

***In Celebration
Ten Year Anniversary
2010 – 2020***



***Dedicated to the preservation and restoration
of Chestnut Ridge Park***



Commemorative Program



Message from the President

On behalf of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Board of Directors, welcome and thank you for being a part of our Ten Year anniversary celebration supporting the preservation and restoration of Chestnut Ridge Park.

We are delighted and immensely thankful to you for having chosen to support the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy in its mission.

This year, because of the difficult times, we have decided to try a different approach for our annual fund raiser through a virtual type Gala. Instead of all of us meeting at one location on a specific date to celebrate, we are giving you the option of choosing select area restaurants via dinner gift certificates as a thank you for your donation(s), for which you may use on your own date and time of choosing. This is our safe way of showing our appreciation for your support of the Conservancy.

In this commemorative booklet you will see and read about our beginnings, our founding trustees, individual past and current board members through the years, the story and history of Chestnut Ridge Park, nostalgic and current photos of the park, our Park restoration and preservation accomplishments in narrative and picture formats and lastly future Park improvement endeavors. We hope you enjoy this keepsake.

Our future ability to support restoration and preservation efforts in Chestnut Ridge Park depends on your support. We can only proceed forward with your financial backing.

From all of us at the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, again, our sincere thank you for your support and may you have a safe and healthy remainder of the year and coming year.

*Sincerely, Gordon M. Panek
President – Chestnut Ridge Conservancy*



Message from the Commissioner

As we all know, this year has been trying on all of us. We are pleased to say that we were able to be a sense of normalcy for many in our region, as we were able to keep all 10,000 acres of our parklands and properties open throughout the Pandemic.

Our Parks and Properties have seen a large increase in users in the past months, which has included many new users of our Parks. With the new users in the Parks we are able to be reminded of the many amazing assets we have across the County.

Through this difficult time, it is even more important that we are lucky enough to have a County Executive and County Legislature who recognize the importance of parks and continue to support our Park System in every way they can. As a non-mandated service in county government, Parks are happy to have great leaders in who recognize the importance of Parks as the “People’s Mandate”.

The 10,000 acres of the Erie County Park System spread across every corner of the County. From Akron Falls to Scoby Dam, it is often imperative for Erie County Parks to collaborate with great partners to preserve and enhance the many regional gems we operate across our County. This is why we are so pleased, to have a great partner in the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy (CRC). Without the CRC, many of the enhancement and restoration projects that have taken place in Chestnut Ridge Park over the past ten years may not have been possible, and for that, our whole region is grateful for the CRC’s efforts.

*Sincerely, Troy P. Schinzel
Commissioner – Erie County Parks, Recreation & Forestry*



*Ten years of partnership with the Erie
County Department of Parks,
Recreation and Forestry for the benefit
of Chestnut Ridge Park.*



For that, we sincerely thank

- ❖ *County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz*
- ❖ *Commissioner of Parks Troy P. Schinzel*
- ❖ *County Legislator John J. Mills*
- ❖ *Superintendent J. J. Thomas*
- ❖ *The entire staff at Chestnut Ridge Park*

STATE OF NEW YORK
LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY
BUFFALO, N.Y., SEPTEMBER 24, 2020 A.D.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT at a regular session of the Legislature of Erie County held in the County Hall, in the City of Buffalo, on the 24th day of September, 2020 A.D., a resolution was adopted, of which the following is a true copy:

Chestnut Ridge Conservancy
10th Anniversary

WHEREAS, *The Erie County Legislature seeks to honor individuals and institutions of Erie County who enhance the quality of life in the community through their efforts; and*

WHEREAS, *Chestnut Ridge Park consists of 1,213 acres of park land, named after the Chestnut Trees on its hills. Chestnut Ridge Park was one of the first parks established by Erie County in 1926, and is the largest park operated by the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry; and*

WHEREAS, *The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy was formed in 2010 to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park; and*

WHEREAS, *The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy members volunteer and raise money to assist various park events and projects including the annual youth fishing clinic, the Blue Star Memorial Byway marker, Santa Land and Winterfest, and the Eagle Scout Project to restore bleachers at the baseball diamond, among other events; and*

WHEREAS, *The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy has worked together with the county and other groups to improve the park in many ways including the installation of a wildflower garden, tennis court wind screens and benches, pet waste collection stations, memorial benches, fishing pier, long-range binoculars, casino mural restoration, park signage, extensive stone work restoration, casino floor refinishing, and more.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, *the Erie County Legislature pauses in its deliberations to honor and recognize members of The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy for protecting and improving the treasure of Chestnut Ridge Park to be enjoyed for generations.*



JOHN J. MILLS
Erie County Legislator – 11th District



Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

August 28, 2020

IN RECOGNITION OF 10 YEARS OF TIRELESS WORK RESTORING AND ENHANCING
CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK.

THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Stefan I. Mychajliw

Erie County Comptroller





ERIE COUNTY COMPTROLLER
HON. STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW

August 28, 2020

Mr. Gordon Panek
Chestnut Ridge Conservancy
P. O. Box 1376
Orchard Park, NY 14127

Dear Mr. Panek,

Congratulations to the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy on marking its 10th anniversary. Since your incorporation in 2010, the Conservancy has accomplished a great deal of restoration and important refurbishments to one of our county's most beautiful parks. The stone work you have done, the casino floor refinishing, your work on the eternal flame, and so many other important projects have helped keep Chestnut Ridge Park a jewel of our region.

Thank you and the rest of your board, as well as your many volunteers both past and present who have given in time talent and treasure. You and your members are great partners to Erie County, and I look forward to many more years of great work and partnership. As we move forward during and following this Coronavirus crisis, leaders like you are going to be instrumental in helping guide our area toward continued progress. The greatest natural resource of our region are people like you who have generous hearts, and are willing to share that spirit serving others.

As Erie County Comptroller, I appreciate your willingness to invest in our community. Thank you for using your gifts and talents to make our little corner of the world a better place to live.

Sincerely,

STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW
Erie County Comptroller

About the Conservancy, it's beginnings, and its future...

In an effort to assist the County of Erie in preserving and restoring Chestnut Ridge Park in the midst of budget cuts and rising expenses, a dedicated group of concerned citizens came together in 2008 to form the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

Officially incorporated in 2010 as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization the Conservancy was established to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park.

The Conservancy is a all volunteer organization comprised of a non-paid Board of Directors. The members of the Board work in partnership with Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry through a legal Memo of Understanding with Erie County. The Conservancy's funding stream is based on memberships, general donations and a once a year Gala fund raiser. Through the past ten years the Conservancy has accomplished some very notable achievements for Chestnut Ridge Park. See our achievements page.

As is the case with most not-for-profit organizations, funding new initiatives big or small remains a challenge. Today's Park perseveration and restoration projects whether they are big ones or smaller ones, cost a lot of money. Even simple stone work restoration can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

The Conservancy remains committed to continue as a viably funded organization, to utilize its resources to help with occasional calling from the Erie County Parks Department on various restoration or preservation projects. Community support is essential for the Conservancy to remain as a viable funded organization.



News from the Office of
**Erie County Executive Chris
Collins**

Contact: Ellen Notarius, Director of Community Relations
(716) 858-8500 (office)/(716) 870-5513 (cell)

For Immediate Release:
January 14, 2010

Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Formed to Revitalize Park

Volunteer group will help fundraise and identify projects to enhance park

Erie County Executive Chris Collins and County Parks Commissioner Jim Hornung welcome the opportunity to work with a group of volunteers who are forming the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy. This association of volunteers came together with the specific purpose of revitalizing Chestnut Ridge Park. The new group held its first fundraising party in the Chestnut Ridge Casino tonight.

This is a different model than the Olmsted Parks Conservancy. The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy will be focused on fundraising, and identifying possible projects to improve the park, with the guidance of the Erie County Parks Department. The County will continue to handle all maintenance and day to day operations of the park.

Parks Commissioner Jim Hornung said, "We're thrilled that Erie County residents are taking an active role in beautifying one of our County parks. Chestnut Ridge holds a tremendous amount of historic architecture in bridges and shelters. This group will help us preserve those structures. While government agencies across the nation deal with budget constraints, it's nice to see citizens step in and help ensure their parks remain in the best condition possible."

"Chestnut Ridge is the largest County park in the United States and is graced with stunning views, extraordinary natural beauty and unique rustic architecture," said Conservancy Member Marilyn Heim. "The vagaries of the past few years have left our Park in a state about which none of us can be pleased. With the enthusiastic support of our County Department of Parks, we have begun this venture to rebuild and revitalize our Park."

If the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy is successful, it may serve as a model to develop conservancies for other County parks in the future.

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy may be contacted by mail at PO Box 165, Orchard Park, NY 14127.

***The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy
2010 Original Board of Directors
“Founding Trustees”***

Chairman – Raymond Fabiniak (d)

President – John Bailey

Vice President – Ed Starosielec (d)

Treasurer – Jack Bertsch

Secretary – Justine LeFauve (d)

David M Buyers (d)

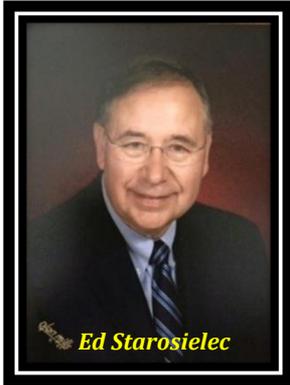
Marilyn Heim

Michael Merritt

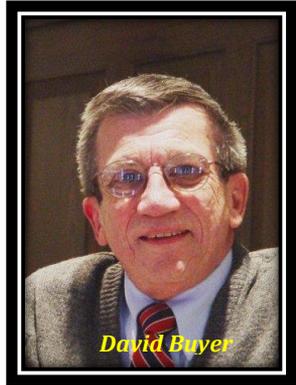
Ronald J. Michnik

Michael Neumeister

Sincere thank you to those founding trustees who had played the key role in forming, incorporating and setting the wheels in motion for the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and its mission. For those listed above (d) who have passed, may their memory live on with the organization they played their respective role in founding.

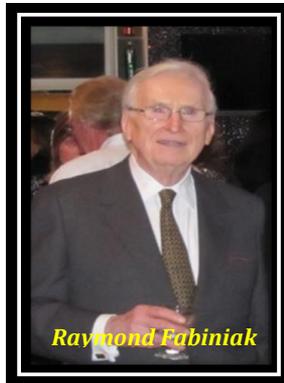


Ed Starosielec



David Buyer

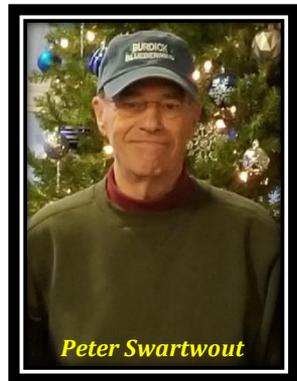
In Remembrance



Raymond Fabiniak



Justine LeFauve



Peter Swartwout

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy 2020 Current Board of Directors

*President - Gordon M. Panek
Vice President – Ramona Lloyd
Treasurer – Thomas A DiSimone
Secretary – William Thornton*

Directors

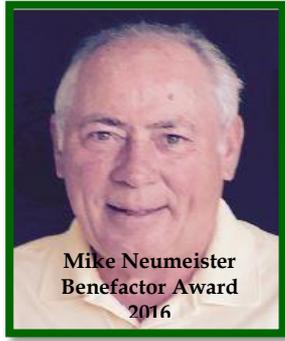
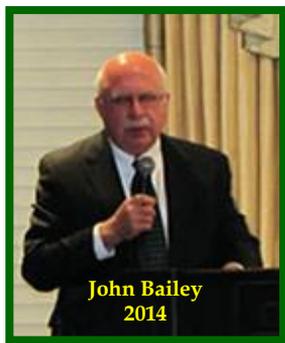
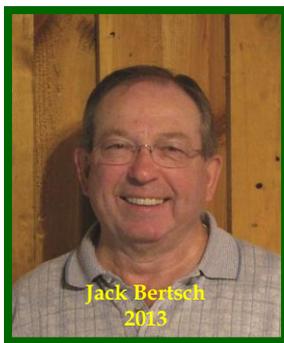
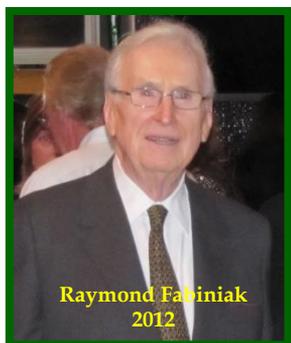
*Ron Michnik – Founding
Trustee
Troy Schinzel –
Commissioner of Parks
Bernie Boinski
Liz Cash
James Lynch*

*Toni Cudney
Andy Gernold
Edward J. Murphy III
Lynn Buffamonti
Jason Jaskula
Barbara Hauser
Jim Hornung, Sr.*

*Recording Secretary – Liz O'Donnell
Administrative Consultant – Herbert Schmidt
Playground Grant Consultant – Mary Simpson*

Raymond A. Fabiniak Guardian and Benefactor Award Recipients

Each year Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Board of Directors selects an individual to award for their outstanding service, dedication and



Conservancy Galas through the years



Chestnut Ridge Park

Excerpts from Erie County Park Commission booklet published 1939

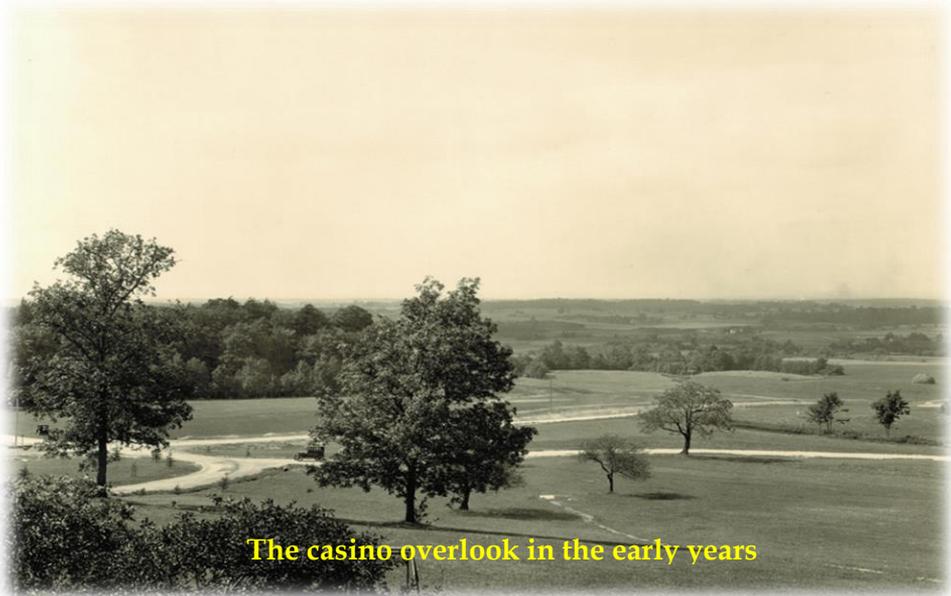
“South easterly from Buffalo there is a gradual rise towards the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania. The first sharp rise in this direction from the gently sloping basin which surrounds Buffalo at the foot of Lake Erie has an elevation of about 1200 feet. It is about seven miles inland from Lake Erie. One of these ridges swings westerly to merge in the uplands on the eastern side of the Eighteen Mile Creek valley which extends southward. Along the crest of this ridge Erie County pioneers found many enormous chestnut trees and ever since that time, this section, as been known as Chestnut Ridge”

. With an overlooking panoramic vista of Lake Erie, the City of Buffalo, Village of Orchard Park and other towns now sits Chestnut Ridge Park, the crown jewel of Erie County’s Park System.



Chestnut Ridge Park consists of 1,213 acres of park land, originally named for the chestnut trees on its hills, it is currently the largest park operated by the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry.

The Park property was acquired by Erie County in 1926, and it was one of the first parks established by the County. The park’s facilities and landscapes were improved substantially by the Works Progress Administration throughout the 1930s. The Park lands include some of the most beautiful natural scenery and vistas to be found anywhere in Western New York.



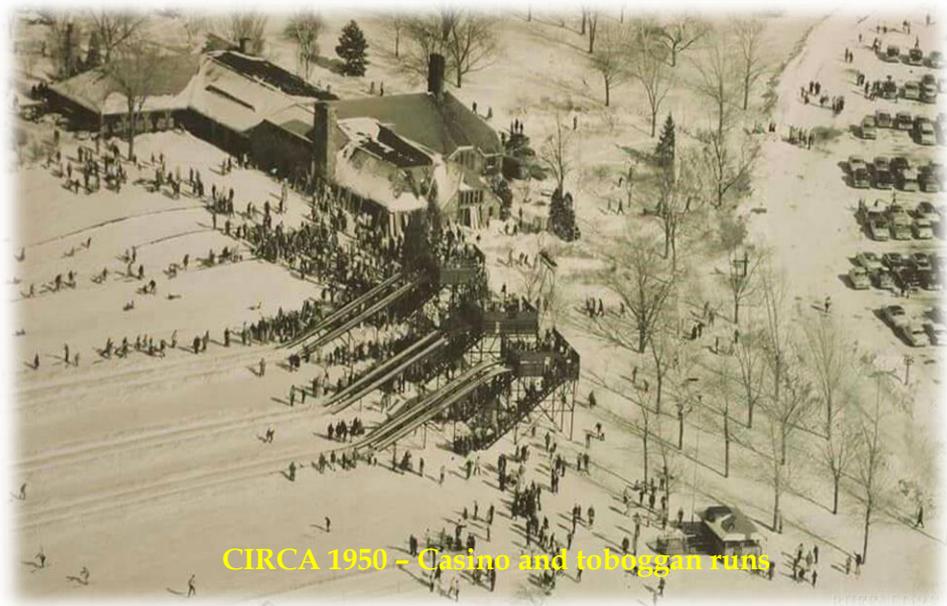
The casino overlook in the early years



The original casino



The first toboggan runs



CIRCA 1950 - Casino and toboggan runs

Things to see and do in Chestnut Ridge Park

With miles of walking, hiking, biking & running trails, unsurpassed scenic views, toboggan and sledding runs, twelve tournament tennis courts, disc golf, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, natural lake, fishing pier, picturesque casino with roaring fire places and café, numerous picnic shelters and larger event shelters, Chestnut Ridge is the park for nearly any outdoor activity preference you may desire.

● ● ●
“Keep close to Nature’s heart... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.” - John Muir





❧ 2020 ❧

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CONGRADULATIONS
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ON YOUR 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

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restoration and preservation
of Chestnut Ridge Park.**

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On Your
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Accomplishments

- ★ *Casino interior stone work – completed in 2020 \$10,000* ★
- ★ *Tennis courts lights replacement & relighting 2020 \$25,000* ★
 - ★ *Casino floor refinishing \$19,000* ★
 - ★ *Eternal Frame trail head rest area \$5,000* ★
 - ★ *Casino murals restoration \$40,000* ★
 - ★ *New park entrance signs \$29,000* ★
 - ★ *2018 Stonework restoration \$15,000* ★
 - ★ *New wildflower garden \$10,000* ★
- ★ *Boy Scout Legacy 11 Project (Pier, Shelter & Bridge) \$7,500* ★
 - ★ *New park benches & swing \$5,000* ★
 - ★ *Tennis courts wind screens \$2,500* ★
- ★ *Fifteen Oak Tree Planting @ Eternal Flame Trail Head \$1,500* ★
 - ★ *Tennis court benches \$500* ★
 - ★ *Portable bicycle/sled racks \$3,000* ★
 - ★ *Binocular viewer at casino \$1,200* ★
 - ★ *Hamilton Ward memorial plaque \$1,200* ★
 - ★ *Commissioner's cabin re-staining \$1,000* ★
 - ★ *Blue Star memorial garden \$1,000* ★
 - ★ *Dog waste collection stations \$1,000* ★

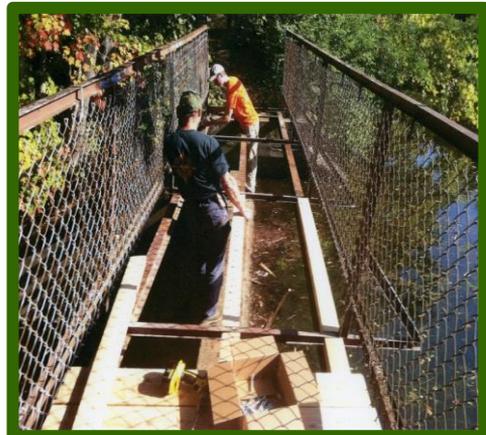
Initiative(s) for 2021

- ❁ *An “all-inclusive/special needs” playground. \$450,000* ❁

Event Sponsorships or Participations

- *The Chestnut Ridge Summer Classic Tennis Tournament* ●
 - *The United Way Day of Caring* ●
 - *Movie Night(s) on the Hill* ●
 - *The Orchard Park Art Festival* ●
 - *The Annual Kite Festival* ●
- *Chestnut Ridge Santa Land & Winter Fest* ●

Legacy '11 Boy Scouts Park Project
The CRC's first park project sponsorship



BUILDING A FISHING PIER AT CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK





- COUNTY OF ERIE - STATE OF NEW YORK -
- OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE -
- EXECUTIVE PROCLAMATION -

**CHESTNUT RIDGE
PARK/BERNARD C.
FELDMAN MURALS DAY**

WHEREAS, Chestnut Ridge Park, a historic park landscape most celebrated for natural beauty and outdoor activities, has a built and artistic legacy to celebrate in the park's casino and other structures; and

WHEREAS, in 1948, local artist Bernard C. (Ben) Feldman contributed to the cultural legacy of Chestnut Ridge Park's iconic casino with five wall-size murals; and

WHEREAS, Ben Feldman created the design for the poster for the City of Buffalo's Centennial in 1932 and painted murals in many public buildings; and

WHEREAS, the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, with the support of the Erie County Parks Department, raised funds to restore the murals to original brilliance; and

WHEREAS, Chestnut Ridge Park includes rich natural landscapes and historic structures that contributes to the enjoyment and welfare of visitors to Erie County's most popular park; and

WHEREAS, Ben C. Feldman's murals are a unique and treasured contribution to the public's experience; and

WHEREAS, Ben C. Feldman's murals have recently been restored by the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

NOW THEREFORE, I am proud to hereby proclaim Tuesday, April 21, 2015 as Chestnut Ridge Park/Bernard C. Feldman Murals Day in the County of Erie, and to recognize his continued service and devotion to the people of Buffalo, Erie County and Western New York..



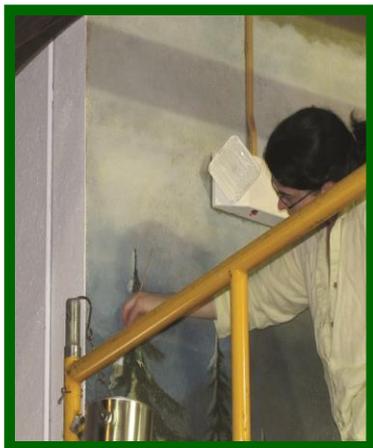
Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the County of Erie, State of New York in the City of Buffalo this twenty-first day of April in the year two thousand and fifteen.

County of Erie, State of New York

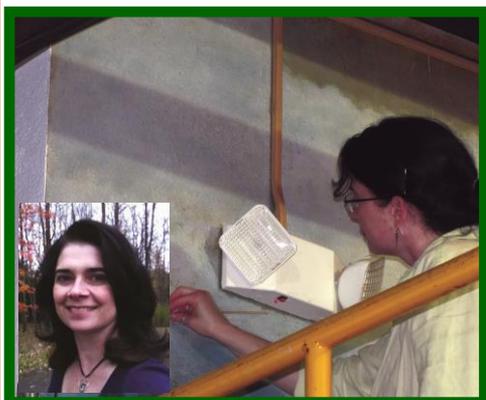
By:

Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive





Casino Mural Restoration by Eileen Sullivan of Aurora Art Conservation





Three New Park Entrance Signs





CRC 2018 Oak Tree Planting

Fifteen Oak Tree Plantings at Eternal Flame Trail Head



Tennis Court Wind Screens & Eight New Court Benches



Wild Flower Gardens & Blue Star Memorial Gardens





Stonework restoration





Eternal Flame Trail Head Rest Area Project with Boy Scout Troop 285





Casino flooring and fireplace stonework restoration





New Tennis Court Lighting



United Way Day of Caring

For over six years, in the month of August, the Conservancy has been working with M & T bank and a number of their outstanding volunteers to do painting, maintenance and cleanup work at Chestnut Ridge Park on the "United Way Day of Caring". Ron Michnik, the CRC's only remaining founding trustee has been the lead coordinator between M & T bank and the Parks Department on this yearly effort. So much has been done for the benefit of Chestnut ridge Park and we thank Ron Michnik, the many M & T Bank volunteers and the Erie County Parks department for working so well together and devoting their time!



*A Playground for All
Coming to Chestnut Ridge Park in 2021*





A place where children of all abilities can enjoy healthy outdoor activity in a Park setting.



Chestnut Ridge Conservancy event sponsorships and Community Outreach



BPO Concerts



Tennis Tournaments



Movie Nights on the Hill



Rock Painting at the Orchard Park Art Festival





Annual Kite Festival & Pumpkin painting



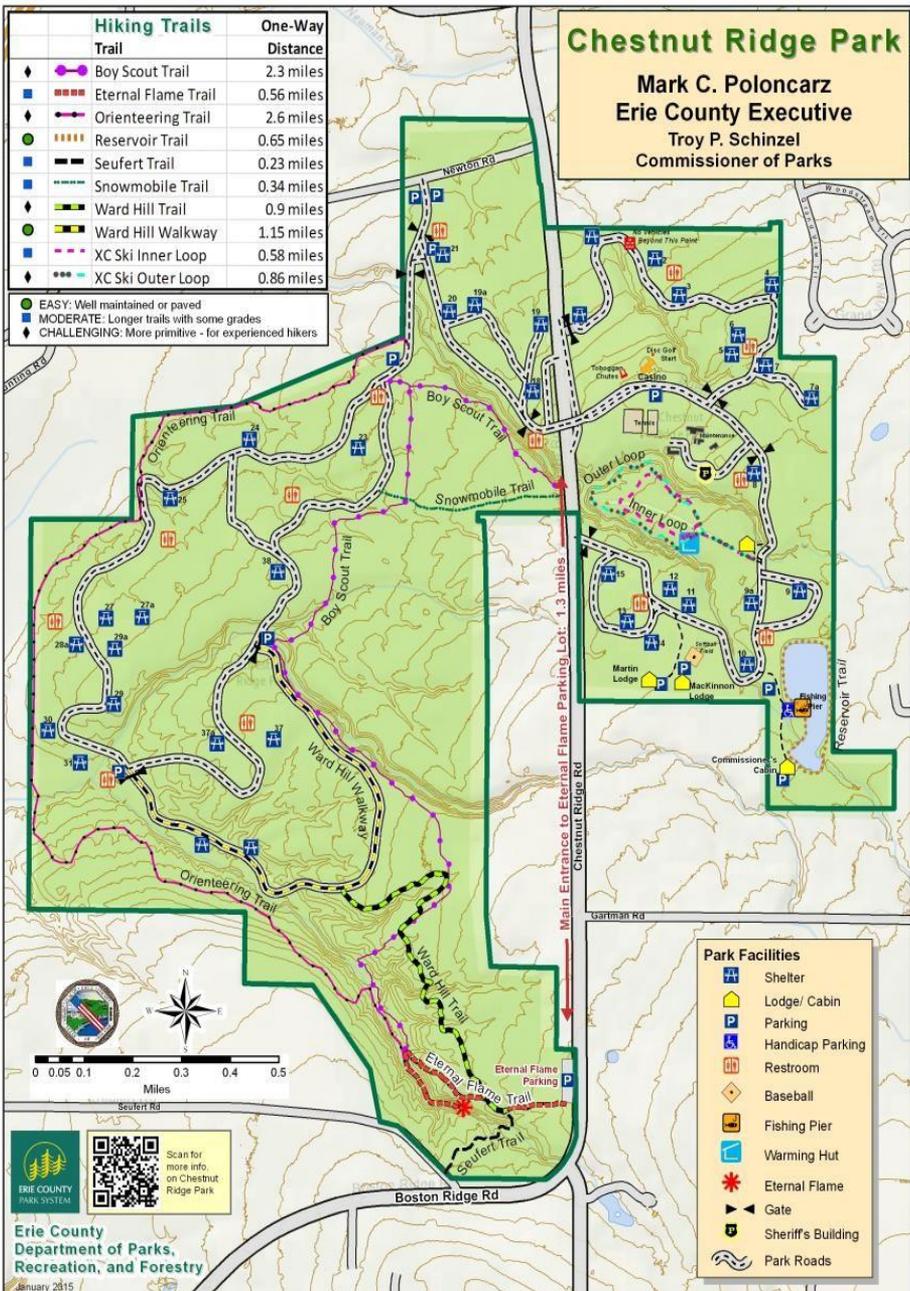
Santa Land and Winter Festival





Artify the Park





Dedicated to the Preservation and Restoration of Chestnut Ridge Park



CHESTNUT RIDGE
Conservancy

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