

Short Line Hollow Park provides nature lovers new walking and hiking trails.

BY JENNIFER BROZAK

Thanks to a tireless group of local volunteers, Ross Township now has a new dog-friendly walking and hiking trail park.

The park, named Short Line Hollow Park, officially opened in October of 2017. The name reflects the township's history, including its proximity to the former Harmony Short Line Railroad, which once ran through the terrain. The park was named by a Ross resident, following a month-long community contest sponsored by the township.

The idea for the park was conceived in late 2016 after discussions with Walk/Bike Ross, a township committee founded by Ross Commissioner Jeremy Shaffer. The all-volunteer group is dedicated to making walking/biking more accessible to residents.

"There is a need for better hiking, walking, and biking areas in our community," says Shaffer. "I was looking for ways that we could economically

Hit the Trail



create some hiking/trail areas in the community. I was also very interested in preserving green space in the township.”

Upon reviewing the area’s land parcels, Shaffer discovered that the township owned 60 acres along Cemetery Lane that weren’t being used.

“I thought this would be an excellent area for a new trail park and worked with others in Walk/Bike Ross and fellow commissioners to investigate using the land to create a park,” he says.

Steve Korbelt, President of the Ross Township Board of Commissioners, stresses that the park’s development was primarily a result of volunteer manpower.

“Due to limited funds, the park was predominantly prepared through hundreds of volunteer hours,” says Korbelt. “Also, I know that the township public works department was directed to make several improvements that resulted in improvements to the area that is now the Short Line Hollow Park.”

Walk/Bike Ross member Joseph Brandt says that even the team of volunteers was surprised by the park’s fast development.

“When we first started working on the trails last spring, I had a hard time imagining that we would make as much progress as we did,” he says. “However, we had several volunteers who became personally committed to making the trails a reality. As a result, we now have over two miles of walking and mountain biking trails cutting through the valley.”

Aside from the trails, which volunteers carved into the terrain, the park’s natural habitat was left undisturbed. Therefore, there are a variety of native plants and animals throughout the park.

“I am pleased we were able to preserve this green space in the township and turn it into an excellent area for hiking – all at no cost to Ross taxpayers,” says Shaffer. “It’s great to see Short Line Hollow, now the largest in Ross, being utilized by residents from all over the region. The ability to walk dogs in the park also meets a key need that residents were asking for. I am very grateful for all the volunteers who have made this happen and their ongoing work.”

Korbelt notes that there are plans to add more trails throughout the park in the future—requiring more volunteer help.

“We are always looking for volunteers to clean up and to build new trails,” he says.

Brandt agrees. “We are off to an exciting start, but the park is still in its early development stage. There is still a lot of work to be done on the existing trails, as well as on a few new trails we are planning to build in the coming years,” he says. “However, it is very satisfying to see what can be done through those who have



volunteered their time and energy toward making the vision a reality. I hope that more people will see the potential of the park and step forward to help us to make that happen.”

The park is the only one in Ross where leashed dogs are permitted. It is open from dawn to dusk, every day of the year.

For more information, or to volunteer, contact Walk/Bike Ross through the “Friends of Short Line Hollow Park” Facebook page, or via email at walkbikeross@gmail.com. ■

