeking professional advice and perspectives from some of the profession's most experienced leaders.

A Word about Peer Consults – A Service to the Profession

ANCA Peer Consults provide a unique service to the nature center profession. They offer intensive examinations of important questions for client organizations, conducted by carefully selected nature center professionals whose skill sets match the issues to be explored. Consults also provide professional development opportunities for center staff.

The ANCA professionals volunteer their time and expertise and the host organization pays travel, lodging, and other expenses incurred by the consult, and a fee to ANCA that helps cover administrative costs and other valuable ANCA services including scholarships. In return, client organizations gain the advantage of advice and guidance from some of the most respected and experienced leaders in the nature center profession.

Introduction

Key Issues to be addressed by ANCA Peer Consult

Background: Meg Slifcak, Richfield Joint Recreation District, and Beth Sanderson, Friends of Crowell Hilaka working with their respective boards developed a list of key issues.

Key Issues:

1. **Communication and Relationship** - Improve internal communication and relationships between the two key organizations in an effort to build a strong organizational structure.
2. **Community** - Engage the Community: Explore external communications, what the community may support physically and financially with an eye on fiscal sustainability. Utilizing educational and recreational programming to build community support.
3. **Planning** - We need some help getting started with the actual planning process, realistic timelines, budgets, expectations, prioritizing and goal setting.

Process for the Consult

After the key issues were identified, ANCA Peer Consult Team Leader, Robert Mercer, scoured the profession to build a team of peers that could relate to the Richfield Heritage Preserve experience.

The ANCA Team was provided a wealth of documents prior to the visit. These documents provided necessary background information for the team. A list of documents can be found in Appendix B.

The team then spent two days meeting with key stakeholders. A copy of the agenda can be found in Appendix C.

A complete list of participants appears in Appendix D.

From the conversations with these people, the ANCA Peer Consult Team developed a series of recommendations we feel are realistic, are necessary, are within the ability of an organization like Richfield Heritage Preserve to accomplish, and will place the respective organizations in the best position to fulfil their missions.

Observations and Recommendations

General Observations

The ANCA Peer Consult Team made the following observations about the Richfield Heritage Preserve.

- **Natural and historic resource** – The Richfield Heritage Preserve is rich with resources. Inadvertently, the girl scouts preserved a forest. The fence to keep the girls safe also kept the deer out. The Richfield Heritage Preserve understory is relatively intact. The old roads make wide, easily accessible trail ways that offer the additional benefit of limited vehicle access. The Kirby estate, including the mill, pond, dance hall and home constitutes a unique historic asset that may lend itself to educational opportunities specific to the site. The additional Amity House, boat house, and numerous buildings from the scout camp make the property abundant in resources for a multitude of potential uses. The many buildings offer opportunities to create diverse public use space, while at the same time creating high cost maintenance challenges for the park. The deer fence makes the place look uninviting. The roads and structures need to be maintained at a high cost.



- **Passion** –The number of diverse individuals who came to stakeholder meetings provided the ANCA Team with a tremendous insight to the passion of this community. Everyone indicated their desire to see the Richfield Heritage Preserve advance to a sustainable and prosperous future. It was clear that these same passionate people are the driving forces behind the varied individual interests in the park and this presents both real and perceived conflicts.

- **Accomplishments** – There is much to celebrate as the Richfield Heritage Preserve has accomplished many goals within its very short existence. First, the effort by the Friends of Crowell Hilaka to galvanize the community to preserve this treasure. Secondly, the community coming forward to pay for the acquisition of the property and to provide a large pool of funds to develop the infrastructure. Additionally, the courage to create a new governmental agency bringing together two very different communities to support the operations. Presently, many of the structures have been stabilized. One drawback



is that the work over the last few years while critical is also significantly invisible to the community. A lot of money has disappeared into the Richfield Heritage Preserve, without anything that can generate enthusiasm within the community. The completion of the dam will be an important milestone.

- **Financial**

- **Seed money** – Very few organizations start out with any significant funds to hire staff. Thanks to Richfield Village and Richfield Township providing funds from a levy, there are funds available. This money can then be used to leverage additional support.
- **Levy** – This levy also is providing significant support towards improving the infrastructure of the park. The challenge with this funding source revolves around the need to convince the taxpayers to continue the support beyond the 10-year levy commitment. Major capital improvements and infrastructure projects like roofs and sewage treatment facilities while critical to the ability of the park to serve the public will be difficult for the taxpayers to appreciate.

- **Diverse stakeholders and partners**– The Richfield Heritage Preserve is blessed to have so many groups that appreciate the resource. The challenges here include the reality and/or perception of single interest groups each pushing their agendas forward. The ANCA Team was impressed by the array of local organizations and agencies willing and able to support the park as it drives toward a sustainable future.

The abundance of potential and realized partners for the Richfield Heritage Preserves suggests that there is an opportunity to find deeper collaborations with the goal of better serving the public while avoiding unnecessary duplication of existing efforts. These opportunities might include programmatic collaborations with the library to provide a fireside venue for library programs, or Buckeye Trail Association organized hikes between Richfield Heritage Preserve and neighboring parks, or multisite history tours that include the Kirby Complex at the Richfield Heritage Preserve to name just a few ideas.



- **Facilities** – Having so many structures available for potential use is wonderful, but overwhelming. Though many of the existing structures were integral to the operation of the former Girl Scout camp, the limited access and lack of utility infrastructure may not make all of them suitable for future public use. Furthermore, many may not be well placed for public use. Facilities need access and utilities. Serious consideration needs to be given to not retaining structures that do not provide these two features.

- **High skilled individuals within boards and partners** – Both the Richfield Joint Recreation District and the Friends of Crowell Hilaka contain board members who are highly skilled and highly opinionated. Both want to see the Richfield Heritage Preserve be a valuable resource to the community. Whenever highly motivated and opinionated people come together, there are bound to be disagreements and to some degree conflict. It is critical that substantial investments be made in negotiation and compromise so that tensions may be eased and differences resolved.
- **Organization transition stage** – Most organizations go through very predictable growth phases. Within minutes, the members of the ANCA Team knew where the Richfield Joint Recreation District and the Friends of Crowell Hilaka stood in traditional growth phases of organizations. See Appendix E. Organizations start out with the Phase of Creativity where people work to start something new like a business, a non-profit, or in this case a park. In this phase, many people work together to accomplish the missions, pouring uncountable hours and effort towards the mission. Once the initial mission has been accomplished (in this case the preservation of the park), the organization starts to need a focus on leadership, someone to coordinate the diverse efforts and to make sure these efforts are not wasted and are directed towards the most critical needs.
- **Richfield has several sizable and established parks and preserves nearby.** – These create opportunities for collaboration and connectivity; they also may compete with Richfield Heritage Preserve for visitors, renters, and program participants.

The following observations and recommendations are built upon the key issues identified early in the consultation process. The subsequent recommendations are based upon the above observations and observations specifically associated with the key issue. The ANCA Peer Consult Team has endeavored to create a vision for what needs to be done and, equally importantly, can be done for the Richfield Heritage Preserve.

Priority 1: Communication and Relationship

Key Issue Identified By Richfield Heritage Preserve:

“Improve internal communication and relationships between the two key organizations in an effort to build a strong organizational structure.”

Observations

- **Everyone wants to see Richfield Heritage Preserve successful** – Without exception, everyone who participated in the many meetings wanted the Richfield Heritage Preserve to become a sustainable community asset. Individuals who attended meetings indicated that they regularly used and supported, both with time and financial resources, the efforts of their respective organizations. This commonality provides the foundation for collaboration.
- **Boards not working as board** – In both the non-profit and governmental world, boards should adhere to best practices. In our charge to examine the two organizations most connected to the Richfield Heritage Preserve (Richfield Joint Recreation District and Friends of Crowell Hilaka), it became evident to the ANCA Team that there were multiple examples of both organizations failing

to adhere to best management practices. Some of these practices however continually rose to the top.

- First, the board needs to be working as a board. Organizations in the Phase of Creativity often have volunteers who also serve as board members. These two roles are distinctly different and should be treated as such. As a volunteer, an individual has the ability to represent themselves and their own unique interests. However, that same individual must refrain from portraying “their” interests as being “the” interests of any board they serve on. Board members must act and speak always from a unified position representing the auspices of the entire board when it comes to activities specifically authorized by the board.
- Second, board’s bylaws often will include a board rotation policy. In the Phase of Creativity, this can seem counter-productive as often times those who are most passionate are the individuals who are the driving force behind the early success of an organization. Add the additional challenge of finding new board members and it is easy to slip into a pattern of keeping the same board members longer than is healthy for the organization. A well run board embraces a constantly changing composition of the board and they encourage new people to become involved and to bring in new energy and ideas. While far from fixed, a common pattern of best practice is for board members to fill a three year term. After three years, if that person wished to stay and is considered an asset to the board, they can be asked to stay on for an additional three year term. After serving two three year terms however, they must step down for a period no less than one year. This allows an individual time to reflect as to if they still have the energy and drive to take on the hard work of a board member. It also pushes organizations to be building new levels of talent within their community and to make networking connections for the organization through board recruitment. Board rotations also prevent organizational stagnation and can be a great assessment to the health of the overall organization.
- **Individuals making decisions and taking action** – Those who are dedicated to the Richfield Heritage Preserve see things that in their opinion need to get done, so they make the decision to just do it. In the business world, it is entirely appropriate for an owner or director to conduct business this way. However, in the government and non-profit worlds a collaborative and joint decision process must take place before the action can occur. This creates a level of complexity, but also creates a level of buy in for everyone involved; reducing or eliminating the avenues of potential conflict down the road. Without collaborative decision making, work does not proceed efficiently. Duplicated efforts and heightened tensions are often a consequential result.
- **Lack of trust** – One product of inconsistent leadership or multi-level leadership is confusion as to who actually is in charge. As individuals move initiatives forward without the support of the board, confusion and conflict arise. This produces a result of rumor, innuendo, and disengagement by those attempting to guess at who is responsible for the action and what their intentions and motives are in moving it forward.

- **Personality clashes** – Personality issues arise in organizations as small as families and are inevitable in larger organizations. The confusion of leadership and the lack of trust exacerbate the problem. Overcoming these things can be difficult and even occasionally impossible. If individuals cannot resolve their animosity of the past, this fracture will prevent either organization from succeeding, and it may be time for them to simply step away.
- **People struggle with letting the past go** – The only constant is change. Some people embrace change and even serve as agents of change. On the other hand, stasis is comfortable. Routines are set and easy, people are predictable, and the future appears certain.

Every time there is even the smallest change, people go through a mental process of denial, rejecting, and exploration before they can reach a stage of agreement or action. See Appendix F. Recognizing where you, your peers, and your organizations are within the process helps one understand how they can help everyone reach a level of comfort (this is different from a blanket agreement) with a decision or direction. One does not have to like the decision, but they must be able to accept it and move on. Becoming entrenched in a view is counter-productive to success. Inevitably some people cannot get on board with a new direction or decision. Those people should make the decision to step aside as they, whether intentional or not, serve as an obstacle to progress.

- **Dysfunctional feedback loops** – A well-functioning organization is like a stream. It is flowing in one direction. Yes, it may twist and turn and there will be rough spots, smooth pools, and the occasional waterfall, but the water is still heading in a common direction. The lack of trust, the inconsistent leadership, the inability to let go of the past has created little side streams or whirlpools within each organization; wasting precious resources as they whirl around in circles. The unfortunate consequences of allowing these whirlpools to be created is that they divert others into the same circles of dysfunction.
- **People want to be recognized** – We all like to be recognized. Many people do not wish to be the center of attention, but they also do not wish to be ignored. For many future thinking people or those who have a more analytical mind, remembering to say “thank you” or to acknowledge someone’s contribution does not come naturally. They are mentally off working on the next project or issue. This skill of remembering to be grateful can be fostered. A happy person is a productive person.
- **Unclear processes** – As a result of the two organizations being in the Phase of Creativity is that so much happened so fast that clearly defined processes do not exist. This generates confusion and stress. One of the primary accomplishments that happens when an organization moves to the Phase of Direction is processes become more formal. This creates clarity of purpose and action.

Recommendations

1. **Hire a Director** – The ANCA Team feels strongly that the Richfield Joint Recreation District must hire a full-time director to manage the day-to-day operations. In a small organization that has multiple players, this person will face many challenges. Consider also hiring some support staff to take on routine tasks like fielding phone calls and filing, even if part-time. While the Richfield Joint

Recreation District will be the employer, the director's charge should be to work with the various partners to get all efforts focused on the improvement of the Richfield Heritage Preserve's service to the community. As with any governmental agency or nonprofit, the board then sets a broad vision or plan, establishes a budget based upon that plan and then lets the director implement that plan. The board does not do day-to-day supervision, but has the director attend board meetings to inform the board on what is happening and to help guide the board as to what the needs are. There is then a board committee that does an annual review of performance. Within the Richfield Heritage Preserve's library is one of the books published by ANCA, Extraordinary Leadership: Securing your next Executive Director." This can guide the process of finding this key person.

- 2. Learn and implement best practices for boards** – As mentioned earlier, the boards must learn to act as a unit, not as individuals. When they are individuals, they are just another organizational volunteer.

Boards need a constant infusion of new blood. This is implemented by a board committee tasked with finding people with the skill sets that will move the current plan forward. This should never just be someone to fill an empty seat. This committee may be called a board development committee, a board advancement committee, or a nominating committee. Regardless of the name, the responsibilities are much larger than just filling seats.

The board's role becomes one of setting policy and procedures. Board committees perform the function of working on details that are then brought to the board for approval. A Managing Board does not get involved in day-to-day operations, but looks at the big picture. In the ANCA publication, Director's Guide to Best Practices, a chapter on boards offers examples of best practices. There is a wealth of resources available on the internet and in print media.

- 3. Use tools provided to resolve communication issues** – During the ANCA Team's time at the Richfield Heritage Preserve, members of the Richfield Joint Recreation District and the Friends of Crowell Hilaka worked together on a process to construct an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various partners based upon three scenarios. (See Appendix G) This is a simple quick tool that can be used to build clarity when issues arise. This tool gives the various players an opportunity to recognize the legal and liability implications of each role. Dig this format out and work through the myriad of confusing issues which will arise when the Richfield Heritage Preserve has a director.

Priority 2: Community

Key Issue Identified By Richfield Heritage Preserve:

"Engage the Community: Explore external communications, what the community may support physically and financially with an eye on fiscal sustainability. Utilizing educational and recreational programming to build community support."

Observations

- **Many in the community believe in Richfield Heritage Preserve** - The wonderful participation by so many people from volunteers to the state senator clearly demonstrate the depth of interest in the Richfield Heritage Preserve.
- **Name confusion** – A common theme heard throughout the many meetings include name confusion. We heard the Richfield Joint Recreation District referred to by that name plus RJRD, the park board, and the board. The Richfield Heritage Preserve was also called the park and the old Girl Scout camp (not by FoCH people but by residents). The Friends of Crowell Hilaka was referred to as FoCH (pronounced “folk”-it seemed important to add that pronunciation), The Friends of Crowell Hilaka at the Richfield Heritage Preserve, the friends, the friends of the park, and possibly the Friends of Richfield Heritage Park. Several stakeholders referred to the Friends of Crowell Hilaka as “The Girl Scouts,” conflating the name and making assumptions about who the organization represents. No wonder people are confused.
- **One thing to consider is the use of acronyms.** This is a classic example of do what we say, not what we do. The name Association of Nature Center Administrators was formed to have a catchy acronym—ANCA. Years later, the organization came to the realization that acronyms, while serving internal communications, do not translate well to the public. Acronyms actually create additional confusion and serve to exclude the general public. Only people in the know will come to and support the RHP.
- **Lack of common branding** – There is no common agreement on branding. Each organization involved has their own logo and brand, but rarely within the brand is acknowledged the relationship with the combination of organizations working together. The multiple names and acronyms undermine your ability to develop your brand and tell your story.
- **Visitor experience is undefined** – Finding the Richfield Heritage Preserve may be easy for those in the know—it is between to the Giant Eagle Supermarket and the highest point in Summit County. To someone new to the community finding the preserve can be challenging. No signs on streets direct people toward the Richfield Heritage Preserve. Upon arrival, one is greeted by a rustic, almost invisible sign announcing the entrance. Inside the entrance, an imposing fence and gate provides the next barrier to feeling welcome. The fence and gate could be converted into an attractive interpretive station explaining the importance it serves as a deer excluder. Without staff on site, visitors are left totally on their own to discover the wonders. Work is being done on the signage, but, other than to former girl scouts, some of the location names are not very descriptive.
- **Community members have special interests** – As mentioned earlier, the interest in the Richfield Heritage Preserve is strong, but often the interest is towards a specific function. This can be very good as long as the various special interest groups do not push outside of the mission and purpose of the park. Sometimes, these special interests are incompatible—horses and mountain bikes, active recreation and research. Good strategic and master plans would find space for multiple interests.


- **Educational and community program is being conducted by partners** – Thank goodness the Friends of Crowell Hilaka and other partners are creating some programs and events. These draw visitors and introduce people to the Richfield Heritage Preserve and lets the community see things are happening.
- **Lack of consistent community program** – As a startup, finding a niche and the resources to conduct educational and/or recreational programs is daunting. Yet, dedicated people want to encourage use and visitors, so they create programs and events. This is great, but it would benefit from some coordination and collaboration. The events seem haphazard to the community.
- **Many people do not know about Richfield Heritage Preserve and/or how their tax dollars are being spent** – Knowing that the old Girl Scout camp no longer exists and the community can now visit a wonderful unique open space area escapes some of the local residents. Others only know that they are paying taxes on something they may or may not have wanted. What are those tax dollars being spent on? To date, a lot of money has been spent on critically important yet essentially invisible infrastructure—securing old houses that no one in the community will ever use; securing buildings or shelters that have no access or facilities; etc. What the community may see is an unwelcoming entrance, or degraded roads, or structures that look like they are falling down, or empty houses. It is not clear to the Richfield community how the park is providing value to the community.
- **The history of Kirby and Crowell Hilaka are important stories** – The Richfield Heritage Preserve contains an array of stories. The Kirby and Girl Scout legacies are two of the stories within a much bigger collection of stories. No one story is the Richfield Heritage Preserve. The Kirby Estate tells the story of invention, innovation, and entrepreneurship. This creates an unusually strong resource for STEM education within the park. The story of Camp Crowell Hilaka allows you to connect with the history of scouting, and in fact, that thousands of girls developed a life shaping connection to nature, and to leadership through their time in Richfield. In reality, Crowell Hilaka no longer exists. The memory of and passion for the old Girl Scout camp is strong and runs deep for those who remember the camp. This provides an opportunity for marketing and fund raising to that narrow audience. A case statement may be built that might read, “You have fond memories of unique and wonderful experiences at Crowell Hilaka. We have a golden opportunity to re-energize and share some of those experiences and create new memories with a much wider, more diverse audience. We need your support to... at the Richfield Heritage Preserve.” The Richfield Heritage Preserve’s partners needs to recognize their role. They also need to recognize, honor, and value the contribution of the other stories within the preserve.



Recommendations

- **New director becomes the face for the organization** – Once a new director is on board, they become the focal point for the preserve. It is no longer the various board or board members. This

individual works closely with the various boards and partners to ensure that the Richfield Heritage Preserve is serving the mission. This person works closely with the board of the Richfield Joint Recreation District and the Friends of Crowell Hilaka to develop plans and policies. It then becomes the director's role to implement those plans and policies. Many organizations through joint agreement have had success with having the governmental director serve as de facto or unofficial chief executive officer of the Friends organization. This ensures a very close working relationship between all of the entities. If this does become the role of the Director, they work closely with their Friends organization to advance the mission of the Friends and the mission of the park. Successful operations are where the director thinks of the Friends as if they were the organization that represented the community to the park.

- **Work together to solidify a Richfield Heritage Preserve brand** – Right now there is a strong Richfield Joint Recreation District brand and a strong Friends of Crowell Hilaka brand. There needs to be a strong Richfield Heritage Preserve brand. The Richfield Heritage Preserve name is especially important because it reinforces and honors the citizens of the two Richfields, who made the park a reality by committing their financial resources to the effort to preserve the land. Using the metaphor of a baseball, the Richfield Heritage Preserve is the core of the ball. The supporting organizations are the leather wrappings that work together to keep the ball in service. The preserve is what the community sees. As a general rule, the community members are not interested in who is who, but they are intensely interested in what the preserve offers them. The critical role of holding these two wrapping organizations together needs to be someone's responsibility. This would be the role of a director or administrator. They are what Bob Mercer likes to call the "bloody red stitch" that adjusts to the stresses and changes from the two partners to make sure the ball is functional and that the community only sees the ball.
- 
- **Celebrate successes** – Every success needs to be celebrated by everyone involved. The community wants to see success and progress. They do not care about infighting. At one of the many sessions, the participants were astonished when a community member after listening to the many people vent about problems, said, "I never knew any of this." Why should the community care about anything other than having a wonderful place to visit? Every completed project, every effort to raise funds, every grant, and successful partnership needs to be celebrated far and wide so that the community sees things happening.
 - **Promote each other's events and activities** – One way to get the word out is to actively promote each other's events and successes. The community likes successes. One success is the incredible number of volunteers involved with the Richfield Heritage Preserve. Big numbers are impressive. For this reason, every volunteer should report every hour they contribute. Many volunteers do not report their hours because they are not doing the work show off or for egotistical reasons. They work for dedication and love of the Richfield Heritage Preserve. At the same time every volunteer, even if they do not turn in their hours should be counted. A large quantity of hours reported and numbers of individual volunteers makes the Richfield Heritage Preserve look even more

impressive and successful. The leaders within the village, the township, and at potential funders will see these two numbers (number of volunteers and number of hours volunteers contributed) as a good reason to support the Richfield Heritage Preserve's various partner's requests for support. It is not about the individual, but the whole. Brag about the volunteer work, recognize the volunteer work (even if they do not report yet their contribution is known). Invite the public and politicians to these events. Attendance by celebrities and politicians build exposure and generate interest and very likely financial support even if they are annoying in their politicking. A visit by a high-ranking politician demonstrates that they are familiar with the Richfield Heritage Preserve and that can be leverage into publicity and support. Honor them.

Eventually, the Richfield Joint Recreation District may want to invest in a volunteer management program to help keep records.

Priority 3: Planning

Key Issues Identified By Richfield Heritage Preserve:

"Programming - What areas of new program growth would best serve the community while highlighting and preserving the center's ecosystem?"

Observations

- **Phase of Direction involves the development of plans** –A characteristic of organizations within the Phase of Creativity include doing things without plans. As an organization grows and naturally evolves into the Phase of Direction, plans become very important. Plans like strategic plans, facility master plans, communications plans, and fund raising plans once jointly created ease the confusion that reigns in groups that are outgrowing the Phase of Creativity.
- **Facility investment preceded a use plan** – Understandably, but unfortunately, within the Richfield Heritage Preserve, the investments in infrastructure and facilities have preceded any plan for how the land will be used. There are a lot of ideas and desires, but the ANCA Team could not find any real concrete plans.
- **Current plans are unclear** – Where there are plans or ideas, they are either unclear or not shared widely enough for the many partners to advance the vision.

- **A very complex array of structures** – It is no surprise to anyone involved that the Richfield Heritage Preserve has a complex array of structures from a swimming pool to a historic mill. While some of these served the Girl Scout camp well, they may not be useful for a public park. Each structure requires maintenance and a financial commitment. Many lack basic facilities that will be needed to make them useful—parking, restrooms, handicapped access. Others may be logically arranged in a like function cluster—a picnic grove. A good facility plan would identify where the existing structures might work together to create a use synergy while others would create a use conflict with users not interested in that style of recreation. An example might be mountain bikes and horses or nature study and an active picnic ground.



- **Funding for director is available** – When the ANCA Team recognized that the Richfield Heritage Preserve needed a director, the question arose, “How does that person get paid?” The Richfield Joint Recreation District as part of the levy has operating funds available. This will facilitate moving forward towards creating a position that has a guarantee of funding for a minimum of several year. These funds can be used to leverage other funds.

Recommendations

- **Use outside expertise to develop a strategic plan for the park using community and Friends of Crowell Hilaka input** – Once there is a director on board, someone who will serve as the focal point for coordinating efforts by all involved, the Richfield Joint Recreation District needs to create a strategic plan for the preserve. This should not be just an exercise, but it should become the guide as to what the organizations places as their priorities. A strategic plan drives the budget(s) and informs everyone involved the current direction.

A strategic plan sets priorities but does not address the minutia of implementation. That is the function of the director. Good strategic plans are simple, relatively vague in detail, and generated through input of the whole array of stakeholders. Focus groups and mailed or in-person surveys are tools that engage the community and discover the needs that are not adequately served by other area parks. Communicating the survey results back to the community could show that the Richfield Joint Recreation District is listening and responsive.

One component of this research should be to learn more about who the current users/visitors are. How far away are people traveling to visit the park? It is possible that most park visitors live within a mile or two of the place and that folks who live farther away are opting to go to other places. It is also possible that people are visiting specifically because the Richfield Heritage Preserve is not well-known or highly visited. If so, as the park works to promote itself and

increase visitation, the people seeking quiet commune in nature would start to find the place less desirable. It is important to know this information.

In the end, a strategic plan for the Richfield Joint Recreation District can be used by the Friends of Crowell Hilaka and others to build their strategic plan governing how they will support the development of the Richfield Heritage Preserve. The strategic plan looks far out into the future—5 to 10 years. That then drives an annual plan which clearly defines the goals for the next fiscal year. This then facilitates the development of a budget to implement the plan. Planning is a lot of work, but if done right transforms an organization from a haphazard collection of activities and events into a smoothly running well thought out organization that is the pride of the community. A good outside facilitator makes a huge difference. This process often takes three to six months.

- **Develop a facility master plan** – Once the strategic plan defines the long range future, then the Richfield Heritage Preserve can look at the physical capabilities and decide what is important to advance the plan and what needs to be discarded. This is done with a facility master plan. A well designed facility master plan ensures the efficient use of funds. There are consulting companies that can help with this.
- **All plans need to be living documents reviewed annually** – All plans should be a fluid (changed as needed upon consensus of the parties). Plans are reviewed and updated annually.

Other observations/recommendations

- **When plans are done** - Things change. Opportunities arise and disappear. The plans need to be flexible enough to accommodate change. At the same time, a plan must prevent mission creep. Every opportunity may not be the best thing. If an opportunity, say a huge offer of funds, comes along, but there are strings attached or this opportunity destroys or impinges upon a strategic visitor experience, an organization needs the courage to say, “No thank you.” The Chippewa Nature Center in Midland, Michigan shared a document that they use to help keep them on mission. See Appendix H. The Richfield Joint Recreation District announced during the ANCA Team’s visit that the Richfield Heritage Preserve will be receiving help through the National Park Service. This is a wonderful opportunity to keep the ball rolling.
- **Clean Ohio Access Improvements** - The various organizations involved with the Richfield Heritage Preserve may already be aware of this funding opportunity, but the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund can provide funds for visitor experience and access improvements, on land already protected by Clean Ohio Deed of Restrictions.
- **State Capital Fund** – One of the meeting participants included the Ohio State Senator representing the district within which the Richfield Heritage Preserve resides. She was very supportive and more than willing to take proposals to present to the state before the end of this year. While there are no guarantees, as with any grant, a “no” does not mean a “no” forever. Each proposal will be considered anew. A grant proposal will have even greater likelihood of being

funded if it includes letters of support from the Richfield Township and Village, showing that there is a community buy-in on the project.

Conclusion

The Richfield Heritage Preserve is a well-loved and at times jealously protected jewel. As a relatively young park with many interest groups excited about the opportunities, it has tremendous possibilities. Before these possibilities can be realized however, there needs to be a radical improvements made in cooperation and communications between the two primary function boards. With the right director, many of the issues that interfere with progress can be ameliorated by having this individual guide the advancement through the creative and collaborative use of the resources of the many partners.

The recommendations made by the ANCA Team will not be easy. People will need to learn to compromise and play nice with each other. The new director will face tremendous challenges and will need everyone's help in jumping the hurdles and to smooth the road to success. People are encouraged to explore the resources available in the various documents published by ANCA and now in the Richfield Heritage Preserve's possession and by logging into the ANCA Members Only web page - <https://www.natctr.org/membership/member-portal>. Many organizations exist with the mission of helping non-profits be more successful. There is a wealth of information available via the internet.

The ANCA Team is greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of those involved. We hope that our short time with these highly dedicated and opinionated people has helped them shed some of the mistrust and learn ways to improve relations through better communication. We hope that understanding that what these organizations are experiencing are very natural and predictable struggles and that there are processes available to move to the next level of succession. While the individual personalities are unique, the situation is not. Most organizations can move from one development phase (in this case the Phase of Creativity) to the next phase (in this case the Phase of Direction) smoothly and in a timely fashion. In the appendixes, we provide templates for some of the tools we use to resolve disagreements.

This organization is poised upon great change. Remember the process of change and how important it is to guide people through the various levels. Finally, if people cannot at least live with the decisions, they should voluntarily step aside and let those who want to make it work at least move forward without the obstruction of disagreement. This does not say that everyone has to be happy with each and every decision. But we are asking that people find a way to at least accept the new direction and agree not to impede progress.

Appendix A – Consult Team Bios and Contact Information

Bob Mercer started at the Silver Lake Nature Center in July 1975. At that time, the Center, a facility of the Bucks County Department of Parks and Recreation had a small corps of volunteers who had formed a Friends of Silver Lake Nature Center. Since then, he helped the organization become a 501-C-3 and encouraged its growth to a point where it provides about 50% of the operating funds for the Center including more staff hours than is provided by the county. During his tenure, he worked on the expansion of the grounds from 60 to 235 acres, the construction of a new building, and the building of a small exhibit area, twice. Bob served on the ANCA Board of Directors over a period of 13 years during which he coordinated the development of five Best Practices monographs. He served as a member and leader on multiple consult teams. After more than 40 years, Bob retired in January 2016.

Nick Boutis is the director of the Glen Helen Ecology Institute, a position he has held since 2006. He has a Biology degree from Oberlin College, a Master's degree in Nonprofit Management from the University of Maryland, and is an alumnus of the naturalist training program at the Glen Helen Outdoor Education Center. Prior to his present post, he directed teacher training programs for Population Connection. His 30-year career in conservation also includes work in advocacy and education for the National Audubon Society, Endangered Species Coalition, and Ocean Wildlife Campaign. He has delivered over 300 lectures and workshops at colleges, universities, and conferences in the United States and Canada, and is the author of a travel guide to Ohio natural areas as well as a middle-school supplemental curriculum kit on mathematics and the environment.

Liz Roxberry has been the Executive Director of Fenner Conservancy since January of 2015, previously serving as Interim Executive Director and the Program Manager since joining the organization in 2013. Formally known as the 'Friends of Fenner Nature Center', Fenner Conservancy rapidly evolved from a friends group to the non-profit managing arm of the municipally-owned nature center property in 2009. Liz has a documented history of leadership in the fields of non-profit management, environmental education and natural resource relations, and she brings more than a decade of professional experience to the consult team. At Fenner Conservancy Liz oversees all strategic planning, visioning and organizational capacity building, mission driven fundraising, budget management, project implementation, team cohesiveness, and human resource relations. Additionally, she acts as the primary liaison between the Board of Directors and the City of Lansing. Most recently, Liz guided her team through the organization's first major capital campaign and has broken ground on a new, combined education and community use building (complete in Fall 2019), quadrupling programmatic capacity, while also expanding the region's largest alternative transportation pathway, bringing it into the park (complete in Summer 2022).

Tim Sandsmark is the Supervisor of Education Services for Jefferson County Open Space in Golden, Colorado which includes management of Lookout Mountain Nature Center and Hiwan Heritage Park and Museum and the nature and history/heritage education efforts for the 28 Park Open Space system.

Prior to that he was the Director of the Greenway and Nature Center of Pueblo and its satellite site the Mountain Park Environmental Center in Beulah which is now called the Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center. He was also an adjunct faculty member at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

Tim taught photojournalism at Colorado State University-Fort Collins for several years and was Director of the Colorado State University Alumni Camp program. Other work experience includes being a park ranger for the National Park Service for several years working for Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan, Boston National Historical Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area in Colorado and Rocky Mountain National Park where he served as a program instructor for Kodak’s Photography in the National Parks program. He also worked in the private sector as the Creative Director of an in-store marketing and advertising firm and as a field manager with Ford Motor Company.

Tim has served on several nonprofit boards including the Association of Nature Center Administrators (served terms as President and Treasurer), the Colorado Environmental Partnership, Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education and is currently serving on the Lariat Loop National Scenic Byway (Treasurer) and SHARE (Science, Health and Access to Resources and Education)(Treasurer). He has served as a leader and member of several consulting teams for nature/environmental centers throughout the United States. Academically he has a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, a Masters of Arts in outdoor/environmental education and Educational Media and completed all but the dissertation on a doctoral degree from Colorado State University in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism.

<p>Nick Boutis Executive Director Glen Helen Ecology Institute, Antioch College 405 Corry Street, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387 P: 937-769-1902 m: 937-286-6884 nboutis@glenhelen.org</p>	<p>Robert Mercer, Team Leader Director-Naturalist (Retired) Silver Lake Nature Center Home Address: 45 Penn Valley Dr. Yardley, PA 19067 267-394-3333 - cell ra.mercer@outlook.com</p>
<p>Liz Roxberry Executive Director Fenner Conservancy 2020 E. Mount Hope Avenue Lansing, MI 48910 517-483-4223 director@mynaturecenter.org</p>	<p>Tim Sandsmark Education Supervisor Jefferson County Open Space 28473 Meadow Drive Evergreen, CO 80439 720.497.7653, 303.916.6553 cell, jeffco.us tsandsma@co.jefferson.co.us</p>

Appendix B – List of Documents Reviewed by Consult Team

1. Richfield Heritage Preserve draft Mission/Vision/Core Value Statement- March 8, 2019
2. Richfield Heritage Preserve five year plan outline
3. Richfield Heritage Preserve capital projects list and budget
4. Friends of Crowell Hilaka reports to community 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018
5. Friends of Crowell Hilaka brochure
6. Richfield Heritage Preserve Map
7. Richfield Heritage Preserve Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program grant application and supporting letters
8. Richfield Joint Recreation District’s regarding committee policy, formation, and purpose as approved March 28, 2016
9. Draft Memorandum of Agreement between the Richfield Joint Recreation District and the Friends of Crowell Hilaka
10. Financial details for general operating of the Richfield Joint Recreation District
11. Richfield Heritage Preserve naming rights and donor recognition report presented May 29, 2019
12. Notes regarding marketing team discussions about tag lines
13. Draft of material related to a potential capital campaign
14. The team members also reviewed various website related to the Richfield Heritage Preserve and its partners.

Appendix C –Consult Agenda

Thursday, September 26, 2019

- 4:30 – 6:00 Tour buildings and grounds
- 6:00 Dinner with Board Members

Friday, September 27, 2019

- 8:00 – 9:00 Open session - 7 in attendance
- 9:15 – 10:15 Richfield Joint Recreation District Board Advisors and Partners – 15 in attendance
- 10:30 – 11:30 Richfield Joint Recreation District Board – 4 in attendance
- 11:30 – 12:30 Lunch – 1 in attendance
- 12:30 – 1:30 Friends of Crowell Hilaka – 11 in attendance
- 1:45 – 2:45 Richfield Township and Village
- 3:00 – 4:00 Richfield Residents and Former Board Members
- 4:15 – 5:15 Open meeting

Saturday, September 28, 2019

- 9:00 – 11:30 Board members - Richfield Joint Recreation District and Friends of Crowell Hilaka
- 7:00 – 9:00 ANCA Team present findings to participants

Appendix D – Focus Group Participants

This list includes everyone who was invited to a focus group. Those marked in bold signed in to each focus group. The organization of the list does not reflect the time frame when each of these individuals participated, but represents the various agencies they are associated with. Names may appear in multiple locations.

RJRD Board:

- **Bob Becker – Chairman**
- **Meg Slifcak - Vice-Chair, Governance**
- **Pat Norris - Treasurer**
- **Bill Smith - Secretary**
- **Sandy Apidone - Park Services**
- **Jeff Deluca - Park Operations**
- **Art Gonzales - Fundraising**

RJRD Staff:

- **Judy Sorczak – Administrative Coordinator**
- **Tim Clymer - Fiscal Officer**
- **Jim Hardy - Purchasing Agent**
- **Bill Hannah - Legal Counsel**
- Tom Tindira – Maintenance Tech
- John Evans - Technology

RJRD Volunteer Coordinator:

- **Susan Czaplicki - Volunteer Coordinator**
- **Judy Makowski – Website**
- Kathy Donchess – Social Media
- Russ Schutt – Former Maintenance Tech

RJRD Board Committee members and Advisors*:

- **Governance: Slifcak, Gonzales, Norris**
- **Governance: Cynthia McWilliams, FoCH/OHC***
- **Governance: Beth Sanderson, FoCH***
- **Park Service: Apidone, Deluca, Smith**
- **Park Services: Nicole Schill, Programming for Medina Parks***
- **Park Services: Dr. Carrie Davis-Todd, Baldwin Wallace University***
- **Park Service: Joshua May, Intern***
- **Park Operations: Deluca, Apidone, Smith**
- **Park Operations: Maureen McGinty***
- **Park Operations: Judy Makowski, FoCH***
- **Park Operations: Susan Czaplicki, Volunteer Coordinator**
- **Fundraising: Don Laubacher***
- **Fundraising: Karen Kannenberg, CFRE Cleveland Metroparks Principal Giving Director***
- **Fundraising: Cynthia McWilliams, FoCH/OHC***
- **Capital Improvements: Smith, Deluca, Norris**
- **Capital Improvements: Ralph McNerney, CoreyRingle ***

RJRD Board Alumni:

- Ralph McNerney
- Ralph Waszak – Attorney

FoCH Officers:

- **Corey Ringle, AIA - President and Coordinator of Historic Home Stabilization Task Force (Registered Architect)**
- **Beth Sanderson, OVCN with CVNP, NFW Habitat Steward, Landscape for Life Instructor - Vice President, Marketing, and Coordinator of Native Plant Restoration / Invasive Species Management Task Force.**
- **Donna Spiegler - Treasurer and Marketing Coordinator for Stan Hywet.**
- **Lynn Richardson - Secretary, Grant Writer, and Park Historian**

FoCH Board:

- **Elizabeth Csontos**
- Cynthia McWilliams
- **Rob Richardson**
- **Karen Smik**
- **Barbara Starr**
- **Nancy Kanik**
- **Cheryl Lace**
- **Judy Makowski**
- **Chris Naizer**
- **Sandy Norris**
- **Rachel Oppenheimer**
- **Betty Vandermeer**

FoCH Advisory:

- **Molly Eastwookd**
- **Clive Fetzer**
- Joanie Gottschling
- Nancy Kanik
- **Cheryl Lace**
- Judy Makowski
- Chris Naizer
- **Sandy Norris**
- Betty Vandermeer
- Ralph Waszak, Jr
- **FoCH Marketing Volunteer -Carolynn Thompson**

Residents:

- Mark Gable - RTWP leisure time industry
- Ellen Daniels - RV Park Board/Teacher
- Kim Kaspsar - artist/world traveler
- Missy Haslinger - RV
- Rene Tuttle - RV Neighbor
- **Jeff Truebig - RV CVNP security team**
- Sue and Ron Janek - RV retired/world travelers
- Vickey Neal - RTWP Cleveland Metroparks
- The Luther Family (Bob Luther, TWP, Betty Vandermeer, FoCH, Dorothy Hooper, Gale Luther, and Marilyn Scarborough)
- Roger Swan
- Hugh Groth, Invasive Volunteer
- **Rich Jandry, Cuts Grass**
- **Bill Hamilton, Northcoast Signs**
- Chuck Rankin, Countryside Conservancy
- **Ken and Judy Bowman, CVNP Historic Contractor**
- Tim Ochwat, President of Meridian Construction
- Tim Ostrander, Local electrician
- Jim McClintock
- Jon Antalvari
- **Mary Djordjevich**

Partners:

- Richfield Historical Society: Paul Swan, President and **Karen Smik**
- Buckeye Trail Association: **Pat and Mary Hayes**
- Ohio Horseman Council: **Molly Eastwood and Cynthia McWilliams**
- Ohio Invasive Plant Council & Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves: Jennifer Windus, President of OIPC
- Crane Hollow: Heather Stehle, Executive Dir
- Ohio Operating Engineers
- **Baldwin Wallace: Dr. Carrie Davis-Todd, Associate Professor of Geology**
- **Western Reserve Land Conservancy Sarah Kitson** and Andrew McDowell
- Spif's Garden and the Pruett Family

Partnership by Projects:

- Akron University: Randy Mitchell, Biologist
- **Cleveland State University: Dr. Phil Wanyerka, Archeologist**
- **Rocky River Watershed: Jared Bartley**
- Oviatt/Jim Brown Historian: Jim Fry RTWP
- Cuyahoga Valley Career Center: Josh Hayes

Potential Collaborative Partners:

- Deb Yandala (CEO) and Janice Mateucci (COO) Sue Kline and Steven Metzler (Board) Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park
- **Andrea Ireland, Rivers & Trails & Conservation Assistant**
- Ann, Cleveland Hiking Club
- **Eric Schultz, Why Not Hiking - MeetUp**
- **Mark Spisak-Summit Metroparks Park Commissioner**

Local Businesses:

- Olesia, Tavern of Richfield

Community Leaders:

- **Kristina Roegner, Ohio Senate District #27**
- Rick Hudak, President Village Council
- **Mike and Polly Wheeler, Village Council**
- Gary Dominick, Village Council
- **Barbara Lanford, Village Council**
- Mike Lyons, Village Council
- Pat Healy, Village Council
- **Ralph Waszak, Sr., Village Council**
- **Bobbie Beshara, Mayor of Richfield**
- Sandy Turk, Village Fiscal Agent
- **Ruth Jocek, Richfield Village Parks and Rec.**
- Jan Weber, Villiage Senior Center
- Matthew Montgomery, Superintendent, Revere
- **Jennifer Stencel, Diane Nagy, Richfield Library**
- Bob Gilbert, Richfield Police
- Chief Phil McLean, Fire Chief
- Janet Jankura, Township Trustee
- **Bob Luther, Township Trustee**
- Jeff Shupe, Township Trustee
- Mindy Remec, Township Admin
- Laurie Pinney, Township Fiscal Officer
- **Sheryl Wilson, President of the Richfield Chamber of Commerce**
- **Sue Serdinak, Editor of the Richfield Times**
- **Chris Williams, President of Focus Consulting**
- **Ken Bowman, CVNP Historic Contractor**

Appendix E – Organizational Growth Chart

ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CYCLES

PHASE OF CREATIVITY	PHASE OF DIRECTION	PHASE OF DELEGATION	PHASE OF CONSOLIDATION
<p>One big family working for the cause; everybody pitches in to help with everything.</p> <p>Management Focus: Commitment to cause</p> <p>Organizational Structure: Informal/family</p> <p>Top Management Style: Individual/entrepreneur</p> <p>Rewards: Mission/meaning</p> <p>Control System: Tangible results</p> <p>Communication: Frequent and informal</p> <p>BOARD: Following or Leading Volunteer (Hands-on)</p>	<p>Operations' procedures are written and standardized: job description, personnel policies; jack of all trades disappears.</p> <p>Management Focus: Efficient operations</p> <p>Organizational Structure: Centralized</p> <p>Top Management Style: Directive</p> <p>Rewards: Salary/merit increases</p> <p>Control System: Standards</p> <p>Communication: Formal/impersonal</p> <p>BOARD: Volunteer Governing (Policy)</p>	<p>Expansion into new projects, areas; staff makes decisions; heightened motivation at lower levels.</p> <p>Management Focus: Expansion of market</p> <p>Organizational Structure: Decentralize/geography</p> <p>Top Management Style: Delegate</p> <p>Rewards: Mission, project bonuses</p> <p>Control System: Reports! profit center</p> <p>Communication: Decentralized</p> <p>BOARD: Volunteer Governing to Institutional</p>	<p>More formal and time-consuming planning; provide greater coherence, consolidation and organization</p> <p>Management Focus: Consolidate organization</p> <p>Organizational Structure: Team approach</p> <p>Top Management Style: Watchdog</p> <p>Rewards: Mission, money</p> <p>Control System: Plans, reports</p> <p>Communication: Frequent staff reporting</p> <p>BOARD: Institutional (Policy and Fundraising)</p>

Transition readiness indicators...

of employees increases
Informal communications inadequate
Charisma & cause now insufficient to keep org. running
Burdened with mgmt. response & demand more structure
Fears of impending bureaucracy
Longing for the good old days
Time to let go of your baby

Hierarchy: Lower staff don't share ownership
Procedures rigid; stifle initiative
Demands for greater autonomy & staff participation in decisions

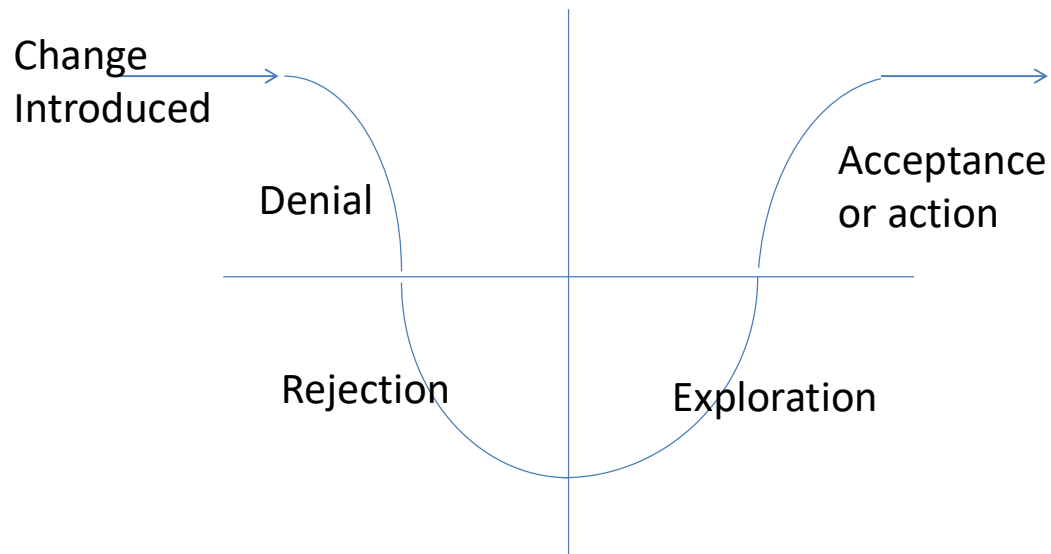
"Projectitis"/fiefdoms rampant
Top mgmt. losing control
Coordination breaks down
Focus on individual projects
Calls for renewed sense of overall direction

Red tape crisis
Proliferation of planning
Accountability systems exceed their utility

Adapted for nonprofits by Karl Mathiason in "Passages" from Greiner's "Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow," Harvard Business Review, 1972. Via La Salle University Nonprofit Management Development Center

Appendix F – Process of Change

The Process of Change



Appendix G – Roles and Responsibilities

Working in a small group, please answer these questions. For each question, you will define responsibilities as Primary (P), Contributing (C), and None (N). (You can use this format to address any issue where there is confusion as to roles and responsibilities. We offer these questions as examples.)

This is the record of the three different teams assessing the questions. Following each written in bold type is some comments provided by the ANCA Team. Note, there can only be one primary.

Who should run the friend raising events in support of the mission of the Richfield Heritage Preserve?

	FoCH	RJRD	Administrator
Planning	P P P	N N C	C P C
Approval	P N C	C P C	C N P
Implementation	P P P	N N N	C C C
Review	P P P	C P N	C C C

While for the most part there is agreement, the one place the ANCA Team would disagree is in the approval. If Richfield Joint Recreation District or the Administrator does anything more than approve the use of the facility through the special use permit, they accept some of the responsibility legally and financially, which is unacceptable. The Richfield Joint Recreation District could contribute to the review.

Who is responsible for managing the volunteer effort within the grounds of the Richfield Heritage Preserve?

	FoCH	RJRD	Administrator
Planning	C C C	C N C	P P P
Approval	C N N	C N N	P P P
Implementation	C N N	C N N	P P P
Review	C N N	C C C	P P P

The groups were closely aligned with this. The administrator serves the primary purpose for this. His or her involvement insures the volunteers are performing the work needed by the Richfield Heritage Preserve. The Friends of Crowell Hilaka and Richfield Joint Recreation District boards would be involved by providing people who can volunteer but not in any management role. On occasion each group might help with the planning by suggesting project. Neither should be part of the approval. Approval of volunteer work does not rise to the level of board action. Both groups might provide people to volunteer. The administrator might ask some Friends of Crowell Hilaka or Richfield Joint Recreation District members to head up a team, but they are not doing this as a board member, but as just another volunteer.

Who is responsible for major capital improvements to the Richfield Heritage Preserve?

	FoCH	RJRD	Administrator
Planning	C C C	P P P	C C N
Approval	N N N	P P P	N N N
Implementation	C C N	P P P/C	C P C/P
Review	C C N	P P P	N C C

Once again, there was significant agreement and the majority is correct. One just needs to remove the duplicate primaries in implementation. In a large organization the administrator would be responsible for implementation, but with the size of this operation that should remain the responsibility of the Richfield Joint Recreation District.

Appendix H – Program Impact Worksheet

Maximize the quality and effectiveness of Chippewa Nature Center programs and services

Develop due diligence questions for taking on new opportunities (time involvement, impact of employee hiring, ROI, analysis of inputs, impact on current programs/ services, etc.)

Mission & Vision:

- How does this fit our mission?
- How does this opportunity affect other visitor experiences?
- What impact will it have on current programs/priorities?

Staff Impact:

- How does this affect staff? (need to hire, use of time, priorities, prep time, burn out)
- How are other departments affected by an opportunity? (more maintenance, vehicle use, marketing, volunteer needs)
- Will anything have to come off the plate?

Brand & Reputation:

- Does the opportunity meet our brand promise of excellence and quality?
- What visibility will CNC gain as a result?
- What is the impact of saying “no”? (Reputation, partnerships, relationships) and we have to be okay saying “no”.

Community Impact:

- How many people and to what level will be impacted by this opportunity?
- Are there opportunities for partners and collaborators?
- Is there another organization meeting the need?
- What data do we need? Does the data support a need for the opportunity?

Financial Impact:

- Can we fund it?
- Can we sustain it?
- Is there an opportunity to generate revenue?

Environmental Impact:

- What’s the impact on our property, trails, and infrastructure?
- Is there significant ecosystem or environmental impact?

Safety & Security Impact:

- Can we do it safely and maintain security?