

Sharing the Secret of GULLY BROOK

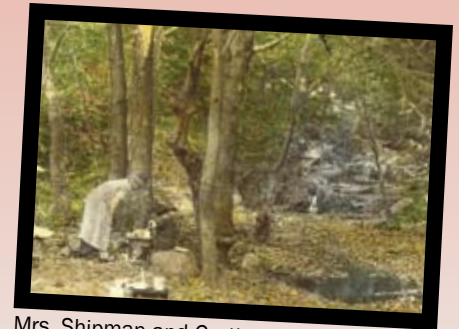
by Karen Lakus, *Historical Interpreter*



Burroughs' Nature Club hike circa 1920s



Gretta Shipman taking a photo of ice in Gully Brook



Mrs. Shipman and Gretta picnicking at Gully Brook circa 1920s

GENERATIONS OF WILLOUGHBY AND WILLOUGHBY HILLS RESIDENTS have experienced the natural wonders of Gully Brook. Farmed by pioneers, beloved by naturalists, and explored by children, Lake Metroparks is now inviting all Lake County residents to share in the magic of Gully Brook.

Gully Brook is named for the Chagrin River tributary that flows through the property. It is bordered by I-90 on the south, River Road on the east, Ridge Road to the north, and the Deer Creek subdivision to the west (see map on page 8). Long before European settlers moved in, Native Americans regularly passed through the area on the Lake Trail (now Route 84) and the Salt Trail (now Route 174) although no evidence of their habitation has been found at Gully Brook.

Pioneers moved west from New England and began to clear land for farms at Gully Brook in the early 1800s. Trees were felled to create fields for crops; the trees were used for construction, fuel and industry. Wildlife populations shifted dramatically as settlers moved in and bears, wolves, rattlesnakes and other animals disappeared from the landscape.

Gully Brook remained mainly agricultural throughout the 19th century. Along with growing crops such as corn, wheat, oats,

rye and barley, dairying and raising sheep for wool were also important land uses during this time. Agriculture reached its peak in Gully Brook around 1880. After the turn of the 20th century, much of the land was left to return to woodlands as its owners abandoned farming for other pursuits. There was a large amount of the eastern part of Gully Brook, however, that was still farmed well into the next century.

Some of the earliest and most well-known landowners at Gully Brook were the Ferguson family, Jonathon Ward, James Campbell, the Viall family, the Nash family, and Mary Jopling. Jacob Viall, an orphan from New York who was raised by his grandparents in Mentor, purchased land in the Gully Brook valley in 1834. He worked as a farmer and mill operator before becoming Constable of Willoughby, Sheriff of Lake County, and eventually a U.S. Marshal.

Gully Brook became a popular destination for local naturalists in the early 1900s. In spite of population growth in the surrounding areas, the land at Gully Brook remained a mix of fields, woods, and wetlands. The Burroughs' Nature Club was founded in 1916 and held all of its early outings at Gully Brook. Local nature-lovers Frank North Shankland and Charles M. Shipman were early members of the club. The two men left

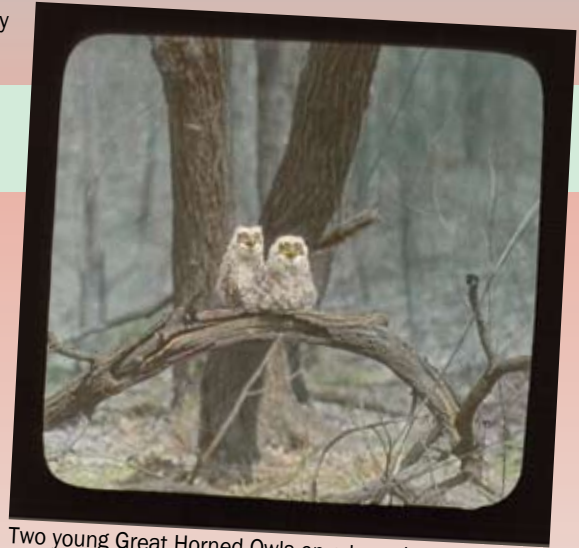
behind a legacy in writings, photographs and personal contacts that have inspired many to appeal for the conservation of Gully Brook.

According to Gretta Pallister, local conservationist and daughter of C. M. Shipman, Gully Brook was "a mecca for naturalists in the 1920s and 1930s who would gather for Sunday morning hikes." C. M. Shipman took many photographs in Gully Brook, which are preserved in the Shipman Lantern Slide Collection at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The slides were hand painted for color and show the brook, owl fledglings, snow scenes and wildflowers in Gully Brook. Several also portray a young Gretta Shipman on outings in Gully Brook.

After the heyday of naturalist hikes, Gully Brook served as a playground for kids growing up in the neighborhoods around it. They built forts, climbed trees, fished and hiked in the 1940s and 1950s before the days of television and video games. In 1954, the Willoughby-Eastlake school district purchased the Tucker Estate on Ridge Road, which is adjacent to Gully Brook and now the site of the Willoughby Board of Education, Middle School and South High School. A part of this purchase included a 40-acre section of Gully Brook that has been used for nature study by Willoughby students since 1962.



Ice flows in Gully Brook



Two young Great Horned Owls on a branch in Gully Brook

GULLY BROOK:

THE NATURAL TREASURE

by Stephen W. Madewell, *Deputy Director*

ACROSS NORTHEAST OHIO THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SPECIAL PLACES that have long been recognized by the conservation community. Gully Brook is one of those places. Many prominent figures in the conservation field have tramped along the stream looking for birds and wildflowers.

When Lake Metroparks was formed 50 years ago, the intention was to protect areas like Gully Brook for wildlife, habitat and the future use and enjoyment of Lake County's residents. The park system's efforts to acquire property in this area began in earnest in 1988-89 with the completion of a study by the Lake County Planning Commission on behalf of the park system. The people of Lake County passed a major park levy in 1986 and The Board of Park Commissioners was committed to expanding park holdings in the western half of the county. The Gully Brook area was one of the top four sites recommended by the Planning Commission as a suitable future park.

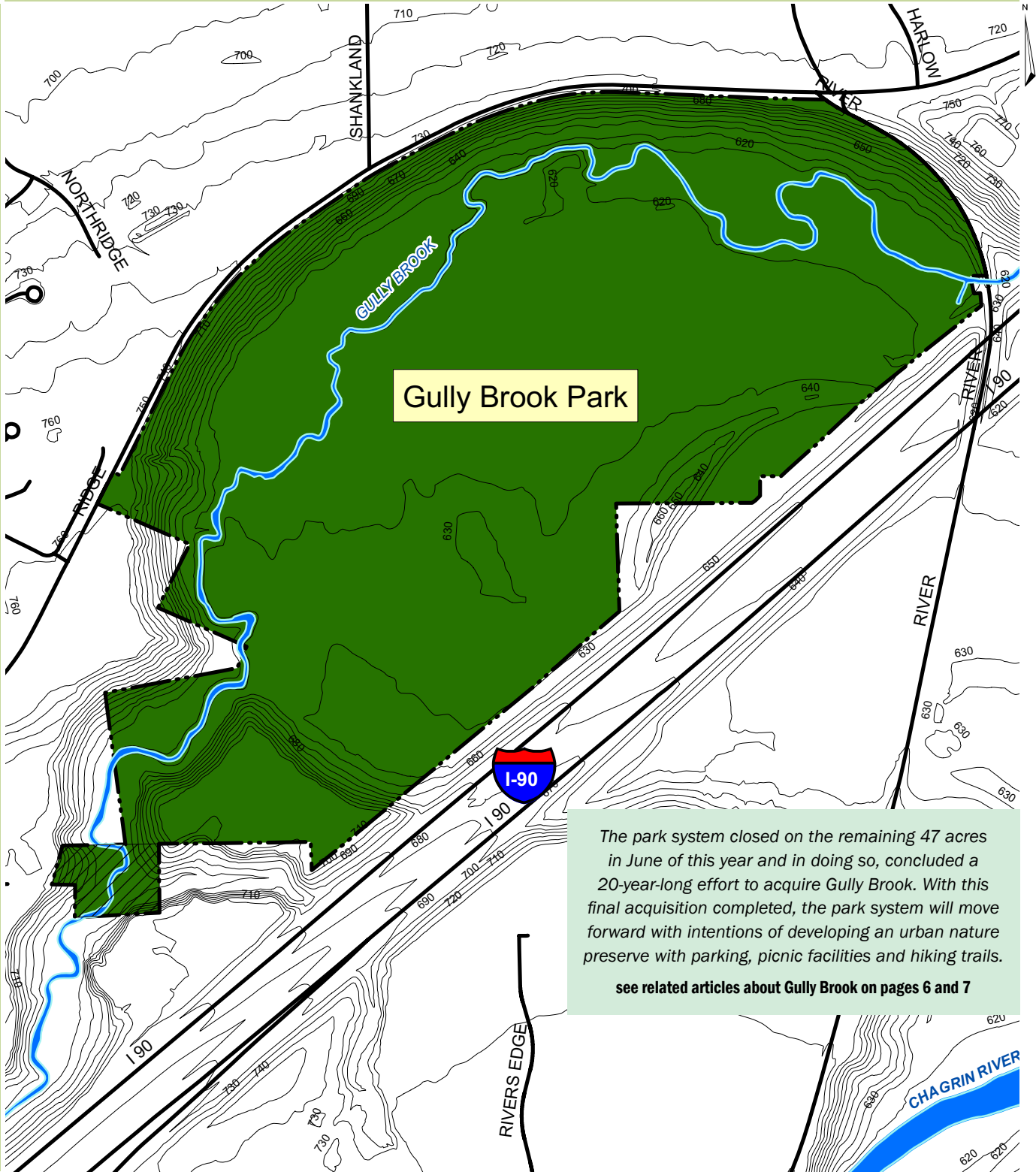
The other top recommendations were Chagrin River Park, Willowick Lakefront Park and Veterans Park. Chagrin River Park had one landowner (CEI), Willowick Lakefront Park and Veterans Park were primarily owned by the perspective cities, but the Gully Brook area had several different owners. The park board had established a western land acquisition fund to acquire and develop these near western park areas. Unfortunately these resources were exhausted early. Contacts with the property owners at Gully Brook indicated a long negotiation period was in store.

With the acquisition and development of the other top western park projects, the Gully Brook acquisition efforts were put on hold until 1998 with the passage of the TEA-21 Act. Congressman Steve LaTourette was familiar with the park system's efforts to acquire Gully Brook. Through discussions with park staff and Willoughby Mayor Dave Anderson, the Congressman was successful in securing more than \$1 million dollars for this cause. This resulted in the first major Gully Brook acquisition in 2001. This 78-acre tract was purchased from a business partnership who had hoped to one day develop the property. While this was a beginning, the park system was restricted by limited access to the property. In October of 2001, Lake Metroparks entered into a management agreement with the Willoughby-Eastlake Board of Education who owns 40 acres in the Gully Brook area. The intention of this agreement was to ultimately develop greater access and utility for the junior high and high school students.

Even with this agreement, accessibility for park development and improvements were extremely limited. One key parcel remained, utilizing a combination of local park financial resources, funding from the State of Ohio's Clean Ohio Program, and the remaining TEA-21 funds, the park system closed on the remaining 47 acres in June of this year. And in doing so, concluded a 20-year-long effort to acquire Gully Brook. With this final acquisition completed, the park system will move forward with intentions of developing a passive park with appropriate parking, picnic facilities and trail system. These improvements may begin as early as this fall. The first phase of improvement should be completed in the summer of 2009.

see map of Gully Brook Park on page 8

Lake Metroparks Gully Brook Park

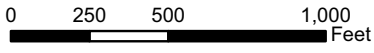


Gully Brook Park

The park system closed on the remaining 47 acres in June of this year and in doing so, concluded a 20-year-long effort to acquire Gully Brook. With this final acquisition completed, the park system will move forward with intentions of developing an urban nature preserve with parking, picnic facilities and hiking trails.

see related articles about Gully Brook on pages 6 and 7

- Legend**
- LMP_TRAILS
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 - Index_Contours
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 - Gully Brook Park
 - LMP_Conservation_Easements



Date: 6/5/08