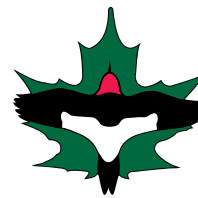




Your 28th open park, Troy Wetlands

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT Year in Review 2023



Gauga Park District is happy to share this glance at the projects, programs, initiatives and outcomes accomplished in 2023. You tell us that your parks are valuable to you. The Board of Park Commissioners and staff follow the mission of our organization and take to heart the voice of the people when making decisions concerning the future of our parks and protected lands. Because of your support, Geauga County residents, and the help of our cherished volunteers, your Geauga Park District is thriving. Take the time to visit a park near you and take advantage of what Nature provides us.

In 2023, Geauga Park District took care of your parks...

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Natural resource management of more than 10,500 acres and 21 ponds and lakes
- Managed more than 38 acres of meadow with prescribed fire to improve native meadow wildflowers and grasses for critical pollinator and songbird habitat
- Managed 367 acres for invasive plant control
- Stocked more than 1,800 fish at 4 ponds for anglers to enjoy (more than 1,200 donated by the Ohio Division of Wildlife)
- Planted about 700 native Ohio trees and shrubs (25 species) with help from sponsoring organizations and volunteers as part of our 1,000 Trees initiative at Veterans Legacy Woods



- Hosted an annual Earth Day drive-through that provided more than 200 people with 350 milkweed plants and other native Ohio wildflowers along with 200 native trees
- Developed the design of the upcoming coldwater stream habitat restoration project at Veterans Legacy Woods. Projected cost: \$1,163,575, funded entirely through the Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program.
- Presented biological resources and conservation goals to secure \$753,200 in Clean Ohio Conservation funding for the purchase of 182 acres of park land now named Hambden Hills in Hambden Twp. This acquisition, funded entirely through grants totaling \$1,053,200 in partnership with Western Reserve Land Conservancy, protects more than 1.5 miles of Bates Creek, an important Grand River tributary, and 40 acres of high quality wetland.



Thanks to our 1,000 Trees sponsors to date:

Arms Trucking, Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Trout Club, Covia/Best Sand, One Tree Planted, The Davey Tree Expert Company, Troymill Wood Products, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, In Memory of Frank Murzynski, ACE Billing Group, Donate a Tree to the World, Geauga County Maple Leaf, The Middlefield Banking Company, One Tree Planted, Petersen & Petersen, Rotary Club of Geauga County, VFW Chardon, The Town & Country Garden Club of Cleveland, VCA Burton Animal Hospital, VFW Middlefield, Sunrise Springs, Sage's Apples & The National Wild Turkey Federation

RANGERS

- Handled 1,445 incident reports and daily patrols
- Reported 433,851 park visitors with car counters April-October (top visited: Frohring Meadows 62,553, Big Creek Park 32,658, Beartown Lakes Reservation 31,753)
- Conducted firearm, archery and muzzleloader pre-qualifications for 200 residents to assist with deer management in the parks

...and invested in your future.

PLANNING

- At Holbrook Hollows' Franklin Marsh, completed construction of new parking, trail connection, restroom with water, picnic shelter and boardwalk. Final cost: \$743,520.90, including \$375,000 awarded through the Ohio Capital Fund.
- At Veterans Legacy Woods, completed interior renovations and improvements to Tribute Lodge, the property's former clubhouse, which is now fully reservable by phone.
- At Big Creek Park, completed the 6-mile mountain bike trail and trailhead
- Held public input meetings and completed a countywide survey in preparation for the 2025 strategic plan
- Completed construction drawings and documents for the replacement of The West Woods' entry bridge starting in 2024



CONSTRUCTION

- At Troy Wetlands, completed construction of parking access, fishing platforms, picnic areas, boardwalk, and Nature viewing platform, finishing Geauga Park District's 28th open park. Final cost: \$60,036.68, including \$16,409 secured through an Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant.
- Produced 122 gallons of maple syrup from 500 taps February 13 to March 19 at Swine Creek Reservation

GROUNDS & FACILITIES

- Replaced and added 15 Nature interpretation signs and 21 directional road signs
- Presented a brand new Touch-a-Truck event with the naturalists, attracting 803 visitors to The West Woods
- Hosted Geauga voters at Claridon Woodlands, The West Woods and Veterans Legacy Woods



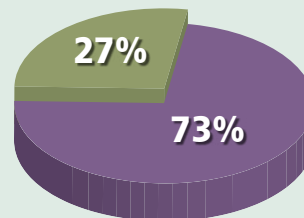
FINANCE

Opening Cash Balance as of 1/1/2023 **\$5,512,087**

Revenue & Other Sources

Levy and Tax Income 6,939,019
Other Sources 2,605,911

Total Source of Funds **\$9,544,930**



Revenue

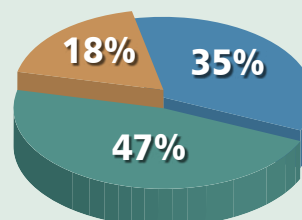
LEVY AND TAX INCOME
OTHER SOURCES

Expenditures & Other Uses

Personnel and Benefits 4,454,884
Operating 3,302,705
Capital Improvements 1,715,461

Total Uses of Funds **\$9,473,049**

Year End Cash Balance as of 12/31/2023 **\$5,583,968**



Expenditures

PERSONNEL AND BENEFITS
OPERATING
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

In 2023, Geauga Park District helped you connect with Nature.



NATURALISTS

- Developed and presented 1,191 programs and events serving 46,655 patrons
- Assisted 2,397 boat rentals and 895 ropes course climbers
- Engaged 808 students from 11 local schools in our fifth-grade Nature Scopes Binocular Program during the 2022-23 school year
- Partnered with the Foundation for Geauga Parks for support of Nature Scopes, summer camps and the Nature Writing Contest
- Led 128 campers entering grades 3 through 10 on summer day camp adventures
- Welcomed 16,290 visitors to Geauga Park District's building in The Great Geauga County Fair's Natural Resource Area
- Hosted 750 people at our annual Winter Solstice Celebration, the event's second-highest total in the past 20 years, and 1,030 people at three Sap's-a-Risin'! maple sugaring events in March
- Enrolled 488 patrons in our 2023 Geauga Gems Hiking Series
- Launched the all-new Agents of Discovery location-based game at The West Woods starting in April, with an estimated 1,821 plays by 203 unique accounts (the equivalent of 435.39 miles traveled and 2 weeks, 5 days, 11 hours and 49 minutes of engagement with Nature)
- Fielded 32 Nature questions posted to our website's Ask a Naturalist page
- Created 34 unique seasonal displays shared at The West Woods Nature Center

VISITOR SERVICES

- Facilitated 3,655 facility reservations (attended by 129,000) and 1,337 camping reservations for Geauga residents and others enjoying our natural areas
- Hosted 21,850 visits to The West Woods Nature Center



VOLUNTEERS

- 135 volunteers gave 5,550.45 hours, including 1,489.25 hours assessing trails and conducting light maintenance duties on foot
- Hosted 5 mentorship students representing Kenston, West Geauga and Berkshire schools
- Welcomed two scouts to finish their Eagle Scout projects in our parks: three insect hotels at Frohring Meadows and a Little Free Library at Sunnybrook Preserve
- Entered a partnership with Vantage Aging and AmeriCorps Seniors
- The Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association volunteered 160 hours at Big Creek Park



MARKETING

- 199,117 users viewed our website 566,614 times
- Active senior media presence reached users 559,975 times on Facebook and 19,427 times on Instagram