

Summit Metro Parks ANNUAL REPORT



2014
Two Thousand and Fourteen



2014
ANNUAL REPORT

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summitmetroparks.org

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Parks & Multipurpose Trails

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Cascade Valley Metro Park | Akron |
| Deep Lock Quarry Metro Park | Peninsula |
| Firestone Metro Park | Akron |
| Furnace Run Metro Park | Richfield |
| Goodyear Heights Metro Park | Akron |
| Gorge Metro Park | Cuyahoga Falls |
| Hampton Hills Metro Park | Cuyahoga Falls |
| Liberty Park | Twinsburg |
| Munroe Falls Metro Park | Munroe Falls |
| F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm | Akron |
| O'Neil Woods Metro Park | Bath |
| Sand Run Metro Park | Akron |
| Silver Creek Metro Park | Norton |
| Springfield Bog Metro Park | Springfield Twp. |
| Wood Hollow Metro Park | Hudson |
| Bike & Hike Trail | 34 miles |
| Freedom Trail | 4 miles |
| Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail | 22.4 miles |

*Visit our website for
addresses and directions.*



Summit Metro Parks manages
13,000 acres, including 15 parks,
several conservation areas and
more than 125 miles of trails.
Annual attendance averages
5.2 million visits.

Welcome



Joel D. Bailey

Morgan C. Greene, Ph.D.

Mark A. Spisak

Jane E. Bond

Herbert Newman

Board of Park Commissioners

2014 was a year of change. The park district's name was changed to Summit Metro Parks, the Board of Park Commissioners was expanded from three to five members, and our largest natural area — Liberty Park in northeast Summit County — grew by more than 1,100 acres.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Throughout the county, our clean and safe parks and trails, educational programs and special events continued offering opportunities to view wildlife and explore the outdoors. The role of commissioners, employees and volunteers is still to conserve natural resources and help people enjoy the Metro Parks.

This report is a brief summary of accomplishments in 2014. We invite you to see more examples of your public dollars at work, in person in *your back yard*.



A 25-year management agreement was signed with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for Tinkers Creek State Park and Tinkers Creek State Nature Preserve. The deal added 1,142 acres to the now 3,000-acre Liberty Park.

Thank you for your continued support.

We're Your Back Yard

Our Mission

The mission of Summit Metro Parks is to acquire, conserve and sustainably manage natural resources to provide the public with passive outdoor recreational and educational opportunities through a regional system of natural-area parks.



Improvements

The following is a partial list of projects completed in 2014:

BIKE & HIKE TRAIL

- Repaired and resurfaced several miles of the trail

FIRESTONE METRO PARK

- Added city water and capped the water well at Coventry Oaks Pavilion

FREEDOM TRAIL

- Constructed Phase 2 — between Tallmadge Circle and Eastwood Avenue in Akron — of this planned eight-mile trail that will connect Akron and Kent. Phase 2 will open in early 2015.



FURNACE RUN METRO PARK

- Installed new windows in Brushwood Pavilion and painted the exterior of the reservable structure

HAMPTON HILLS METRO PARK

- Repaired Spring Hollow Trail following spring storms, and nearly completed the rerouting and rebuilding of Adam Run Trail



- Continued constructing a new mountain bike trail, a carryover from 2013. The trail could open in 2015.
- Constructed a new archery platform in the archery area

LIBERTY PARK

- Began construction on a new nature center in the Twinsburg Ledges Area. The building will open in 2015.

F.A. SEIBERLING NATURE REALM

- Built a plastic-bottle greenhouse for programs and to educate visitors about recycling
- Removed the dirt on top of the underground visitors center and waterproofed the building. A new roof will be built in 2015.



O'NEIL WOODS METRO PARK

- Repaired and rerouted Deer Run Trail following spring storms



SILVER CREEK METRO PARK

- Constructed a new archery platform in the archery area
- Cleared and seeded a new cross-country course. The course should open in 2016.



OHIO & ERIE CANAL TOWPATH TRAIL

- Resurfaced several miles of the trail

WOOD HOLLOW METRO PARK

- Built an entrance and parking lot for the new park. It will open in 2015.

Programs & Events

EDUCATION

Naturalists led 981 programs, teaching 30,267 visitors of all ages about environmental education, recreational activities and the park district's natural and cultural history. Scouts earned badges and students met Ohio's science standards through experiential learning in an outdoor setting.



More than 60,500 visitors learned about nature with educational exhibits, native live animals, events and naturalist interactions at the visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In 2014, more than 2,400 visitors earned rewards during the 11th annual **Spree For All** hiking event (May-June) on flat, easy trails. Over 650 runners participated in the 3rd annual **Mother's Day 5K** at Munroe Falls.

**SPREE
FOR ALL**

**SUMMER
BIKING
SPREE**

**FALL
FAMILY
OUTINGS**

**mother's
day
5k**

**FALL
HIKING
SPREE**





About 1,000 riders completed the 2nd annual **Summer Biking Spree** (July-August) on multipurpose trails. More than 11,000 people earned rewards during the 51st annual **Fall Hiking Spree** (September-

November) on easy, moderate and difficult trails. Thousands of visitors enjoyed free hayrides and more at the **Fall Family Outings**, held at Goodyear Heights and Silver Creek in October.

Resource Management

SPOTTED TURTLES

- Hatched two endangered spotted turtles for eventual release on park property. Biologists at the Greater Cleveland Aquarium are rearing the turtles.



POND BROOK RESTORATION

- Completed the restoration of another 5,500 feet of Pond Brook in Liberty Park, and began planning additional restoration work

CONFLUENCE RESTORATION

- Designed and constructed a three-acre wetland and a sand barren habitat in the yet-to-open Confluence Metro Park in Akron

Safety & Security

- Rangers tallied 9,825 hours of foot patrols and more than 54,000 contacts with visitors.
- The Bike Patrol, which consists of more than 80 volunteers, rode the Bike & Hike, Freedom and Towpath trails to offer assistance to visitors.
- Thirty-five lifeguards kept watch during the swim season at Munroe Falls and Silver Creek.



Volunteers

More than 840 volunteers gave 31,288 service hours. Roles included support of customer service, resource management, interpretation, rangers and operations.



Fund Balance on January 1 \$20,931,769

Resources

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Taxes | \$15,829,891 |
| Grants*/Special Revenue | \$404,540 |
| Donations | \$25,598 |
| Investment Income | \$10,565 |
| Swimming Fees | \$183,202 |
| Merchandise Sales & Concessions | \$114,295 |
| Programs & Services | \$24,338 |
| Pavilion/Shelter/Property Rentals | \$172,867 |
| Other Receipts | \$410,983 |

Total Resources \$17,176,279

Total Resources & Fund Balance \$38,108,048

Expenditures

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Wages & Salaries | \$6,375,849 |
| Employee Benefits | \$2,315,730 |
| Administration/Operations | \$3,562,916 |
| Development & Capital Improvements | \$5,210,994 |
| Other Expenses | \$588,662 |
| Equipment | \$483,183 |
| Land Acquisition | \$1,612,000 |

Total Expenditures \$20,149,334

WHY A FUND BALANCE?

Summit Metro Parks has received nearly \$20 million in grants — for various projects — since 2007. The district is leveraging tax dollars to expand the protection of natural resources and your enjoyment of the outdoors.

*** A number of projects, programs and initiatives would not have been possible without grants from the following:**

F.W. Albrecht Family Foundation • Clean Ohio Trails Fund • Federal Highway Administration, Transportation Enhancement Program • Northern Ohio Golf Charities Foundation • Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance • Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Shooting Range Grant • Ohio & Erie Canalway Association • Ohio Public Works • Summit County Community Grant Program • U.S. Fish & Wildlife Habitat Development Grant & Wildlife Restoration Funds



YOUR PUBLIC DOLLARS AT WORK

Your Metro Parks are funded by a small Summit County real-estate tax.










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