

Kayaking, canoeing, history, hiking

Ohioville Community Day July 17 at Lock 57 Park

By *Angela Modany*

The Ohio River Trail Council will hold its first Community Day on July 17 at Lock 57 Park in Ohioville with plenty of kayaking, hiking and local history.

The activities will run from 1-9 p.m. at the park. John Szatkiewicz, vice president of the Ohio River Trail Council and mayor of Ohioville Borough, said people should come dressed for the outdoors.

“Wear play clothes, something you don’t mind getting wet,” he said. “Wear comfortable shoes – tennis shoes are probably your best bet.”

The council is partnering with Venture Outdoors, an outdoor

non-profit organization, which will provide kayaks, life preservers and free beginner kayaking instruction. Venture Outdoors will

instruct the kayakers in groups and take them a mile up to Lock 54, a calm stretch of Little Beaver Creek, Szatkiewicz said.

Besides kayaking, there will also be an opportunity to help plant wildflowers for a butterfly preserve. It is supported by the Venture Outdoors Environmental Catalyst Program, which encourages environmental organizations to engage more with their communities. The butterfly preserve will be parallel to the walking trail and include a variety of plants that attract butterflies and

hummingbirds, including lilacs and butterfly bush.

“The butterfly preserve is important because they’re losing so much habitat,” Szatkiewicz said. “We’re trying to sustain the butterfly and hummingbird populations.”

Birdwatchers are encouraged to come to see the variety of different birds that live in the Lock 57 Park area. Szatkiewicz said bald eagles, great blue herons, kingfishers, ospreys, hawks and turkey buzzards are among species often sighted around the park.

Those who wish to hike will be able to do so on the old Pittsburgh, Lisbon and Western Railroad

tracks. Szatkiewicz said this trail will eventually become part of the Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway, which will stretch from Lake Erie to the Ohio River.

There will be plenty of history to discover at the Community Day as well. Szatkiewicz will be one of the council members talking at the Point of Beginning. This landmark sits near where Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia meet. It was the starting point for land surveys of the Northwest Territory and western states, and marks the beginning of the township and range system.

Visitors can also learn more about the engineering marvel that

is the Sandy and Beaver Canal, which was built in the 1830s and ‘40s and ran north for 73 miles, much of it along the Little Beaver Creek. Lock 57, the first lock on the canal, is now underwater because of the raised pool created by the modern Ohio River lock and dam system.

Szatkiewicz said many people aren’t aware of the history in the area. Community Day is “a good opportunity to get together and learn about history, the community and the outdoors,” he said.

For more information on the event or the Ohio River Trail Council, people should call 724.728.2625.