



**OLMSTED  
PARKS**  
CONSERVANCY



# NATURE & NEIGHBORHOOD

Winter 2022



AN UPDATE ON  
BEARGRASS PRESERVE

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE  
CHEROKEE PARK COWS

TIPS FOR WINTER  
HIKING AND SLEDDING

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WHAT'S NEXT FOR

# BEARGRASS PRESERVE

AT CHEROKEE PARK

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Layla George  
*President & CEO*

**IT HAS BEEN ALMOST A YEAR SINCE** we announced the historic expansion of Cherokee Park. In December 2021, Norman and Belita Noltemeyer donated \$8 million to enable us to purchase 25 acres from the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. It was an unprecedented act of generosity leading to an unprecedented expansion of an urban park designed by the great Frederick Law Olmsted.

When we purchased the property, we placed permanent restrictions on the land to ensure it would serve as a public park open to all, in perpetuity. Quite a legacy for all involved.

Since that time, we have rolled up our sleeves and gotten to work. We were able to quickly raise the funds to

demolish the seven existing buildings on site. Tearing down a building is not as simple or quick as I would have thought. Items were removed and donated to Habitat for Humanity and Kentucky Refugee Ministries. Asbestos was removed and then came the fun part – demolition!

All the buildings have now been demolished and the next step is grinding the stone material and hauling it away. By the end of the year, the site will be graded and covered with seed and straw. This will provide a clean slate for what comes next.

And what does come next? A master plan.

We are currently reviewing proposals from firms to manage the master

planning process. This involves a historic and cultural analysis of the site, studies on the hydrology and natural landscape, community engagement, and of course, planning.

At the end of this nine-month process, we will have a design for Beargrass Preserve. Will it include a natural playground for children, walking trails through the woodlands, a paved path for cyclists and pedestrians, a new building for the offices of Olmsted Parks Conservancy?

Come to a planning meeting and share your input on what your hopes and dreams are for this property. It will take all of us to help realize the full potential of this incredible spot.



*Top: Contractors demolish the old buildings on the Beargrass Preserve property.*

*Below: These limestone cliffs, formerly Louisville Seminary property, are now protected as public park space in perpetuity.*

## December Membership Drive



**Dec. 1 - 17**

Enter to win a  
**FREE**  
**eBike!**

Donate any amount by December 17 and you'll be entered to win a PEDEGO E-BIKE - a \$1,995 value!\*

\*No purchase necessary to enter or win. See [official rules](#) for details.

# MOST INSTAGRAM-ABLE PLACES

WINTER EDITION

Jesse Hendrix-Inman  
*Development Manager*

## EACH SEASON CHANGES THE

landscapes of the Olmsted Parks. We've rounded up the spots with the "wow factor" for your Instagram and family snapshots this holiday season.

## SUMMIT FIELD AT IROQUOIS PARK

Iroquois Park is known for the stunning views at the North Overlook, but Summit Field deserves a closer look from photography enthusiasts. Olmsted Parks Conservancy's Team for Healthy Parks maintains the site as a native prairie, and the biodiversity is breathtaking. Grasses and seed pods provide food and shelter for insects, birds and other animals during the winter, and as a bonus, they offer a beautiful rustic view.

## CENTRAL PARK PERGOLA

The vine-draped pergola off the Old Louisville Visitors Center offers architectural interest and posing opportunities galore. Early morning and afternoon light filters through the structure for a soft glow.



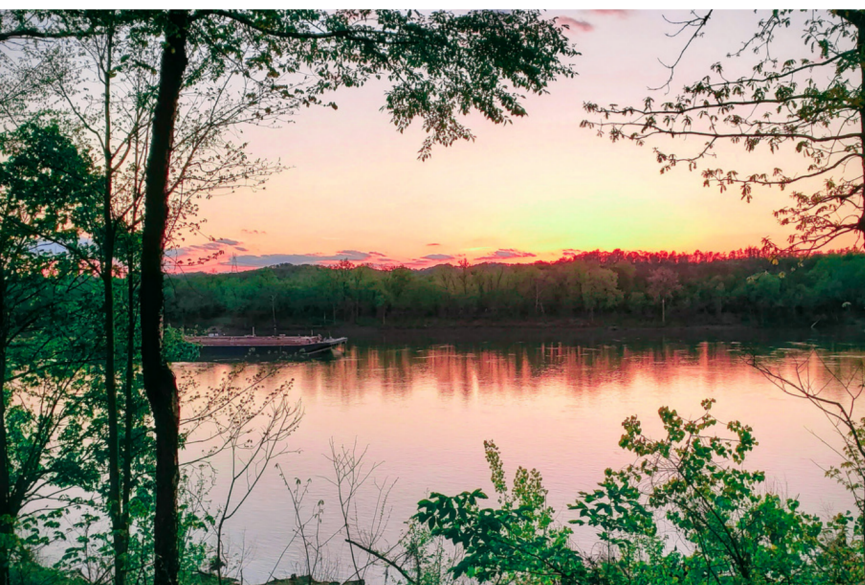
*Top: Summit Field at Iroquois Park.*

*Below: The Central Park Pergola.*



## WILLOW PARK GAZEBO

As Cherokee Triangle's "Town Square," Willow Park offers respite in the middle of the Highlands. The gazebo is well known as a gathering spot for concerts, family gatherings and even weddings. The sight of the gazebo gives many Louisvillians a feeling of nostalgia, and fewer events on site in the winter means it's easier to get your personal Instagram-able moment.



## CHICKASAW PARK RIVERVIEW

The sun sets over the river at this waterfront park, painting the sky with color and light. The Olmsted Parks Conservancy's Team for Healthy Parks works hard to clear the area of invasive plants to open the view and keep the natural areas healthy. The vista is particularly impressive in the winter, when the bare trees afford an even more expansive view.

*Top left: The gazebo in Willow Park; photo by Anita Finley.  
Left: A view of the Ohio River from Chickasaw Park;  
photo by Darrin Johnson.*

# Tyler Gerth Memorial Photo Contest

The 2022 Olmsted Parks Conservancy Photography Contest was named in honor of Tyler Gerth, who was tragically killed in June 2020 while photographing and supporting the movement for racial justice in Louisville.

The winning photographs from the contest are featured on our new notecards. These images celebrate the beauty of our city's Olmsted Park System, which was designed to be an equitable public resource and connect various neighborhoods together. We are honored to pay tribute to Tyler Gerth and promote the love of parks and photography in Louisville.

Notecards are available in packs of six on our online store at [olmstedparks.org/shop](https://olmstedparks.org/shop).



# WRANGLING COWS IN CHEROKEE PARK

Marshall Berry  
*Field Crew Technician*

Photos by Liz Winlock

*On October 21, while being transferred between trucks, eleven cows escaped into Cherokee Park. Olmsted Parks Conservancy staff, including Marshall Berry, helped to safely round up seven of the cows and coax them onto a truck. Here is Marshall's story from an eventful day on the job.*

**THE TEAM FOR HEALTHY PARKS HAD** spent the better part of the morning at Algonquin Park, preparing the pollinator garden for winter by cutting the plants down to the ground and collecting the debris so that the new growth in the spring wouldn't be inhibited. On our way back to the shop [THP headquarters], we received texts and then a call from Liz Winlock, OPC's Project Manager. She reported there were cows sighted at the Cherokee Park golf course and we were needed there. Mary Anne and I headed straight to Cherokee Park and met up



*Cows enjoy the grass in Cherokee Park.*

with Liz on the golf course, while Matthew and Lauren went to get hay and snow fencing from the shop.

There were seven young bulls on the golf course, and our first objective was to get them in a bunch and hold them while we waited for reinforcements. By positioning ourselves correctly and walking behind them, Liz, Mary Anne, and I were able to herd them to a wet spot. The cows were thirsty at this point, so they were stepping in the saturated soil and drinking the water that filled their tracks. Luckily the bulls were young, only about a third of the size of more mature bulls, and calm considering the nature of their escape. About twenty minutes after we had the bulls in a good spot, Louisville Metro Animal Services and Louisville Metro Police arrived. After



*Marshall keeps an eye on a grazing bull.*

a quick chat with everyone about strategy, Matthew and Lauren came with the hay and snow fencing.

At this point I had taken charge of the situation because I was the only one who had a background in wrangling cows. I grew up on a beef farm in Henry County, Kentucky, where I spent a lot of time around cattle. I was out in the fields with my dad as early as I could walk, and I learned from him that cattle have body language that can be studied and read, just like people do. After years of practice, I developed a keen

intuition in knowing what cattle are going to do before they do it. I learned when to move, when to be still, when to make noise, and when to be quiet. Never in my life did I think I would be using this experience in the city, but now I was especially grateful for everything my farming background had taught me.

I told people where to position their vehicles, where to stand, where to put the snow fencing, and how to get the cattle to move how we wanted them to. After all was explained, we started to move them.

We stood about five feet apart from one another and formed a semicircle reaching from the bulls to the trailer. Then the people behind the bulls only had to clap and wave their arms to move the cattle forward, while everyone else kept them contained inside the semicircle. With thirty people this was easily done, and within about a minute we had the bulls pinned right next to the open side door of the trailer.

From there, I entered the penned-in area alone and encouraged the cattle to go into the trailer by tapping the back, sides, or tail of the cow closest to the door. The entrance was about a foot and a half off the ground, and everyone was clamoring that we needed a ramp and trying to figure out where we could get one. "A ramp would be nice," I said, "but they'll go in if we're patient."

Liz suggested putting hay inside the trailer and at the entrance, and the bulls took interest immediately. After about twenty minutes of careful poking and prodding, one bull jumped into the trailer, and the rest quickly followed. After the gate to the trailer had been closed, I was met with handshakes, high fives, and calls of "Good work!" from the group. Before I was even out of the pen, reporters were around me asking if I had a moment to speak to them.



*The Team for Healthy Parks uses snow fencing to corral the cattle.*



*Working together, LMAS, LMPD, and OPC staff gradually herd the bulls toward the trailer.*



After things had settled a bit and most everyone had left, Liz and I remained at the park to see if we could find any of the remaining four bulls that had split off from the group before the crew had arrived. We had no luck that day, but a cowboy came in from West Virginia the next day and was able to catch three more. The last bull was finally caught on November 19 and taken to Tribe Animal Sanctuary.

As someone who likes work to be shaken up sometimes, I thought cattle wrangling was a great adventure for a Friday. It was a fun experience, and it felt good to exhibit the skills and knowledge I have.

A frustrating stereotype I've observed in my life is the belief that farmers are just country bumpkins. In reality, farmers are often very intelligent. It takes knowledge and skill to handle a situation like rounding up escaped cattle. As someone who grew up on a farm, I want to be an example and show this stereotype couldn't be farther from reality.

*Marshall gets up-close and personal to coax the escaped bulls into the truck.*



## MEET THE TEAM



**Lauren Hendrickson**  
Field Crew Technician

***On Staff Since:*** December 2019

***Favorite Olmsted Park:*** Iroquois

***Hobbies:*** Walking her dog, hiking, running, reading, and keeping her houseplants and garden alive

As a college student, Lauren completed Olmsted Parks Conservancy's Park Steward training, a program for dedicated volunteers. She later went to work in southern Indiana, but upon returning to Louisville was excited to learn the Conservancy was hiring. Now, as a member of the Team for Healthy Parks, Lauren helps manage the natural areas of the parks to maintain and improve their ecological resilience and biodiversity. She specializes in woodland restoration: removing invasive vegetation to enhance the native flora and habitat for local fauna. She can also be found improving other amenities in the parks—for example, installing a tribute bench or maintaining a landscape bed. Lauren's favorite part of working in the parks is seeing an area of woods transform. "I love to see the presence of plants transition in an area as we are working from season to season and throughout its management," she says.



# WINTER TRAIL TIPS

Liz Winlock  
Project Manager

**TEMPERATURES ARE DIPPING, BUT** there's still plenty to do in our parks, especially on trails. Here are some tips to keep your winter park visits fun and enjoyable for all.

Almost all of Louisville's Olmsted Parks have paved walking paths that are separated from car traffic. These can be great spots to amble along, especially if you're bringing young children, are facing mobility challenges, or just want a quick walk among the trees. Visit our website at [olmstedparks.org](http://olmstedparks.org) to find parks and trails in the system you might not have visited yet.

While you're out, look around! When leaves are off the trees, you may be able to see things you miss in other seasons. If you see or hear an interesting living thing, try using the iNaturalist, eBird, or Merlin apps to identify it.

While you're out on the trails, follow a few basic rules to help everyone stay safe and have fun:

*Above: a section of a new natural surface trail in Iroquois Park. In cold months, freeze-thaw conditions pose a risk to natural surface trails like this one.*

- **Stay on paths** as much as possible. Taking shortcuts degrades the trail and spreads invasive plants, too.
- **Follow Leave No Trace ethics.** If you bring something in, you are responsible for placing it in a trash can or packing it out again. You can even go a step above by bringing bags to pick up bottles, cans, and other litter and leave the park even better than you found it.
- If you notice you're picking up lots of burs or sticky seeds on your pants, boots, or dog's fur in one area, **shake off seeds** before you go somewhere else. This can help to slow down the spread of invasive plants like Japanese chaff flower.

- **Practice trail etiquette.** Acknowledge others on the trail, especially different user groups. If you're passing someone from behind, announce yourself and try to go to their left. In narrow, tight trail spaces, be prepared to slow down occasionally so people can navigate around one another. When going downhill, step to the side and let folks coming uphill keep their momentum.
- **Pay attention to park signs, rules, and closures.** There are so many great trails in the area! If one is closed, there's a good chance it's for your safety.
- **Keep dogs on leashes** in public spaces. Especially on trails, you are responsible for your pet and their behavior. Help them follow Leave No Trace by picking up after them.



*The great egret is one of many birds observant hikers may encounter in the parks.  
Photo by Jeff Mattingly.*

Finally, be aware of **freeze-thaw conditions**. Even the most compacted and established trails can absorb water. When that combines with freezing temperatures, soil can get less compacted and move around, shifting to make channels and ruts that will then hold more water...which freezes, moves soil, and keeps making bigger ruts in the trails.

It doesn't take long for great trails to turn into a sludgy mess that's lost the cross-slope required to shed water. Hiking and riding both can damage trails when that freeze-thaw cycle is happening quickly.

Here are a few tips to help protect trails while temperatures are see-sawing over that 32° F point:

- Before gearing up for a hike or ride, **check local trail conditions**. The Kentucky Mountain Bike Association tracks current trail conditions on their website at [kymba.org](http://kymba.org).
- When you get to a trailhead, pay attention. Are folks coming off the trail with thick mud on their boots and tires? **If your boots or tires are quickly coated in mud, turn around** and use paved trails or come back another day.
- Consider [donating to fund our trail work](#). These trails help us to stay healthy and feel connected to nature. It's our job to keep them maintained so we can continue to enjoy them for years to come.

# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ANIMAL TRACKS

Sarah Wolff

Director of Advocacy and Programs

Illustrations by  
Elizabeth Paige Carlisle

**WINTER IS A GREAT TIME TO LOOK** for secrets in the woods and fields. A light, fresh cover of snow can reveal the movements of many shy creatures, inspiring our curiosity and hours of fun in nature.

Tracking is something best learned by doing, but here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Animal tracks are easiest to find in mud, soft soil, sand, and snow.
- Shadows created during the early morning or late afternoon hours make prints easier to see.
- Study the ground closely, noting the size of the track and whether it shows claw marks.
- Most importantly, *don't get lost!* Before heading into the woods, always make sure someone knows where you are going and when you plan to return.

With that in mind, here is an overview of some of the most common tracks you may find in our local parks:

*Right: White-tail deer are common in wooded areas of the parks. In snow, their tracks are easy to identify. Photo by Buddy Sergesketter.*



**Rabbit** tracks have repeating bound (jump) patterns. Each group of 4 tracks tends to form a tall, thin rectangle. Rabbits also have small, round toes and fur-covered feet.



**Squirrels** have a wide, blocky bounding pattern compared to rabbits. If tracks are clear, you may see the long, skinny toes. Follow these tracks and they will eventually lead to a tree or other structure for the squirrel to climb.



**Raccoons** tend to waddle when they walk and often leave a trail with side-by-side tracks. Look for paw prints with five long, finger-like toes. The toes usually connect to a C-shaped palm pad.



**Opossum** tracks are highly recognizable, as each foot has five toes and the rear tracks resemble those of an infant child. Opossums also tend to stagger when they walk.



**Deer** tracks are distinctly hoof-shaped and usually easy to identify. However, their hind feet tend to step on top of their front tracks, leaving distorted and confusing marks. In deep snow, even deer tracks can be tough to identify.



**Canine** tracks can be easily misidentified. Look for 4 toes on each foot, claws that usually (but not always) show, and a triangular heel pad.

Dogs' heel pads tend to be fairly small in proportion to their foot (about the size of 3 of their toes), while cats' heel pads tend to be proportionally larger (about the size of 4 toes).

A domestic dog can have a similar-sized print to a coyote, making it difficult to tell them apart. If you find a set of prints, you can usually tell the difference by how the two animals walk. Wild animals like coyotes tend to walk in a straight line to conserve energy, while dogs zig-zag and circle around quite a bit.

The fox is the smallest canine and has the smallest print (2" to 3"), almost dainty compared to their bigger cousins. Foxes tend to drag their feet and also have more hair in their paws, producing a print that is fuzzy around the edges and has a small pad imprint. Domestic dogs also tend to splay their toes, producing a track with toes and nails that are pointing outward. Another difference is the nails: dog nails are thick and blunt, while wild canines leave thin and sharp nail prints.

For more help in identifying animal tracks, you can download a free pocket guide from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife at [fw.ky.gov](http://fw.ky.gov).

Happy tracking!

# READY FOR SLEDDING



Sarah Wolff  
Director of Advocacy and Programs

**AS THE DAYS GET SHORTER AND COLDER,** there is still fun to be had in the Olmsted Parks! Sledding is a great way to gather with friends and family in the winter months. Below is some important information to help you plan your next sledding adventure.

## SLEDDING RULES

- Designated sledding hills in six parks will be open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on days when the snow accumulation reaches 2-3 inches.
- Sledding is permitted on designated hills when the "Sledding Hill Open" sign is displayed. Park users are asked to avoid sledding when hills are closed.
- Keep in mind if you see blades of grass poking through the snow cover, there is not enough snow coverage to sled. Sledding on surfaces with too little snow cover will cause turf damage that must be repaired in the spring.

*Above: Baringer Hill in Cherokee Park is a popular destination for sledding on snowy days.*

## DESIGNATED SLEDDING HILLS

On days when snow accumulates 2-3 inches, look for "Sledding Hill Open" signs in these parks:

### Olmsted Parks

- Cherokee Park
- Tyler Park

### Other parks

- Joe Creason Park
- George Rogers Clark Park
- McNeely Lake Park
- Charlie Vettiner Park

- Do not sled on golf courses. Sledding can cause considerable damage to fairways and greens that may result in costly repairs.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted in the parks at any time.
- Bonfires are not permitted in parks.
- Park users are urged to carry a cell phone in the event of an emergency.
- Please pick up your trash and use the designated trash bins for waste removal—or take trash with you as you leave.
- Those who use the designated sledding hills do so *at their own risk*.

### SLEDDING SAFETY

- Only use devices designed for sledding.
- Wear appropriate clothing—loose ends or flaps can easily get caught.
- Do not overload a sled with too many riders.
- Dress in layers, so you can remove one layer without risking frostbite. Several thin layers are warmer than one bulky layer.
- Make sure you're with someone who knows your name and can contact family in an emergency. Parents should remain with their children.
- Don't drink alcohol before sledding; it impairs your judgment and causes the body to lose heat more rapidly.
- Check your path for trees and other objects before starting your descent.

- Don't sled head-first or standing up. Good visibility is necessary during your descent.
- Don't face backwards, and make sure your vision isn't obscured by hats and scarves.
- When climbing the hill, stay to the sides. Don't climb in the sledding path. Remember slopes can become very crowded during peak times.

We hope you enjoy the snow and time with friends and family in the parks!



*Keep your sledding adventure fun and safe by following park rules and safety tips.*



Olmsted Parks Conservancy's mission is to restore, enhance and forever protect Louisville's Olmsted-designed parks and parkways, connecting nature and neighborhood while strengthening the community's well-being.

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