



Photo by Sonny Williams



Photos by Sonny Williams



Photo by John Swaney



Photo by Tom Malinchak



GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT Year in Review 2024



Photo by Sonny Williams

In 2024, your parks received great care from our Natural Resource Management team and Ranger Department...

- Protected the natural resources of more than 10,500 acres and 21 ponds and lakes
- Managed more than 21 acres of meadow with prescribed fire, improving native meadow wildflowers and grasses for critical pollinator and songbird habitat



- Controlled 253 acres of invasive plants
- Stocked more than 1,900 fish at 5 parks for anglers to enjoy (more than 1,200 donated by the Ohio Division of Wildlife)
- Planted about 300 native Ohio trees and shrubs (20 species) at Veterans Legacy Woods with help from sponsoring organizations and volunteers as part of our 1,000 Trees initiative
- Hosted an annual Earth Day drive-through that provided more than 200 people with 200 milkweed plants, 400 native Ohio wildflowers and 250 native trees



Coldwater Stream Creation at Veterans Legacy Woods

Cost: \$1,163,575 (entirely funded through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program)



- Created 1,700 feet of coldwater stream, a hopeful site for Ohio native brook trout introduction
- Enhanced 3 wetlands
- Restored 1,450 feet of warmwater stream
- Returned 32 acres in the Cuyahoga River watershed to a more natural state



Thanks to our 1,000 Trees sponsors in 2024:

Covia/Best Sand, One Tree Planted, Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Trout Club, Arms Trucking, Toddy & Jim McMonagle, Virginia Poirier, In Memory of Frank Murzynski, The Pattie Group, Thrive Lawn & Plant Healthcare, The Town & Country Garden Club of Cleveland, VFW Middlefield, St Dominic School, Matthew Rambo, Sunrise Springs, Sage's Apples & The National Wild Turkey Federation

- Performed daily patrols and handled 1,509 incident reports
- Conducted firearm, archery and muzzleloader pre-qualifications for 200 resident hunters and oversaw related park closures
- Car counters reported 420,925 park visitors April-October (top visited: Frohring Meadows 50,315, The West Woods 32,315, Big Creek Park 31,635)

FINANCE

Opening Cash Balance as of 1/1/2024

\$5,583,968

Revenue & Other Sources

Levy and Tax Income 6,371,344
Other Sources 1,826,951

Total Source of Funds

\$8,198,295



Revenue

LEVY AND TAX INCOME
OTHER SOURCES

...and these investments were made in the future of your parks by our skilled planning, construction, and grounds and facilities staff.

- Developed a mission-driven strategic plan to prepare staff and leadership to meet future challenges and opportunities for the next five years. Resulting from a countywide survey, public input meetings and staff feedback, this plan will guide future decision-making, priorities, goals and objectives.
- Completed planning for the replacement of The West Woods' entry bridge in 2025, being funded at 95% by the Ohio Department of Transportation
- Built new trails and boardwalks at Veterans Legacy Woods, including a "Rainbow Bridge" along the Duty Trail to commemorate service dogs and pets



New Tulip Trail at The West Woods

Cost: \$77,491 (\$34,703 funded through a Foundation for Geauga Parks grant with support from the Geauga Ohio Horseman's Council)

- Created 1.2 miles of trail passing the second largest tuliptree in Ohio
- Amassed 92.5 miles of trail across 28 open parks



Upper Dam & Plaza Improvements at Claridon Woodlands

Cost: \$23,452

- Renovated the plaza outside the lodge with native plantings and new stone seating
- Improved the outlets of the upper dam



- Completed Cricket Trail improvements at Orchard Hills Park
- Resurfaced entrance drives and parking lots at The Rookery and Orchard Hills Park
- Produced 69 gallons of maple syrup from 500 taps February 13 to March 19 at Swine Creek Reservation
- Hosted Geauga voters at Claridon Woodlands and Veterans Legacy Woods

Acquisitions & Funding

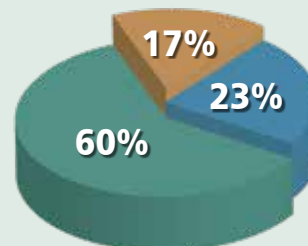
- Acquired 119 acres of Cuyahoga headwaters marsh property on Clay Street, across from Observatory Park, from West Creek Land Conservancy
- With the help of Senator Vernon Sykes and Representative Steve Demetriou, secured \$344,075 of State Capital budget for 2025 playground and site improvements at Beartown Lakes Reservation

Expenditures & Other Uses

Personnel and Benefits	4,881,717
Operating	1,884,399
Capital Improvements	1,424,359

Total Uses of Funds **\$8,190,475**

Year End Cash Balance as of 12/31/2024 **\$5,591,788**



Expenditures

PERSONNEL AND BENEFITS
OPERATING
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

In 2024, Geauga Park District naturalists, visitor representatives, volunteers and marketing team helped you connect with Nature.

- Facilitated 3,171 facility reservations at 12 enclosed lodges and 18 open-air shelters (attended by 111,900) and 1,320 camping reservations at 33 campsites for Geauga residents and others enjoying our natural areas
- Engaged 151 community artists to create more than 300 tree-inspired pieces of artwork through "The Forest is Calling and I Must Create" Community Art Show at The West Woods Nature Center, which was viewed by almost 6,000 visitors
- Developed and presented 754 programs and events serving 53,406 patrons (including 1,426 attending 75 archery sessions)
- Partnered with the Geauga County Fairgrounds to host an unforgettable viewing experience of the April 8 total solar eclipse for 3,200 people with hands-on activities, crafts, educational stations and food trucks
- Facilitated 2,397 boat rentals and 710 ropes course climbers
- Led 115 campers entering grades 3 through 10 on summer day camp adventures
- Welcomed 16,775 visitors to our building in The Great Geauga County Fair's Natural Resource Area



- Engaged 1,642 fifth-graders from 11 local schools through our Nature Scopes Binocular Program during the 2023-24 & 2024-25 school years



- Partnered with the Foundation for Geauga Parks to financially support our summer camps, Nature Writing Contest and Nature Scopes
- Hosted 875 people for our annual Winter Solstice Celebration — its highest attendance since debuting in 1989 — as well as 1,341 people for maple sugaring programs, including three Sap's-a-Risin'! Sundays in late February and early March
- Created 40 unique seasonal displays for The West Woods Nature Center
- Inspired the public to explore more trails through our Geauga Gems Trekking Series (502 signed up) and Top 10 Trails Contest
- Inspired a record-breaking 351 writers of all ages to compose Nature-inspired prose and poetry through the 29th Annual Nature Writing Contest
- Facilitated 992 plays by 203 unique accounts of the location-based exploration game Agents of Discovery at The West Woods (the equivalent of 187.5 miles traveled and 1 week, 1 day and 3 hours of engagement with Nature)
- Updated all interpretive trail signage along the Planetary and Weather Trails at Observatory Park

Volunteerism

- 145 active volunteers generously provided 5,713.25 hours of support, including 1,189 hours assessing trails on foot and conducting light maintenance duties as part of the Volunteer Trail Team
- Revamped the Volunteer Bike Patrol, whose 24 active volunteers spent 266.75 hours on The Maple Highlands Trail
- Hosted 8 mentorship students from Berkshire, West Geauga and Kenston and Auburn Career Center
- Continued a partnership with The Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association, whose members volunteered 280 hours at Big Creek Park
- Coordinated volunteers to help 930 children sample archery at The Great Geauga County Fair



- Hosted 19,977 visits to The West Woods Nature Center
- Naturalists responded to 964 public inquiries via email, phone, our website's Ask a Naturalist page and in person
- Quarterly *Park Explorer* Activity Guide reached 42,975 households
- Active social media presence reached Facebook users 787,272 times, 4,400 followers on X and 5,795 followers on Instagram
- Website viewed 584,713 times by 213,455 unique users