



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

MILL CREEK METROPARKS



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.

President	John Ragan
First Vice-President	Scott Schulick - (1/2015 - 5/2016)
Second Vice-President	Robert Durick
	Germaine Bennett
	Michael Senchak - (1/2016 - 3/2016)
	Lee Frey - (6/2016)
	Tom Shipka - (6/2016)
Executive Director	Aaron Young

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

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



MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Mill Creek MetroParks is to provide park, recreational, 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 MetroParks facilities such as greens fees, rentals of cabins, pavilions, and boats, programs, and other activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal

Enhance Mill Creek MetroParks' mission through effective partnerships, communications, signage, and promotions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MCMP staff had a busy year taking part in many community events and participating in local organizations as board members, committee members, and volunteers.

- External organization events accommodated by MCMP: 19
- External event participants using MCMP: 14,225

MetroParks staff from the Horticulture and Operations Departments continued to maintain an area at the Canfield Fair. They again contributed plantings to the picnic area and assisted with the set-up of the picnic tables. The Community Engagement staff spruced up the information area and filled it with the most current information. MetroParks Farm personnel staffed and coordinated Old MacDonald's Barn with the help of MetroParks volunteers.

Fellows Riverside Gardens celebrated the 125th anniversary of Mill Creek Park by centering the theme of the Winter Celebration as One Man's Dream: Celebrating 125 years of Mill Creek Park.

Mill Creek MetroParks' trolley, the Cohasset Express, made an appearance in the Canfield 4th of July parade. The Recreation and Education department, including naturalists and volunteers,

were present at the Mahoning Valley Riverfest. MetroParks Police took part in the Unity in the Community parade put on by Warriors, Inc.



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help support the many activities that occur in Mill Creek MetroParks. Without the commitment of dedicated volunteers, many events would not be possible. Volunteers were recognized at the annual Volunteer Recognition Picnic held in August 2016. The picnic was held at the Mill Creek Golf Course.

Volunteer time recorded in 2016 was 12,625 hours. Based on state minimum wage (\$8.10), this time would have an approximate value of \$102,262.50.

9,210 hours were contributed by 290 volunteers and multiple groups at Fellows Riverside Gardens. More than 400 volunteer hours were accrued at the Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary and other preserves for wildlife surveys, invasive species management, and habitat enhancement projects.

A total of 3,414 volunteer hours were accrued from 75 Recreation Volunteers and multiple groups (hours include: MetroParks Farm, Ford Nature Center, General Recreation, and Boy Scout Earth Day Clean-up).



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CONTINUED

METROPARKS POLICE

MetroParks Police provide 24-hour patrol of park lands and facilities, and operate a 24-hour dispatch and walk-in information area at the police department. They provide traffic control and security for all park events. While MetroParks Police have the same traditional police powers to enforce laws and make arrests as other police departments, they also have the duty to protect the parks facilities and natural resources.

MetroParks Police utilize both sworn and non-sworn staff. Sworn staff is made of up of full-time, part-time, and reserve police officers. Those who haven't completed Basic Police Officer Training can serve on the MetroParks Auxiliary Police and are a key part of the MetroParks Police team.

POLICE STATISTICS

Part-time Police Hours	11,662
Reserve Police Hours	5,886
Auxiliary Police Hours	817



RECREATION & EDUCATION

Goal

Create broader recreation and education programs that inspire more users to experience Mill Creek MetroParks for the value it provides to the community.

GOLF

The Golf Course had the best year financially on record, beating 2012's record year. Merchandise sales for the year exceeded \$100,000 for the first time ever. 19 more events were added to the golf outing schedule. Major events for the year include: AJGA, NCAA, NBC AM TOUR, NOPGA, DC&P, PGA JR. League, Par-3 Interclub League, Vindy's Greatest Golfer 300+ Field, OHSAA, Vindy's Greatest Junior Big "I", and Junior Par-3 Tournament. The addition of a new golf cart fleet in 2016 will produce an \$18,000 savings in 2017. Addition of a new tournament leaderboard and golf outing tent.

2016 Rounds

9 hole resident	16,208
9 hole non-resident	127
9 hole Jr. & Sr.	23,238

18 hole resident	9,761
18 hole non-resident	939
18 hole Jr. & Sr.	5,866

Total 9 holes	39,573
Total 18 holes	16,566



HORTICULTURE

- Total attendance for the Visitor Center at Fellows Riverside Gardens in 2016 was 285,197.
- 41,900 blooming bulbs planted in the fall of 2015 yielded a spectacular spring show at Fellows Riverside Gardens in 2016.
- 237 trees and shrubs, 1005 perennials, 3200 bulbs and 100 flats of annuals were planted in contrived/natural areas maintained by the MetroPark's landscape crew.
- Various Landscape Crew projects included Golf Course South Entrance plant additions and improvements to scoreboard bed, Daffodil Meadow planting and improvements, Lily Pond parking lot and east bank plantings, Lanterman's Mill parking lot plantings, Ford Nature Center entrance butterfly garden, Volney Rogers statue bed rose additions and other improvement projects.
- Developed a new Horticulture Certificate Program to include sustainability-oriented class topics.
- Various events held throughout the year included: Twice Loved Book Sale, Jewels of Winter, "What World is This!" Outdoor Gallery, Plant the Seed to Read Book Fair, Daffodil Weekend, Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens Spring Plant Sale, Friends of Fellows Riverside

RECREATION & EDUCATION

Gardens Summer Garden Party, Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens Autumn Plant Sale, Pumpkin Walk at Twilight, Winter Celebration, and seven exhibits on display in the Weller Gallery.



HORTICULTURE EDUCATION

Horticulture Program & Educational Event Statistics

Total Participants 18,280

- Family Participants: 11,175 (61%)
- Youth Participants: 2,531 (14%)
- Adult Participants: 4,579 (25%)

Family Fun Fridays (June 10 – August 26): 1,321

Garden District Children's Gardening Program (June 14 – August 16): 14 registered; every Tuesday

Garden Adventure Day (June 4): 300

School Participants: 1,201

- Super Seeds: 770
- Leaf It To Us: 26
- Botanical Discoveries: 137
- Outreach - Super Seeds: 235
- Outreach - Youngstown City School District Afterschool Alliance Night: 33

Programs Scheduled 525

- Programs Held: 480 (91%)
- Programs Cancelled: 45 (9%) due to no registration, low registration and weather

School Programs: 31

- Super Seeds: 14
- Leaf It To Us: 1
- Botanical Discoveries: 7
- Outreach - Super Seeds: 8
- Outreach - Youngstown City School District Afterschool Alliance Night: 1

Garden Tours: 8

Garden Tour Participants: 158

*Tours scheduled for specific groups, not drop-in guided garden tours

Highlights:

- January – December - successful Green Thumbs program, 18 participants – monthly meetings to

CONTINUED

develop leadership and teambuilding skills.

- February – Education Manager attended the American Public Gardens Association Education Symposium in Seattle, WA.

- April – Brent Heath's Undaunted Daffodils lecture. Sponsored in part by the John S. & Doris M. Andrews Education Endowment.

- September – YSU Biology Club programs learning about edible plants and herbs throughout Fellows Riverside Gardens.



RECREATION & EDUCATION

RECREATION

School Education Programs:

- 107 classrooms (2665 participants) visited by Ford Nature Center staff with nature programs.
- 336 classroom presentations by Farm staff reached 6,604 individuals with Ag Ed Programs.
- Nature Programs at Ford Nature Center provided for 144 groups (3666 individuals)
- Education Tours at Lanterman's Mill provided for 116 groups/classrooms (2,445 individuals).
- Education tours at Farm provided for 143 groups (6,365 participants).

Special Programs, Events, Series:

- Photo Show: 185 entries
- Farm Animal Baby Shower: 2,500+ visitors
- Boy Scout Earth Day Clean-up: 401 participants at 25 sites
- Star Party: 80+ participants
- Eggstravaganza MultiCultural Event: 350+
- Concerts: 4,600 attendees
- Bug Day: 1,436 participants
- Shakespeare Plays: 425 attendees
- Trolley: 1,390 riders Standard & Special program tours

- Family Camp Out: 101 participants
- Old MacDonald's Farm at Canfield Fair drew 12,000 visitors
- Green Cathedral: 202 Participants
- Sunset at the Farm: 1,800 participants
- Halloween Bash: 200+ participants
- Old Fashioned Christmas at Lanterman's Mill: 5,500+ visitors
- Santa's Winter Barn: 500+ participants
- Ballroom Dance Classes: 525+
- Metro Mutts Programs: 603 participants

Day-to-Day Programming

- Farm Wagon & Weekend Ag Ed Programs: 2,529
- Volunteer Led Recreational Hikes: 486 participants
- Interpretive Programs: 2,145 participants (Hikes, Frog walks, roving naturalists, birding, wildflowers, kayaks, interpretive family, children programs, etc)
- General Recreational Programs: 2,752 participants

Facility Visitor Statistics

- Farm Walk-in Visitor Estimate: 912
- Mill Tours provided to 11,313 visitors
- Ford Nature Center Walk-in Visitors: 13,091

CONTINUED

Boat Rentals 8,358

Recreation Field

- 900 games from diverse sports leagues
- 45,000 visitors attending or playing



INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal

Create an effective capital improvement and maintenance plan to preserve the historic aspects of Mill Creek MetroParks as well as provide a safe and enjoyable experience.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

WET PLAYGROUND AT WICK RECREATION AREA

COST
\$147,000

CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS OF LANTERMAN'S MILL WHEEL

COST
\$15,000

PARKING LOT AT LILY POND

COST
\$133,000



HITCHCOCK WOODS PARKING LOT

COST
\$27,900

DAFFODIL MEADOW IMPROVEMENTS

COST
\$2,977.50

MEMORIAL HILL DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

COST
\$106,450

FORD NATURE CENTER REHAB DESIGN & COST ESTIMATE

COST
\$42,968.52

SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

COST
\$20,000

BIKEWAY ASPHALT MAINTENANCE

COST
\$12,000

INFRASTRUCTURE

CONTINUED

LANTERMAN'S MILL PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS

COST
\$65,000

900 OLD FURNACE HOUSE CHIMNEY REPAIRS

COST
\$17,000

DAVIS CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

COST
\$75,000

PIONEER PAVILION REWIRING

COST
\$8,000

GLACIER BOATING DOCK REPLACEMENT

COST
\$23,500



OUR PEOPLE

Goal

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.

The year began with the MetroParks' implementation of a functional management model as outlined in the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan. Although the changes were difficult, they were necessary in ensuring the long term sustainability of the MetroParks. The MetroParks maintained its commitment through continued training opportunities, a dedicated full-time Human Resources department, and an annual increase in staff wages, the first in nearly a decade. The MetroParks also contracted a Virtual Information Officer for updated technology. An evaluation and update of personnel policies and procedures were implemented as well as All Staff Meetings.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Goal

Enhance Mill Creek MetroParks' management of natural resources through improved access of developed trails, opening new parks in underserved areas of the County, and incorporation of a natural resources management plan.

Canada goose management measures were continued in 2016. "Do Not Feed Wildlife" efforts included signage, public service announcements, brochures, enforcement and incorporating education into programs. Various MetroParks departments carried out Canada goose harassment efforts, including pyrotechnic launchers. An ODNR Canada goose nest destruction permit was obtained and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services was contracted to perform nest inspection and egg addling activities. 69 nests were located and 363 eggs were addled. A repellent product was applied to the Daffodil Meadow area.

Native plants were incorporated into various planting projects throughout the MetroParks to not only enhance wildlife habitat, but also to attract diverse species and provide food for our important native pollinators.

Operations and Horticulture installed native shrubs and applied wildflower seed mix at Lanterman's Mill, Lily Pond, and the Golf Course.

In October, staff and 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 within a 24 hour period from one location. This year a total of 68 bird species were observed at the Wildlife Sanctuary, which placed the Sanctuary first in Ohio and seventh overall in the world!

Ongoing efforts to reduce invasive non-native plants throughout areas of the MetroParks occurred again this year including invasive spraying at the Ford Nature Center, Newport Wetlands, Mill Creek Preserve, Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, and MetroParks Bikeway.

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Volney Rd - Donation 0.68 acres

Lakeview Dr- MCLRC 0.14 acres

Lakeview Dr- MCLRC 0.14 acres

Glenwood Ave - MCLRC 0.35 acres

Youngstown Salem Rd - Donation 2.70 acres



STEWARDSHIP

Goal

Establish a long term financial and cost recovery plan for the MetroParks through effective use of the Mill Creek Park Foundation, grants, and business management practices.

BIKE RENTAL PARTNERSHIP

In 2016, Trailside Bicycle Company began offering hourly and daily bike rentals from the Kirk Road Trailhead located at 6685 Kirk Road, Canfield. The rentals are being offered as part of a lease agreement between Mill Creek MetroParks and Trailside Bicycle Company.



METROPARKS BIKEWAY • PHASE III

Consultant services for the extension of the MetroParks Bikeway, beginning at Western Reserve Road and running 6.4 miles to the Village of Washingtonville.

Managed consultant services with GPD Group to prepare final right-of-way plans and to begin property appraisal work.

Managed consultant services with Environmental Design Group (EDG) to conduct site assessments, ecological work, geotechnical testing, environmental documentation, bridge/culvert analysis and preparation of preliminary construction drawings.

CONSULTANT SERVICES COSTS \$627,845.60

Project substantially funded through a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant at 80% (\$179,210.61 Federal/\$44,802.65 MetroParks).



MEMORIAL HILL DRIVE RESURFACING

Memorial Hill Drive is the historic entrance to Mill Creek Park, which stretches from Glenwood Avenue to West Glacier Drive. The drive was closed for a pavement resurfacing and infrastructure improvement project. The project addressed improving safety and driving conditions for park patrons vehicular traffic, preserving the roadway's original function and historic features, and restoring the user experience along Memorial Hill Drive in Mill Creek Park.

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST \$123,000

PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION

CLEAN OHIO CONSERVATION FUND

Project managed restoration work on a COCF Round 7 project at the Mill Creek Preserve, including invasive vegetation treatment and preparation of soil for planting of native seed. Coordinated grant reporting and contract management on the various projects.

TOTAL COSTS \$85,246.40

Projects were substantially funded by Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grants at 75% (State/MetroParks).

STEWARDSHIP

CONTINUED

LILY POND IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements included a new observation deck, floating bridge, signs to educate visitors on wildlife, landscaping, and native plants were added.

Previously, more than \$250,000 improvements to the area had been made. Those improvements included new trails, an arrival plaza with an information kiosk, and boardwalks that had been mostly funded by donors.

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST
\$14,523.80

SWIF GRANT

More than \$123,000 in Ohio EPA grants funded the improvements. Improvements included new permeable pavers, new curb, a bioswale and native plant stormwater garden.



STEWARDSHIP

CONTINUED



DONORS

Barktastic K9 Cupboard
Mahoning-Shenango Kennel Club
Mahoning Valley Amateur Radio Association
Johnny Appleseed Garden Club
Mahoning County Visitors Bureau
Mahoning Valley Hospital Foundation
Masonry Materials Plus
Commercial Truck & Trailer
Mill Creek Golf Course staff
Haf-Hil Services Pest Control
Becker Funeral Homes
Mahoning Garden Club
Preneed Funeral Program
Youngtown Youth Flag Football
The Youngstown Foundation
Green Leaves Garden Club
AVP Digital, Inc
Mahoning Valley Hospital Foundation
Home Savings Charitable Foundation
American Junior Golf Foundation

Jason DiPasqua
Karen Zook
Brian Tolnar
Larry Maravola
Anonymous
Melinda Wright
Shelley Engellenner
Gloria Jean Rubbo
Christine Davidson
Marie Jones
Jeffrey Deeds
Denise DeBartolo York
Linda Devlin
Mary Kay Lee
Amy Goldberg
Susan Digracomo
Gunther Lange
Harold Dampf
Brad Chamberlain
Gail Frankeberger
Jeanne & John McNally

Edward & Marianne Klein
Maynard & Ruby Jo Bryant
Diane & Jeff Antalík
Jeffrey Doinoff
Linda Wagner
Kathy Baun
Sherry Walker
Janet & Paul Williams
John, Laura, Dave & Mary Bertsch
Julie Modarelli
Nancy Sprockett
Stacy Kolenich
Vera Mileusnich
Paul Blankenmeister
Sharyn Campbell
Kevin O'Brien
Kathleen DeLuca
Bob and Carol Davis

STEWARDSHIP

CONTINUED

RENTAL FACILITY USAGE

Fellows Riverside Gardens

- Auditorium – 95 rentals
- Classrooms – 98 rentals
- Ceremonies (indoors & outdoors) – 132 rentals
- Garden Café – 5 rentals
- Radius Room – 38 rentals
- Wedding Receptions – 43

MetroParks Farm

- Classroom A – 78 rentals / 2,391 attendance
- Kenneth McMahon Hall – 224 rentals / 19,334 attendance

Cabins

- Bears Den Cabin – 126 rentals / 3,478 attendance
- Birch Hill Cabin – 252 rentals / 10,078 attendance
- Old Log Cabin – 59 rentals / 1,228 attendance

Pavilions

- Chestnut Hill Pavilion – 49 rentals / 3,108 attendance
- Pioneer Pavilion – 134 rentals / 8,571 attendance
- Scholl Pavilion – 114 rentals / 4,742 attendance
- Slippery Rock Pavilion – 41 rentals / 3,279 attendance
- Stitt Pavilion – 50 rentals / 3,435 attendance
- Thomas J. Bresko Pavilion – 81 rentals / 1,835 attendance

Yellow Creek Park

- Capt. John Struthers Pavilion (Yellow Creek Park) – 44 rentals / 2,273 attendance
- Yellow Creek Lodge – 101 rentals / 5,799 attendance

Other

- Lake Glacier Boathouse Room – 5 rentals / 79 attendance



STEWARDSHIP

CONTINUED

TOTAL ALL FUNDS

UNENCUMBERED CASH BALANCE January 1, 2016	\$1,610,281.80
PRIOR YEAR ENCUMBRANCES	\$1,314,718.17

INCOME:

General Property Tax	\$7,069,592.62
Park District Activities	\$1,981,566.86
Local Government Fund	\$319,150.82
Lily Pond SWIF Grant	\$121,380.00
OPWC Clean Ohio Grant	\$44,638.44
ODOT Grant	\$329,985.82
Gas Royalties & Interest	\$26,212.66
Insurance Settlements	\$96,750.09
Law Enforcement Training Revenue	\$5,612.00
Total Income	\$9,994,889.31

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE \$12,919,889.28

DISBURSEMENTS:

Materials & Supplies	\$2,596,139.24
Salaries & Wages	\$5,445,593.40
Capital Equipment	\$250,089.09
Capital Improvements	\$1,117,698.08

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$9,409,519.81

Year End Cash Balance December 31, 2016	\$3,510,369.47
Year End Encumbrances	\$363,761.94
Unencumbered Cash Balance	\$3,146,607.53



