

## **1970 - 1979      A PARK DISTRICT IS BORN**

### **1970**

- After several years of discussions and studies by the Findlay – Hancock County Chamber of Commerce, Hancock Regional Planning Commission and League of Women Voters, requests were made to the City and County to form a park district for all of Hancock County, including cities and villages.
- Following Resolutions asking for a park district by Hancock County Commissioners, and several public hearings, and Findlay City Council, Probate Court Judge Robert G. Payne created the Hancock County Regional Park District on October 19, 1970 to improve and add parks and recreation within the district boundaries of Hancock County.
- The first Board of Park Commissioners appointed included: Everett Musser, Emory Adams, Robert Smith.

### **1973**

- Board of Park Commissioners appoint Tim Brugeman as the first park district planning director and began working out of regional planning building at 223 S. Main St., Findlay.

### **1974**

- Civitan Park, a gift from the Hancock County Commissioners, is the first HCRPD area to open in downtown Findlay.
- 120 acres (Riverbend) located northeast of Findlay Reservoir is purchased by means of a \$42,500 federal cost-sharing grant, with Hancock County Commissioners matching county funds.
- A system of three bike routes throughout the City of Findlay and countryside begin development. The first, the Old Millstream Bikeway opens Memorial Day, 1974 with over 300 cyclists riding the first tour.
- Nature programming series begins to encourage people to experience the out-of-doors.

### **1975**

- 75 acres (first phase of 120 acres) at Riverbend Recreation Area opens to the public with improvement of an additional 6,500 trees being planted along with picnic shelters and grills, playground, parking lot and restrooms.
- A Ranger Department is established to curtail vandalism.
- North Country and Ottawa Creek Bicycle Tours are offered completing the bicycling system in cooperation with the Hancock County Engineer's Department and Hancock Handlers Bicycle Club.
- An Outdoor Recreation Plan is released to the public.

### **1976**

- Hancock County Regional Park District name is changed to Hancock Park District.
- Voters approve first parks levy for 0.5 mills for 10 years.
- Bureau of Outdoor Recreation grant received to match development funds for further improvements at Riverbend.
- Cooperative agreements network established with the city of Findlay and nine villages.
- Friends of the Old Millstream provide guidance to help with beautification of river parks for better public access sites for fishing and canoeing activities.

### **1977**

- HPD completes its most active and productive year in nine park and outdoor recreation area totaling 157 acres in various stages of development.
- HPD rangers begin patrolling 1,000 acres at the Findlay Reservoirs as part of a cooperative agreement.
- \$16,000 in grant funds is received from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to complete new facilities at Riverside Waterfalls and Eastpoint sites.
- Five new sportsmen's access areas (Old Mill Stream Parkway) are opened along the Blanchard River including Riverside Park Waterfront, Waterfalls Sportsmen's Access, Liberty Landing, Eastpoint and River Landing transferring property from the City of Findlay to HPD.
- Canoe livery opens for operation as a HPD concession.
- Sharing of levy funds to Findlay and nine village parks begins under a new cooperative agreement.
- Forest G. Hall Memorial Park, named for the local conservationist, at the Old Millstream Fairground is dedicated.

### **1978**

- 11 parks and outdoor recreational areas totaling 163 acres are now part of the HPD.
- An old barn for a maintenance center is improved at Riverbend.
- Further development at Riverbend Recreation Area continues with a \$31,225 grant from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and visitation soars at the county's largest park. Development included construction of additional shelters, group picnic area, restrooms, play equipment, and parking lots.
- A concentrated effort to clean up almost 53 miles of the log-chocked Blanchard Riverbend through Hancock County began.
- Three bicycling routes are establishing utilizing over 130 miles of paved roads with signage and pavement markings throughout Hancock County.

### **1979**

- The most extensive capital improvement year to date for HPD, with new major construction projects and renovation of older facilities completed.
- HPD relocated Headquarters into the 1833 Courthouse at 819 Park Street, Findlay. At the time, it was thought that the structure was the 1<sup>st</sup> Hancock County Courthouse.
- Old County Dog Pound is renovated into a maintenance facility at River Landings located on Fox Street in Findlay.
- Remington Arms Company donates 13 acres (Blue Rock Nature Preserve) as the first nature preserve for HPD valued at \$113,000.