Friends of Maybury State Park

2024 Summary

The Friends of Maybury State Park (FoM) had a very successful year. The Organization sponsored 16 events and participated in an additional 12 events sponsored by other organizations. They grew their volunteer base as well as implemented processes to ensure the continuity of operations for years to come. They had success moving forward several large projects and utilized grant money to make park improvements and offer a new educational program. 2025 looks to be an even better year as the organization capitalizes and improves on the foundation laid in 2024.

2024 events sponsored by the Friends of Maybury State Park

First Day Hike, January 1st

Full Moon Hike, February 24th

Full Moon Hike, March 24th

Wildflower Walk, May 3rd and 4th

*Introduction to Nature Journaling, June 9th – New Event*

Music at Maybury July 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, Aug 5th & 12th

Edible Plant Hike, August 17th

History of Maybury Sanatorium Hike, September 14th

Park Open House, October 12th

Owl Prowl, December 6th

2024 events the Friends of Maybury participated in that were sponsored by other organizations

Eggstravaganza, Maybury Farm, April 6th

Earth Day Clean-up, Maybury State Park DNR, April 20th

Michigan DNR Friends Summit, North Higgins Lake State Park, May 3rd & 4th

Plymouth Business Showcase, St John’s Resort, May 6th

Family Campout at Maybury State Park, Northville Parks & Recreation, July 27th

DiversAbility Day at Maybury State Park, Oakland Co Parks/DNR, August 22nd

*Animal Tracking at Maybury State Park, MI DNR, August 23rd – Requested by FoM*

Schoolcraft College School Daze Fall Festival, September 16th & 17th

Great Fall Festival, Maybury Farm, October 5th & 6th

Northville Holiday Lighted Parade, November 22nd

Initiative generation and tracking: The FoM Board of Directors wanted to ensure that all members were given the opportunity to submit ideas even if they weren’t comfortable speaking up during a meeting. Therefore, during the November 2023 monthly meeting and January 2024 Annual Meeting 3x5 cards were handed out so attendees could provide input anonymously. This proved to be a successful way to gather input as many of the below achievements are initiatives from a member suggestion.

Major Projects

**Seven mile nonmotorized entrance:** After several years of hard work, this project passed several milestones during 2024. The FoM received several large public and private donations, obtained a cost estimate from the engineering consultants, and received plan approval from Wayne County. The project is expected to go out for construction bids in early 2025.

**EnChroma lens viewers:** EnChroma lens viewers improve color vision for individuals with color blindness. The FoM applied for and received a grant from the Northville Rotary and also received a generous private donation for this initiative. Two viewers were ordered and will be installed in the park in the first half of 2025.

**Olin Community Foundation Grant projects**: Several new bridges were built and gravel was placed on the path around the pond using money from the grant and DNR manpower.

Accountability and Continuity – The DNR, FoM members, generous donors and the local community count on the FoM to be good stewards of their resources and plan for the future. Therefore, the FoM put a priority on financial accountability and long-term continuity.

**Money Minder:** The FoM fully implemented a web-based accounting software designed for use by nonprofits. This facilitates a 100% tracking and reporting of income and expenses and provides accountability to its members, the Maybury community and IRS. It also paves the way for a smooth transition during turnover of board of directors officer positions.

**Event summaries:** Another way the FoM helped guarantee the long-term sustainment of the organization was to complete an event summary for each event the organization participated in. This ensures the knowledge of veteran volunteers are passed on and lessons learned are captured.

**Supply inventory/organization:** The FoM continued to inventory and organize their supplies that are maintained at the park. They aim to have an inventory of their resources so they can be utilized but also to not store items they can no longer use. Serviceable items no longer needed by the organization were repurposed by donating them to other organizations within the park.

Marketing/Communication: Efforts were made to optimize how the organization communicates with its members and local community by ensuring communication was accurate, timely, and purposeful.

**Email:** The FoM continues to use email as a way to communicate with its membership, but has taken a more deliberate approach to ensure they are not flooding members’ inbox. In addition, they put an increased emphasis on protecting members’ privacy by use of “BCC” and encryption whenever possible.

**Website:** Thanks to the many many hours put in by a team comprised of veteran and new members, the antiquated website was saved from catastrophic failure. The platform was updated and the appearance was overhauled with a new template and fresh content.

**Social Media:** Social media continues to be a beneficial way to communicate to the community. The FoM coordinated Facebook and Instagram posts to ensure a consistent message. Event postings continue to be a key component. In addition, the FoM made an effort to increase the number of posts that educated followers on the other contributions the organization makes, as well as the benefits of becoming a member.

**Signs in Park:** The organization felt that there are many visitors to the park that are not members and don’t know about the FoM. To help fill this knowledge gap temporary signs were posted in the park to educate visitors on what the organization does and the benefits of becoming a member.

**Scarecrow:** The FoM participated in the Scarecrow in the park in Downtown Plymouth.

**Holiday Tree:** The FoM decorated a tree in the park with decorations made by community groups.

**Selfie Sign:** A previously purchased Selfie Sign was mounted near the playground.

**New Brochures:** The membership brochure was updated including new professional quality photos taken by a volunteer DNR Photo Ambassador.

**Volunteerism:** The FoM was eager to grow their volunteer base by making volunteer opportunities more visible and easier to access. Opportunities are now posted on the website and in trailhead kiosks including a Sign-up Genius link so volunteers can easily register. This also improves continuity because all board members are able to view sign-ups and know who is expected to attend events. This resulted in a boost of first-time volunteers with the organization. Also, as part of building continuity, the FoM started promoting more shadowing opportunities. These opportunities allow individuals to work with an experienced guide in order to learn how to lead the event in the future.

Programs

**Scout Projects:** The FoM continued its long-standing tradition of partially funding projects for local scouts. During 2024 two projects were completed that renovated sections of the boardwalk around the pond.

**Bluebird boxes:** 88 boxes were maintained and monitored resulting in 43 bluebird fledglings. In addition, the FoM replaced and relocated boxes in several locations and plans to continue the replacement efforts in 2025.

**Track Chair:** The FoM held a training session in the spring for individuals that desired to become a guide. In addition, the organization used donations to purchase program supplies and equipment.