



metroparks
TOLEDO AREA

Metroparks of the Toledo Area
2013 Annual Report

Your Clean, Safe, Natural Metroparks

Each of the Metroparks offers picnic areas, play fields and playgrounds. They have trails for hiking, bicycling and cross-country skiing. And they preserve important natural areas. Each Metropark also offers its own unique characteristics and experiences.



Parks

Wildwood Preserve, Sylvania Township
Oak Openings Preserve, Swanton
Secor, Berkey
Side Cut, Maumee
Farnsworth, Waterville
Bend View, Waterville
Providence, Providence Township
Swan Creek Preserve, Toledo
Pearson, Oregon
Blue Creek Conservation Area,
Whitehouse (portions open)
Fallen Timbers Battlefield and Ft. Miamis
National Historic Site, Maumee
Toledo Botanical Garden, Toledo
(affiliated organization)

Greenway Trails

In partnership with local communities and institutions.

University/Parks Trail
Wabash Cannonball Trail
Towpath Trail
Oregon Parks Trail
Chessie Circle Trail (in development)

Future Parks

Middlegrounds, downtown Toledo
Howard Farms, Jerusalem Township
Keil Farm, Toledo
Oak Openings Greenway

Attractions

The Canal Experience, Providence
The Manor House, Wildwood
Ellen Biddle Shipman Garden, Wildwood
National Center for Nature Photography,
Secor
Toledo Botanical Garden
Maumee River
Windows on Wildlife (in six parks)
The Lathrop House (partnership)

To Preserve and Protect the Natural Heritage of Northwest Ohio



The Board of Park Commissioners
Governing Body of Metroparks of the
Toledo Area

Scott J. Savage, *President*
Fritz Byers, *Vice President*
Lera L. Doneghy, *Vice President*

Board members appointed by Judge
Jack R. Puffenberger, *Lucas County
Probate Court*

Stephen Madewell, *Executive Director*
David Zenk, *Deputy Director*

Mission

The mission of Metroparks of the Toledo Area is to conserve the region's natural resources by creating, developing, improving, protecting, and promoting clean, safe, and natural parks and open spaces for the benefit, enjoyment, education, and general welfare of the public.



Creating A Roadmap To The Future

Metroparks is looking far into the future and seeing green.

In 2013, the park system launched a comprehensive planning process to establish a vision for the next two decades. This effort involved creating an inventory of existing conditions and identifying opportunities and priorities for protecting high quality natural areas and streamways across the region. By doing so, we can envision ways to create open space corridors or trails to connect existing and new parks.

The comprehensive planning also included developing a collection of conceptual plans to:

- Guide the completion of new park developments over the next 10 years
- Create a corresponding business and sustainability plan to ensure the balance and stability of Metroparks over that period and beyond

Three consulting firms were selected based on their specific areas of expertise. Each firm was charged with creating an independent plan representing one section of a three-part, comprehensive set.

An Inventory Of Opportunities; A Foundation For The Future

URS was challenged to create a 20-year vision plan for the park system. This vision would identify natural resource attributes and amenities of the park district and the county within the context of national, state and regional significance. The process involved taking inventory of the opportunities to connect existing parks and open spaces to communities and population centers, and to recommend preservation strategies for significant natural areas and greenway corridors.

Business Plan For Sustainability, Service

Leon Younger and PROS Consulting was contracted to review existing park operations, develop fundamental principles for operational excellence and create standards to insure a sustainable future for the Metroparks. This included evaluation of long-range financial planning, relationships between operational overhead and available capital improvement funds, service delivery, educational and recreational programs, as well as marketing and communications. The resulting outcome would ensure a commitment to maintaining best management practices for all areas of park operations.

Emerging Parks

Metroparks has not opened a new park for several decades.

At the time this comprehensive planning process began in 2013, two major park projects were already moving forward: the Middlegrounds in downtown Toledo and Howard Farms in Jerusalem Township. Both had significant grant funding and associated completion schedules.

MKSK was retained to review and evaluate existing preliminary plans for other non-developed parklands, and to create conceptual plans for new parks in selected study areas.

MKSK's project study sites included: the Kiel Farm property in Toledo, Fallen Timbers Battlefield and Fort Miamis in Maumee, Blue Creek Conservation Area in Whitehouse, the Swan Creek Corridor in Toledo and sections of the Oak Openings Corridor in western Lucas County.

The results of this comprehensive look at our community and park district will be essential in developing the park district's annual capital improvement budget and projected capital improvement roster for the next five to 10 years. In short, it will be a roadmap for the future of your Metroparks.

Connecting With The Community

One of the park district's primary goals is to provide opportunities for the people of Lucas County – and especially children – to connect with Metroparks through quality, cost effective experiences.

Programming Highlights

Holidays in the Manor House – Metroparks most popular annual program – had more than 16,000 visitors in attendance during the week-long event in December. The event brings more than 100 volunteers who lend their collections to decorate the house. Related Farmhouse Holiday programs also grew in popularity in its second year; 309 people attended programs provided during the four-day program series.

More than 10,000 people, many of them students from local schools, boarded the canal boat at Providence Metropark for an immersive program about Ohio history.

Nature Camp reached 83 percent of capacity in 2013 over the 12 week season and included expanded opportunities for children through After School All Stars and the National Youth Sports Program.

Metroparks reached more than 7,500 students in Lucas County schools in 2013.

In partnership with WGTE Family, “Click with Nature” continued to grow in its fourth year, using photography to connect youth with nature.

The 2013 Autumn Adventure walking program saw a 25 percent increase in participants who completed the program.

Canoeing and kayaking continued to grow in popularity in 2013, and the program department expanded paddling options for the coming year.

Customer Service

The White Oak Campground opened at Oak Openings Preserve late in the season, offering a way to connect with families. In just a few months, the campground had 1,974 visitors and generated more than \$6,000 in revenue.

Shelter rentals and Manor House rentals increased in revenue and capacity in 2013, generating \$282,660 and serving more than 81,500 people.

Connecting with the Future

Financial sustainability is paramount to Metroparks success, and a robust program provides opportunities for the community to contribute to that success through planned giving, grants and membership opportunities.

Memberships

More than 78 percent of Metroparks Memberships were renewed, while a campaign began in the third quarter to reach out to lapsed members.





Reenactors at Ft. Miamis event commemorating the First Siege at nearby Ft. Meigs.

Special members programs provided opportunities to learn more about the park district that they generously support.

Gifts, Grants, Partnerships

A small park in Maumee is a big part of local history. Ft. Miamis, a property on the Maumee River now owned by Metroparks, played roles in the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the War of 1812. In May, the site was included in commemoration events as part of the bicentennial of the First Siege at the larger fort across the river, Fort Meigs.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Dorothy MacKenzie Price Fallen Timbers Education Fund at the Toledo Community Foundation, visitors from that day on have been greeted with a new walking path, informative signs and other interpretive features. By pressing a button on a “talking box,” a

visitor can even hear dramatic readings of letters written by American and British soldiers. Drawings by local artist Richard Reed depict scenes from the battles to help better explain the historic events that took place at the fort.

A piece of Toledo area history from another era was also preserved thanks to partial funding from the Stranahan Foundation: The Manor House at Wildwood Preserve, which was the former Stranahan family estate, received a new roof and all of the windows in the house were refurbished. The work was finished just in time for the house to receive more than 16,000 guests for the annual Holidays in the Manor House.

Wagener family’s annual Memorial Golf Outing in September raised \$6,000 to benefit Side Cut Metropark’s winter recreation area.

A donor gift from Dr. Michael and Chris Basista will provide changes to the Secor Window on Wildlife in 2014 as the renovation plans for the building and the Nature Photo Center get underway.

France Stone Foundation, a long-time supporter of Metroparks, made a \$30,000 grant to the park district in 2013.

Financial and volunteer support from the BP Husky refinery, Friends of Pearson and the Eastern Maumee Bay Area Chamber of Commerce made possible a unique new playground at Pearson Metropark.

The park district received a grant of \$84,000 from the State of Ohio Recreational Trails Fund.

Partnerships with The Anderson’s, 7 Up, Roadrunners, BBCSN as well as others in the community continued to maximize Metroparks outreach in 2013.

The Metroparks staff aggressively pursues grant funding. In 2013, the park district received a total of \$1.2 million in grants for land acquisition and \$645,000 in additional state and federal grants for environmental stewardship and road maintenance.



Former Board President Leaves Metroparks Legacy

Jack Gallon was a noted Toledo attorney and civil rights advocate, and for 20 years a member of the Board of Park Commissioners. Because of his service and leadership, the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association inducted him into its Hall of Fame in 2010.

Mr. Gallon loved the parks, and never stopped supporting them. Even after he was retired from the board, he was often seen walking at Wildwood, picking up any litter he found and placing it in a newspaper carrier’s bag that he wore over his shoulder.

Upon Mr. Gallon’s death on March 9 at the age of 82, he left one final gift to the park district – \$1 million.

“Jack Gallon’s many contributions to the community as an attorney, philanthropist and advocate for civil rights are well known,” said Scott J. Savage, president of the Board. “His record of service to the Metroparks is also part of that legacy. Jack has now made one final gift to the park system that he cared so much about, and are again humbled by his generosity.”

Metroparks At A Glance



2.8 Million People Visited the Metroparks

Visitation is calculated using a combination of vehicle counts and estimates based on public surveys.

Wildwood Preserve	949,726	Oak Openings Preserve	348,927
Pearson	485,281	Farnsworth	111,101
Side Cut	391,810	Secor	93,506
Swan Creek Preserve	358,046	Providence	64,917



2013 Revenue \$20.8 million

Local property taxes	\$ 15.7 million
Donations, federal/state grants	\$ 4.1 million
Income from fees	\$ 1 million

2013 Expenses \$19.4 million

Salaries/personnel	\$ 8.1 million
Land acquisition	\$ 3.2 million
Park development/major maintenance	\$ 4 million
Park operations, utilities, materials, etc.	\$ 4.1 million

Employees: 81 full-time 29 part-time and 85 seasonal employees.

AFSCME: 46 full-time employees are represented by Local 706 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees



Metroparks Earns Auditor Of State Award

A financial audit of Metroparks by Auditor of State Dave Yost's office returned a clean audit report and the Auditor of State Award for excellent record keeping.

The Auditor of State Award is presented to local governments and school districts upon the completion of a financial audit. Entities that receive the award have no findings for recovery, material citations or weaknesses, significant deficiencies or other findings or questions. The award is a tribute to the hard work of the park district's Finance and Information Systems Division, under the leadership of Director of Finance/Treasurer Carla Y. Westbrook, CPA.



Volunteers Power Park District

Metroparks runs on volunteer power, starting at the top with the three-member, volunteer Board of Park Commissioners. Volunteers work in every park, helping in virtually every area of the operation, from maintenance to customer service.

In 2013, 3,789 Metroparks volunteers donated 49,086 hours of time in support of the Metroparks mission through a wide variety of volunteer programs.

Volunteers gave their time and talents at special events and in ongoing ways. Some were members of Friends of Pearson, Friends of the Lathrop House, Friends of Side Cut, Volunteers In Parks or the Manor House Volunteers. Still others volunteered at special events through their employer, church, service organization, school, Scout group or families.

A new Roving Interpreter program began, with financial support from Metroparks Members. The brand new program was honored with a first place award from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association.

The Volunteer Trail Patrol celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2013. Each VTP member makes a commitment to complete 50 hours of service in the program, patrolling the parks on foot, bike or (at Oak Openings) horseback.

Holidays in the Manor House brought in more than 75 new volunteers including new individual recruits and those from organizations such as Owens Corning, Sylvania Interact, Y2Y Outreach and Cedar Creek Church. More than 5,000 volunteer hours were contributed during the 10-day event.

Metroparks U launched in October to provide youth 14-18 opportunities to participate in community volunteerism while learning leadership skills. More than a dozen teens actively attended all three meetings and volunteer activities, resulting in more than 100 hours of service. Fifty youth volunteers were selected to become Counselors in Training for Summer Camps.

Natural Resource volunteers keep a sharp eye on the plants and wildlife that call Metroparks home. The Breeding Raptor volunteers alone contributed 764 hours. The Metroparks native seed nursery at Blue Creek also benefits from the involvement of Natural Resource volunteers, while volunteer land stewards help maintain areas for native plants to thrive.

A volunteer partnership project with BP-Husky Refinery employees and their families, as well as the George Gradel Co., resulted in more than 350 service hours donated to create a new "playscape" at Pearson.



What A Winter!

Record snowfall and low temperatures made the winter of 2013-2014 one to remember.

After a long, exceptionally cold winter, a large floe of ice that had formed a dam on the Maumee River broke up suddenly one evening in dramatic fashion. These scenes at Providence Metropark were captured by Art Weber.



The record snowfall played havoc with school schedules and made life difficult for many, but also brought beautiful scenery and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities.



Caring For Natural Resources Central To Metroparks Mission

A three-year, \$398,000 wet prairie restoration project funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, through The Nature Conservancy, restored 312 acres of land. Metroparks restored wet prairies and associated uplands in the Oak Openings Corridor – more than doubling the amount of this globally-imperiled plant community in the Oak Openings Region.

Another GLRI grant funded a partnership to restore habitat while creating jobs. The Maumee Corps was funded by a \$503,000 grant awarded through Partners for Clean Streams. Under the grant, Metroparks removed invasive species and restored habitat on 950 acres of high priority natural areas at Oak Openings Preserve, Wildwood Preserve, Secor and Swan Creek Preserve. Under the grant, Metroparks employed two full-time crew leaders, a part-time land management specialist and 13 seasonal field assistants in 2013.

More than 2,500 lbs. of locally native seeds representing over 100 plant species were harvested at the Blue Creek Seed Nursery in Whitehouse. The seeds were used in greenhouse production, planting and enhancement projects across the park district. Approximately 27,000 locally native plant seedlings were propagated in the nursery greenhouses for planting into large-scale production beds which will

be used to generate additional seeds for future restoration projects.

Thirty orange-fringed orchids – an Ohio endangered species – were reintroduced at Oak Openings from seeds collected at The Nature Conservancy's Kitty Todd Preserve in an effort to protect and expand the last remaining population of this rare orchid in the Oak Openings Region. If successful, this state-of-the-art orchid propagation program may be used to reintroduce other orchids such as the federally endangered Eastern prairie-fringed orchid.

Metroparks initiated a new land stewardship program to engage volunteers in natural areas restoration and management throughout the park district, including tree planting, invasive species removal, seed production and habitat restoration. In 2013 volunteers logged a total of 1,460 hours on various stewardship projects.

A gypsy moth outbreak at Oak Openings Preserve spread to almost 500 acres in 2013. After initiating surveys and documenting the extent of the outbreak, Metroparks will be working with the Ohio Department of Agriculture in 2014 to treat the outbreak through the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program.

A deer management program began in fall 2013 within the Oak Openings Corridor and Blue Creek Conservation Area using volunteer bow hunters on lands currently not open to the public. The new program begins to address

negative habitat impacts from extremely high populations of deer across northwest Ohio. A total of 85 volunteer archers were randomly selected from hundreds of applications to participate in this program. During the 2013-2014 deer season, a total of 22 deer were harvested over an approximately 800-acre area.

Another wildlife management project reduced the number of raccoons in an area of Oak Openings Preserve to help increase the survival rate of Blanding's turtles. The decline in the Blanding's population can be attributed largely to raccoons preying upon the turtle's eggs.

The following volunteer monitoring programs were implemented in 2013 to monitor rare and endangered species across the park district and inform efforts to manage habitat for these species.

- *Oak Openings Butterfly Transects*
- *Karner Blue Butterfly Monitoring*
- *Oak Openings Frog and Toad Calling Surveys*
- *Rare Plant Monitoring*
- *Cavity Nesting Birds Monitoring*
- *Lark Sparrow Nest Monitoring*
- *Antenna-waving Wasp Population Surveys*
- *Vernal Pool Monitoring Program*
- *Oak Openings Raptor Research Project*
- *Ground nesting bird population monitoring*

A New Home For Bats

A large "bat condo" at Oak Openings Preserve, paid for by Metroparks Members, provides an important and safe place for female big brown and little brown bats. The bats use the "condo" to roost and form a maternity colony to rear their young. During the spring and summer, the structure can hold thousands of these bats. So far, approximately 75 big brown bats have moved in.

Of the estimated 1,000 species of bats worldwide, there are 11 species found in Ohio; eight of those are found in the Oak Openings Region. Researchers from Bowling Green State University assisted in monitoring the bats.



Land Acquisition

In 2013, Metroparks acquired a total of 261 acres of land across the park district, including 249 acres within the Oak Openings Corridor, 2 acres adjacent to the Chessie Circle Trail, and 10 acres to expand Swan Creek Preserve. In 2013, Metroparks received \$955,000 in outside grant funds to offset the cost of these land purchases. While the 0.3-mil land acquisition levy approved by Lucas County voters expired at the end of 2012, all lands acquired in 2013 were purchased with remaining funds collected from the land levy.

Lucas County voters in 2002 approved a 0.3-mill, 10-year levy for land acquisition. The levy enabled Metroparks to leverage grants from the Clean Ohio Fund and other sources to increase the park district's land holdings by 3,715 acres by the end of 2013.

Land Acquisitions by Category (in acres)	2003-2013
Oak Openings Corridor and Region	2,146
Lake Erie Coastal Zone (Howard Farms)	987
Maumee River Corridor	104
Swan Creek Corridor & Chessie Circle Trail	127
Keil Farm and Blue Creek Conservation Area	350
Total	3,715

Connect With Your Metroparks



metroparks
TOLEDO AREA

Enjoy them. Protect them.

Let them live forever through your designated or planned gift.

Please contact us at 419-407-9716.

2013 Planning & Construction Projects

Lathrop House

Completed the renovation of the basement, where visitors will learn about the house's history as a stop on the Underground Railroad

Wildwood

Manor House roof replacement and windows refurbishing
Improvements to park district administrative offices
Planning to replace elevated boardwalk and bridge
Metroparks Hall renovations
Central Avenue native landscape project

Side Cut

Window on Wildlife roof replacement
Playground improvements
Orange Trail improvements
Maintenance drive bridge replacement
Silver Lake parking lot and road paving

Fort Miamis

Walkway and signage improvements

Ft. Miamis sign



Manor House



New trail signage



University/Parks Trail

Lathrop House



Oak Openings

Created new White Oak Campground
Mallard Lake shoreline improvements, phase 2
Lodge restroom improvements
Built large bat house

Pearson

New shelter and restroom facilities at Pearson North
New playground
Packer-Hammersmith Center and nearby restroom improvements

Secor

Began renovations to National Center
for Nature Photography
Tupelo Way paving
Planning for building renovations
Planning for Walnut Grove restroom

Mallard Lake shoreline



Pearson playground



Pearson North shelter



Packer-Hammersmith Center, Pearson



White Oak Campground

Providence

Historic Area parking lots and drive paving
Mill improvements

Farnsworth

Indianola parking lot and drive paving
Improvements to Adirondack shelters
Waterville-Farnsworth Road bike trail
New playground and shelter at Boat Launch entrance
Waterline replacement
Boiler replacement at Indianola shelter

Swan Creek

Glendale Area improvements

Howard Farms

Park/wetland design

Regional Trails

University/Parks Trail renovations and
Wabash Cannonball Trail paving and guardrail
replacement (county projects)
Chessie Circle Trail Planning

Blue Creek

New roof on Land Management building

Middlegrounds

Completed site plan for construction to begin in 2014

Howard Farms



Middlegrounds

Providence Heritage Center



New shelter at Farnsworth



Farnsworth playground

2013 Planning & Construction Projects

Leave A Lasting Legacy

Naming Metroparks as a beneficiary can benefit you, the donor, as well as the community. A planned gift may provide you and your heirs with significant tax advantages and the personal satisfaction of supporting our natural heritage for future generations.

Your gift can be unrestricted or designated to a special program, project or Metropark. In some cases, a special fund, named in honor of the donor or a loved one, may be established. Funds are invested through professional investment advisors.

Learn more. Call 419-407-9716



Members Make a Difference

Join Today! By becoming a member, you place yourself in the fields and forests protecting wildlife; help restore natural areas; assist naturalists in classrooms and workshops to educate children and teachers. **Memberships make great gifts.**

Metroparks members receive two issues per year of Metroparks Magazine and four issues of the Program Guide mailed to their home, plus discounts on facility and program reservation fees and invitations to special members-only events.



*Become a member.
Call 419-407-9723.*

We're Working Together

A partial list of Metroparks partners:

American Association of
University Women

Anthony Wayne Youth
Foundation

Friends of the
Lathrop House

Friends of Pearson

Friends of Side Cut

Lucas Soil and Water
Conservation District

Manor House Volunteers

Maumee Valley Adventurers

Nature's Nursery

Ohio History Connection

Toledo Area Aboriginal
Research Society

Toledo Botanical
Garden Board Inc.

Toledo Lucas County
Public Library

Toledo Museum of Art

Toledo Zoo

The University of Toledo

Volunteers In Parks

StayConnected!

All parks, administrative offices: 419-407-9700

Program and facility reservations: 419-407-9710

Metroparks of the Toledo Area

Administrative Offices

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