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OUR MISSION
Protect the region’s natural heritage and provide outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature.

OUR VISION
To be the conservation leader of a vital, active, nature-based community.

OUR PURPOSE
To protect natural areas, parks and river corridors, and to promote the conservation and use of these lands and waterways for the ongoing benefit of the people in the region.

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES
EXCELLENCE  COMMUNITY  INNOVATION  FUN  INTEGRITY
COMMITMENT  FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY  RESPECT  COLLABORATION
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH  DIVERSITY  SUSTAINABILITY
CELEBRATING A VITAL COMMUNITY

2012 Year in Review

A review of 2012 gives us many reasons to celebrate people who have contributed to the vitality of Five Rivers MetroParks. The actions taken by volunteers, staff, sponsors, benefactors and millions of visitors last year confirm the appeal and value of our park system. They also breathe new life into our parks and community.

Grass roots community support was a key factor in the birth of MetroParks in 1963. Today we view it as a measure of success. Land and waterway conservation remains a fundamental value. It comes to life in our parks as people benefit from the rich, diverse experiences and natural beauty. Local involvement also ensures our parks stay relevant and accessible to everyone across the Miami Valley.

Our mission speaks of providing outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature. At MetroParks we’re expanding the personal connection concept to benefit our community. This includes a commitment to innovative outreach and collaboration, as well as fiscal responsibility. While we look within to make improvements, we also look outside ourselves for inspiration. We see it in our parks and in a vital, active, nature-based community. That’s something everyone can celebrate.

Rebecca A. Benná
Executive Director
OUR PARKS
The Gift of Visionaries

It started in 1963 with a group of citizens concerned about the rapid sprawl of our urban areas. Thanks to their efforts, Five Rivers MetroParks has been able to maintain forests, prairies, and wetlands where wildlife thrives and people can make personal connections with nature. Nearly fifty years later Five Rivers MetroParks encompasses nearly 16,000 acres located throughout our county. From these visionaries and their dedicated efforts, millions of people have been delighted, entertained, refreshed, educated and inspired by nature-filled experiences.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

15,500 APPROXIMATE ACRES
11 CONSERVATION AREAS
25 FACILITIES
150 MILES OF MANAGED TRAILS (HIKING, BICYCLES, MOUNTAIN BIKES, HORSES)
270 MILES OF RIVER CORRIDOR
3.2 MILLION VISITORS IN 2012
90% MAINTAINED IN NATURAL STATE
3,000 ACRES IN CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHT

Dayton Business Journal named Five Rivers MetroParks the second most visited attraction in the Dayton region, 2nd Street Market the seventh.

For a detailed history, click here.
PARKS IN OUR BACKYARD

When Nature Gets Personal

Through years of conservation leadership, MetroParks created access to amazing open outdoor spaces. Today, wherever you are in Montgomery County, you’re never more than 10 minutes drive time from a MetroPark. Millions of visitors embrace the parks and our programs for their own personal reasons. For some, the parks represent an opportunity for outdoor adventure. For others, the parks are respite from the stress of modern life. Still others value their parks as places where they can share experiences with their children or grandchildren.

3.2 MILLION PARK VISITORS
4% GROWTH IN ATTENDANCE OVER 2011

1,874 SHELTER & CAMPING PERMITS
12% GROWTH IN SHELTER RESERVATIONS

YEAR IN REVIEW: HIGHLIGHT

The hugely popular Tree Tower at Cox Arboretum MetroPark opened in October 2012 after more than 10 years of community support and funding from the James M. Cox Jr. Arboretum Foundation.

Click here for a complete list of parks and amenities with mapped locations.
Providing Rewarding Outdoor Experiences

MetroParks’ programs help participants gain new insights into the world, connect with nature, learn new skills or just enjoy being outdoors. From school tours to horse camps, gardening classes to backpacking trips, farm demonstrations to concerts and festivals, more than 118,000 participants enjoyed their pick of over 1,800 public programs in 2012.

To see the wide range of available activities, click here.

1,800 PUBLIC PROGRAMS
6,500 CHILDREN SERVED THROUGH SUMMER TOURS
118,000 PROGRAM AND EVENT PARTICIPANTS
122,000 PUBLIC CONTACT HOURS

YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Two programs positively impacted urban Dayton youth and the community. For children 5 to 18, Adventure Central provided over 60,000 contact hours of programming focused on creating caring, capable, and contributing citizens of tomorrow while getting children outdoors and connecting them to nature. Our CityBeets program helped 12- to 15-year-old youth learn leadership and job skills by growing vegetables and selling them at 2nd Street Market.

With 15,000 visitors, the Midwest Outdoor Experience at Eastwood MetroPark became one of the largest festivals celebrating the outdoor lifestyle in the country.
The bottom line at MetroParks involves much more than a balanced budget. With a majority of funding provided by a citizen-approved levy, we focus on returning value to the community. A healthy return on investment results from the way we improve our parks, encourage participation and enrich people’s lives, as well as manage funds. We build value and public trust through collaboration, demonstrating that our parks exist for the benefit of the community.

Learn more about the MetroParks public funding by clicking [here](#).

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**2012 REVENUE**

- **Levy Income**: $16,576,074
- **State Income**: $1,271,779
- **Grants, Donations & Sponsorships**: $121,636
- **Program/Facility Fees & Charges**: $446,789
- **Other Income**: $561,960

**Total**: $18,978,238

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**2012 EXPENSE**

- **Personnel**: $11,848,528
- **Operating**: $6,692,507
- **Capital Improvements & Equipment**: $716,847
- **Grant**: $(829,775)

**Total**: $18,428,107

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**YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS**

Grant dollars were leveraged for several key initiatives in the agency:

- A Transportation Enhancement (TE) grant was awarded to Five Rivers MetroParks by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission that funded 80% of the cost of pavement repairs to the Upper portion of the Wolf Creek Recreation Trail ($248,628).
- A grant from the Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) funded the MetroParks Inquiry Adventures Boxes (IA) program and teacher trainings designed to help teachers bring nature into their curriculum.
- A 4-H Teens Teaching Youth about Biotechnology grant of $30,000 offset expenses for the Adventure Central Job Experience and Training (JET) Program.
- An Ohio Department of Natural Resources Watercraft Boating Education grant was received to purchase new kayaks, life jackets and misc. associated equipment for our outdoor recreation program.
- A grant-funded program from the Jane B. and Horace M. Huffman Jr. Trees for the Rivers Endowment Fund allowed MetroParks to plant trees at Huffman and Eastwood MetroParks.
- A $197,000 grant from the Clean Ohio Fund underwrote the agency-wide reforestation initiative.
AGENCY FUNDING
Changing Times Require Innovative Thinking

In recent years Five Rivers MetroParks has experienced new financial challenges to continue to provide the high-quality services and amenities due to the loss of revenue from our major funding sources. This revenue comes from local property taxes and state funding, such as local government funds and tangible personal property tax reimbursements. As a result of the reductions, we have lost millions of dollars in revenue annually since 2011. This trend is expected to continue.

Despite these challenges, we managed to balance our budget in 2012, through identifying creative opportunities to become more efficient, reduce expenses and develop new revenue opportunities.

### 2011 & 2012 REVENUE COMPARISON

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<tr>
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<th>2011 REVENUE</th>
<th>2012 REVENUE</th>
<th>DIFFERENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$22,296,513</td>
<td>$18,978,238</td>
<td>$3,318,275</td>
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MetroParks pursues a range of funding sources to offset decreases in levy income due to the challenging economic climate.

### YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

MetroParks increased the use of volunteers across the agency by training and utilizing volunteers to organize deer and wildlife management projects, lead reforestation projects, compile organization data, and assist in native plant propagation, greatly increasing the reach of these projects and reducing costs.

The Business Finance Department expanded MetroParks’ use of cooperative purchasing contracts to purchase goods and services estimated to save MetroParks more than $55,000, the majority of which will be an annual savings for the near future.

The Great Miami Wetland Mitigation Bank brought in $138,000 in credit sales and farm rent in 2012.

“The MetroParks have earned a great reputation for stretching our hard-earned tax dollars.”
—AFL-CIO
PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY

Joining Forces for Excellence, Innovation and Fun

Fiscal responsibility compels us to leverage resources. MetroParks and our partners benefit by sharing expertise, facilities, volunteers and enthusiasm for our community. One group of partners helps protect, restore, preserve and promote our region’s environmental and agricultural resources. Others focus on building healthy, active communities and promoting positive youth development and leadership skills. We also work with businesses, outdoor clubs and civic organizations to enrich our program offering. View recent program partners here.

YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Subaru Partnership: Received 1-year use of 2 Vehicles ($158,000 value)

Lowe’s Home Improvement Stores and Wegerzyn Gardens volunteers joined forces to renovate the Gift and Garden Shop located at the Second St. Market. Free labor from Lowe’s staff and monies donated ($3,200) from the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation created a brand new look for the Gift Shop, increasing gross sales 4% for 2012.

“We believe that our park system is an important part of the fabric of our community and a vital element of our collective sense of place.”

–Charles A Jones
Former chair of the Dayton Foundation Governing Board
FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

Community Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>SOME OF OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Protect, restore, preserve and promote the region’s environmental and agricultural resources</td>
<td>Partners for the Environment, Ohio State University Extension, Montgomery County Solid Waste District, Miami Conservancy District, Dayton Regional Green 3 (DRG3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build healthy, active communities</td>
<td>Greater Dayton RTA, Greater Dayton Rowing Association, City of Dayton, YMCA of Greater Dayton, Wright State University, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve economic standing of the region by improving the quality of life</td>
<td>Dayton Development Coalition, updayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership, Dayton Montgomery County CVB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote positive youth development education and leadership skills</td>
<td>Adventure Central, The Ohio State University Extension, 4-H Youth Development, University of Dayton</td>
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“The YMCA of Greater Dayton establishes strong kids, strong families and strong communities through programming that builds a healthy mind, spirit and body. It’s a public duty and sentiment Five Rivers MetroParks also shares, providing educational and recreational opportunities to Miami Valley families as well as protecting our natural heritage for generations to come.”

— YMCA of Greater Dayton
Volunteers are the lifeblood of MetroParks. For these volunteers, making a difference in the world starts in their own community. And they do it with passion and enthusiasm. Whether sharing in conservation, organization, education or beautification, their gifts bring deeper meaning to themselves and others. They also brighten the financial outlook and enhance our range of offerings. To get involved, click here.

**STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

1,749 volunteers
139 non-full time staff
167 year-round full-time staff

55,729 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2012

$800,000 VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS*

*Source: PROS Consulting LLC

**YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHT**

Over 2,000 participants volunteered at 37 sites at the agency’s Annual Adopt-a-Park event. These volunteers removed trash and invasive species, maintained trails, and prepared garden beds. Roughly 28,000 pounds of litter and 300 tires were removed, 13,500 pounds of recyclable materials were collected, and 6,000 trees were planted.

“I often wonder who receives the most benefits from my volunteering, the community or my well being, which includes self satisfaction, physical and mental activity, personal contact with coworkers and the public.”

—Kenneth, Miamisburg
FOUNDATION SUPPORT
Sustaining Our Parks through Private Donations

Sustainability at MetroParks is not just about reforestation. People also sustain our parks financially through individual donations, sponsorships, memorial gifts and foundations. These Foundations and Friends are appointed volunteer organizations whose purpose is to support our educational & environmental programs and guide continued development.

Along with the individual donors, many area organizations and businesses partner with us to provide gifts, sponsorships and in-kind services and programming. For more information on giving, click here.

YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHT

A combined total of $489,000 in funding was raised to support Five Rivers MetroParks through the Cox Arboretum Foundation, Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation and the Friends of Carriage Hill Farm.

“It is beautiful to see everyone work together for the purpose of helping these kids we all care so much about.” —Karen
By Ohio law, Five Rivers MetroParks is governed by a three-member volunteer Board of Park Commissioners that are appointed by the Probate Judge of Montgomery County. The Board establishes all policies and rules, approves developments and land acquisition, and controls all funds. Each Commissioner serves without pay for a three-year term with one member’s term expiring each year.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

*Volunteer Professionals with an Outside Perspective*

“I love the parks. They provide good family fun and education.”
—Barbara, Oakwood

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**PRESIDENT**

Karen L. Davis is a health care professional, community volunteer and family advocate.

**Vice President**

Irvin G. Bieser, Jr., is an attorney, supporter of the arts and nature-lover.

**Commissioner At Large**

Alan F. Pippenger is a local business-man, supporter of open-space preservation and community leader.

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**YEAR IN REVIEW**

HIGHLIGHT

Our “Leaf a Legacy” reforestation campaign was recognized by the National Recreation and Parks Association as a leading example of conservation advocacy for park and recreation agencies across the country.
LEADERSHIP
Complemented by a Personal Connection

The directors of MetroParks are grateful for widespread community support over the years. A unique sense of responsibility and awe comes from hearing individual experiences and stories about our parks. They offer a glimpse of key elements that sustain MetroParks: respect, integrity and collaboration. They further remind us that, at the heart, it’s about inspiring a personal connection with nature and each other. View one of many personal connections here.

Becky Benná, Executive Director
Carrie Scarff, Deputy Director
Trish Butler, Director of Marketing & Public Relations
Mark Hess, Chief of Rangers
Karen Hesser, Director of Parks & Legislative Services
Debra Jackson, Director of Human Resources
Robert L. Johnson, Director of Finance
Dave Nolin, Director of Conservation
Beth Redden, Director of Development

YEAR IN REVIEW: HIGHLIGHTS

MetroParks Rangers, the region’s leader in Police Bicycle Patrol training, hosted its annual International Police Mountain Bike Association training school for Ranger staff and area police agencies.

MetroParks has demonstrated leadership with the development, programming and management of nature play sites and garnered interest on a national level.

“Thank you for the opportunity to share the wonder of nature with others, and for all the behind the scenes things you do for the conservation of our beautiful Miami Valley.”

—Amanda, Dayton
Letter to Executive Director of Five Rivers MetroParks

Dear Ms. Benna:

Thank you for Hills and Dales MetroPark. Let me tell you about our relationship. Last spring and summer I was very ill. When I was able to ride in the car, my son drove me around west Kettering and always through Hills and Dales MetroPark. I was particularly attracted to the Dogwood Park area. My long-term goal was to walk through Dogwood, on my own. In August I was able to get in and out of a wheel chair and my son took me to Dogwood Park. I sat in my wheel chair on the first bridge and watched the water, enjoyed all my surroundings and thanked God for life.

Later, I walked part of the path with the help of my walker; my goal still was to walk the entire path. The day came when I made most of the path with my cane. Finally, I walked it on my own.

On Saturday, 3 December, we walked the whole park. No support for me except my son’s arm now and then. This was my reward for working hard to get well. I’d love to go when there is snow, but I’m a little wobbly and I probably won’t get to do that. So I will look forward to spring and all the beauties it will bring.

While in the park, we saw a young couple wearing Santa hats, making a heart with two candy canes and taking their own picture. Another couple was trying desperately to get their son, about 10, to cooperate and have his Christmas picture made with his sister. (My son said he would smile just before his mother gave up completely.) Another young couple was there with a beautiful big dog; we saw them later on the path in the woods.

What a day! Not only did we enjoy the beauty of the park and see others enjoying it, we could smell fall—the dying leaves, the stream—almost as good as the sights. I congratulate Five Rivers MetroParks on the Hills and Dales MetroPark. It is truly a wonderful park. I am blessed to live in a metropolitan area that treasures and cares for its natural beauties. Thank you, the commissioners, and all your staff for your efforts.

Sincerely,

Helen, Kettering
“The park system has created new ways to serve the community while always adhering to its mission of protecting our land, connecting the community with nature and conservation, enhancing quality of life, and increasing awareness of our rivers as recreational assets.”

—Alan Pippenger, Board of Park Commissioner