Sustainable Kent News

Special Edition – October 2026 Sustainability Month Celebration

The latest on sustainability efforts in Kent



October 2026 Sustainability Month Celebration

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Welcome to the Sustainable Kent News Special Edition focused on the City of Kent's October Sustainability Month! The celebration invited all residents, schools, businesses, and organizations to join this celebration by participating in activities throughout the entire month that promote sustainable practices.

Everything from remembering to take your own bags to the grocery store to hosting a special event promoting sustainable practices qualified as contributing to this celebration. By showcasing sustainability efforts together throughout the month, a celebration as unique and special as Kent itself was had, and we're excited to share about some of those efforts!

That said, sharing about the Kent community's sustainability efforts doesn't have to stop with this special edition! The Around the City column of the regular edition Sustainable Kent e-newsletters is a place where anyone in the Kent community can submit a write up about sustainability work they are doing and have it shared in same. Additionally, be sure to read on below about the City's new Connected for Climate: Kent's Green Calendar as another opportunity to have your sustainability-related event shared!

Please feel free to contact the City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris, at: julie.morris@kentohio.gov with any questions, to submit a write up for a future edition of the newsletter, and/or to have your sustainability event added to the Green Calendar webpage.

The City sincerely thanks all those who participated in the October Sustainability Month Celebration and for the work you all do each and every day that helps us enjoy a healthy and resilient community!

The City of Kent October Sustainability Month Celebrations

October Sustainability Month - Making it Permanent

In October 2025, the late Mayor Fiala issued a proclamation declaring October 2025 as "Sustainability Month" in a public acknowledgement of the internationally recognized designation. The proclamation was issued as part of the City's ongoing commitment to the education and outreach component of the City's Climate Action Plan.

The administration and the Sustainability Commission requested that, this year, Kent City Council authorize a resolution permanently recognizing October as "Sustainability Month" in the City of Kent, which City Council passed at their Council Committee Meeting on September 16, 2026.

The Resolution 2026-83 document can be accessed by clicking the following link:
https://www.kentohio.gov/media/eeibssyu/2026-83-resolution-sustainability-month_signed.pdf

The City looks forward to many future celebrations, and stay tuned to the October Sustainability Month Celebration webpage each year for additional, updated details!

Connected for Climate: Kent's Green Calendar – Debut of a New Webpage

Are you interested in some brief highlights about the City's Climate Action Plan initiatives and other sustainability related work? Are you curious about sustainability-related events happening in the area this month? Visit the new Connected for Climate: Kent's Green Calendar webpage, as it will be updated with new information throughout each month!

This page, which was released as part of the City's celebration, is designed to provide snapshots of various sustainability activity happening in Kent. The City would be pleased to include your events on the Green Calendar! Contact the City's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris, at julie.morris@kentohio.gov for more information about how to get your work added to this new sustainability resource!

VISIT OUR SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW WEBPAGE!

The City has a main webpage to highlight its sustainability work and keep the community posted about related Climate Action Plan implementation progress, programs, news, events, and more! Be sure to visit frequently as additional items are added regularly.

Visit: https://www.kentohio.gov/business-building-development/sustainability-overview/

Lights Out For Wildlife Event at Plum Creek Park – A Recap



As a start to any good spooky story, it was a cold and rainy night.....just kidding! After days and days of sunshine, and unlike last year, the night of the Lights Out for Wildlife at Plum Creek Park event, held Friday, October 9th, 2026 was cool, beautiful, and clear!



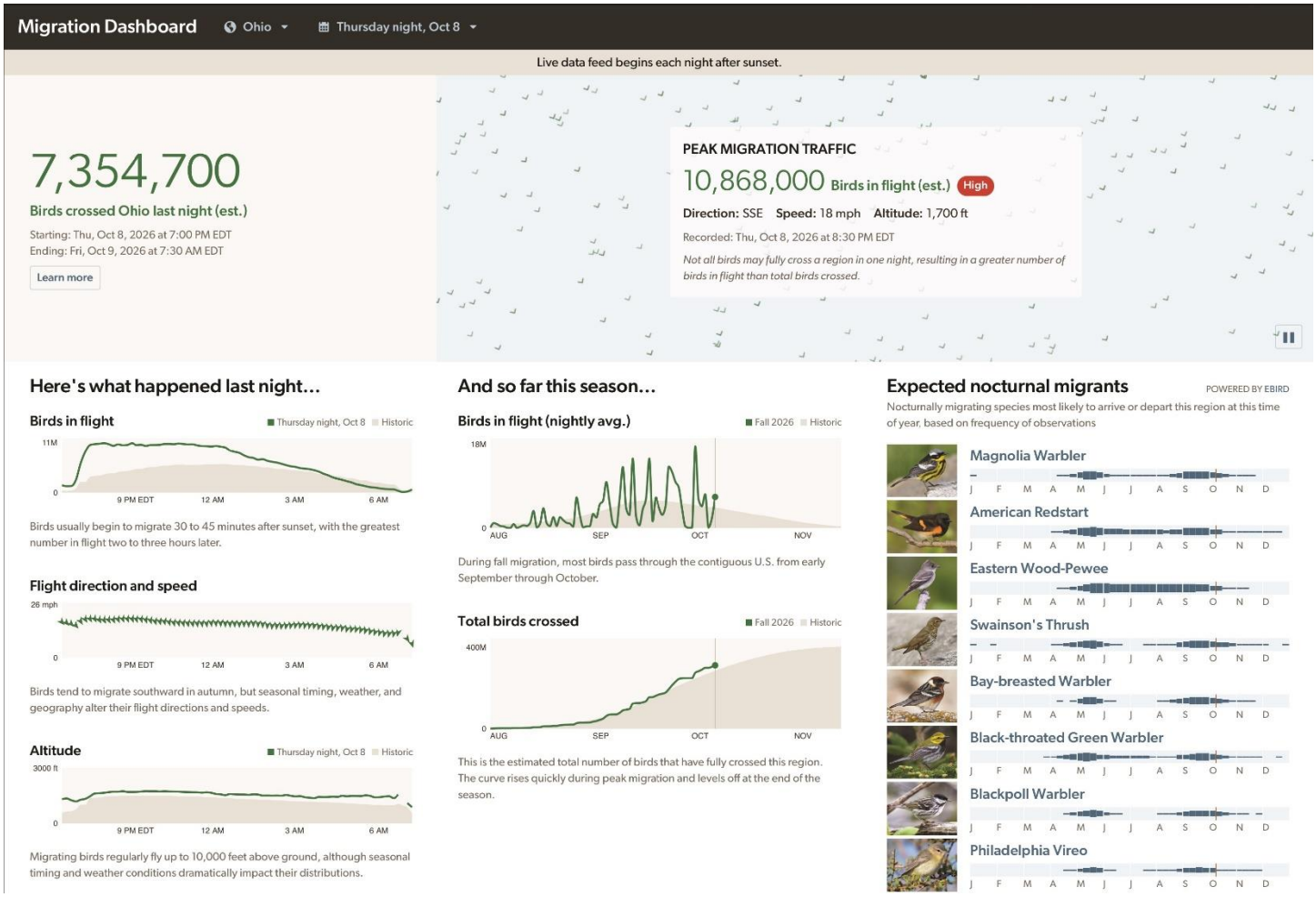
Over the course of the evening, around 30 community members of all ages attended an event full of education about bats and other area wildlife, the benefits to be had from turning the lights out, and a night hike through the park was, once again, enjoyed by most!





Todd Cartner, President of Kent Environmental Council and Co-Owner of Discover Bats Ohio, LLC, as well as Holly Stoneberg, Education Program Coordinator from Portage Park District, both provided excellent presentations with some highlights from the evening as follows.

Todd began by noting that, according to Cornell Lab's Bird Cast, over 7 million birds crossed over Ohio the night before the Lights Out For Wildlife event!



Todd pointed out that not only bird migration, but all kinds of wildlife activity takes place at night! He also provided details about how Bats in particular navigate the dark.

DISCOVER BATS OHIO
DISCOVER THE AMAZING WORLD OF BATS
DiscoverBatsOhio.com

The Night Shift – Where the Party Is Really At

Most of the wildlife around you is not day wildlife. A look at who clocks in at dusk across the Midwest and North America, and why it matters that we keep turning the lights off.

1. Sixty Seconds After Dark

Go outside tonight, stand still, and count to sixty. What sounds like an empty yard is the busiest shift nature runs.

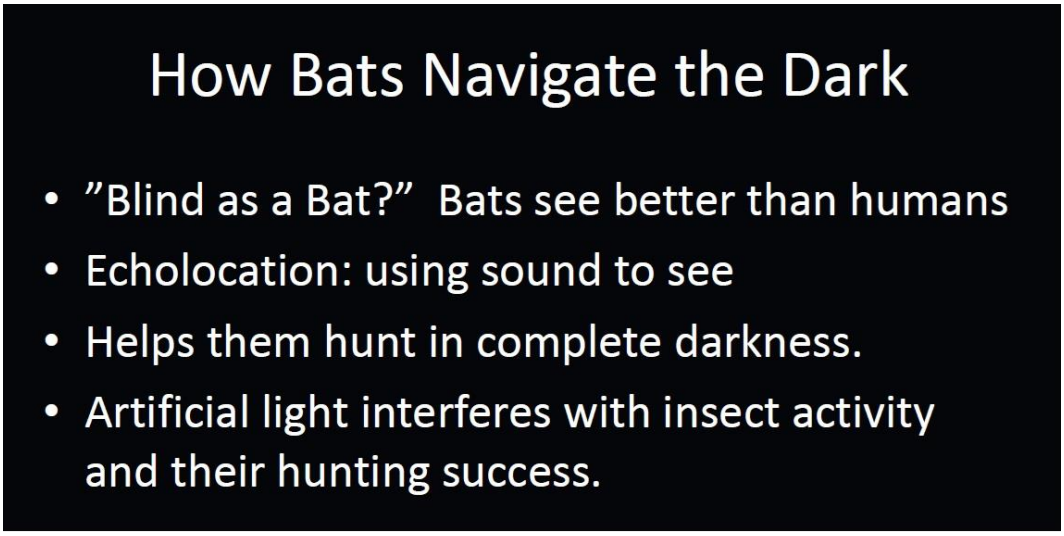
Fifteen feet over your head, a big brown bat is screaming into the dark, loud enough to hurt, if your ears could reach that pitch and listening for the echo off a moth's wing. Two thousand feet above *that*, a Swainson's thrush is on its way to South America, steering by the stars. In the grass, more species of moth are flying in your neighborhood tonight than there are species of butterfly in the entire state. And in a wet ditch down the road, a spotted salamander that has spent eleven months underground is walking to the pond it hatched in, a trip it will make only in the dark, only in the rain, and only on a couple of nights all year.

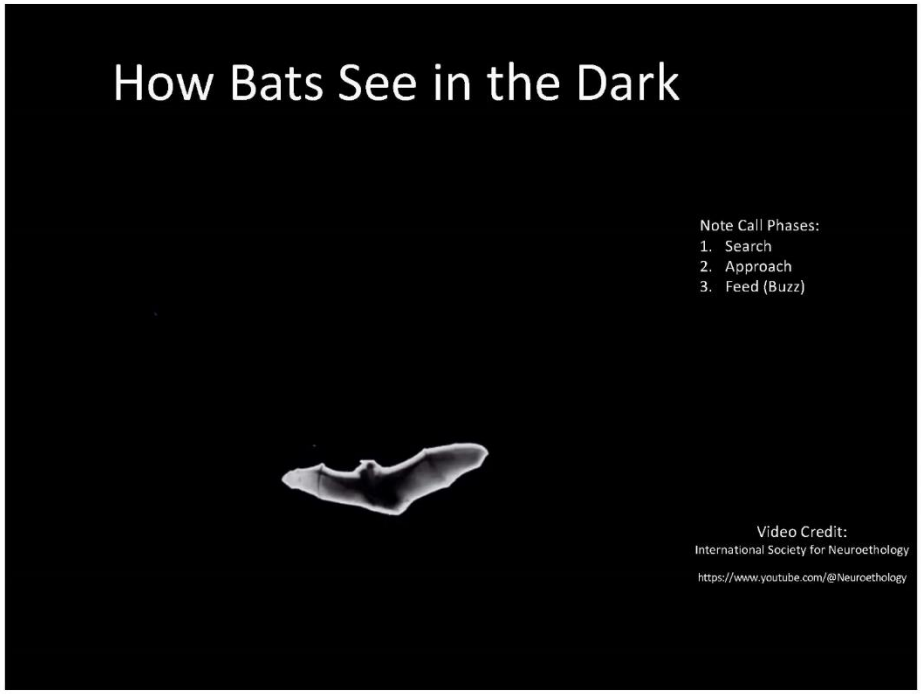
69% of the world's mammal species are nocturnal. Only 20% are active by day.

We built our entire mental picture of "wildlife" out of the animals that happen to keep our hours. That picture is missing most of the animals. Here is who it leaves out.

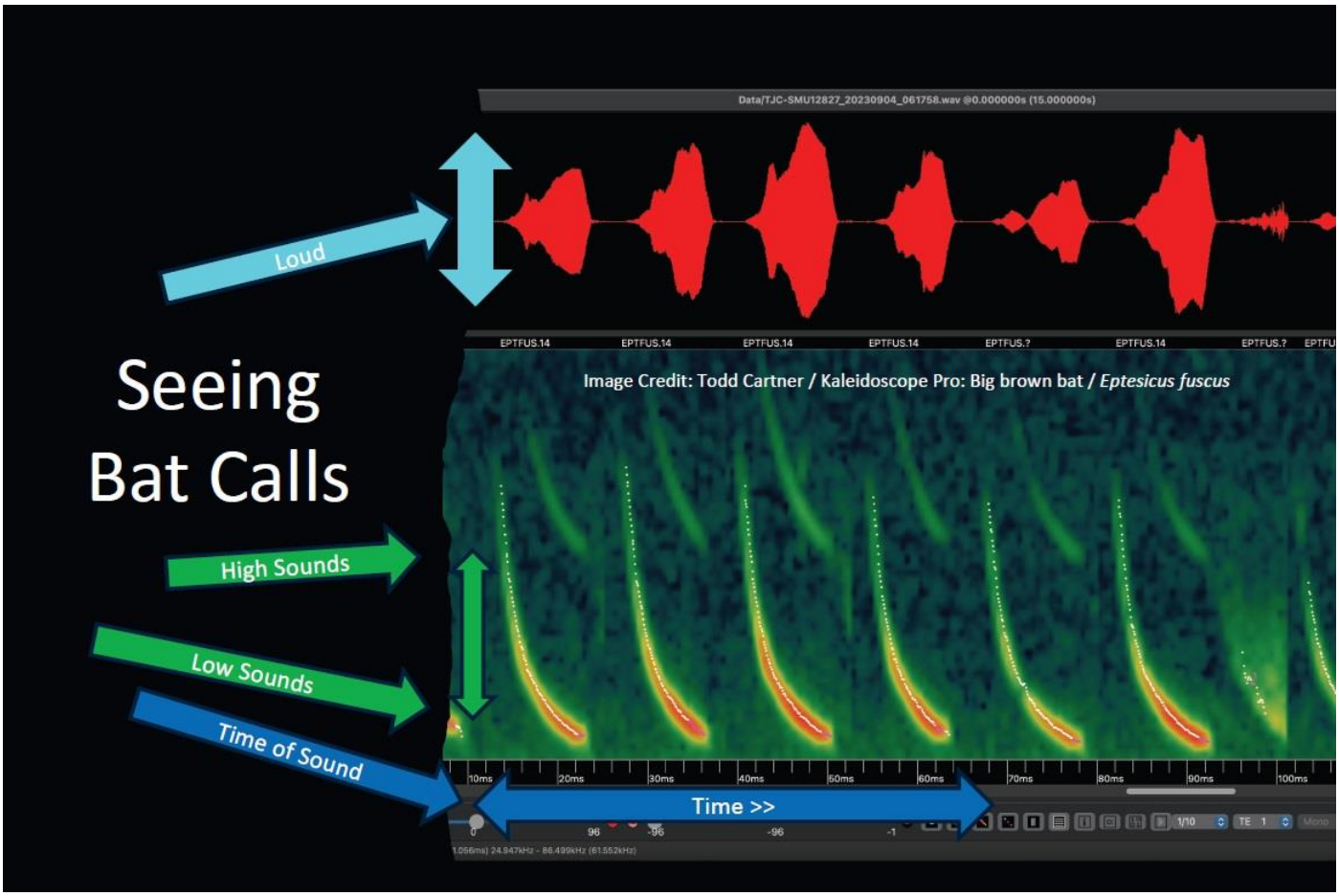
2. Who Works the Night Shift

Group (order / family)	When they work	Why the night shift matters
Bats *Chiroptera — Vespertilionidae*	~100% night	Every one of Ohio's native bat species is an insect-eater that hunts only after dark. Nationally that free pest control is worth **at least $3.7 billion a year** to agriculture, and where white-nose syndrome wiped out local bats, farmers raised insecticide use by about 31%.
Moths *Lepidoptera — ~90% of the order*	Night	Ohio has **more than 3,000 moth species, at least twenty times its butterfly list**. They are also serious pollinators: 45% of moths sampled in one study carried pollen from 47 plant species, several of them rarely visited by bees or butterflies.

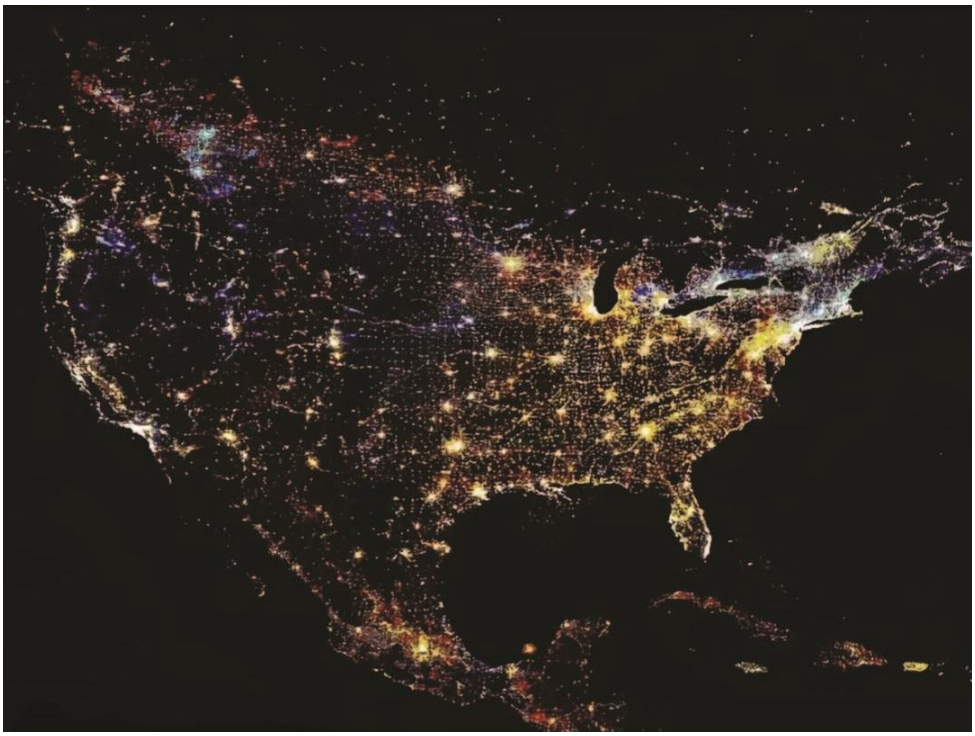




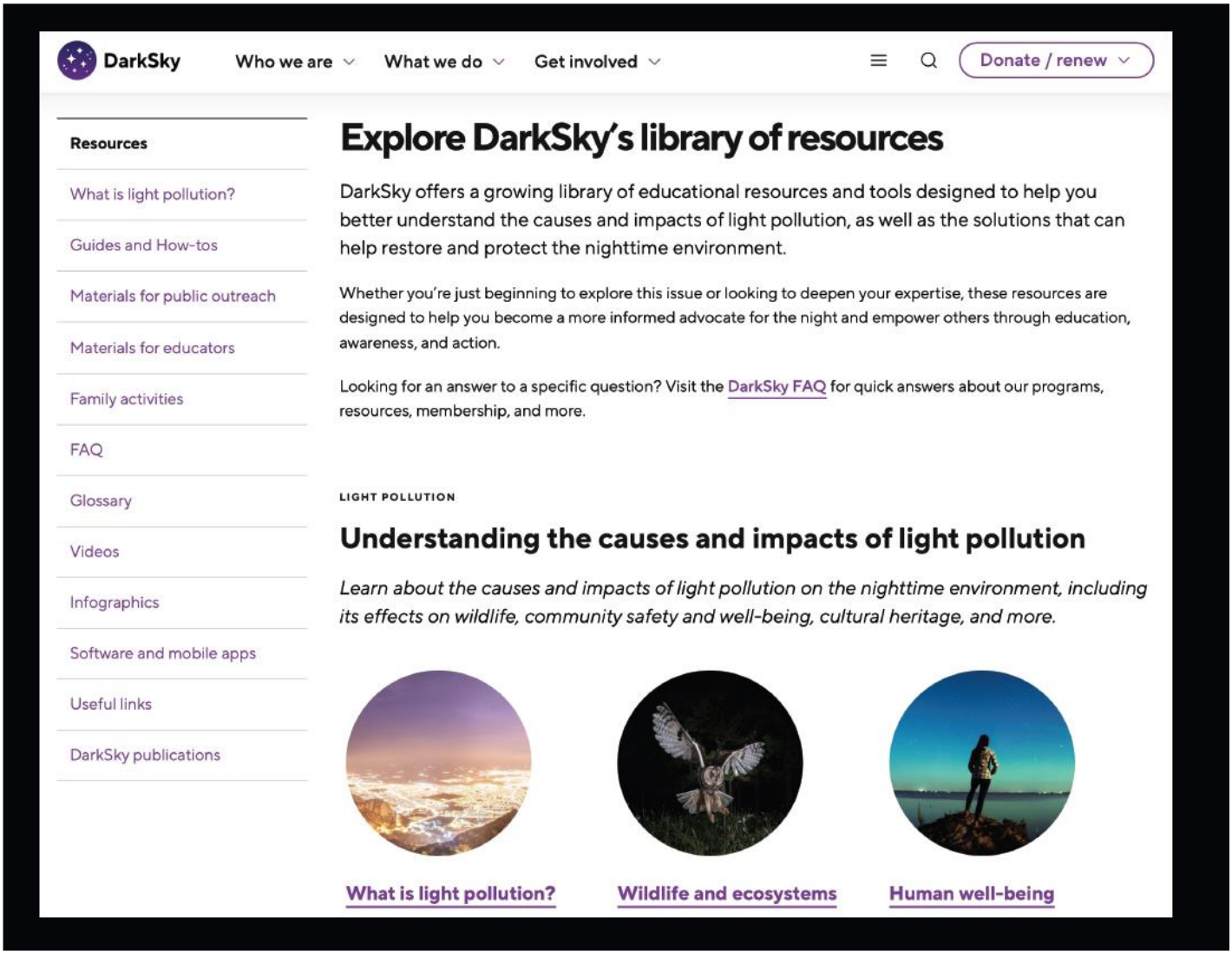
Todd offered some fascinating information about how bats actually see in the dark using echolocation. He pointed out there is a sequence to the calls while the bats are searching for, on approach to, and then feeding on their prey. Todd provided a demonstration of audio files of bat calls matched to a visualization of those calls during the call phases.



Todd had noted that artificial light at night interferes with insect activity and bats' hunting success. Todd provided a glimpse of the extent of light pollution in the United States via the following satellite image, and offered insights into various issues light pollution poses to both humans and wildlife.



Todd discussed the organization DarkSky and directed folks to their extensive resource library to help learn more about issues of light pollution: [Resources | DarkSky International]



Conclusion: Dark Night Skies

- Provide natural light cycles
- Ecological balance
- Navigation and orientation
- Human health, sleep, and well-being
- Cultural, scientific, and aesthetic value

Todd offered some concluding thoughts about the benefits of dark, night skies, and he spent some time answering questions from the audience about his presentation.

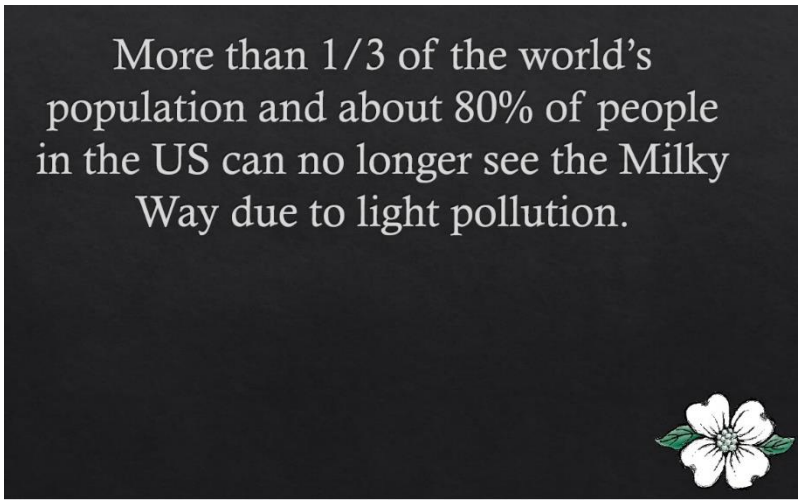
Todd also offered access to more resources about bats, including a list of books he had brought for display at the event (and more!) at the Discover Bats Ohio website. He noted the books are also available at area public libraries.

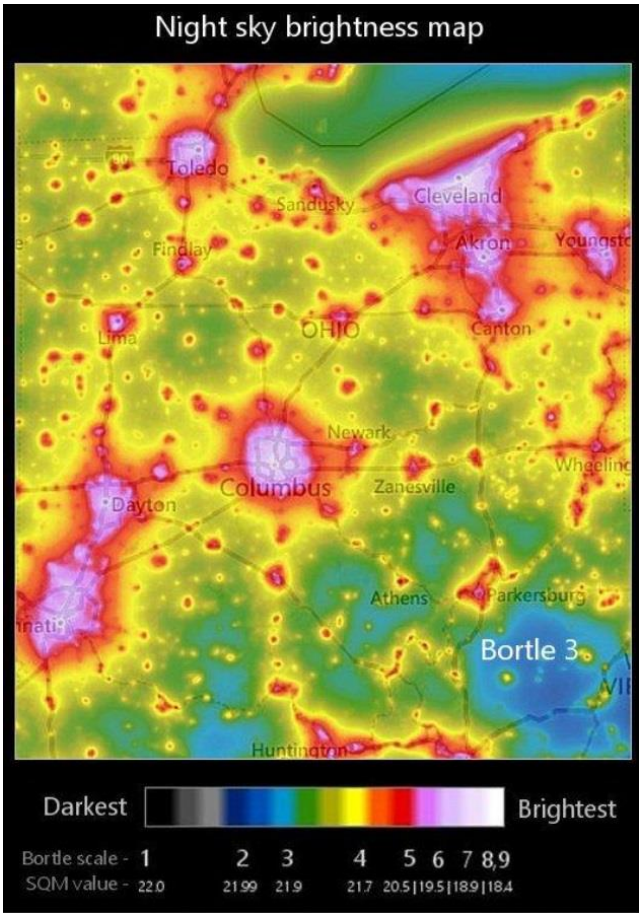


Holly shared information about the mission of the Portage Park District.

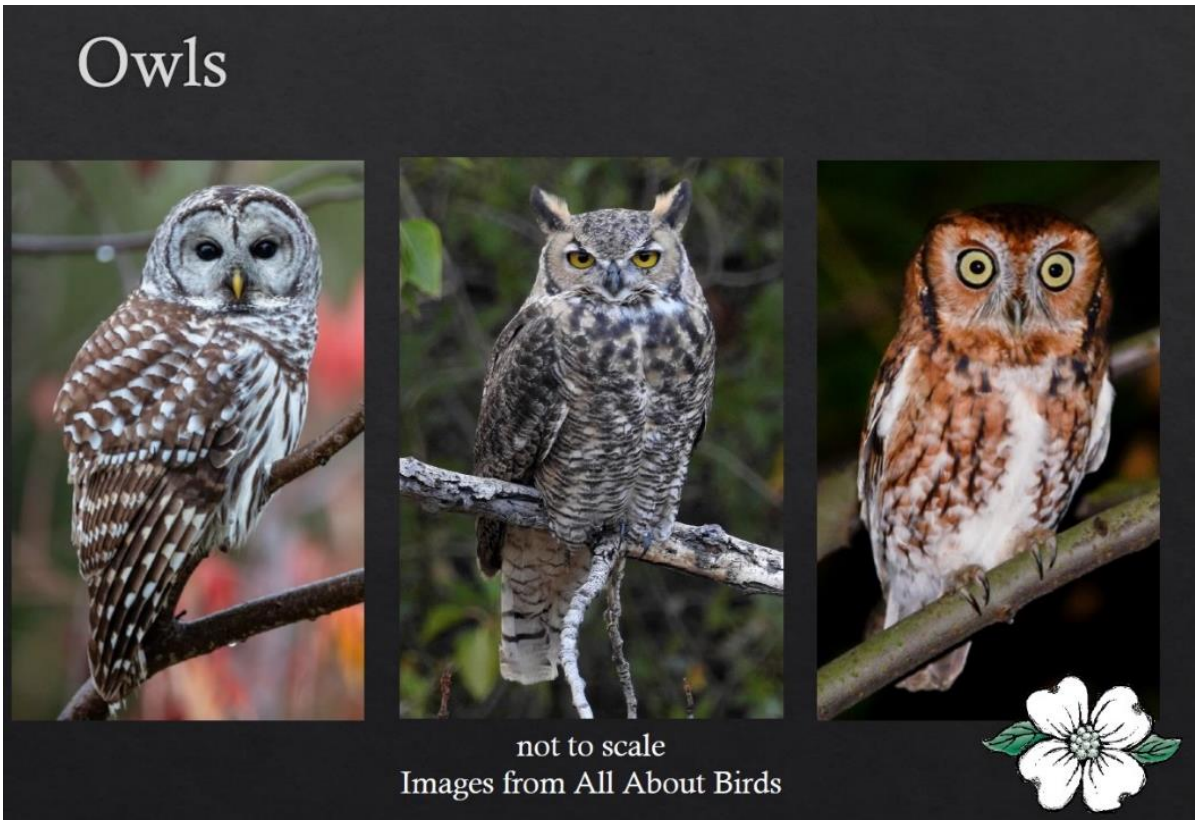


Holly elaborated on the information that Todd had shared about light pollution, providing some additional imagery of night sky brightness in our area (located at the top right side of the map).



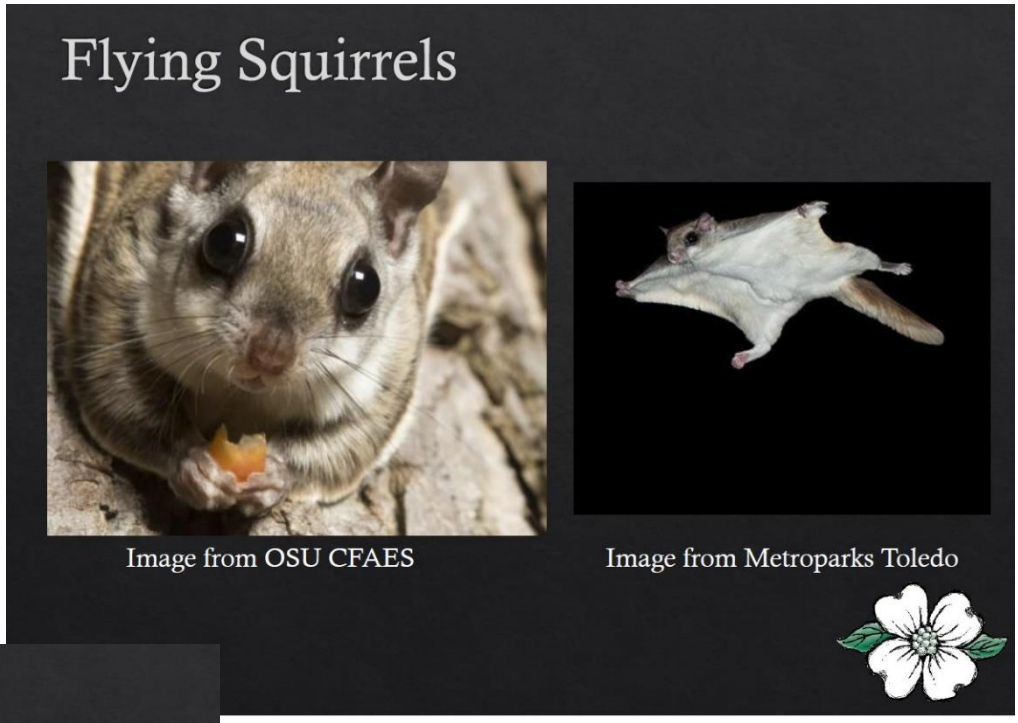


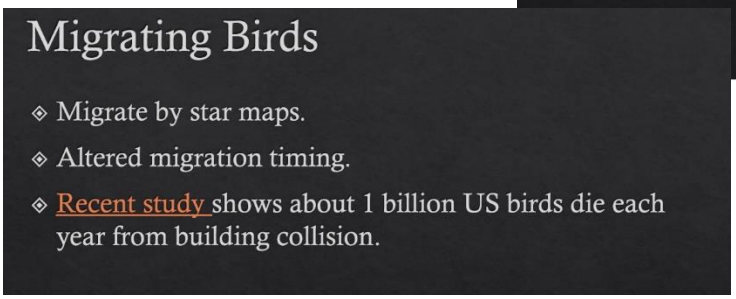
Holly focused on nocturnal owls and moths, engaging the audience in helping identify and describe features that help owls to see, hear, and hunt in the dark, as well as features of moths that help protect them from predators.





Holly provided a surprising fact: Flying Squirrels are actually the most common squirrel in Ohio, including in our area, but we rarely see them due to their activity being primarily at night!







Holly noted that light pollution not only affects human capacity to view the night sky, but impacts migrating birds as well. Holly advised that birds migrate by star maps, and light pollution has also altered their migration timing. She noted millions of birds migrate each year, most of them at night, and the light coming from buildings is disorienting. As a result of this disorientation, Holly advised that the birds either hit the buildings, or they circle the building until they drop. Holly provided a link to a study done in 2014 (Bird–building collisions in the United States on JSTOR) showing about 1 billion birds in the United States die each year from building collision.

Holly shared the moving example of birds circling in the lights of the Twin Towers Memorial in NYC, disoriented by the lights – the NYC Bird Alliance monitors the birds in the light beams every 20 minutes, and if the count surpasses 1k birds, the Tribute in Light organizers will turn off the lights for 15-20 minutes to allow the birds to reorient themselves.

Holly also directed folks to Dark Sky International to learn more about light pollution, noting a local connection with the Akron Lights Out group, and she provided some additional tips for what folks can do on their own to help.

How you can help!

- Use outdoor lights only when necessary
- Use motion sensors or timers
- Use lower wattage or warm colored lights
- Close blinds at night

AKRON LIGHTS OUT

DarkSky INTERNATIONAL

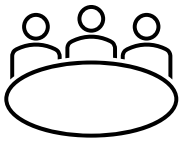


Kent State's 2026 ESDRI Forum – Sustainability in Community



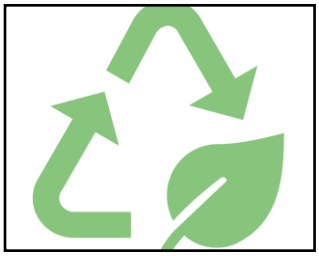
In this forum we heard from three experts who shape sustainability and engagement in Northeast Ohio communities: Julie Morris, Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Kent, Deepa Vedavyas, Director of Resiliency and Sustainability at Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC), and Greg Peckham, President & CEO for the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The invited speakers shared their career pathway and current work and joined in a conversation moderated by Kent State University professor Jennifer Mapes, Ph.D. Together this group showcased how cities can collaborate to achieve their sustainability goals, how collective action can secure environmentally friendly and affordable resources, and how partnerships among governments, nonprofits, businesses, and residents can support thriving communities and resilient landscapes.

Learn more about ESDRI and the 2026 Sustainability Forum at: https://www.kent.edu/esdri2026



AROUND THE CITY

Community members and organizations share in their own words and pictures how they participated in the October 2025 Sustainability Month Celebration



From Kent Resident, Fred Pierre

I compost year-round and in October I used my finished compost soil to repot my indoor plants for the Winter season. I move each plant to a slightly bigger pot and use the previous pot to upgrade a smaller plant.

I spent most of my budget locally, supporting Kent small businesses including the Kent Natural Foods, Leaf, Beware the Leopard, Laziza, Taco Tonto's, Kent Stage, The Zephyr, Ray's Place, The Venice Cafe, Shah's Halal, Sue Nelson Design, The FJ Kluth Art Gallery, Rotten Peach, Ace Hardware and Bent Tree Coffee, while banking with Kent's Hometown Bank.

Sustainable Kent News

I supported local arts by attending events at the Standing Rock Cultural Arts, including an art opening, old-time music jam, song circle and the annual Dio de Los Muertos celebration. Supporting the arts builds community.

To prepare for an art exhibit, I found old frames, cleaned the glass, repainted the trim and framed photographs, which I exhibited at the Kluth Gallery.

October was a big month for me in terms of sustainability and I encourage everyone to shop local, upcycle old merchandise and keep the cyclical economy going in Kent. When small businesses prosper, your town prospers too.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my Sustainability Month experience.

Sincerely, Fred Pierre

Learning about EV's With the Kent Environmental Council on October 8, 2026

By Dr. Joseph Ortiz, Greater Cleveland-area Regional Coordinator for EVA of Ohio



The weather was bright and sunny, with a crisp fall breeze when we gathered on Thursday, Oct. 8 at the First Christian Church in Kent, Ohio for an EVA EV Showcase during a Kent Environmental Council (KEC) meeting.

About 45 people were present to ask about cars, hear a presentation by Joseph Ortiz from EVA of Ohio about

electrification and a primer on EV ownership. There were students from Kent State University, and passersby who stopped in see the EVs on display, and talk to members of EVA, KEC, and the First Christian Church. Participants were surprised to learn that hybrid vehicles with gas and electric powertrains are much more likely to be involved in fires than battery electric vehicles, and that used EVs are now less expensive than comparable fossil fuel cars.



Rich Charles of EVA of Ohio brought his “new to him” EV to display at the event and was able to illustrate that point with a local example.

“Last week, I purchased a used 2026 Blazer RS AWD EV with 8,433 miles for $36,995. For comparison, I found two used 2026 Blazer RS AWD ICE models: one priced at $41,448 with 12,105 miles and another at $44,564 with 6,956 miles. That makes the ICE versions about $4,000 to $7,000 more expensive—roughly a 13% premium,” Charles said. “Regarding 2026 models, a new Blazer RS EV carries about a 7% premium over a comparable Blazer RS ICE model (EV MSRP: $53,500; ICE MSRP: $49,995).”



Another topic of discussion during the event was the 90-day, gas tax holiday in Ohio. EV owners are now the only drivers paying in full to support road maintenance. The gas tax holiday is not a viable solution to the long-term rise in gasoline prices. Variable pricing around the state suggests that not all the gas tax savings are being passed along to consumers. And due to the program, there will be more than $700 million in road maintenance costs that will need to be taken from elsewhere in the

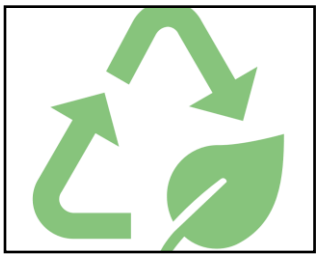
state budget. If you want a long-term solution to the high cost of fossil fuels, switching to an EV will get you off the gas price rollercoaster.



This article is republished from the EVA of Ohio website. EVA of Ohio is a 503(c), non-profit organization that advocates for EV adoption to save money, minimize the environmental and climate impacts of driving and to enhance local public health outcomes by improving air quality due to less tailpipe emissions. They provide educational programs and seek to partner with communities and local organizations holding large events to better get the word out about the advantages of electrification. You can contact EVA of Ohio if you are interested to learn more about our programs, would like to collaborate, or if you want to join.

For more information about the Kent Environmental Council, click https://kentenvironment.org/blog/ or find us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/KentEnvironment





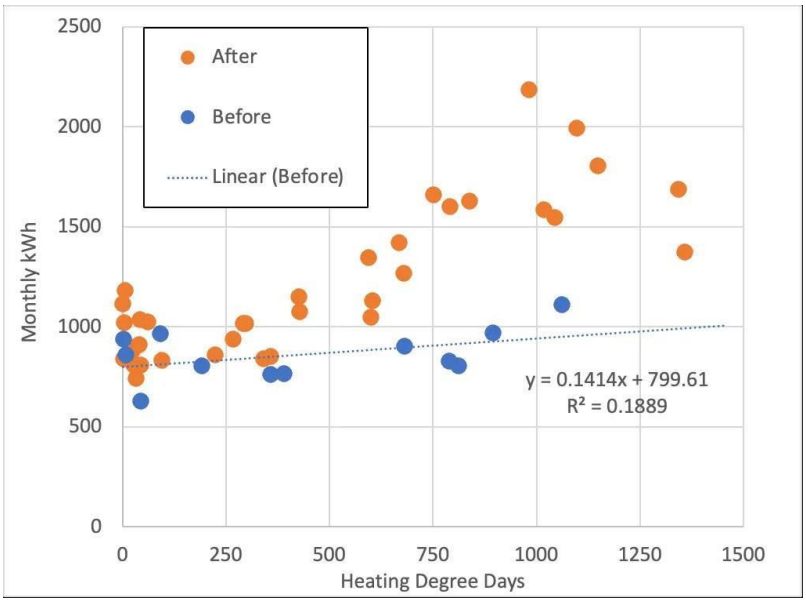
Electrification is a Great Way to Save on Energy Costs

By Dr. Joseph D. Ortiz, Ph.D.

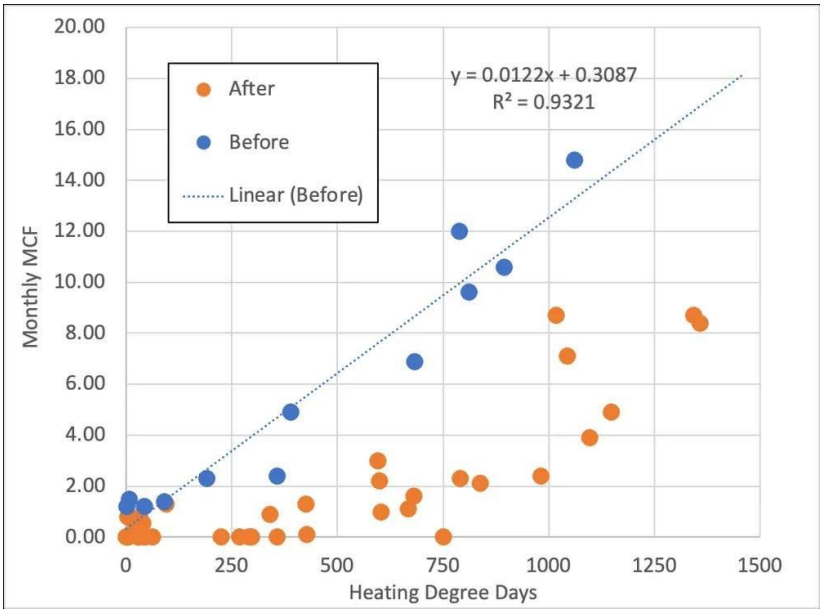
The conflict-driven, high cost of fossil fuels is providing inflationary pressure on our economy and incentive to cut back on their use. There are many advantages to switching from fossil fuel appliances to electric ones. They cost less to operate, improve indoor air quality, and have less negative environmental and climate impacts associated with their use. If you are wondering if we have options to avoid burning fossil oil and gas at home, or driving a fossil fuel powered car, my spouse and I have been on a journey over the past six years to reduce fossil fuel use in our daily life. I have some insights to pass along about the experience. To reduce our carbon footprint, we decided to switch to EVs and low carbon emissions appliances each time we have had to make a replacement. Because more than 80% of appliance purchases are unexpected, we did some product research before we needed to make a switch. That way, we would be ready with the information we needed rather than rush into a purchase or just replace a fossil fuel appliance with another one.

We purchased a Kia Niro EV midway through 2020 when our Toyota Prius was totaled in a crash. We replaced our worn-out fossil gas range with an induction stove and convection oven in 2022. In 2023, we replaced our 30-yr old AC with a three-season HVAC heat pump. We decided to keep our old fossil gas furnace as the backup heating appliance for temps <20°F. That let us save on install costs and avoid upgrading our electrical panel. There are cold climate heat pumps that will work down to -22°F, which is lower than the record minimum temperature in this area. That is an option if you are considering getting off fossil gas entirely. That approach will cost more up front but will lead to greater operational savings as you can turn off your fossil gas line hookup permanently. In 2025 when our fossil gas water heater failed, we replaced it with a hybrid heat pump water heater. Since then, we have been able to shut off our fossil gas line for seven months per year because the HVAC heat pump could handle all our home heating during those warmer months of the year. Now we only use fossil gas for heating when temperatures are <20°F in parts of the coldest five months of the year. In 2026, we replaced our second fossil fueled car, a Subaru Forester, with a new Toyota bZ EV.

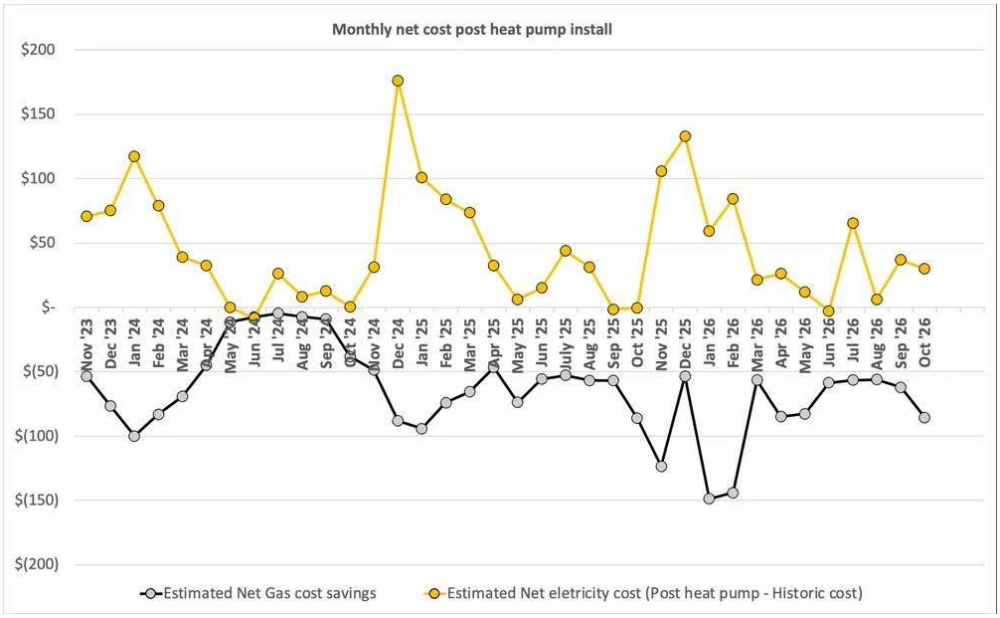
I've calculated how much our energy use has changed with time based on monthly heating degree days. This is the monthly sum of the difference between 65°F and the daily mean temperature. Our electricity use has increased to cover the electric and induction appliances we added and the two EVs. But keep in mind that the kWh we now consume cover all our home electrical needs and most of our heating and transportation costs. We only use fossil gas during the coldest months of the year and greater than 90% of our EV charging takes place at home, like most EV drivers.



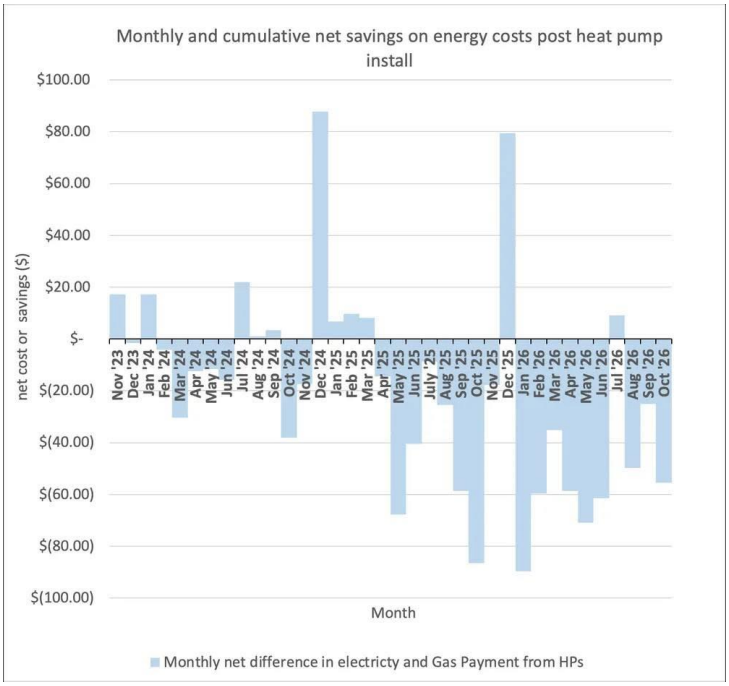
While our electricity use increased, our fossil gas use has decreased because we replaced several fossil gas appliances. Heat pumps and induction appliances are much more efficient than fossil gas appliances. As a result, our overall energy use has also decreased.



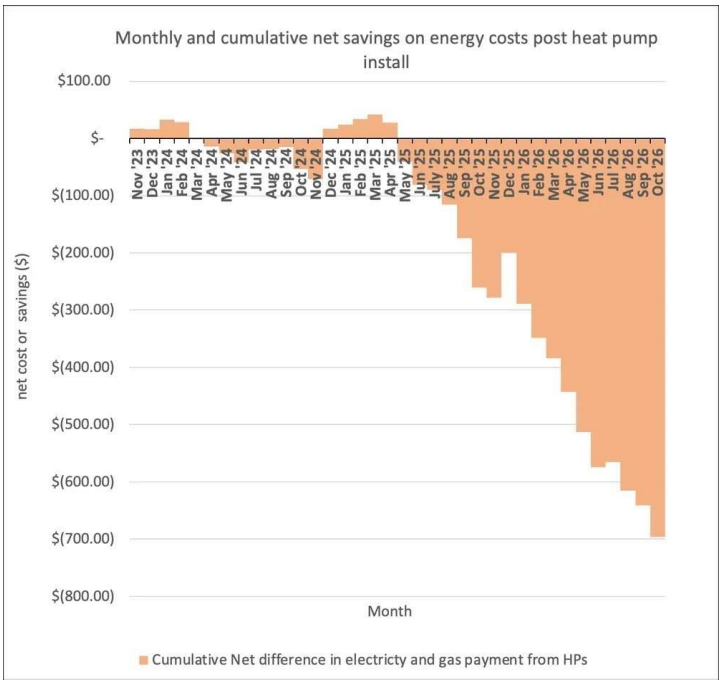
Knowing heating degree days and the efficiency of each appliance lets me estimate how much electricity and fossil gas we would have used if we had not switched the appliances. We can then take the estimated kWh and fossil gas MCF for the “before” case and use the actual rates we paid for electricity and fossil gas to determine on a month-by-month basis how much we have saved on operating costs by switching away from fossil fuels.



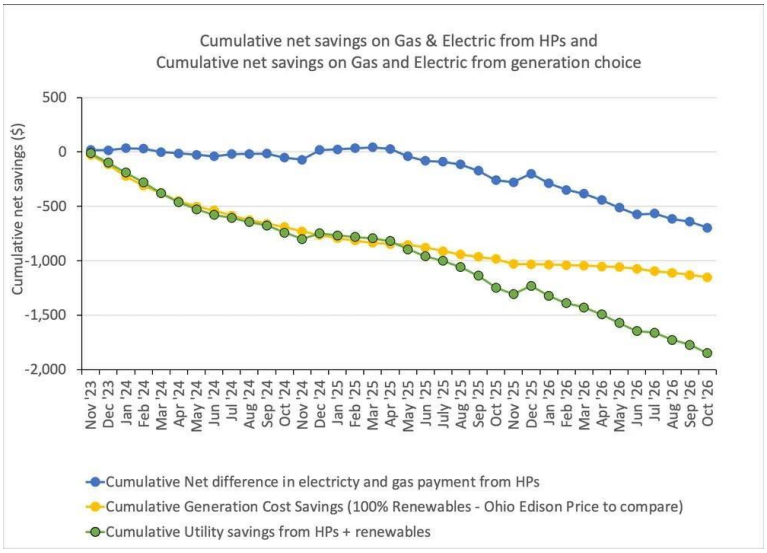
While we were making these switches, the rates for fossil gas and electric have been climbing. If we add the net differences, we see that while we paid more for electricity, it was balanced by a reduction in fossil gas use, particularly during the past cold winter. Being able to turn off our fossil gas use for seven months of the year has resulted in the most consistent savings over time. As a result, we have had net savings during most of the months since 2023 when we started tracking the costs.



If we look at our cumulative savings, we reached a net savings of about $700 since install by switching to heat pumps and an induction stove.



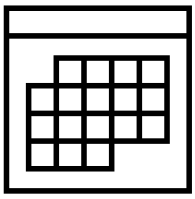
We also purchase less expensive, 100% renewable electricity over the grid using a program from the Public Utility Commission of Ohio (PUCO), rather than use the standard grid mix electricity, which includes more expensive fossil fuels. If you factor in the savings from using 100% renewable electricity, we have saved almost $2,000 since install.



The last piece of savings comes from our switch to EVs from fossil fuel burning cars. Between the two EVs, we save around $1,500 on fuel costs alone. EVs also require less maintenance than fossil fuel burning cars, averaging 40-50% of the cost to maintain. Here in Ohio, they cost more to register than a fossil fuel car due to the flat, $200 extra registration fee assessed each year. Factored together, the EVs save a net ~$400 to $500 per year on maintenance and registration relative to a fossil fuel car here in northeast Ohio. That translates into around $3,900 to $4,000 in combined net savings from all sources since Nov. 2023, or ~$108 to $111 a month over the 36 months since 2023.

What my experience demonstrates is that we have the technology needed to switch from fossil fuels right now. Dwindling fossil fuel supplies and the fossil fuel wars underway globally have added energy instability & cost, not to mention human suffering. Switch from fossil fuels can help you to save money and improve environment, climate, and public health outcomes.

Dr. Joseph D. Ortiz is Professor of Earth Sciences at Kent State University. He holds a Ph.D. in Oceanography from Oregon State University and a B.S. with Honors in Aquatic Biology from Brown University. He is the past Chair of the Department of Earth Sciences at Kent State University, a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, and an expert in climate change, environmental remote sensing and energy and sustainability. He is also the Chair of the Environmental Awareness Committee of the City of Hudson, and the greater Cleveland area, regional coordinator for the Electric Vehicle Association of Ohio. He gives public lectures on his research and on environmental topics and advocates for EV adoption through his role in EVA of Ohio. The views expressed here are his own based on his professional experience and expertise.



CALENDAR & ITEMS OF INTEREST

Supporting our local businesses and organizations is a key component of Sustainability! Check out the City's Culture & Community section of the website (www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/) for more details about the following:

Mayor Jack Amrhein has officially declared free parking in downtown Kent on the following dates to encourage holiday shopping and community engagement:

- **Friday, November 27, 2026 – the day after Thanksgiving**
- **Thursday, December 24, 2026 – Christmas Eve**

Metered parking is free during this time with the 3 hour parking areas still in effect.

- **Haymaker Farmers' Market**
  - Open year-round, every Saturday morning in Kent: Held outdoors in downtown Kent on Franklin Ave. from April through November, 9am to 1pm, and indoors at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent – Hobbs Hall from December to March, 10am to 1pm. Visit www.haymakermarket.com for full details.

- **Main Street Kent**
  - A non-profit organization that focuses on the promotion, beautification, and revitalization of downtown Kent. The City of Kent, Kent State University, local businesses, and community members support Main Street Kent. Check out their full calendar of events here: www.mainstreetkent.org/events/full-calendar/ .

- **Kent In Good Company Podcast**
  - Hosted by Kent resident and small business owner, Katy Thomas, head to the Main Street Kent website at the following link to listen and learn more about Kent's local businesses: https://mainstreetkent.org/discover/in-good-company/ .

- **The Kent Area Chamber of Commerce**
  - Visit www.kentbiz.com/events/eventcalendar for a full listing of Chamber and Community events.

- **Kent Historical Society & Museum**
  - Learn more about our community at Kent's primary history resource and reference center! Visit www.kentohiohistory.org for organization details and events.

- **Kent Parks and Recreation**
  - Offers a variety of locations, programs, and events for individuals and families to enjoy. They provide quality recreation and entertainment for the community through parks, sports, fitness, education and cultural arts. Visit their full program and event offerings at: www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/kent-parks-and-recreation/

- **Portage Parks Free Events**
  - For a full list of events and information visit: https://www.portagecounty-oh.gov/portage-park-district

- **Festival of Lights and Small Business Saturday – 11/28/26**
  - Grab your coats, scarves, mittens, and cameras and enjoy the magic of the season with your family and friends at the Festival of Lights sponsored by Axess Family Services on Saturday, November 28, 2026 (Small Business Saturday) from 5:30pm-9pm, and presented by the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce. The event will be held in traditional fashion by the Main Street Bridge, Hometown Bank Plaza and gazebo at the corner of Main Street and Franklin Avenue in downtown Kent. Highlights include Santa and Mrs. Claus arriving by train, light-up of downtown Kent, horse drawn wagon rides, cookies and hot chocolate. Before and after enjoying the festivities, keep your holiday spirit going by supporting local at downtown Kent shops and restaurants (business hours will vary) to support them for Small Business Saturday. Limited road closures will be made for the safety of people attending the Festival of Lights. For more information, please contact the KACC office at 330.673.9855 or dcampbell@kentbiz.com.

- **Sun in Leo's Clothing Swap – 12/11/26 through 12/13/26**
  - December 11th, 12th & 13th, 2026 - 12pm-7pm
    154 E. Main Street in Acorn Alley, downtown Kent
    Join us for our monthly clothing swap! Bring a bag and take a bag!
    Our clothing swap is a free way to refresh your wardrobe by bringing a bag of clothing and accessories to then swap out with textiles from our bins. The bins contain an assortment of clothing and accessories for you to decide what you can re-wear or up-cycle.
    How it works:
    Bring a bag of your unwanted clothes, take home a bag of our bin clothes a bag donation equals a free bin bag haul from the bins bin bags are $5 to anyone who doesn't donate but still wants to participate. Visit https://www.facebook.com/MainStreetKent/posts/save-these-dates-for-sun-in-leos-next-clothing-swap-nov-11-13/1536073861877212/ or https://suninleo.shop/ for full details.

- **The Kent Flea – Holiday Market 12/12/26**
  - Come visit the Kent Flea & Makers Market located at the historic Marvin Kent Home at 409 W. Main Street in Kent. The last two markets of the season are Holiday Markets and will be held from 10am – 4pm on 11/14/26 and 12/12/26 respectively. Full market details available at: https://www.facebook.com/kentflea/

- **Kent Community Timebank Orientation – 12/13/26**
  - JOIN THE KENT COMMUNITY TIMEBANK BY ATTENDING OUR QUICK ORIENTATION! Join one of the most active timebanks in the United States by attending the short orientation for the Kent Community Timebank! This meeting is all you need to do to become a member. You do not need to live in Kent to participate. You are invited! Current KCTB Members are also welcome to attend to refresh their understanding or to give an attestation to the value of the KCTB! You will earn timecredits for attending! Visit the website for full details and items to fill out before attending this free event.

- **Rooted Kent's Home Repair Basics Class – 12/17/26**
  - December 17, 2026
    6:30pm - 8pm
    211 Cherry Street in Kent
    Led by Jon Farrell and Josh Lehman, the Home Repair Basics class is a practical, beginner-friendly class that teaches essential home maintenance and simple repair skills. Each session covers useful topics such as fixing common household issues, basic plumbing, electrical safety, drywall repair, painting, and general upkeep to help homeowners save money and gain confidence in caring for their homes. The class is ideal for new homeowners, renters, or anyone looking to learn fundamental skills in a relaxed, step-by-step environment. Tools and materials will be provided during class. No previous experience is necessary. Visit the website for full details.

- **Yard Waste Transfer Site - Open Through 12/19/26**
  - The yard waste transfer site hours are Tuesdays 9am-1pm, Wednesdays 5-8pm (through 10/28/26) and Saturdays 9am-noon. The site is a place for residents of Kent to drop off brush, clippings and other yard waste. It is also the place to get the grindings from the waste, to use like mulch, for free! Stop by near Cherry Street and Mogadore Rd, near the entrance to Plum Creek. The Yard Waste Site is closed during the winter months. It will remain open until December 19th, 2026, weather permitting. During winter weather prior to the anticipated winter closing date of December 19th, please call the Service Department at 330-678-8105 to verify that the site is open. Full details at: https://www.kentohio.gov/living-here/garbage-and-recycling/yard-waste/