

2022

ANNUAL REPORT





MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Mill Creek MetroParks is to provide park, recreational, educational, and open space facilities of regional significance. In fulfilling this mission our objectives are:

- To be responsive to community needs
- To be environmentally sound
- To be adaptable
- To be economically responsible

A SEPARATE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE OF OHIO

Mill Creek MetroParks is a separate political subdivision of the state of Ohio and is not part of any local or other political subdivision. It was established on January 1, 1989, under Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code, as the successor to the Youngstown Township Park District subsequent to the voters' approval of the conversion. Mill Creek MetroParks serves all of Mahoning County.

The MetroParks currently operates Mill Creek Park, located in Boardman Township and the City of Youngstown; Yellow Creek Park in Struthers; the MetroParks Farm in Canfield Township; Vickers Nature Preserve in Ellsworth Township; MetroParks Bikeway, which traverses Austintown Township,

Canfield Township, and the City of Canfield; Sebring Woods in the Village of Sebring; Cranberry Run Headwaters in Boardman Township; Sawmill Creek Preserve in Canfield Township; Mill Creek Preserve in Boardman Township; McGuffey Wildlife Preserve in Coitsville Township; Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in Beaver Township; and Egypt Swamp Preserve in Green Township.

MetroParks revenue is derived from three main sources: receipts of a tax levy upon all real estate within the District, receipts from the Local Government Fund, and income from other activities (greens fees, cabin rentals, pavilion rentals, boat rentals, programs)..

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Mill Creek MetroParks is governed by a board of park commissioners consisting of five residents of Mahoning County appointed by the Probate Court of Mahoning County and serving without remuneration of benefits.



Appointing Authority
The Honorable Judge Robert N. Rusu, Jr.
Mahoning County Probate Judge



Lee Frey
President



Germaine Bennett
Vice-President



Tom Frost



Jeff Harvey



Paul Olivier



Aaron Young
Executive Director

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The MetroParks, including staff and volunteers, participated in various outreach programs, events, and speaking engagements throughout the year. Some of these include: The Big Sit, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program, Youngstown State University's Summer Fest, Earth Day, Celebration of Science Day, Friends of the Mahoning River Riverfest, and Back to School Bash at Western Reserve Schools.

MetroParks staff from the Operations Department continued to maintain a picnic area at the Canfield Fair and participated with the Old-Fashioned Sawmill Exhibit. They contributed plantings to the picnic area, assisted with the set-up of the picnic tables, and provided timbers for the sawmill exhibit. The Community Engagement department stocks the information area kiosk with various literature (of the facilities throughout the MetroParks) outlining MetroParks facilities.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an important supporting component in many areas of park operations. Volunteers support staff efforts in offering events and programs to the community; they play a part in educating and engaging our local community, and ultimately increasing support for our parks. Volunteers make a vital contribution to both Mill Creek MetroParks and to Mahoning County!



A volunteer Meet & Greet was held in March 2022 to gather volunteers together to reconnect with old acquaintances, meet new friends prior to the season, and learn about the different opportunities scheduled for the year.

Volunteer time recorded in 2022 was 4,651 hours from park wide volunteers and multiple groups. Some of the specific events, exhibits and activities where hours were recorded are: Nature Gardening/Horticulture, Conservation/

Preservation, Citizen Advisory Committees, Veggie Gardens/Green Thumbs, Adopt-a-Crag, Trolley Tours, Tractor Wagon Tours, Hikes, Kayak Guides, Kiosk Stocking, and Programs/Special Events such as the Farm Animal Baby Shower, Green Cathedral Half Marathon, Pumpkin Carving, Pumpkin Walk at Twilight, Old Fashioned Christmas at the Mill, and Winter Celebration. Volunteers were recognized at the annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner held in September. The





dinner was held in the Garden Cafe at Fellows Riverside Gardens. Those volunteers who met a specified hour criteria in 2022 also received a complimentary Mill Creek MetroParks volunteer t-shirt.

Each year efforts are made for recruitment and the future growth of the volunteer program. The Community Engagement Director was invited to serve on Youngstown State University's Community Partner

Advisory Committee, which focuses on volunteerism from YSU students. Mill Creek MetroParks also participated in the YSU Volunteer Fair and visited area schools to share our volunteer opportunities.

The Community Engagement Director also continued the Forum for Volunteer Administrators membership and attended various workshops and meetings in 2022.

MILL CREEK METROPARKS POLICE 2022

The MetroParks Police provide 24-hour patrol coverage of Park District lands and facilities. The department provides complete law enforcement services, which include proactive enforcement, facility security, land and resource preservation, and a presence at park events. The department maintains full police powers to make arrests, issue summonses and enforce all laws and park rules.

The department is made up of both sworn and non-sworn staff members. The sworn staff includes full time and part time officers. The department also maintains an auxiliary force of non-sworn staff who assists sworn officers at park events with traffic direction and event security. The department also utilizes non-sworn Rangers to work various locations and support the police officers with a variety of tasks and patrol functions.

In 2022, the MetroParks Police Department maintained certification from the Ohio Collaborative. Staff also attended various training programs which included: Axon Taser Instructor, Leads Training, Computer Training, Public Records Training, State Mandated Weapons Qualification, Crisis Intervention Training, Policy Reviews, and Daily Training Bulletins (DTB's) from Lexipol. In addition, all sworn officers attended approximately 28 hours of training

mandated by the state of Ohio as Continuous Professional Training (CPT).

Officers complete Daily Training Bulletins on a variety of topics. These DTB's address many of the Ohio Collaborative Standards. The Bias-Based Policing Policy is reviewed annually with all staff. Officers have maintained demographic statistics concerning self-initiated traffic stops. The 2022 self-initiated traffic stop breakdown is listed below:

WHITE MALE	287
WHITE FEMALE	189
BLACK MALE	139
BLACK FEMALE	97
HISPANIC MALE	22
HISPANIC FEMALE	12
OTHER MALE	5
OTHER FEMALE	2

MetroParks Police, along with Mahoning Valley Chiefs of Police Executives, hosted a community summit at Pioneer Pavilion with area police chiefs and community and church leaders.

Various officers serve on the following: Ohio Law Enforcement Foundation Certified Law Enforcement Advisory Board (CLEE), the Mahoning County OVI Task Force, the Mahoning County Homicide Task Force, and the Mahoning Valley Law Enforcement Executives Association.

Both positive and negative concerns can be addressed by filling out the Police Customer Satisfaction Survey Form posted on the MetroParks website. As always, supervisory staff is available to speak to anyone concerning police department issues.

The MetroParks Police hosted its annual "Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs" program in June at the MetroParks Farm pond.

The MetroParks police continued to be proactive in 2022. Law enforcement contacts totaled 16,503, arrest totals were 213,

dispatched events totaled 2,653, and patrol miles totaled 172,655.

The department also received the Lexipol Gold performance award for the highest levels of policy compliance and completion during 2022.

The department continues to strive in the effort to meet our mission statement:

"Professional Excellence, Every Day, In All We Do".





GOLF & RECREATION

MILL CREEK GOLF COURSE

In 2022, the golf facility was involved in several capital improvements projects, which included new practice range netting, the purchase of a new oncourse restroom facility for the South Course, completion of the asbestos remediation process for the Fieldhouse, completion of the architecture design of the Indoor Golf Player Development Center in the upstairs of the Fieldhouse, new sewer lines for the Fieldhouse, new fire suppression system for Hole #55 Bar & Grille, as well as a new four year golf cart lease with Ezgo which will bring 132 new golf carts to the operation in January of 2023. In addition, maintenance equipment upgrades included three club car carryalls and a new fertilizer spreader.

During the offseason, the Mill Creek MetroParks golf staff continued their approach for growing their customer base by attending the Cleveland, Columbus, Michigan, New York, and Pittsburgh Golf Shows through a tourism grant from the Mahoning Valley Visitors and Convention Bureau. The golf shows equated to an additional 10,000+ rounds of golf with overnight stays in the Mahoning County. The travel show attendance continues to make a positive impact in growing rounds of golf along with creating new tourism opportunities for the MetroParks.

In June, Mill Creek hosted to the 7th Annual AJGA Junior All Star National Invitational



and AJGA Preview Tournaments on the South Course. This year showcased a new title sponsor and partnership with the Mercy Health Foundation and their four-year \$100,000 commitment. The financial impact to the Mahoning Valley in 2022 was \$408,097 in hotel stays, dining, recreational spending, green fees, and shopping. Since 2016, the financial impact for the Mahoning Valley surpassed \$2,227,791, and this includes over \$80,000+ to local charities over the past seven years.

During the summer, Mill Creek Golf Course hosted the Junior Optimist International East Coast Regional Qualifier. This was the

third national junior event hosted at the MetroParks and in Ohio over the past seven years. In August Mill Creek hosted the 3rd Annual Notah BeGay III Tournament East Coast Regional Qualifier. The tournament played host to players with their families from 49 different states. The year also brought two U.S. Kids Cleveland Junior Tour events to the Mahoning Valley. The events were hosted in May and October for kids ages 8 to 15.

September brought 17 collegiate women's golf programs to the Mahoning Valley for the return of the NCAA Roseann Schwartz Invitational presented by Youngstown State

University. This year's event was held the week after Labor Day where the Youngstown State University team took home the crown. In addition, Mill Creek also hosted the NCAA Kick Off Classic presented by Youngstown State University.

The golf department hosted the national PGA Hope Program in October and was only

one of two facilities to host this program in the state of Ohio. The PGA Hope Program stands for H-Helping O-Our P-Patriots E-Everywhere. The program is part of the PGA of America's REACH Foundation for giving current military members, retired military veterans, and disabled veterans the opportunity to learn and play the game of golf. The second-year program included

free golf instruction, golf, lunch, and prizes for area military veterans. The program had overwhelming success as well as national support from Jack & Barbara Nicklaus and is scheduled to return in 2023 as a two-month program in the fall.

Mill Creek expanded their golf in schools programming and community outreach by adding two new golf clinic series programs with the Educational Service Center (ESC) of Eastern Ohio Special Needs Program and Down Syndrome Association (DSAV) of the Valley. Both programs took place during the offseason month and the DSAV clinic series took place with a partnership between the PGA Staff at Mill Creek and the Women's Golf Team at Youngstown State University where the event was hosted. The third program was Putting with the Police and was a collaborative effort between the Mill Creek Police Department and the Golf & Recreation Department. It was a free program to children 15 and under and offered golf instruction, police car tours, and games.

For the third straight season Mill Creek Golf Course was awarded for having the "Best Service" in the Mahoning Valley by the Youngstown Vindicator and Warren Tribune for the golf course category. The Mill Creek Golf Shop was awarded with their fifth Merchandiser of the Year Award over the past eight years by the Northern Ohio PGA Section in 2022. In addition, Mill Creek Golf Course took home a third place award from

the Ohio Public Parks Association Award (OPRA) for hosting the PGA Hope Program in the special events and community impact events category.

2022 GOLF ROUND BREAKDOWN

NORTH & SOUTH GOLF COURSES

Total 9 Hole Rounds:	55,822
Total 18 Hole Rounds:	26,242
TOTAL ROUNDS PLAYED:	82,064

WICK RECREATION PAR-3 COURSE

Total 9 Hole Rounds:	17,804
Total 18 Hole Rounds:	8,372
TOTAL ROUNDS PLAYED:	26,176

*Closed for a total of 57 days due to rainouts/weather

RECREATION

In 2022, the Recreation Department added 16 new recreation programs including kids Par-3 golf leagues, youth soccer leagues, sand volleyball leagues, youth NHL DEK hockey leagues, Tiny Tikes soccer league, MetroCyclers club, 50+ Spring Baseball Camp, Youth NFL Flag Football, Adaptive Sports, Youth Cheer Squad, and two new archery camps. These programs reached a range of demographics from toddlers to seniors. The growth in this area was in part to the addition of four new part-time staff members to facilitate the added leagues and new facilities moving forward.

The Wick Recreation Area saw several new improvements during the year including the construction process of the new Recreation Center at the Wick Recreation Area. This project is set to be completed in Spring 2023. This project includes a complete restoration on the old Ice Rink Warming House that will now be used to house new restroom/locker facilities, food & beverage kitchen, rental room for banquets, parties and recreation classes, recreation offices, a team merchandise shop, outside seating areas, and new storage space.

In addition to the new Recreation Center coming in 2023, construction began on the new cross-country course at the Mill Creek MetroParks Farm. The new cross-country course will provide a NCAA regulation sized facility for hosting collegiate, high school, junior high, and elementary cross country events as well as marathons and races. The new cross-country facility is projected to open in the Fall 2023.

The Glacier Boathouse re-opened for the 2022 summer season and continues to be the hub for getting on the water in Mill Creek MetroParks. Annually, the recreation department conducts a boater safety training course each spring in conjunction with ODNR. Boaters also made use of the rentable boat racks at Lake Glacier and Lake Newport to store over 65 kayaks and canoes for the boating season.





EDUCATION

The Ford Nature Center Redevelopment Project continued in 2022 with an anticipated opening in 2023. The project will allow the Ford Nature Center to continue serving the community as a primary resource for nature-based education through the use of classrooms, learning labs, exhibits, and outdoor environment.

TOTAL PROGRAMS: 359

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 6,341

Youth: 2,547

Adults: 3,114

Volunteers: 680

SCHOOL PROGRAMS:

Programs: 64

Participants: 2,452

INTERPRETIVE TOURS: 168

(Includes FRG Tours, Mill Tours, Trolley Tours, Tractor & Wagon Tours, Step-On Tours)

Participants: 1,819

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Programs: 125

Participants: 2,070

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS:

- **Nature Rocks:** A video series highlighting topics and locations of the MetroParks.



- **What's in Bloom!:** A video series that highlights what is blooming at Fellows Riverside Gardens.
- **From the Archives - Stories of Mill Creek Park!:** A video series of stories about the past of Mill Creek Park as viewed through the local newspaper.
- **Good Morning Mill Creek Park:** Series of pictures and short videos highlighting areas of the Park.
- **What's Going On:** An educational PSA dealing with different aspects of the Park.

- **Happy Trails:** An introduction to the trails of the Park featuring location, length, and difficulty.
- **Naturalist Adventure Guides:** A series highlighting interesting plants and animals found throughout Mill Creek MetroParks.
- **Fantastic Fungi:** A series highlighting the various types of fungi found in Mill Creek MetroParks.



In 2022, the Education Department offered virtual programming and in-person instruction. Classes were presented in both formats to increase the number of participants involved in the Park. School programs enabled students to experience all the Park has to offer. New programs were well received and enjoyed by our visitors with plans being made for future visits. Programs were designed, with the cooperation of classroom teachers, to meet the Science standards of their curriculum.

Educators organized and led Trolley Tours, Tractor-Wagon Rides, and Step-On Tours. Many volunteers assisted with these programs, which provided more opportunities for our visitors to enjoy.

HORTICULTURE

The total attendance for the Visitor Center at Fellows Riverside Gardens in 2022 was 270,000. There were 38,000 spring bulbs planted, which yielded a spectacular show at Fellows Riverside Gardens in 2022. Fellows Riverside Gardens staff and volunteers added the following plants to the grounds in 2022:

- 75 roses replaced
- 5 perennials replaced
- 7 shrubs/ trees replaced
- 50,000 summer annuals grown in-house from seed & plugs then planted
- 350 seasonal mums

FELLOWS RIVERSIDE GARDENS HELD VARIOUS EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, INCLUDING:

Pumpkin Walk at Twilight, Winter Celebration: Festival of the Trees, Breakfast with Santa, four art exhibits on display in the Weller Gallery, Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens Plant Sales, On the Terrace at 5, and Summer Garden Party.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND SERIES

- **Pumpkin Walk at Twilight:**
5,600 visitors
- **Winter Celebration:
Festival of the Trees:**
52 Non-Profits and 27,000 visitors
- **Winter Nights:**
8,500 visitors
- **Breakfast with Santa:**
85 participants

“The best education does not happen at a desk, but rather engaged in everyday living - hands on, exploring, in active relationship with life”

- VINCE GOWMAN





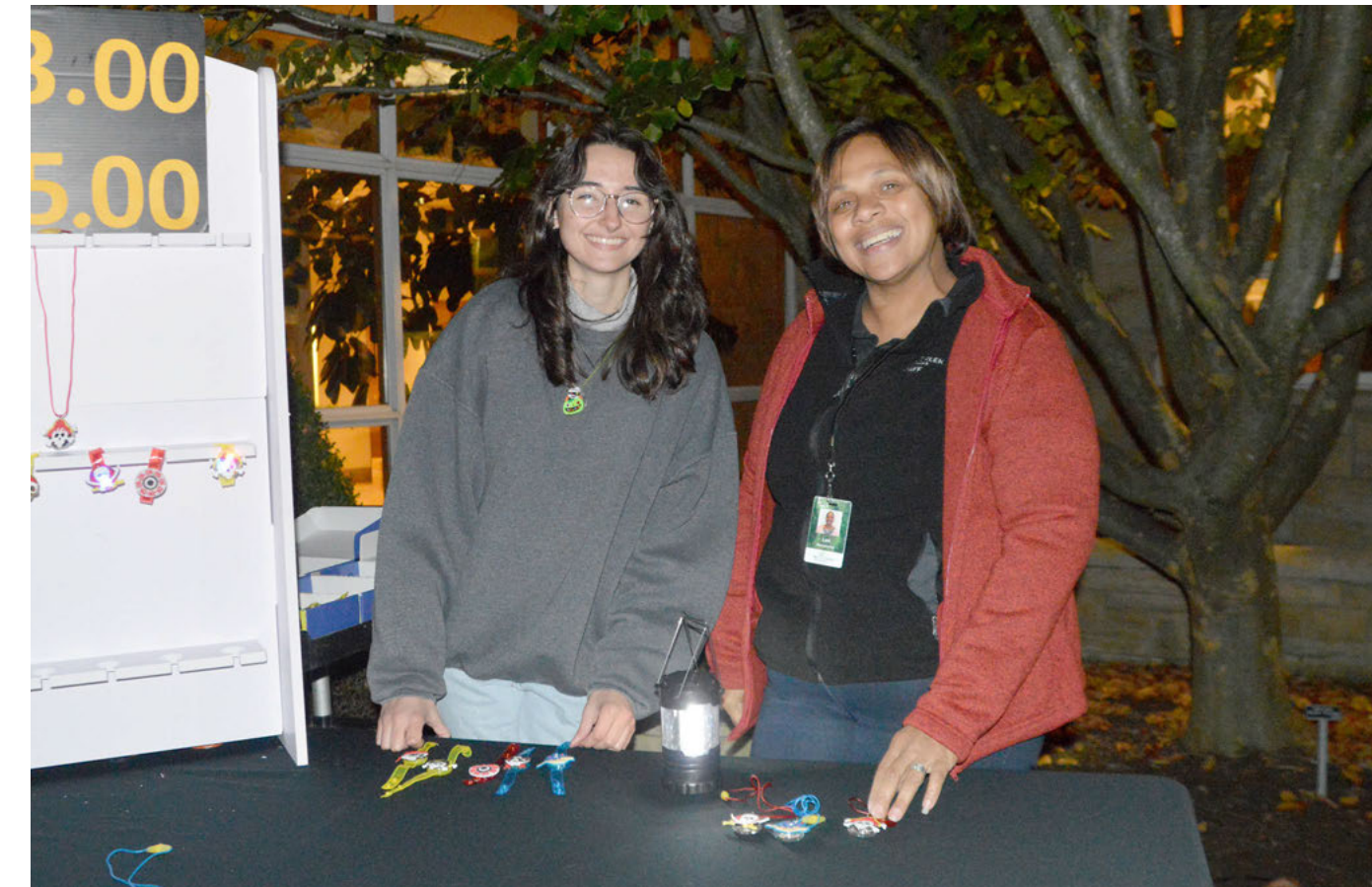
OUR PEOPLE

Our people are committed to serving the community and carrying out the mission of Mill Creek MetroParks.

2022 brought two employee retirements, ten employee promotions, and forty-eight hiring actions. All full-time employees received a three-percent general wage increase in 2022. Several full-time and part-time positions were also adjusted based on merit and added duties.

The MetroParks successfully negotiated a mutually beneficial collective bargaining agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). This contract extends through December 2024 and provides officers with competitive annual pay increases.

The vision of Mill Creek MetroPark's is to provide employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively, in order to serve the needs of Mill Creek MetroParks and the community. By investing in our people, we strengthen our ability to provide services to the community and preserve Mill Creek MetroPark's natural resources. Employees across all six departments attended conferences and continuing education courses throughout the year. Two employees became certified arborists in 2022. With these additions, Mill Creek MetroPark's now has four certified arborists on staff. Mill Creek MetroParks also held quarterly educational



staff meetings. Training opportunities included Ohio Ethics Law, public records, conflict resolution, Drug Free Workplace, disability accommodation, diversity and inclusion, and LGBTQ+ education.

The Employee Association is a MetroParks employee-run group, sustained by employee donations. In 2022, the Employee Association sent flowers and cards to employees during times of celebration and offered sympathy and condolences during times of sickness

and bereavement. The Association also helped the community by making charitable contributions to seven local non-profit organizations.

Updates were made to payroll and employment records including the implementation of a new human resource information system. Employment files were also transferred to electronic formats to improve efficiency and reduce paper usage.



INFRASTRUCTURE

GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS:

Annual Road Improvements, Repairs, and Maintenance

- East Newport Drive (Kreider's Entrance to Kiwatha Drive) project included patching and repair of existing asphalt pavement, pavement planing, installation of new courses of asphalt, and placement of pavement markings. Project partially completed in 2022 with encumbered 2021 funds; to be completed in 2023.
- West Park Drive Infrastructure project included replacement and repair of existing stormwater infrastructure including catch basins, conduit, etc., replacement of curbing, linear grading and excavation. Project partially completed in 2022; to be completed in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$175,000
2022 Expended: \$62,217.80

Annual Parking Lot Improvements

- East Golf Hike & Bike Trail South Parking Lot project included expansion of parking lot from a vehicular capacity of 22 to 50. Trailhead improvements included new concrete pavements, signage, bollards, safety improvements. Work included a newly relocated entrance drive, additional disabled



parking, expanded asphalt surfaces, excavation and embankment. Project unsuccessfully bid three times in 2022; funding is encumbered for construction in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$150,000
2022 Expended: \$0

Annual Signage Improvements

- Park Drive and Wayfinding Signage project continued with installation of signs throughout the Cohasset and Newport areas of Mill Creek Park. Project consisted of sign and pole installation, concrete footer construction, excavation.

- Two facility signs were purchased for regional facilities and improvements to the MetroParks Farm sign were completed.

2022 Budgeted: \$25,000
2022 Expended: \$25,000

Annual Pavilion/Structure Improvements

- Stitt Pavilion roof was repaired and reroofed with synthetic slate shingles.
- Police cruiser barn roof was repaired and reroofed with asphalt shingles.

2022 Budgeted: \$50,000
2022 Expended: \$50,000

Golf Course Indoor Training Facility

- Project to redevelop the second floor of the Golf Course Fieldhouse into a year-round training facility with three golf simulators, a putting green, club fitting area, restrooms, offices, and storage. Utilities were upgraded and hazardous materials removed. Abatement and some demolition work completed; project to bid and be completed in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$400,000

2022 Expended: \$22,880

Vickers Nature Preserve Improvements

- Implementation of Phase I of the master plan for Vickers Nature Preserve included clearing and grubbing, excavation and embankment, installation of new stormwater infrastructure including catch basins and conduit, new entry drive, and aggregate surfaces.

2022 Budgeted: \$250,000

2022 Expended: \$256,471.02

Lanterman's Mill Site Improvements

- Covered Bridge Rehabilitation was not completed due to high cost.

2022 Budgeted: \$100,000

2022 Expended: \$0

MetroParks Farm I Improvements

- NCAA Cross Country Course construction included excavation, embankment, linear grading and drainage work, installation of stormwater conduit, new aggregate surfacing, seeding, and mulching

2022 Budgeted: \$50,000

2022 Expended: \$118,123.95

Wick Recreation Center Improvements

- Redevelopment of the Warming House into the Wick Recreation Center at the Wick Recreation Area included interior demolition, upgraded utilities, new roof, new site design and amenities, and new windows and doors. Project to be completed in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$1,300,000

2022 Expended: \$752,839.80

Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary Improvements

- Repairs to pond dikes and stormwater infrastructure, along with treatment of invasive plants and removal of willows in Pond #2.

2022 Budgeted: \$20,000

2022 Expended: \$15,804.32

Collier Preserve Improvements

- A prescribed burn was conducted in the grassland/prairie area to remove invasive and undesirable plant material and to encourage growth of native warm season grasses previously planted.
- Approximately 15 acres of wetlands were treated by removing woody and herbaceous invasive plants.

2022 Budgeted: \$30,000

2022 Expended: \$30,000

Fellows Riverside Gardens Davis Center, Rose Garden, Site Improvements

- Improvements included purchase of shade structures for the café terrace, lighting and ceiling replacement, electrical and utility upgrades, interior painting, irrigation and stormwater drainage improvements, replacement plants, installation of new roses in Rose Garden, and demolition of 104 McKinley and site restoration; funding encumbered for purchase of new terrace tables and chairs.

2022 Budgeted: \$97,000

2022 Expended: \$105,000

CONTRACTED DESIGN / CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION:

Fellows Riverside Gardens Site Improvements Design

- Preliminary and conceptual design work, cost estimating, and consultant coordination for development of the Children's Garden.

2022 Budgeted: \$50,000

2022 Expended: \$49,900

Wick Recreation Center Construction Administration

- Consultant construction administration for Wick Recreation Center Redevelopment project.

2022 Budgeted: \$50,000

2022 Expended: \$16,775.06

Golf Course Indoor Training Facility Construction Administration

- Hazardous materials survey and report
- Consultant construction administration for Indoor Training Facility project; funds encumbered for use in 2023 .

2022 Budgeted: \$40,000

2022 Expended: \$6,425



NATURAL RESOURCES



Canada goose management efforts were continued in 2022. Various MetroParks departments carried out Canada goose harassment efforts at key locations throughout the MetroParks using pyrotechnic launchers, lasers, and exclusionary fencing. Following harassment activities, a nest destruction permit was obtained through ODNR. USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services was contracted to perform nest inspection and egg adding activities at these same key locations. In total, 24 nests containing 138 eggs were located. Of those located, 19 nests and 112 eggs were treated (no adding took place at the Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary). The 5th annual Canada goose count performed by the local Audubon Society produced a 2022 population count of 169 individuals throughout the park, a slight increase from the 2021 count of 151 individuals.

Public outreach efforts, including signage, public service announcements, brochures, enforcement, and education programs were also continued to further the “Do Not Feed Wildlife” campaign throughout the MetroParks.

In October, volunteers participated in the “Big Sit” event at the Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary. This annual international birding competition provides the opportunity for sites around the world to battle against each other, with participants hoping to record the highest number of bird species observed from one location within a 24-hour period.



This year a total of 66 bird species were observed during this event at the Wildlife Sanctuary, ranking 2nd in Ohio. Separate from the “Big Sit”, numerous volunteers contribute to an annual species count at the Sanctuary, which documents the total number of different bird species encountered at the Sanctuary for a given year. The all-time species count for the Sanctuary has risen to an all-time high of 260 species.

Efforts continued this year to reduce and control non-native/invasive plants throughout areas of the MetroParks, most notably the Collier Preserve and Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, where a combined 23-acres were treated. Herbicide applications and/or physical removal of undesirable species were also conducted at properties such as the Lily Pond, Lake Newport Wetlands, Vickers Nature Preserve, Springfield Forest, Mill Creek Park, and



the MetroParks Farm. Additionally, the MetroParks completed its first controlled burn at the Collier Preserve, which included 48-acres of native warm-season grass prairie.

Habitat restoration efforts took place at Springfield Forest where approximately 2.5 acres of reverting field was planted with a native prairie seed mixture which includes warm season grasses and wildflowers. Additionally, native species of shrubs were planted over five acres following the treatment and removal of invasive species.

The MetroParks continued the Healthy Streams Initiative, an annual project aimed at restoring natural flow patterns and reducing erosion along Mill Creek and its tributaries by removing fallen trees and woody debris from the stream. In 2022, the project focused on Mill Creek as it flows through the Hitchcock Woods, beginning at the junction of Mill Creek and Sawmill Run and continuing north toward Route 224. This year's project successfully improved 5,903 linear feet of stream. Throughout the lifetime of this program, Mill Creek MetroParks has improved over 8.5 miles of stream including portions of Mill Creek, Indian Run, and Anderson Run.

The Lily Pond was the focus of numerous improvement projects in 2022, most notably the continued plantings to enhance the overall biodiversity of the site and reintroduce the once abundant water lily. Park staff also continued ongoing management efforts focusing on algae treatments, invasive

species treatment, and invasive species removal.

Lake Newport was treated in August of 2022 with an algaecide to help combat late summer algal blooms that are typical of Lake Newport. This is the second year of treatment, and Lake Newport has responded well.

The MetroParks' spring fish stocking efforts continued in 2022 with stockings taking place at Lake Glacier (in partnership with ODNR), Yellow Creek Park, Vickers Nature Preserve, and the MetroParks Farm. This program ensures high-quality fishing opportunities for anglers throughout the MetroParks.

Through partnerships with FirstEnergy and the YSU Legacy Forest Committee, the MetroParks continued tree planting initiative at the Collier Preserve and the MetroParks Farm, successfully planting 1900 native trees over approximately 4-acres in an effort to reforest areas of reverting farmland.

Through continued partnership with The Nature Conservancy, management of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, a non-native insect that threatens the Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) took place throughout Mill Creek Park. Additional surveys and treatments were completed in 2022 to combat the adelgid in the areas surrounding Slippery Rock Trail, East Cohasset Trail, Artists Trail, Birch Hill Cabin, Bears Den Cabin, and Cascade Run.





STEWARDSHIP

GRANT STEWARDSHIP:

Annual Trail Improvements

- West Newport Hiking Trail project included repairing existing stone walls and steps, replacement and installation of new stormwater drainage, resurfacing of trail surface, new signage, and replacement of comfort stations at Newport Wetlands with new restroom. Restroom funds encumbered; installation in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$175,000

2022 Expended: \$107,257.50

Bikeway Phase III

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant funding for right-of-way consultant services and property acquisition. Federal property acquisition process continued throughout the year.
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) CMAQ program grant funding for design & engineering consultant services. Construction drawings were completed.

2022 Budgeted: \$249,000 (100% grant)

2022 Expended: \$0

East Park Hike & Bike Trail Phase II Development

- Construction of Phase II of the East Park Hike & Bike Trail connecting the Lanterman's Mill Overflow (Idora) parking lot to the East Cohasset Hike & Bike Trail. Work completed includes clearing and grubbing, excavation, embankment, and placement and compaction of aggregate base courses; installation of asphalt courses to be completed in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$170,000 (80% grant)

2022 Expended: \$0

Clean Ohio Property Acquisition

- An application to the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund for improvements to Hawkins Marsh was not awarded in 2022; funding was encumbered for a successful application in 2023.

2022 Budgeted: \$33,688 (75% grant)

2022 Expended: \$3,093.02

Springfield Forest Improvements

- Implementation of successful Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant for construction of a fishing pier, aggregate entry drive, aggregate parking lot, aggregate and grassed trails, and restoration of native habitat.

2022 Budgeted: \$242,936 (75% grant)

2022 Expended: \$96,465

Annual Road Improvements

- Resurfacing of West Park Drive through the ODOT Park District Road Improvements program. The preceding infrastructure project was not completed; therefore, the resurfacing project could not begin; funds were encumbered for a 2023 construction project.

2022 Budgeted: \$175,000 (65% grant)

2022 Expended: \$0

Annual Comfort Station/ Restroom Improvements

- An Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) NatureWorks grant to install a new vault restroom at the Golf Course.

2022 Budgeted: \$80,000 (19% grant)

2022 Expended: \$0



MILL CREEK METROPARKS FOUNDATION

Since 1980, the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation has served as the philanthropic arm of Mill Creek MetroParks through raising funds for structured endowments and capital improvements throughout the MetroParks system.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN CAMPAIGN

Youngstown Clothing Co.

Karen Cabraja

George Frecksco

Charles Spirtos

Shirley Sedlar

Stanley Watson

Rotary Club of Austintown

Judiann Dohallow

Harriett Demeretz

Melaine R. Cochran

Ann Marx

Ohio Living

Sweeney Buick GMC Truck

Micro Doctor IT

Hill, Barth & King LLC

Roth, Blair, Roberts, Strasfeld & Lodge

Farmers Trust

Gerry Kravec

David Ditzler

Linda Kolasky

Donna Carden

Carol Zajack

Guenther Hladiuk

Mary Colleen Gaydos

Lori Heller

Marilyn Hladiuk

Frank & Diane Bordonaro

Ralph Brown

Nancy Sprockett

Gary Orosz

Schwab Charitable

PNC

Daniel Gregory Bustle

James Pieron

Marianne Klein

Carol Bainisaukas

Donna Gerlach

Jim & Del Phillips

Susan & John Houghton

Inez Heal

Paul & Laura Olivier

FELLOWS RIVERSIDE GARDENS ENDOWMENT

William Brenner

Jean Chrobak

Zwiren Family Living Trust

Peggy Kuo

Jennifer Cox

Linda Rose

Kim Barabas

Delores Pernotto

FORD NATURE CENTER REDEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

Dawn Rae & Chris Litton

Marijo Martin

Chris Litton

Karla Poole

Shelly Marlowe

Sara Wood

Scott Schulick

Michelle Ferketic

Karen McClurkin

David and Ruth Humphrey

Michael McNally

Patricia McHenry



Lesley Millwood

Helen Matta

Eileen and Mike McCaulay

Celeste Dunlap

Dick and Mimi Riley

Tom and Stephanie McCammon

Dan Brown

Linda Stein

Julie & John Garel

Marla & Eric Grossman & Steinmiller

Wendy Feldman Block

George Haidos

Lynn and Bob Fletcher

Merri-Lynn Toporcer Smith

Julie Grohovsky

Carole and Peter Dyck

Katherine Pepe

Stacey Sanner



Sarah Poggi
 Annette Carnie
 The Youngstown Foundation
 Marijo Martin
 Kaitlyn Rinehart
 Clarke Family
 Eiryn McKay
 Centofanti Foundation
 Premier Bank Foundation

John D. Finnegan Foundation
 Beecher Family Foundation

**MAHONING VALLEY
 HOSPITAL FOUNDATION
 GOLF ENDOWMENT FUND**

Boys and Girls Club of Youngstown
 Mahoning Valley Hospital Foundation
 Down Syndrome Association of the Valley
 AJGA



**THE MILL CREEK METROPARKS
 FOUNDATION GENERAL
 ENDOWMENT FUND**

Dr. Thomas and Katherine Shipka

**ROSE GARDEN
 ENDOWMENT FUND**

Lisa Miller
 Mary Ann Hudzik
 Maureen Long
 Gloria Chojnacki
 The Family of John and Joanne Beeghly

NATURAL TRAIL FUND

The Family of John & Joanne Beeghly
 Columbus Foundation

THE TREE TRUST

Patricia Godics
 Boardman Subaru
 Joyce Pallante
 Deborah Poppke

**THE COLLIER FAMILY
 METROPARKS BIKEWAY
 ENDOWMENT**

The Community Foundation
 Mahoning Valley

RENTAL FACILITY USAGE

FELLOWS RIVERSIDE GARDENS

- **Auditorium:** 125 rentals
- **Classrooms:** 75 rentals
- **Ceremonies (indoors & outdoors):** 190 rentals
- **Garden Café:** 25 rentals
- **Radius Room:** 42
- **Wedding Receptions:** 125

METROPARKS FARM

- **Classroom A:** 47 rentals/538 attendance
- **Kenneth McMahon Hall:** 168 rentals/11,770 attendance

CABINS

- **Bears Den Cabin:** 122 rentals/3,926 attendance
- **Birch Hill Cabin:** 244 rentals/9,918 attendance
- **Old Log Cabin:** 60 rentals/1,108 attendance

PAVILIONS

- **Chestnut Hill Pavilion:** 54 rentals/2,935 attendance
- **Pioneer Pavilion:** 108 rentals/6,232 attendance
- **Scholl Pavilion:** 52 rentals/1,987 attendance



- **Slippery Rock Pavilion:** 48 rentals/3,572 attendance
- **Stitt Pavilion:** 48 rentals/2,838 attendance
- **Thomas J. Bresko Pavilion:** 48 rentals/1,070 attendance
- **Kirk Road Pavilion:** 6 rentals/200 attendance
- **Vickers Pavilion:** 2 rentals/30 attendance

YELLOW CREEK PARK

- **Capt. John Struthers Pavilion:** 14 rentals/300 attendance
- **Yellow Creek Lodge:** 111 rentals/6,339 attendance

EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

- **Equestrian Rings:** 3 rentals/200 attendance

2022 ANNUAL REPORT STATISTICS

Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1, 2022 \$4,822,026.03
 Prior Year Encumbrances \$14,670,681.01

INCOME:

General Property Tax \$8,287,770.88
 Park District Activities \$2,426,759.34
 Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation \$625,695.55
 Local Government Fund \$427,386.82
 Fund Transfer In \$250,000.00
 Gas Royalties \$155,480.65
 Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens \$149,369.61
 Interest \$130,736.21
 ODOT Grants \$123,316.00
 BWC Rebates & Grants \$14,797.10
 Law Enforcement Training Revenue \$1,650.00
 Total Income \$12,592,962.16

Total Funds Available \$19,085,669.20

DISBURSEMENTS:

Salaries & Wages \$5,636,711.85
 Materials & Supplies \$3,260,477.25
 Capital Improvements \$2,281,141.59
 Ford Nature Center Loan Payments \$470,214.52
 Capital Equipment \$348,314.14
 Funds Transfer Out \$250,000.00

Total Disbursements \$12,246,859.35

Year End Cash Balance December 31, 2022 \$6,838,809.85
 Year End Encumbrances \$2,627,863.20
 Unencumbered Cash Balance \$4,210,946.65

