

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF MILL CREEK
METROPARKS HELD MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of Mill Creek MetroParks was held on Monday, August 14, 2023.

The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m., with recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance.

Lee Frey, Board President welcomed staff and guests.

Roll Call was as follows:

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| Germaine Bennett; | Present |
| Lee Frey; | Present |
| Tom Frost, | Present |
| Jeff Harvey; | Present |
| Paul Olivier; | Present |

The Board was presented with the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 10, 2023. Lee Frey accepted the minutes into the record as written.

Kevin Smith, Finance Director/Treasurer presented the Department Report for Finance and requested that disbursements #90265 - #90535 for a total of \$763,110.30 be approved. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, the funds having been certified as on hand and duly appropriated, that disbursements #90265 - #90535 for a total of \$763,110.30. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

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|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Voting Aye: | Bennett, Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier |
| Voting Nay: | None |

Kevin Smith, Finance Director/Treasurer requested to increase appropriations to account 100-2103-5097 Gardens Capital Improvements by \$4,940.09. This was the amount received from our insurance provider for repairs to the Gardens maintenance building due to a recent storm. Lee Frey moved, at the request of the Finance Director, to increase appropriations to account 100-2103-5097 Gardens Capital Improvements by \$4,940.09. The motion was seconded by Germaine Bennett after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Voting Aye: | Bennett, Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier |
| Voting Nay: | None |

Aaron Young shared that the East Cohasset Trail Improvement Project has been completed and urged all to take a visit and see the improvement for themselves.

Megan Hanley, HR & Administrative Services Director presented MetroParks Policy updates for approval. Policy updates were made to Standards of Conduct, Employment Policies and Procedures, Wage and Salary Policy, Benefits and Services, and Workplace Safety and Security categories. Frey moved, at the request of the HR & Administrative Services Director, to approve the MetroParks Policies as presented. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Voting Aye: | Bennett, Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier |
| Voting Nay: | None |

Chris Litton, Development Director presented the MetroParks Foundation deposit report for the period of July 1-31, 2023, at a total of \$52,975.00. Lee Frey moved at the request of the Director of Development to accept the deposit report for the period of July 1-31, 2023, at a total of \$52,975.00. The motion was

seconded by Paul Olivier, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Bennett, Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier
Voting Nay: None

Public Comments to the Board: (see sign-in sheet)

- Lisa Bond: Concerned about the number of cars who speed on Volney Road. Recommends speed humps on roads to slow traffic. Memorial Hill Road is experiencing a slope failure and needs to be addressed. Garbage bins along the trails, East Cohasset in particular, additional garbage bins are needed. Has concerns for the safety of the deer hunt.
- Jerry Serbel: Lives on 2318 Bears Den Road and his main concern is the deer. He is also concerned about the condition of the Lily Pond, and it looks like one large green pit or Italian wedding soup. Aerators need attention.
- Cathie Pesa: Resident of the County and is concerned about the condition of Mill Creek Park. A tree was purchased, and a paver was bought for his name. They were devastated by the appearance of the Gardens. The tree that was purchased was gone and there were lots of weeds in the Gardens. Concerned over the efforts of gaining volunteers. More creativity is needed to get volunteers.
- Janet Barnard: Read from the last passage in the book called The Green Cathedral. She stated that it helped her to be appreciative of the park. She stated that the Rose Garden and the Gardens are a mess. She does not understand the purpose of the deer hunt.
- Frank Martin: A resident of Boardman. He recited a message about a story of a family watching the deer. The disrespect of the nature trails, particularly the East Cohasset Trail by the recent donor does not represent the public. The taxpayers should be the ones that should be listened to. Claimed the Board is authoritarian with regards to the deer hunt and improvements. The downed trees should also be cleaned up.
- Samie Winick: Former 27-year Friends Volunteer. Provided a background on Fellows Riverside Gardens. She believes that the end of the Master Gardener Program is the beginning of the end of the Gardens. The declining condition of the Gardens began a long time ago with the changes that took place. She rejects the premise that one part of the park should suffer so that another can thrive. The mission of Fellows has not changed and asked all to come together to improve the current condition.
- John Prerog: A Boardman resident. Shamed the Board as the Park used to be the gem of the Valley. Hears commercials on the radio promoting the visibility of wildlife.
- Robert Craciun: A resident of Old Furnace neighborhood. Had an inquiry about the names associated with the Lily Pond as it used to be named Goldfish Pond and the lower pond used to be called Lily Pond. Stated that dead trees are leaning against living trees that are a concern for falling on the road. He believes that the deer are being named scapegoats for the poor condition of the Parks. The paths are not safe. Money from the cull should be used to hire a botanist or forestry management degree. The forest needs to be managed.
- Lana VanAuken: Lives near Sawmill Creek. Stated that Volney Rogers stood for nature, not a killing zone. The Sanctuary should not be a place to be killed. She thanked Dr. Allen for his article in the Vindicator. Thanked the McGuffey Historical Society for objecting to the cull. There are other methods that are more humane than killing. We should teach our children about wildlife. Quoted Jane Goodall about our responsibility to maintain the planet. The root problem is poor leadership.
- Mickey Drabison: Referenced the police departments need for more officers. Regarding the deer issue, the main problem he has is that hunters are calling him that they can just show up and start hunting anywhere. He believes that more information needs to be out there.
- Helen McCarthy: Asked the Board if anyone of them are feeling the same as them.
- Chris Defrank: Asked if any of the Board is a vegan or vegetarian? Has anyone ever been shot? Does not believe that if a survey was done that most would not support the program. He saw a white deer on the East Cohasset Trail. He believes that it should be on the ballot and the

community should be able to vote on it. He does not believe that the numbers are correct. The Park is the home for the deer and is not supporting it.

- Chris Flak: Stated that she lives on Michael Drive in Youngstown. Thanks to all who spoke at the meeting. She has a concern over the use of herbicide in the park. Witnessed the results of vegetation killer on East Glacier Drive and Bears Den Drive. The OEPA recommends material data sheets be kept if used within the park. Her concerns are for the vegetation killer that may have harmful effects on visitors.
- Vic Jasenec: Questioned the number of deer that were identified and asked how the information can be obtained. Questioned the safety of hunting at night. Does not believe that you can see what is beyond your target at night. Provided some statistics on sharp shooting and questioned the number of times sharpshooters miss. People who shoot at night are considered poachers.
- Denise Lowboy: Read a prepared statement that questioned the number of deer identified by the infrared aerial survey. Questioned the amount of time that was given by the Board to the public to consider the issue. Deer have a positive impact on biodiversity. Deer serves as a valuable food source within the Parks. Recommends contraceptive versus lethal means be used to manage the deer. Requests that the Board reconsider the decision to cull the deer.

Commissioners Comments:

- Jeff shared that the peer reviewed articles be included in the minutes of the meeting. Volney Rogers was certainly a visionary but was not what people have claimed. Volney did not like muskrats and instituted a bounty. He did the same for owls.

Publications Consulted on White-tailed Deer and their Forest Impacts

Peer Reviewed Articles

1. Effects of White-tailed Deer on Populations of an Understory Forb in Fragmented Deciduous Forests; David J Augustine and Lee E Frelich.
2. A demographic Study of deer browsing impacts on *Trillium grandiflorum*; Thomas P Rooney and Kevin Gross.
3. Community-level impacts of white-tailed deer on understory plants in North American Forests; Christopher W Habeck and Alexis K Schultz.
4. Managing the Abundance and Diversity of Breeding Bird Populations through Manipulation of Deer Populations; William J Mcshea and John H Rapple.
5. Height of White-Flowered Trillium as an Index of Deer Browsing Intensity; Roger C Anderson.
6. Effects of Deer Herbivory on Birds; Noel J Cutright and Kevin Kearns.
7. Direct and indirect effects of white-tailed deer in forest ecosystems; Thomas P Rooney and Donald M Waller.
8. *Trillium grandiflorum* height is an indicator of white-tailed deer density at local and regional scales; Dawn R Bazely, et al.
9. Long-term consequences of invasive deer on songbird communities: Going from bad to worse? Simon Chollet, et al
10. Browsing down our natural heritage: Deer impacts on vegetation structure and songbird populations across an island archipelago; Tara G Martin, et al.
11. Effects of white-tailed Deer on Songbirds within managed forests in Pennsylvania; David S Decalesta.
12. Nest predation in forest birds: Influence of predator type and predator's habitat quality; Jean-Louis Martin and Mathieu Joron.
13. Effects of Deer Enclosures on Forest Floor Mammals; Marci Brandenburg.
14. Regeneration of Woodland Vegetation after Deer Browsing in Sharon Woods MetroPark, Franklin County, Ohio; Robert Klips and Peter Curtis.
15. Responses of woodland birds to increasing numbers of deer: a Review of evidence and mechanisms; RJ Fuller.
16. The Effects of white-tailed Deer Density on Breeding Songbirds in Delaware; Elizabeth Lynne Tymkiw.
17. Understanding the Paradox of Deer Persisting at High Abundance in Heavily Browsed Habitats; Soizic Le Saout, et al.
18. The effects of high deer density on forest regeneration and carbon sequestration; Harold Beck.
19. Ecological impacts of Deer Overabundance; Tom Rooney.

20. Beyond the browse line: complex cascade effects mediated by White-tailed deer; Harold Beck.
21. Overabundant suburban deer, invertebrates and the spread of an Invasive exotic plant; Jeffrey Duguay
22. Vegetative Legacy of a Protected Deer Herd in Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park; Michael Jenkins.
23. Plant Herbivore Interactions at the Forest Edge; Inara Leal.
24. Declining woodland birds in North America: should we blame Bambi? Jean-Louis Martin.
25. Impacts of white-tailed Deer on Forest Regeneration in Northwest Pennsylvania; Nancy Tilghman, et al.

Other Government and Organization Reports

1. 2022-2023 Deer Management Plan and Request for Deer Damage Control Permit; MetroParks Toledo.
2. Methods for Managing Deer in Populated Areas; Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
3. Considering a Deer Sterilization Program; Cliftondeer.org.
4. Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Final White-tailed Deer Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement.
5. White-tailed Deer Damage Management in Ohio, USDA.
6. New Jersey Stewardship Task Force Report;
7. Healthy Forests; Audubon Pennsylvania.
8. The Forest Nobody Knows; Northeast Research Station, USDA.
9. Cincinnati Park Board Non-Lethal Deer Population Control Pilot Project.
10. Solving Problems with Deer; The Humane Society.
11. Proceedings 19th Central Hardwood Forest Conference; John Groninger.
12. Deer and Birds; New York State Ornithological Association.
13. Deer Herd and Ecosystem Management Plan; Huron-Clinton MetroParks.
14. Meander Forest- Forest Management Plan 2021.
15. A regional assessment of white-tailed deer effects on plant invasion; Kristine M Averill, et al.
16. Deer eating habits have lasting damage on forests; Cornell University.
17. Cleveland Metroparks.com/Deer Management.
18. Lake Metroparks.com/Wildlife Management.
19. Summit Metroparks.org/Deer Management.

No peer reviewed articles or government reports could be found that refuted the impacts of White-tailed Deer on forests or woodlots.

- Lee stated that contraception is illegal in Ohio. Two programs are being used as studies paid for by private entities. It was not an option for MCMP. We will also look at the Lily Pond to see if the aerators are working. Lee also stated that older populations like the improvements which will extend their utilization of the park. USDA sharpshooters will be used as part of the cull program and no hunting will be done in Youngstown.
- Tom Frost questioned the claim of a silent vote. A silent vote was not conducted. All data that we have is on the MetroParks website. He thanked Nick for the work that he does. Tom stated that the Board does read the packet of information that is sent out one week prior. Garbage and road failure is also being addressed. Tom stated that none of them enjoy having to do a deer cull. Tom claimed that the decision was based upon science.

Lee Frey, Board President moved at 7:01 pm to exit regular session and enter executive session for the purpose of pending or imminent court action. The motion was seconded by Tom Frost, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Bennett, Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier
Voting Nay: None

Lee Frey, Board President moved at 7:49 pm to exit executive session and enter regular session. The motion was seconded by Germaine Bennett, after discussion, the roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Voting Aye: Bennett, Frey, Frost, Harvey, Olivier
Voting Nay: None

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 18, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in McMahon Hall at the MetroParks Farm.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:49 p.m.

Presiding Officer

Secretary