

SUMMIT METRO PARKS



2019

Connecting People with Nature

This year SMP helped visitors experience the parks in new and exciting ways. At *Promises in the Park*, 30 couples exchanged or renewed wedding vows in a beautiful outdoor setting. During our annual *Touch-A-Truck*, a new “Autism Friendly Hour” allowed families to experience all the fun without the bright lights and sirens. And, at *Summit Lake Nature Club*, neighborhood kids were introduced to the joys of nature in a daily afterschool program.

Protecting Rare & Endangered Species

In 2019 alone, SMP biologists successfully reestablished spotted salamanders at **Munroe Falls Metro Park**, protected endangered bats at **Liberty Park** (*Twinsburg*) and reintroduced endangered fish at **Summit Lake** (*Akron*). Staff past and present published research on a hybrid bird species and coyote behavior. SMP biologists also managed a pollinator awareness program that produced 200 pounds of honey.

Preserving our Past

As SMP approaches its centennial anniversary, we are as committed as ever to learning about — and preserving — the past. This year, staff and volunteers conducted an archaeological dig at Old Maid’s Kitchen (formerly Mary Campbell Cave) in **Gorge Metro Park** (*Cuyahoga Falls*) that discovered no evidence of Native American occupation of the rock shelter.

Delivering Quality Park Experiences

Summit Metro Parks enhanced its parks and facilities in 2019, including:

- Opening a disc golf course at **Silver Creek Metro Park** (*Norton*)
- Installing an improved Alder Trail Boardwalk with donor funding at **Goodyear Heights Metro Park** (*Akron*)
- Updating the **Goodyear Heights Metro Park** lodge (*Akron*)
- Enhancing **Gorge Metro Park** (*Cuyahoga Falls*) with a new entrance plaza and flush restrooms
- Building the **Summit Lake Loop Trail** (*Akron*) with local partner organizations
- Continuing the restorations at the **Valley View Barn** and **Summit Lake Nature Center** ●

In 2019, your Summit Metro Parks continued a nearly century-long tradition of connecting people with nature in meaningful and innovative ways. Through the support of Summit County residents and with the help of grant funding, generous private donations, strong community partnerships and an energetic volunteer base, SMP conserves, sustainably manages and values our natural resources for the health and enjoyment of all.

Making Meaningful Environmental Improvements

In 2019, Summit Metro Parks staff completed a 15-year restoration project at Pond Brook in Liberty Park (*Twinsburg*). As far back as the late 1800s, Pond Brook had been ditched, dredged and devoid of life. When SMP acquired the property in 1999, we embarked on one of the largest stream restorations in state history. With grant funding, park staff oversaw restoration of several hundred acres of riparian wetlands, creating habitat and fish communities in over five miles of stream corridor. Wildlife have responded well, with otters, native fish and migratory waterfowl once again calling this area home.



Pond Brook is part of the Cuyahoga River watershed, and in 2019 our “crooked river” celebrated 50 years of water quality renewal since the infamous 1969 fire that sparked the modern environmental movement. SMP is proud to manage two access points on the newly designated Cuyahoga River Water Trail. 🍃

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- OPRA 1st Place – *Promises in the Park*
- OPRA 2nd Place – *Autism Friendly Touch-A-Truck*
- OPRA 3rd Place – *Summit Lake Nature Club*
- OPRA 3rd Place – *#mySMPadventure*
- ASCVB Zenith Award for Hospitality Innovation – *Autism Friendly Nature Realm*
- ASCVB Zenith Award for Hospitality Partnership – *Summit Lake*
- Cleveland Museum of Natural History Conservation Educator of the Year – *Mike Greene, Education & Recreation Manager*
- OPRA Jack Hanna Resource Conservation Award – *Mike Johnson, Chief of Conservation*

Summit Metro Parks

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Tina Ughrin *Chair*
 Joel D. Bailey
 Tonya Block
 Herb Newman
 Mark A. Spisak
 Lisa M. King *Executive Director*

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44313
 330-867-5511

BY THE NUMBERS —

- 136,000** – visitors assisted by customer service and rangers
- 72,000** – program participants
- 23,000** – service hours contributed by more than 780 volunteers
- 17,000** – special event attendees
- 2,343** – meals provided by SMP employees through the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank



summitmetroparks.org

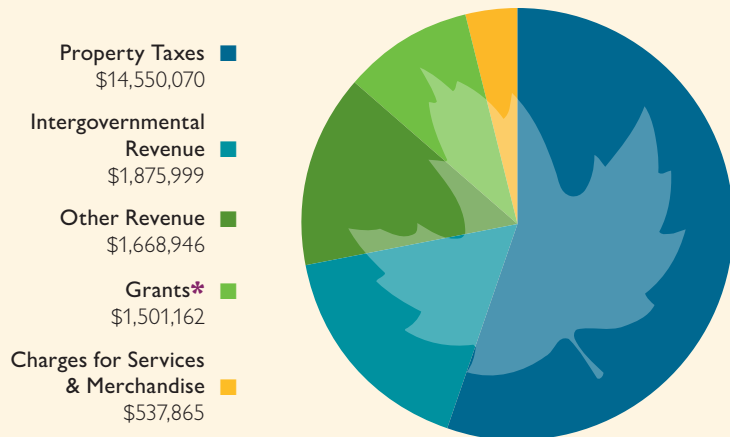
Ohio's Second Oldest Metropolitan Park District

Founded in 1921, Summit Metro Parks manages 14,000 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails. Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. The park district is funded by a Summit County real estate tax, last approved by 75% of voters in November 2013. The cost per \$100,000 property valuation is \$41.64 per year.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

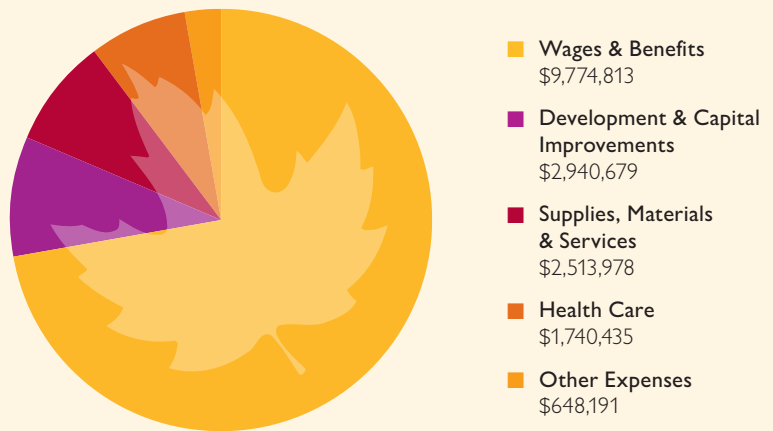
Financial Summary & Fund Balance

2019 RESOURCES \$20,134,042



A one-time property sale and several federal grants specific to the Valley View project account for approximately \$2.8 million of 2019 revenues.

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$17,618,096



* Summit Metro Parks | Grant Support

- Akron Summit Conventions and Visitors Bureau • National Park Service • National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Great Lakes Commission Regional Partnership • ODNR NatureWorks • ODNR Clean Ohio Trails • Ohio Public Works Commission Clean Ohio Conservation Fund • Ohio & Erie Canal Association Strategic Initiatives • Summit County Land Bank Community Development Matching Grant Fund

Summit Metro Parks Foundation | Grant Support

- Akron Community Foundation – Betty R. Axline Fund, Board of Directors Annual Giving Fund, Capital Fund • The Allstate Foundation • Burton D. Morgan Foundation • DuPont Clear Into the Future • First Energy Foundation • Minority Health Commission of Ohio • Reimagining the Civic Commons – Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition (convener) with funding from The JPB Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation • Sisler McFawn Foundation

Summit Metro Parks & Summit Metro Parks Foundation | Sponsorships

- Albrecht Family Foundation and Acme Fresh Market • Akron Life Magazine • Cleveland Clinic Akron General and Cleveland Clinic Children's • House of Plants, Inc. • Roetzel & Andress • Summa Health • Vertical Runner • Western Reserve Hospital