

2013

ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING ON OUR LEGACY





Hiking and backpacking are popular ways the Dayton community connects with nature and explores the outdoors with Five Rivers MetroParks.

OUR MISSION, VISION, PURPOSE, ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

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

Protect natural areas, parks and river corridors and promote the conservation and use of these lands and waterways for the ongoing benefit of the people in the region

OUR VALUES

- Excellence
- Community
- Innovation
- Fun
- Integrity
- Commitment
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Professional Growth
- Diversity
- Sustainability

YEAR IN REVIEW

GROWING OUR SERVICE & STEWARDSHIP



Patty Falls is a popular attraction at Englewood MetroPark. Photo credit: Jason Haley

In April 2013, we launched our year-long 50th anniversary celebration. We honored those in our community who, because they so deeply valued our region's natural resources, created what today is Five Rivers MetroParks. Millions of people have and will continue to benefit from the efforts of these visionaries' efforts. It was a year of looking back to note all we've achieved in creating a park district where everyone in our community can enjoy nature and explore the outdoors. We created a comprehensive website outlining our history and milestones through the years. We partnered with local artists and poets to create original works that speak to the importance of protecting our region's natural heritage. And we reached out to the community to encourage them to discover Five Rivers MetroParks' hidden nature and explore outdoor spaces they hadn't visited before.

We also spent much of 2013 developing a strategic plan that will guide Five Rivers MetroParks for the next five years and position it for a sustainable future. Part of the plan's focus is to engage the community and other key stakeholders to determine what area residents want and need from their parks. This will ensure that Five Rivers MetroParks focuses its services to align with community priorities and uncover opportunities to develop and maintain relationships with local partners and stakeholders—all to provide an even better, more sustainable park district that serves everyone in our community and provides a great value for the Dayton region.

The plan will help Five Rivers MetroParks grow as the conservation leader, as an organization that helps youth and families experience nature, and as a centerpiece in the long list of assets that make the Dayton region a great place to live, work and play. The plan will help Five Rivers MetroParks keep pace with the growing demands and changes in technology and other industry best practices. It will help us maximize levy tax dollars efficiently and diversify our revenue stream to become more balanced in our finances while enhancing our unique role in regional economic development.

As we prepare for the next step in our strategic planning, gathering input from our community, we also celebrate the accomplishments of the past year. Five Rivers MetroParks had many successes in 2013 that strengthened the building blocks of our foundation: conservation, education, recreation. The Mad River Run white water and fishing destination was completed at Eastwood MetroPark. New bikeway extensions were completed in the Medlar Conservation Area, opening that beautiful outdoor space to the public, and connecting Eastwood and Huffman MetroParks along the Mad River Bikeway. We developed new community partnerships, established a development department and launched a shelter reservation program to help us become more financially sustainable. We acquired new land for conservation and created new ways for people to explore the outdoors.

We look forward to serving our community in these and so many more ways. Here's to the next 50 years of protecting our region's natural resources and providing outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature!

Rebecca A. Benná
Executive Director



Left: Local artists (left to right) Bing Davis, Gretchen Durst Jacobs, Marsha Pippenger, Ron Rollins and Amy Kollar Anderson sign copies of the “Hidden Nature” works they created for Five Rivers MetroParks’ 50th anniversary celebration.

Top Right: An exhibit by members of the Miami Valley Art Quilt Network, which featured art quilts showcasing Five Rivers MetroParks, also was commissioned as part of the anniversary celebration. The traveling exhibit, “Magic in Fabric,” was displayed at Cox Arboretum MetroPark, Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark and Carriage Hill MetroPark.



ONE OF FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS’ FOUNDERS RECEIVES STATEWIDE AWARD

The Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) selected long-time nature enthusiast, green space advocate and Oakwood resident Jean Woodhull as the recipient of its Outstanding Citizen Award. Parks and recreation professionals, citizens and legislators were nominated by industry professionals and agencies from throughout the state.

Woodhull, along with other visionary citizens, recognized the need to preserve open space in Montgomery County and the greater Dayton region. She was instrumental in organizing the “Save Open Space Committee” in the 1960s that ultimately gained community support and funding for the park district now known as Five Rivers MetroParks. In addition to her role in helping establish the park district, Woodhull also served on its Board of Commissioners for a decade.

HIDDEN NATURE

In the early 1960s, the Dayton region was growing. Urban sprawl was swallowing green space, and many citizens became concerned about the loss of natural areas. These individuals saw something precious in protecting these spaces – a “hidden” value – and they fought to preserve them. Thanks to their efforts, Five Rivers MetroParks has been able to maintain forests, prairies, wetlands and other native habitat where wildlife thrives and people can make personal connections with nature.

In 2013, Five Rivers MetroParks launched a year-long 50th anniversary celebration, inviting the public to explore MetroParks’ “Hidden Nature.” A website was created featuring a historical time line, photos, and videos of and stories from the people who founded Five Rivers MetroParks and those who have influenced its development through the years. The site also featured a list of 50 things to see and do in your MetroParks.

In addition, nine local poets wrote original pieces and five local artists created original works that embodied the spirit of Five Rivers MetroParks or the concept of hidden nature. The poets recorded

their work, with the recordings available on the website, and the artists’ works were featured in an exhibit at Kettering’s Rosewood Gallery and reproduced in special edition anniversary posters. These posters included hidden QR codes, which the public could scan with their smartphones to learn more about Five Rivers MetroParks. The codes also were clues that led users to a secret message from one of the artists or Five Rivers MetroParks personnel past and present, or to a suggestion for something fun to try on their next park visit.

Learn more about Five Rivers MetroParks and the 50th anniversary campaign by visiting the site, www.metroparks.org/history.

BY THE NUMBERS

Five Rivers MetroParks' programs and services focus on three key areas: CONSERVATION, EDUCATION and RECREATION. Together, they maintain Five Rivers MetroParks' commitment to protect our region's natural resources while providing outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature.

Right: The Butterfly House at Cox Arboretum MetroPark is a popular summer attraction and teaches visitors about the importance of native plants and pollinators.



FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS INCLUDES:

- 15,618 acres
- 90% maintained in natural state
- 3,000 acres in conservation easements
- 11 conservation areas
- 270 miles of river corridor
- 160 miles of managed trails (hiking, biking, mountain biking and horseback riding)

IN 2013, FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS SUPPORTED:

- 3 MILLION visitors
- 1,854 public programs
- 1,949 shelter and camping permits
- 12,101 children served through tours
- 115,000 participants in Five Rivers MetroParks programs and events
- 133,000 hours of interaction with the public, such as outreach programs, speaking engagements and tours

ACTIVITIES IN 2013 INCLUDED:

- Nearly 200 speaking engagements and appearances, reaching 17,925 participants
- 479 nature programs, reaching 17,061 participants
- 1,021 programs targeted specifically at youth and family, reaching 40,350 participants

ATTENDANCE AT FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS' EVENTS INCLUDED:

- 575 Bike to Work Day at RiverScape MetroPark
- 20,000 Midwest Outdoor Experience
- 3,300 R&B Music Series
- 3,500 Big Band Nights
- 1,250 Salsa Series
- 4,700 Music @ Lunch

For more on park amenities and locations, visit www.metroparks.org/parks.

Within our parks, Five Rivers MetroParks offers several specialized facilities designed to deepen the community's understanding of nature or interact with it in a new way. Attendance to these facilities was strong in 2013, including:

- 83,000 Historical Farm at Carriage Hill MetroPark
- 50,000 Children's Discovery Garden at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark
- 42,000 MetroParks Mountain Biking Area (MoMBA)
- 40,000 Butterfly House at Cox Arboretum MetroPark
- 17,000 Nature Center at Germantown MetroPark
- 12,000 Riding Center at Carriage Hill MetroPark
- 4,100 Sustainable Farm at Possum Creek MetroPark



NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT INSTALLED AT WESLEYAN METROPARK

In May 2013, Five Rivers MetroParks held its first community build, working with volunteers and area residents to remove dated playground equipment at Wesleyan MetroPark and install new equipment. Nearly 100 volunteers also helped update landscaping, remove invasive honeysuckle and spruce up this urban park. The project also included the creation of the first part of a Nature Play Area.



CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

Protecting open space and natural areas always has been a priority for Five Rivers MetroParks. Today, 90% of the land Five Rivers MetroParks manages is kept as natural area.

Conservation was part of the 50th anniversary celebration as well: Talking Trees were created at seven MetroParks. These trees bear a small placard that invites visitors to make a call or scan a QR code for more information about that tree and related conservation efforts.

Reforestation has been a significant focus of conservation, particularly since the emergence of the Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive species. In 2013, 600 ash trees were treated for a second time to protect them from the EAB, and nearly all the trees are in good to excellent health.

ALSO IN 2013, conservation volunteers logged more than 15,000 hours helping with a variety of efforts:

- As part of the Forest Foster program, **14,000** native tree seedlings were germinated with the help of volunteers at Cox Arboretum.
- Spring 2013 plantings included **4,600** trees at the Great Miami Wetland Mitigation Bank, as well as **4,534** seedlings at Carriage Hill and **500** seedlings at Sugarcreek MetroParks.
- Fall 2013 tree planting efforts included **875** seedlings planted at Carriage Hill and **250** at Germantown MetroParks.

- **600** shrubs, planted at Carriage Hill MetroPark and the Great Miami Wetland Mitigation Bank, were grown from locally collected seeds by the Marianist Environmental Education Center.
- Tree TLC volunteers monitored **15,000-plus** seedlings.
- Approximately **2,000** acorns and nuts were planted at Carriage Hill MetroPark.
- At two plant-oriented conservation Service Learning Programs, leadership volunteers contributed approximately **2,096** hours.

Protecting new land to manage for conservation also is key. In 2013, Five Rivers MetroParks added 50 acres of land. Of that, 46 acres is a new conservation easement



Left: The blue tubes seen throughout our parks protect the thousands of native tree seedlings planted and cared for as a critical part of reforestation efforts.

near Twin Creek MetroPark, and Five Rivers MetroParks purchased four acres adjacent to Twin Creek MetroPark to expand the park boundaries. This acquisition also will allow one of the bridge trails to be moved to one side of the creek, eliminating a potentially hazardous creek crossing for trail users.

In addition to being a key part of Five Rivers MetroParks' mission, conservation is assisting with the agency's cost recovery efforts. The 360-acre Great Miami Wetland Mitigation Bank, which Five Rivers MetroParks has been restoring as a wetland, is an example of where these efforts meet. Rare species of wildlife are utilizing the Mitigation Bank, including short-eared owls, American Bittern, Sandhill crane, Northern shrike, bobolink, Sedge wren and many others. Five Rivers MetroParks works with developers who damage or destroy wetlands elsewhere in the watershed and must purchase credits in the Mitigation Bank to rebuild more wetland acreage than was destroyed, a requirement of the federal Clean Water Act. In 2013, the sale of these credits generated \$347,500 in revenue. To date, more than \$500,000 has been received from credit sales, as well as \$250,000 from farming future restoration areas until Five Rivers MetroParks is ready to restore them.

For more on reforestation efforts, visit www.metroparks.org/reforestation.



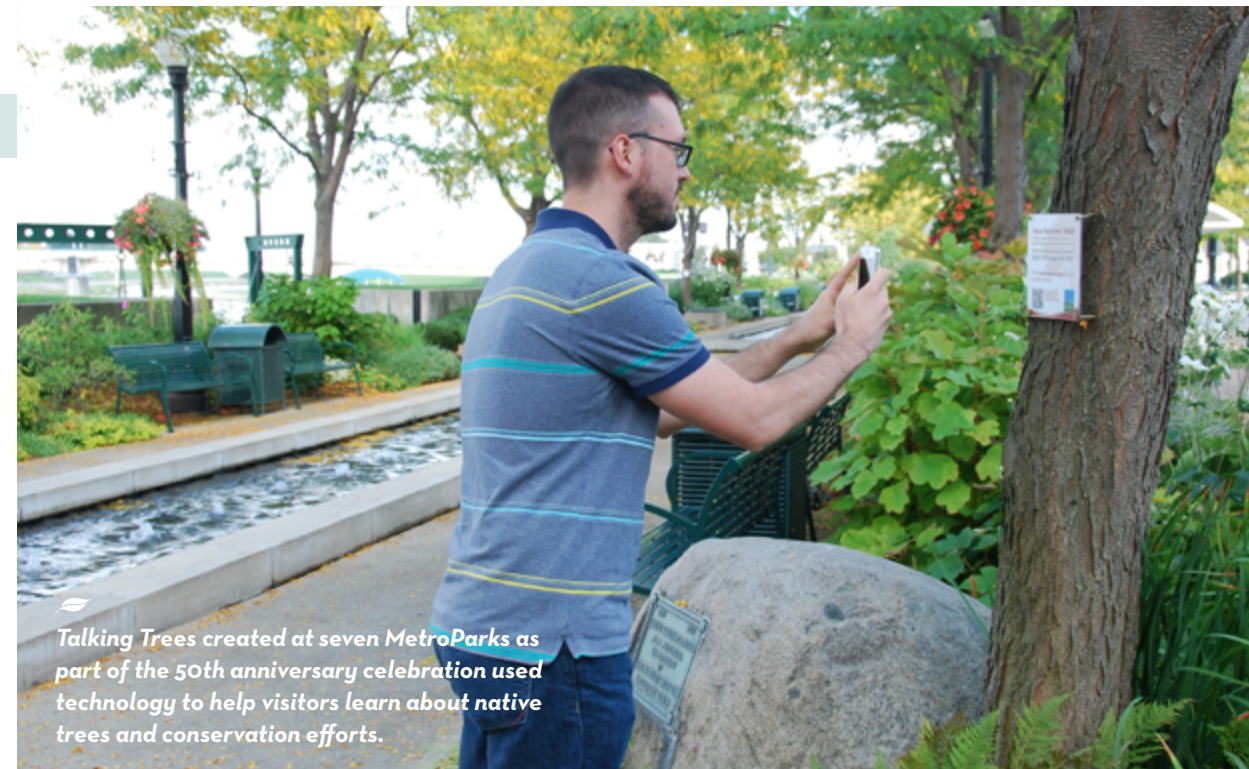
CLEAN OHIO FUND AWARDS FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS CONSERVATION GRANTS

In September 2013, Five Rivers MetroParks was awarded three Clean Ohio grants:

- **Shiloh Woods Headwater Stream Protection:** This grant allowed Five Rivers MetroParks to purchase 20 acres of land adjacent to the Shiloh Woods Conservation Area in spring 2014. Managing the property for conservation will help protect the headwater of a stream as it flows into the conservation area and, because of its location near the Stillwater River, also helps protect the river and wildlife. Five Rivers MetroParks will be removing invasive honeysuckle and planting 500 trees on the property.
- **Twin Creek Woods and Wetlands Preservation:** Five Rivers MetroParks purchased a 13.5-acre parcel at Twin Creek MetroPark with this grant funding. The land contains mature and young woods, ravines, and a small wetland. It's an important parcel located in the middle of the park that will remain in a natural condition and continue to be a scenic backdrop to the adjacent Twin Valley backpacking trail.
- **Possum Creek MetroPark Prairie Addition:** This is an 8.45-acre parcel in the northeast corner of Possum Creek MetroPark. By acquiring this new park land, which contains such native habitats as prairie and thicket, Five Rivers MetroParks can help protect the headwaters of the stream that feeds the four fishing ponds below it.



CONNECTING WITH NATURE



Talking Trees created at seven MetroParks as part of the 50th anniversary celebration used technology to help visitors learn about native trees and conservation efforts.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Through nearly 2,000 public programs, 1,000 requested programs and daily interaction with more than 20,000 followers on social media, Five Rivers MetroParks' educational activities in 2013 helped thousands of Miami Valley residents gain new insights into our natural world. A few highlights are below.

Above: Educational programs provide opportunities for youth and adults alike to experience and connect with nature.

Green Practices Programming

As part of efforts to protect the environment, a Green Practices Coordinator was hired and began to develop a line of youth and adult programming that helps visitors discover the nature in their backyards and adopt home and garden practices that protect nature and conserve resources.

School & Group Programming

Park tours for schools, youth groups, and other organizations remain a mainstay of Five Rivers MetroParks' educational programming. In 2013, more than 500 groups enjoyed time in the parks with staff. In fall, work began on our Green Schoolyards initiative to encourage schools in the region to create vegetable and habitat gardens as an ecological teaching tool and provide a setting for children to connect with nature.

Extending Our Reach

Community need for scheduling flexibility inspired Five

Rivers MetroParks' staff to design independent and self-guided educational experiences that can happen at any time. By sharing nature-exploration tools—such as our Natural Adventures Boxes, Education Kits, Inquiry Adventures and interpretive signage throughout our parks—Five Rivers MetroParks empowers adults without extensive natural history knowledge to get kids outside.

Using Technology

Although technology can be a barrier to getting youth outdoors, Five Rivers MetroParks developed innovative technology-based educational opportunities to help visitors discover the natural world using modern mediums. Such programs as the "50 Things to See and Do" and "Talking Trees" that use QR code technology, as well as Venture Quest using GPS devices, engaged thousands in 2013. Five Rivers MetroParks' following on social media continues to grow, providing new opportunities to interact with the public and create a culture of conservation.



CITY BEETS TEACHES YOUTH ABOUT LOCAL FOOD, BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Five Rivers MetroParks' summer program City Beets is open to youth ages 12 to 15. During this eight-week summer program, youth grow at a MetroParks community garden, sell food on Saturdays at the 2nd Street Market, take field trips, learn about food systems, and gain leadership and job skills. The youth, in turn, teach their friends and families about the importance of eating healthy, local foods.



COMPOST KITCHEN PROGRAM EMPOWERS PARTICIPANTS TO ASSIST FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS' SUSTAINABILITY & CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Five Rivers MetroParks partners with the Montgomery County Solid Waste District to offer Compost Kitchen, a program that reaches more than 200 adults each year with a message about the importance of interrupting the waste stream, building healthy soil, and gardening without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Participants receive six hours of training and a composter upon completion of the program.



PROMOTING ACTIVE, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

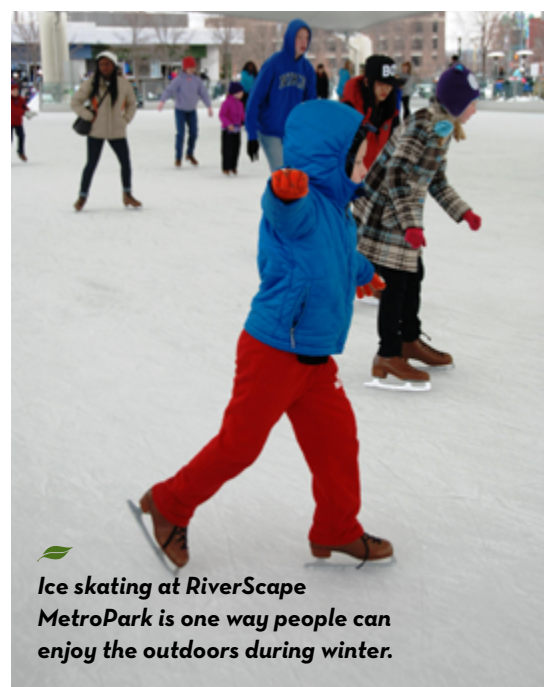
OUTDOOR RECREATION

Above: The annual Midwest Outdoor Experience features a variety of activities and teaches the community how to explore the outdoors in the Dayton region.

Five Rivers MetroParks encourages Daytonians to explore the outdoors in their own backyards, offering numerous ways to Get Out & Play. In addition, Try It programs give people a chance to see how well they like various outdoor activities, including paddlesports, mountain biking, fishing and slacklining. Five Rivers MetroParks also provides Dayton and the surrounding region with opportunities to improve their skill levels and explore outdoor pursuits through programs, trips, events and competitions. We strive to bring the outdoor community together to make Dayton a stronger, more vibrant place to live.

In 2013:

- **682 people** attended outdoor recreation Try-It programs (backpacking, broomball, fly fishing, hiking, kayaking, mountain biking and slacklining).
- **23,872 people** attended outdoor recreation programs, including the Midwest Outdoor Experience.



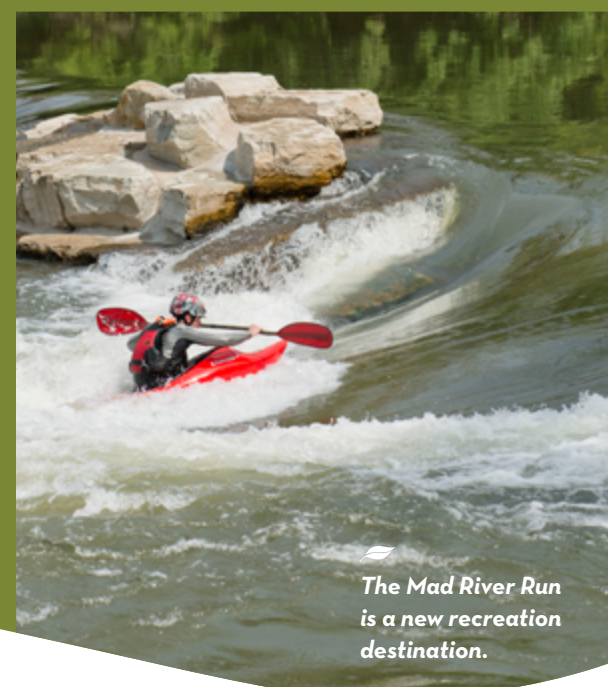
Ice skating at RiverScape MetroPark is one way people can enjoy the outdoors during winter.

2013 WAS A SIGNIFICANT YEAR FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION IN THE DAYTON REGION. SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WHICH FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS WAS A KEY PLAYER INCLUDE:

- **Mad River Run at Eastwood MetroPark Completed:** To help Five Rivers MetroParks celebrate its 50th anniversary while celebrating its 100th, the Rotary Club of Dayton made a generous \$100,000 donation toward the completion of the Mad River Run. Part conservation, part recreation, the Mad River Run is a new regional recreation destination at Eastwood MetroPark. It includes a kayak and canoe feature in the Mad River, river access points, new areas for fishing, and an area for observing paddlers or just enjoying the river.
- **New Medlar Bikeway Opens:** In fall 2013, Five Rivers MetroParks celebrated the grand opening of the Medlar Bikeway, which traverses the Medlar Conservation Area and connects to the Great Miami River Bikeway. This new portion of the regional bikeway system located in southern Montgomery County was the result of a partnership between public and private organizations. The 2.25-mile scenic ride runs through the Medlar Conservation Area, which contains mature forest, wetlands, ravines and a hilltop vista. To complete the project, Five Rivers MetroParks partnered with Miami Township, Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District, the Ohio Department of Transportation, City of Miamisburg and Montgomery County.
- **Mad River Bikeway Extension Opens:** Five Rivers MetroParks celebrated the opening of the Mad River Bikeway extension, a new 3.6-mile recreational bikeway that connected downtown Dayton and the 330 miles of trails in the regional bikeway system with Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The new bikeway segment, opened in June 2013, is also part of the multistate 4,600-mile North Country Scenic Trail and Buckeye Trail. The bikeway extension also connected Eastwood MetroPark to Huffman MetroPark.
- **Dayton Earns Distinction as a Trail Town:** Five Rivers MetroParks celebrated with the City of Dayton, the Buckeye Trail Association and the North Country Trail Association the

official designation of Dayton as “Trail Town” in fall 2013. The city is only the second in the state to receive this recognition for its hiking trails. The North Country National Scenic Trail and the statewide Buckeye Trail both run through Taylorsville, Deeds Point, Island, Eastwood and Huffman MetroParks.

Below: A special hike honored Dayton being named a Trail Town.



The Mad River Run is a new recreation destination.

PARTNERS IN BUSINESS

Five Rivers MetroParks is fortunate to have many partners in the business community who support the agency and help it fulfill its mission and vision. These partners provide critical sponsorship support for events and programming, donate products, and provide financial support for projects. With Five Rivers MetroParks' new Development Department, these partnerships already are increasing, part of our commitment to financial responsibility.



Below: Partnerships with Subaru of America and Wagner Subaru have supported programs, events and daily operations.



EXAMPLES OF BUSINESS SUPPORT IN 2013 INCLUDE:

Bonbright Distributors

Bonbright Distributors announced in late 2013 that it will be making a substantial donation to Five Rivers MetroParks throughout 2014 to support the organization's mission. This donation is made possible through the positive relationship between Five Rivers MetroParks and Bonbright, which has supported such events as the Midwest Outdoor Experience, the Dayton Celtic Festival and The Adventure Summit. It also is made possible because of Bonbright's partnership with New Belgium Brewing Company, which has a long history of supporting outdoor lifestyles, environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

DP&L

The annual volunteer event Adopt-A-Park again was supported by a donation from DP&L, which provided funding for this year's T-shirts and lunch for the volunteers.

DP&L Foundation

A \$20,000 grant from The DP&L Foundation to the Cox Arboretum Foundation will support Cox Arboretum MetroParks' butterfly educational programs.

Subaru of America and Wagner Subaru

Five Rivers MetroParks has developed a partnership with Subaru of America and local dealer Wagner Subaru, which chose to sponsor Five Rivers MetroParks with the donation of a Subaru Tribeca and a Subaru Outback to use for promotional appearances, program support and daily driving, in addition to the businesses' support of Midwest Outdoor Experience. Since 2010,



The popular bike and child accessory rentals at RiverScape MetroPark help people explore our region's bikeways.

Subaru has been the presenting sponsor of this outdoor recreation showcase, which helped keep the event free and open to the public. Subaru's corporate commitments to the environment make it an ideal partner for Five Rivers MetroParks.

Virginia W. Kettering Foundation

To support educational programs for school children at Cox Arboretum MetroPark, this foundation donated \$15,000.

Thank you to the many other businesses and organizations that supported Five Rivers MetroParks in 2013, including:

CH2MHILL
Eddie Bauer
Great Lakes Brewing Company
Julian G. Lange Family Foundation
Mad River Mountain
Miami Valley Regional
Planning Commission
REI
Ruffwear
Subway
True Heights Outfitters
Wagner Subaru
Yakima

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS OPERATES SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES

Five Rivers MetroParks not only partners with businesses, it operates several successful businesses of its own. Those include Ride the River Rentals and the MetroParks Ice Rink at RiverScape MetroPark, the 2nd Street Market and the Riding Center at Carriage Hill MetroPark. These businesses help Five Rivers MetroParks meet its mission by providing opportunities for people to connect to the outdoors through various activities, and the 2nd Street Market provides convenient access to locally grown and produced food, which is less taxing on our environment and often much healthier.

In 2013:

- More than 15,000 people ice skated at RiverScape MetroPark, and 671 people rented bikes and kayaks
- 1,480 people attended trail rides, pony rides or lessons at the Carriage Hill Riding Center
- 2nd Street Market attendance reached 258,480—a 4.33% increase from 2012

In late 2013, Five Rivers MetroParks launched another business: shelter reservations. Now, all 44 park shelters can be reserved for guests' exclusive use. These businesses also are part of Five Rivers MetroParks' cost recovery models, helping achieve financial sustainability.



EXTENDING OUR REACH

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY

Five Rivers MetroParks is fortunate to receive help meeting its mission from many organizational partners. Working together, our resources can stretch further toward the larger, shared goal of making the Dayton region a better place to live, work and play for everyone in our community. By partnering, we can reduce costs while collaborating to reach new, wider audiences and have an even greater impact.

Above: Five Rivers MetroParks works with such partners as the University of Dayton Rivers Institute on projects that include teaching UD students about fish and other wildlife in local rivers.

OBJECTIVE

- Protect, restore, preserve and promote the region’s environmental and agricultural resources
- Build active, healthy communities
- Improve regional economic standing and quality of life
- Promote positive youth development education and leadership skills

SOME OF OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Partners for the Environment, The Ohio State University Extension, Montgomery County Solid Waste District, Miami Conservancy District, Dayton Regional Green 3 (DRG3)
- Greater Dayton RTA, Greater Dayton Rowing Association, City of Dayton, YMCA of Greater Dayton, Wright State University, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Bike Miami Valley, University of Dayton River Stewards, Get Up Montgomery County, Victoria Theatre Association
- Dayton Development Coalition, UpDayton, Downtown Dayton Partnership, Dayton Montgomery County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Adventure Central, The Ohio State University Extension, 4-H Youth Development, University of Dayton

Adventure Central, a youth education center at Wesleyan MetroPark, engages urban youth by building positive relationships with caring adults to connect youth and their parents with nature. Adventure Central students have many choices for outdoor activity, including gardening (below) and exploring wildlife in nearby Wolf Creek (right).



FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS RECEIVES FRIEND OF OSU EXTENSION AWARD

The Ohio State University Extension recognized Five Rivers MetroParks as supporters of county and statewide Extension programming, as Five Rivers MetroParks has taken an active role in promoting the Ohio State University

Extension in Montgomery County through its support of the Adventure Central program. This award is given annually to recipients who were nominated by county, regional or state Extension staff for their outstanding service to Ohio State University Extension.



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The majority of Five Rivers MetroParks' funding comes from a levy supported by Montgomery County taxpayers. Five Rivers MetroParks takes its responsibility to be a good steward of the public's funds very seriously and is committed to providing quality and value for the community.

It has become increasingly critical that Five Rivers MetroParks, like so many nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies, diversify its revenue streams because of the gap created by eroding property tax revenues caused in large part by national economic stressors. While the bulk of Five Rivers MetroParks' work still is funded by the generous support of Montgomery County taxpayers, those dollars need to be supplemented due to these new financial challenges for us to continue to provide and improve the high-quality parks and programs our community deserves. Therefore, Five Rivers MetroParks is increasingly focused on developing new partnerships that allow it to maximize levy dollars and become more balanced and sustainable in its finances.

For more on the agency's funding, visit www.metroparks.org/funding.

Above: Sunsets, such as this one at Englewood MetroPark, are a great time to connect with nature. Photo credit: Joe Tobias.

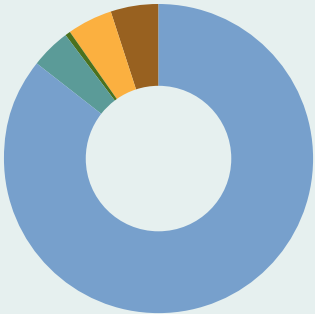
REVENUE COMPARISONS:



2013 REVENUE:

Levy Income	\$16,523,063
State Income	\$780,046
Grants, Donations & Sponsorships	\$121,027
Program/Facility Fees & Charges	\$884,228
Other Income	\$958,825

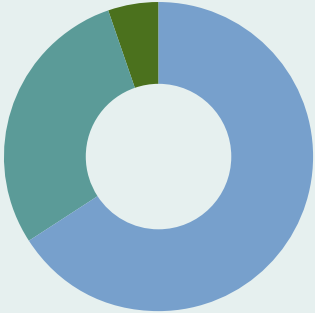
TOTAL **\$19,267,189**



2013 EXPENSES:

Personnel	\$11,391,69
Operating	\$5,023,361
Capital Improvements & Equipment	\$884,291

TOTAL **\$17,299,351**



With more than 15,500 acres of land to manage, volunteers provide critical support in horticultural, reforestation and other efforts.



FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS CREATES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, HIRES DIRECTOR

As part of ongoing efforts to create sustainable business practices, Five Rivers MetroParks created a Development Department in 2013 and hired Beth Redden as the new director of development. Beth's experience includes an extensive background in development and fundraising know-how. She has served the Children's Medical Center of Dayton, The Dayton Foundation, Artemis Center, Goodwill/Easter Seals Miami Valley and United Rehabilitation Services. In her role with Five Rivers MetroParks, Redden coordinates alternate revenue sourcing and fundraising. These duties include identifying, cultivating and soliciting funding from individual and corporate sources, as well as grants, foundations, and sponsorships to supplement tax dollars received by Five Rivers MetroParks. Beth's work is helping Five Rivers MetroParks secure new funding opportunities that are much more sustainable and will ensure Five Rivers MetroParks remains in a position to protect our region's natural heritage and serve the community for generations.



SUPPORT OUR MISSION



2ND STREET MARKET NAMED BEST FARMER MARKET IN OHIO

Downtown Dayton's urban farmers market was named the Best Farmer's Market on the 2014 Best of Ohio Readers' Ballot from Ohio Magazine. The Market was featured in Ohio Magazine's January 2014 issue. The list of winners was generated by votes cast by Ohio Magazine's website visitors during the course of three weeks in fall 2013. Five Rivers MetroParks currently is seeking a sponsorship partner for the 2nd Street Market to help support this regional destination visited by thousands of people every week. Contact Director of Development Beth Redden at beth.redden@metroparks.org for more information.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you or your business has a passion for nature and the environment, then Five Rivers MetroParks will work with you to develop a partnership opportunity that fits your goals. There are many ways to get involved.

Foundations and Friends

These Foundations are nonprofit organizations with appointed volunteer boards whose purpose is to support Wegerzyn, Cox Arboretum or Carriage Hill MetroParks:

- Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation
- James M. Cox Jr. Arboretum Foundation
- Friends of Carriage Hill

Partner with us

Along with the individual donors and members who support MetroParks, many area organizations and businesses partner with us to provide gifts, sponsorships and in-kind services and programming.

Donate

MetroParks can work with you on planned gifts, memorial contribution or in-kind support.

Volunteer

Whether it's a year, a month, a week or even a few hours—there's a place for you as a MetroParks volunteer! Call (937) 275-PARK (7275) for more information or download and print the volunteer application at www.metroparks.org/volunteer.

To learn more about how your company or organization can get involved, contact us at (937) 275-PARK (7275).

MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Volunteers help maintain trails and other natural areas, playing a key role in helping Five Rivers MetroParks meet its mission.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of MetroParks. Thousands of dedicated volunteers make our accomplishments possible and are the very heart of our efforts to promote and accomplish our mission of conserving the Dayton region's natural heritage. Working side-by-side with staff, our volunteers make tax dollars go farther.

In addition, Five Rivers MetroParks is supported by the hard work of volunteers at the James M. Cox Arboretum Foundation, the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation and the Friends of Carriage Hill. All work to support the mission of Five Rivers MetroParks.

In 2013:

- 1,690 volunteers
- 51,267 volunteer hours valued at \$736,000

For more on volunteering, visit www.metroparks.org/volunteer.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS VOLUNTEERS CREATE CLEANER, GREENER PARKS DURING ANNUAL EVENT

Every year to kick off spring, thousands of Miami Valley residents participate in Adopt-A-Park, Five Rivers MetroParks annual Earth Day celebration. Volunteers spend the morning working in parks and other areas throughout Montgomery County, removing litter, planting trees and doing other Earth-friendly tasks. In 2013, more than 2,000 people volunteered at 37 sites located throughout Montgomery County to remove trash and invasive species, maintain trails, and prepare 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.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



By Ohio law, Five Rivers MetroParks is governed by a three-member volunteer Board of Park Commissioners who 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. Commissioners can be reappointed for successive terms. Board meetings are held monthly and are open to the public.

PRESIDENT

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

VICE PRESIDENT

Alan F. Pippenger (center) is a local businessman, supporter of open-space preservation and community leader.

COMMISSIONER AT LARGE

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

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- **Becky Benná**, Executive Director
- **Carrie Scarff**, Deputy Director
- **Dave Nolin**, Director of Conservation
- **Debra Jackson**, Director of Human Resources
- **Beth Redden**, Director of Development
- **Karen Hesser**, Director of Parks & Legislative Services
- **Trish Butler**, Director of Marketing & Public Information
- **Mark Hess**, Chief of Rangers
- **Robert Johnson**, Director of Finance and Business (retired, spring 2014)



Becky Benná,
Executive Director

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS RECOGNIZED WITH MULTIPLE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

The Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) awarded Five Rivers MetroParks three first-place honors in OPRA's annual Awards of Excellence. The OPRA Awards of Excellence are judged on project purpose, goals and objectives, evaluation, community engagement and use of external resources, challenges and creative solutions, and the overall impact of the project. Leaders from park districts statewide are tasked with sorting the best entries among the competitive pool of applicants.

- The Tree Tower at Cox Arboretum MetroPark was recognized as the best "Park-Area Development (up to \$1 million)." The Tree Tower rises 46 feet above the conifer collection, providing breathtaking views of the Arboretum grounds and collections, as well as distant panoramas of the surrounding area. Funding was provided by more than 400 donors through the 10-year effort of the James M. Cox Jr. Arboretum Foundation membership.

- The Great Miami River Wetland Mitigation Bank won first place for "Natural Resources and Conservation." This special facility, located near Trotwood, is one of the first conservation agency-owned mitigation banks in the country. Developers who need federally required wetland credits can use the mitigation bank, which is maintained by Five Rivers MetroParks. This public-private relationship provides flexibility for developers and creates viable habitat for native wildlife. Since it was established, volunteers have spotted more than 89 species of birds at the wetland, many rare to the region.
- The "Hidden Nature" campaign celebrating the park district's 50-year anniversary nabbed the highest rank for "Marketing Innovation." The campaign kicked off on the park district's birthday in April 2013, and historical highlights from the past 50 years can be discovered in the parks through signage, programming, art installations, contests and a historical archive.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS HEADQUARTERS

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*The Ranger Division of
Five Rivers MetroParks
provides 24-hour law
enforcement service
and is committed to
keeping their promise
to the public of clean,
safe MetroParks*



FIVE RIVERS
METROPARKS



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