

GetConnected!

Metroparks of the Toledo Area **2011 Annual Report**





Forested areas



Green and Getting Greener

Being green is an important operating principle for Metroparks. In recent years, the park district's employees have worked to make day-to-day operations increasingly friendly to the environment, with measurable success.

- Electric consumption has been reduced by 25 percent since 2006 through improved operations and employee behavioral changes.
- The operations fleet has been reduced by 31 vehicles, many of which were replaced by electric utility carts. By carefully selecting new vehicles, the average fuel efficiency for the remaining fleet has increased by 3 miles-per-gallon – the equivalent of 7,000 gallons of fuel.
- The annual number of miles driven also has decreased, from 546,849 miles in 2007 to 444,113 miles in 2011. The 120,736-mile reduction equals a savings of approximately 10,000 gallons of fuel. One reason for the

reduction is that rangers now spend a minimum of 45 percent of their shift on foot, bicycle or in an electric cart rather than driving their patrol cars.

- Working with the Lucas County Solid Waste District, Metroparks has established recycling stations at most parks. As a result, the park district recycles five times the amount of refuse that it sends to the landfill.

Metroparks greatest contribution to the local environment, however, is preserving open space. Forested areas absorb carbon dioxide, the No. 1 greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Green space offsets CO₂ produced by human activity, and provides filtration and increased absorption of stormwater.

Students of Dr. Defne Apul's civil engineering class at the University of Toledo recently measured Metroparks "carbon footprint," or the amount of CO₂ produced while operating

the park district. They measured direct and indirect sources, including exhaust from the vehicle fleet, utility consumption and solid waste production, among other things.

The result: the benefit that Metroparks provides to the environment is nine times greater than the carbon footprint produced for park operations.

"Metroparks is currently wearing a size minus-9 shoe," said Joe Fausnaugh, park services manager.

Note: This annual report, Metroparks magazine and other Metroparks publications are printed on recycled paper with biodegradable ink in a printing plant partially powered by wind.

Electric cart



Connecting With The Land

Land Acquisition

2011 was the ninth year of a 10-year plan to acquire property for future parkland, funded by a 0.3 mill levy and grants from a variety of sources, including the Clean Ohio Fund. Metroparks has acquired 76 percent of the property it set out to acquire. Following are total land purchases to date.

Target area – Acres preserved

Zone	Total
Oak Openings Corridor	1,867
Lake Erie Coastal Zone Area	987
Maumee River Corridor/ Fallen Timbers	101
Swan Creek Corridor/ Westside Corridor	117
Other: Nona France, Keil Farm	350
TOTAL	3,422

Highlights

Metroparks grew by 216 acres in 2011, bringing total land holdings to 11,169 acres.

The Oak Openings Greenway, which will eventually connect the two largest Metroparks, Oaks Openings Preserve and Secor, grew by 144 acres. Land purchases were made using grants of \$151,000 from the Clean Ohio Fund and \$200,000 from the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program in partnership with the city of Toledo.

A long-time goal of local organizations to acquire an 11-mile stretch of railroad property known as the Westside Corridor became a reality in 2011. The land was purchased with a \$5.6 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration secured by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur. The corridor connects north and south Toledo and crosses the Maumee River into Wood County, where it connects with the Wood County Park District's Knight Preserve. Metroparks owns the last 1.4 mile stretch of the corridor in Lucas County, from Glanzman Road to the Maumee River. The property includes a railroad bridge over the Anthony Wayne Trail that is scheduled to be demolished and, eventually, replaced.

Metroparks purchased the 30-acre Granger Island in the Maumee River near Waterville, just south of the SR 64 Bridge. The park district owns several islands between Maumee and Waterville.

An additional 27 acres of the Keil Farm property at Reynolds Road and Hill Avenue were acquired with funding from a \$1.08 million grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Economic Development Initiative, secured through Congresswoman Kaptur.

Metroparks also purchased 2.5 acres that are now part of Side Cut in Maumee.

Land Management

The goal of land management is to sustain the health and diversity of natural areas. Often, the task is to help nature take its course by removing or mitigating unnatural influences. At Oak Openings, for example, fires started by lightning or native Americans were historically a part of the natural process. Today, prescribed burns controlled by trained professionals simulate this process.

Removing non-native, invasive species that were introduced to local natural areas is another important function of land management. Left unchecked, these outside influences would overtake native species, drastically changing the landscape of northwest Ohio.

In the past few years, the devastating effects of the emerald ash borer, an invasive insect from Asia, has occupied much of the Land Management Department's time. With funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the park district has been removing dead ash trees that pose a hazard to people or property.

A June 2010 tornado further complicated land management efforts at Oak Openings by downing or damaging thousands of trees over a 150-acre section of the nearly 4,000 acre preserve. Over the winter, thousands of stumps were removed in the affected area. While tornadoes are natural, there is so little left of the Oak Openings that it is important to manage those lands that remain for their maximum habitat potential.



Consider making planned giving one of your Metroparks connections.



Nature Camp

Connecting With The Community

Programs And Special Events

Educational programs, special events, attractions and educational outreach are ways Metroparks connects with the community. In 2011, 62,930 people attended programs and special events, including more than 10,800 students in Lucas County schools.

Summer camps provide children with a memorable day or weeklong, nature-based experience. In 2011, 370 children attended a Metroparks camp. New themed camps are added each year, and in 2012, camps are being offered at Oak Openings Preserve as well as Wildwood Preserve, providing additional options for families.

At Providence Metropark, where the Miami & Erie Canal comes to life through interactive living history experiences, about 10,000 people, including students from 52 schools, toured the Isaac Ludwig Mill and/or boarded The Volunteer canal boat for an educational journey back in time.

Nearly 29,000 people visited the Wildwood Manor House for tours or events. Holidays in the Manor House, a Toledo tradition, had a record year with more than 18,000 visitors in eight days.

The National Center for Nature Photography at Secor continues to grow in popularity with well-attended gallery exhibits and opening receptions, as well as capacity attendance at workshops. The Center has also reached into the community with special exhibits at venues such as Main Branch Library in downtown Toledo, One Government Center, Maumee Bay State Park, Magee Marsh State Wildlife Area and The Andersons corporate offices in Maumee.

Volunteers

More than 3,000 people, including 79 groups, contributed 40,447 volunteer hours in 2011, helping to keep the Metroparks clean, safe and natural. They included individuals, families and organizations such as Adelante, The Latino Resource Center, ZooTeens, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the law firm of Spengler Nathanson, First Solar and Lourdes University Women's Basketball Team.

Volunteer Trail Patrol hours continued to increase. More than 200 dedicated volunteers walked the trails and assisted park visitors, contributing over 10,000 hours of volunteer service!

Friends of Pearson, Side Cut and the Lathrop House, as well as the Manor House Volunteers, continued to make significant contributions to their area of interest, including financial or in-kind donations and advocacy for their

Meet Our Monitors

You will find Metroparks species monitors in the field installing bluebird boxes, wading into vernal pools or taking stock of plants, raptors or frogs. These volunteers gather data and record observations that help track the health of individual species and habitats.

A long-term butterfly monitoring project, in partnership with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, Ohio Lepidopterists Society and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, documents long-term trends, which is essential to revealing population declines before their final stages.

Likewise, the breeding raptor research project documents the nesting success and habitat use of all nesting raptor species (hawks and owls) in the Oak Openings Region. Other volunteers monitor rare plants, bats, frogs and cavity-nesting birds.

The Vernal Pool Monitoring Program raises public awareness of the existence of vernal pools and their importance in local biodiversity. It allows people to participate in a field-research based program to learn more about these periodically wet areas that are bursting with living things.

These "citizen science" programs offer an opportunity for nature lovers to become more familiar with the Metroparks while they collect information that will be valuable long-term in making important natural resource management decisions.





favorite parks and projects. Volunteers in Parks raised money from pancake breakfasts, the Holiday Café and Craft Show and other activities, which goes to support a wide variety of important projects proposed by park district staff.

In a survey, 97 percent of volunteers rated their experience an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale.

Communications

The ability to communicate one-on-one with Metroparks nearly any time through social media wasn't possible a few years ago. Today, thousands of people follow the park district on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and other social sites. Social media is not only an open forum, but a shared experience. Highlights in nature from the park district's Nature Now blog, pictures submitted by visitors, news (sometimes posted live from events) and even simple updates about the weather can be fodder for discussion.

"Social" is more than a means of communication, it's also an attitude. Metroparks has long embraced two-way communication, listening as well as talking. Community surveys over the phone serve as a barometer of public attitudes about park operations, programming and customer service. Face-to-face interviews with park visitors provide more detailed information about satisfaction with the park system.

Listening also informs *how* Metroparks communicates. New TV commercials that began airing in 2012 on local cable stations reflect the attributes of the parks that visitors said were

important to them. Advertising, as part of a larger communication plan, has been successful in attracting visitors, members, donors and volunteers.

Connecting With The Future

Membership and Development

Development funds include memberships, donations of both cash and in-kind services, grants, tributes and bequests. Money from these sources help Metroparks stretch the taxpayer dollars while offering opportunities for individuals and organizations to make a difference in the community by supporting parks and projects that they find meaningful.

Members support a variety of activities through their annual dues. Grants are awarded to projects and programs each year from these funds. In 2011, the number of memberships increased by more than 100 to 2,097. More importantly, 75 percent of members chose to renew their membership – an exceptional retention rate for membership programs.

Foundation and Corporate Support

Carson Family Metroparks Fund:

The Carson family gave combined gifts through the Carson Family Metroparks Fund at the Toledo Community Foundation to restore the formal gardens and landscaping at the Wildwood Manor House.

BP-Husky Refinery LLC: Metroparks received a donation of \$25,000 from BP for Pearson playground renovations. The company also has issued a challenge grant to match up to another \$25,000 donated from other organizations to replace equipment at the popular play area.

France Stone Foundation: A grant from the France Stone Foundation, a longtime Metroparks supporter, paid for repairs to The Volunteer, the canal boat at Providence Metropark.

The Andersons: The Andersons, another longtime supporter, provided program sponsorships to Metroparks

in 2011. Most of Metroparks largest events are made possible in part thanks to The Andersons.

Tiffany Elise Staelin Fund: This private family foundation provided a gift to renovate the trailhead area at Wildwood Preserve, behind the Visitors Center. The many improvements to the Visitors Center courtyard made in recent years have been funded thanks in part to the support of the fund.

Hankison Foundation: A new Metroparks Gift Giving Catalog was developed in 2011 to provide a menu of options for giving. An undesignated gift from the Hankison Foundation was the first contribution to result from the new catalog.

Prudence Lamb Trust: The trust provided funds to enlarge and improve the Lamb Center at Side Cut Metropark. The building is used for special events and meetings, while commemorating the generous, community-minded spirit of Edward and Prudence Lamb.

Edward Lamb Foundation: A gift from the Edward Lamb Foundation provided for a new self-guided historical tour at Side Cut Metropark.

The Alfred Wagener Foundation:

The family foundation, which sponsors an annual golf outing fundraiser, presented a gift of \$6,000 toward the cost of developing a new winter recreation area at Side Cut. The area, which already included a sledding hill opened in 2010 with support of the



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New playground at Secor Metropark

Wagener Foundation, now has an ice rink and additional fire pits for warming cold hands and feet.

Donations and Bequests

Alice Rupp, who died in 2010, was a longtime volunteer at Metroparks with a big heart and a love for nature. Per her wishes, Alice left Metroparks an undesignated gift of \$184,000 to continue to care for the parks where she spent so much of her time.

Frank and Babs Cubbon made a private gift to fund a complete renovation to the Walnut Grove playground at Secor Metropark. The couple made the donation in honor of their 63rd wedding anniversary in November.

Murry Rosenberg loved animals and gave an unrestricted bequest in the amount \$11,988 to Metroparks.

A \$7,500 gift from the **Maumee Rotary Club** provided electricity to the Rotary Pavilion at Side Cut Metropark to enhance rental opportunities.

Hostelling International-Toledo Area Council made a generous contribution of \$5,000 for the Trail Endowment Fund. This gift will help support ongoing efforts to improve and maintain trails in all Metroparks.

Robert and Sarah Brown gave a generous gift of \$2,900 to support the Fallen Timbers Battlefield.

A private donor gave a gift to support Nature Camp initiatives.

John and Yolanda Szuch continued to support the Johlin Cabin at Pearson Metropark.

Grants

Metroparks received a grant for \$80,000 from the Recreational Trails/Clean Ohio Trails Fund to support the construction of a restroom facility on the Wabash Cannonball Trail.

Customer Service

Demand for rental facilities in the Metroparks is growing, allowing the park district to raise revenue for operations while providing venues for hundreds of memorable, private events each year, including reunions, weddings and other family gatherings. Since the Manor House became available for rent in 2008, weddings and other special events in the house have made a substantial contribution to this important source of funding for the park district.

More than \$222,000 was raised in 2011 from rental fees of Metroparks facilities, including picnic shelters and buildings. The Farmhouse at Wildwood became available to rent for the first time in 2011, and several other facilities were renovated (see the Planning and Construction report).

Planning and Construction

2011 was an exceptionally busy year for construction around the park district, including major renovation projects at four parks.

The bulk of the improvements were at Pearson. Macomber Lodge received a kitchen makeover and a 600 square foot addition to accommodate new restrooms. The Window on Wildlife was renovated at the Packer-Hammersmith Center, where the landscaping and brick plaza area were also improved. The Packer-Hammersmith Center itself is undergoing a major remodeling in 2012. The historical shelter house at the playground and the restroom/concession building known as the Lake Activity Center were also renovated.

The Yager Center at Swan Creek received a makeover. New restrooms, a warming kitchen and exterior concrete and landscaping were completed by spring 2012 and the like-new facility is now available for rental.

The Buehner Center at Oak Openings is the park district's newest rental facility. A major renovation included a 900 square foot addition to accommodate new restrooms, which are accessible from inside and outside the building. An obsolete restroom building nearby was demolished as part of the project. The Buehner Center is now available by reservation.

The charming Lamb Center at Side Cut was also renovated.

The newly renovated Buehner Center at Oak Openings Preserve



Side Cut's popular new winter recreation area, opened in 2010, received additional fire pits and a new ice skating rink.

Metroparks also oversaw construction work at the Lathrop House in Sylvania, where a basement was recreated in preparation for additional work in 2012. The basement, where fleeing slaves received shelter during their journey on the Underground Railroad, will be the focus of interpretive programming at the house when it opens in 2013.

The park district's new roving construction crew completed a long list of other improvements throughout the Metroparks, including a new stairway leading to the boardwalk on the Blue Trail at Wildwood, as well as new benches, handrails, steps and shelter improvements in several parks.

At Secor, a new playground – the first of Metroparks new "signature" playground designs featuring interactive sculpture – is now open at the Walnut Grove picnic area.

Over the winter, crews began installing a new system of trail signage at Wildwood. A new trailhead kiosk, directional signage and 10th-mile markers are now in place at that park, and similar signage will be installed in 2012 at Swan Creek Preserve and along the Towpath Trail connecting Farnsworth, Bend View and Providence Metroparks. New interpretive signs at Wildwood and Side Cut created walking tours of those parks.



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Enjoy them. Protect them.

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Ask about our gift catalog.

Please contact us at
419-407-9716.

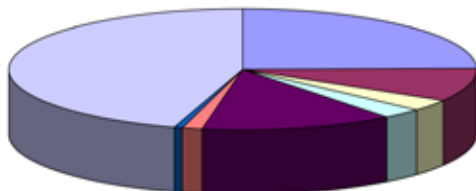


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TOLEDO AREA

Your Clean, Safe, Natural Places To Be

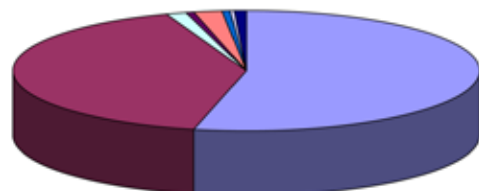
MetroparksToledo.com

Total Expenditures \$22,146,532



■ Salaries
■ Fringe Benefits
■ Materials & Supplies
■ Utilities
■ Contract Services
■ TBG Operations
■ Other Operational Exp.
■ Capital Outlay

Total Revenues \$24,428,900



■ Taxes
■ Intergovernmental
■ Fines and Forfeitures
■ Fees
■ Sales
■ Donations
■ Memberships
■ Interest Income
■ All Other Revenue

Consider making planned giving one of your Metroparks connections.

To Preserve and Protect the Natural Heritage of Northwest Ohio



Board of Commissioners

Scott J. Savage, *President*

Fritz Byers, *Vice President*

Lera L. Doneghy, *Vice President*

Mission

To enhance quality of life and inspire preservation efforts in this and future generations by providing a regional system of premier natural, historical and cultural parklands maintained and operated to the highest professional standards.

Your Metroparks

Each of the Metroparks offers picnic areas, playfields, trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, interpretive information and natural beauty. Each also offers something that makes it unique.

Parks:

Wildwood Preserve, Sylvania Township
Pearson, Oregon

Swan Creek Preserve, Toledo

Side Cut, Maumee

Oak Openings Preserve, Swanton

Farnsworth, Waterville

Bend View, Waterville

Providence, Grand Rapids

Secor, Berkey

Blue Creek Conservation Area, Whitehouse

Fallen Timbers Battlefield, Maumee

Affiliates & Attractions:

Toledo Botanical Garden, Toledo

The Manor House, Wildwood

Oak Grove School, Wildwood

The Canal Experience, Providence

National Center for Nature Photography, Secor

The Lathrop House, Harroun Park, Sylvania

Greenway Trails:

Towpath Trail (Farnsworth to Providence)

University/Parks Trail

Wabash Cannonball Trail



Partner Agencies:

Toledo Botanical Garden Board, Inc.

Nature's Nursery

Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District

Village of Whitehouse

Stay Connected

All parks, administrative office,

reservations: **419-407-9700**

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