The immediate outlook for the park's finances is not rosy. The National Park Service was given a budget increase to cover the cost of inflation this year, but most individual parks such as the CVNP were required to give back part of their increase to the regional and national NPS offices to cover shortfalls in other areas. This forced the parks to cut their programs.

It is disappointing, but it seems that unless the budget picture for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park changes significantly for the better, or an alternative source of funds is found, plans for new trails will not go forward.

Adopt-A-Trail
by
Bill O'Brien

The Ritchie Ledges and its trails will get needed attention via maintenance sweeps as an Adopt-A Trail.

Once owned by Hayward Kendall in the early 20th century as a country retreat, 420 acres was willed to the State of Ohio. The area became the Virginia Kendall Park under the Akron Metropolitan Park, in memory of Hayward's mother and was later the first federal unit of the National Park Service in 1978.

Trail Sweep Crew
Photo by Bill O'Brien

During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built structures here such as the Ledges Shelter, the Octagon Shelter, The Lake Shelter and the stone steps to Ice Box Cave. The stone for the steps, Berea Sandstone, was quarried from Deep Lock Quarry.

The ledges are the outcrops of Sharon Conglomerate stone via a 300 million year old shallow sea. Sediments from fast moving streams flowing into the sea formed the Sharon Conglomerate.

The present result after just a little erosion is a moist, cool microcliment more like northern Canadian woods. Here, plants more typical of this environment such as hemlocks, ferns, yellow birch trees and starflower can be seen. Birds seen in the area would likely be woodpeckers, flycatchers, warblers and sometimes the rare scarlet tanager. During a slow walk and/or frequent sittings one will more likely see these things.

Scenery at the Ledges Photo by Bill O'Brien

There are about 2.2 miles of trails in this area and they tend to come under heavy use. So, as a result of a monthly sweep on the first Saturday, I hope to keep the area cleaned of any trash and structures checked and maintained. This area is considered a jewel of the park and deserves the best of attention.

During a hike this winter, four others and I found that the task of sweeping this trail system is more of a treat than anything. We welcome this monthly duty as I think the uplifting feeling derived from the beauty there is a great reward.

Anybody interested in joining me each month can call me at 330-825-9302. We will have a good time exploring this area as we help it stay clean and beautiful.

JANUARY OUTING
By Gene Wimmer

After various additions and deletions, a half dozen hikers convened on January 17th to explore Sheepskin Hollow State Nature Preserve. Bill O'Brien assembled an Akron contingent including Tom Fritsch and Mike Brittain, while Bill Manthey, Shirley Pashall and Gene Wimmer carpooled from the Boston Store. We rendezvoused in Lisbon before negotiating the backroads to our destination.

Once there, we headed for the section of North Country Trail that passes through the area. We startled a blue heron as we the crossed the icy waters of the North Fork of the Little Beaver Creek and then climbed the switchbacks to reach the ridge above the creek. We followed the ridge past numerous treestands (used by local nature observers) and enjoyed the views from high unobstucted by leaves. One lookout was named and had a bench, providing everything necessary for the group to rest their legs and exercise their brains to concoct stories explaining the name of the lookout. Without concensus on a story, we descended into the floodplain. We enjoyed the ice formations created from seepages along the steep rock walls next to the abandoned road we used as a trail. We passed by neglected fences and foundations created long ago from the native stone. We marvelled at a culvert made from nothing but stacked sandstone that was still functioning perfectly. The culvert even acted as a french drain, sucking the moisture from the treadway above and creating icicles hanging from its roof. A real rock lover (Dave?) would have been in his glory here.