



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

CREATING GREAT PARKS

MISSION

To protect the region's natural heritage and provide outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature.

VISION

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

PURPOSE

To 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

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STRENGTHENING YOUR PARK SYSTEM AS A COMMUNITY ASSET

At Five Rivers MetroParks, 2016 was a year of completing major initiatives – and implementing them to create an even better park system based on what we have heard from the community.

First, in spring 2016, MetroParks completed its 10-year comprehensive master plan, a long-term vision created with extensive community input. The master plan ensures the community's priorities are MetroParks' priorities, including:

- **Protecting significant natural areas and river corridors in the Miami Valley is the most important principle for Five Rivers MetroParks to follow in its conservation planning efforts.** (Five Rivers MetroParks currently manages more than 16,000 acres of natural areas, and a significant portion of the region's 270 miles of river corridor. Read more about the natural resources MetroParks protects at metroparks.org/conservation.)
- **Preserving clean water and air is the most important benefit of conserving land in its natural state.** (A minimum of 90 percent of the land Five Rivers MetroParks manages is in its natural state.)
- **Trails for hiking, walking, backpacking, horseback riding, mountain biking, cycling and cross-country skiing are one of Five Rivers MetroParks' amenities the community most values.** (Five Rivers MetroParks manages 160 miles of trails for a variety of users.)

Second, in fall 2016, the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association awarded accreditation to Five Rivers MetroParks. CAPRA is an industry gold standard that ensures MetroParks is following best-practice standards and demonstrates its commitment to the public it serves.

Now, MetroParks is implementing the community's priorities, outlined in the master plan's recommendations, while maintaining CAPRA's best practices standards. MetroParks also launched the development of master plans for individual parks and conservation areas in 2016, gathering additional public input to deliver the recommendations of the 10-year comprehensive master plan.

For more than 50 years, Five Rivers MetroParks has provided the Dayton region with high-quality outdoor experiences, parks, programs and facilities, thanks to support from the citizens of Montgomery County. MetroParks is proud to continue this tradition and strengthen its role in making Montgomery County and the region culturally vibrant and economically strong – with diverse opportunities to connect with nature and enjoy active, healthy outdoor lifestyles.

Rebecca A. Benna
Rebecca A. Benna
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAPRA ACCREDITATION AT A GLANCE

- CAPRA is the only national accreditation for park and recreation agencies and is a measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management and service to the community.
- Accreditation ensures regular review of operations, policies and procedures and promotes continual improvement.
- Preparing for CAPRA accreditation is a two-year process, and every MetroParks employee had an opportunity to be involved.
- Five Rivers MetroParks is one of the few agencies in the country that met 100 percent of the 151 CAPRA Accreditation Best Practices Standards.
- Five Rivers MetroParks is one of only 10 park and recreation agencies in Ohio and 155 in the United States to achieve CAPRA accreditation.
- To maintain its accreditation, MetroParks must uphold CAPRA standards by submitting an annual report and apply for re-accreditation every five years.



10-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN AT A GLANCE

- The 10-year comprehensive master plan included more than a year of extensive community input and research.
- The community input portion included surveys, public meetings, focus groups, and interviews with community leaders and stakeholders.
- Research included demographic and trend analysis; parks, facilities and program needs analysis; and operational and maintenance analysis.

TOP 10 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

STEWARDSHIP

- Maintain** assets Five Rivers MetroParks manages and protects.
- Preserve** land to protect air and water quality.
- Protect** the value of fish and wildlife habitat.

PROGRAMMING

- Maximize** use of parks and facilities through dynamic programming.
- Create** health and wellness opportunities within parks.

PARKS AND CONNECTIONS

- Enhance** the connections between parks and the urban core.
- Link** the inner ring of community parks.
- Connect** urban and community parks to the rest of the region.

FINANCE AND ECONOMY

- Position** Five Rivers MetroParks as a driver of economic development.
- Develop** a financially sustainable system that can achieve the vision.

PARK MASTER PLANS AT A GLANCE

- Starting in fall 2016, Five Rivers MetroParks took the next step in implementing its 10-year comprehensive master plan by developing or updating master plans for individual parks and conservation areas.
- Like the comprehensive master plan, the park master plans will be based on community input gathered during open houses and through online and paper surveys.
- The park master plans will be completed in phases, with five parks and conservation areas included in the first phase:
 - Medlar Conservation Area
 - Eastwood MetroPark
 - Wetland Mitigation Bank/ former Larch Tree golf course
 - Englewood MetroPark and Aullwood Garden MetroPark
 - Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark
- Drafts of these park master plans will be available for the public to review throughout 2017.
- Each plan will identify and consider protected habitats, park land, park amenities, and potential new uses and improvements for each location, as well as estimated capital and operating budgets for those uses and improvements.

Learn more about the comprehensive master plan and park master plans at metroparks.org/plan.



3.6



MILLION VISITORS

a 9 percent increase from 2015
The Dayton Business Journal again named
Five Rivers MetroParks the Dayton area's
No. 1 most visited attraction in 2016.



194,898 participants
in Five Rivers MetroParks
programs and events.



24,359 participants
at 260 speaking engagements
and appearances,



12,258 participants
with 758 public programs



13,055 participants
at 621 nature programs



8,878 children served
through 263 tours



44,479 participants
at 1,038 programs targeted
specifically at youth and their
families



368,539 participants
at 128 special events

1,986

SHELTER AND CAMPING PERMITS



FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS OVERVIEW



16,112

ACRES OF PROTECTED LAND

90% of the land is maintained in its
natural state, meaning the land is managed
so habitat for plants and wildlife is a priority.
Doing so preserves clean water and air,
supports plant and wildlife biodiversity, and
provides beautiful places where people can
connect with nature.

2,934 acres are in conservation
easements. This land is protected by a legal
agreement between a landowner and
government agency that permanently limits
uses of the land to protect its conservation
values.

12 conservation areas, which are
significant tracts of land primarily in a
natural state with minimal infrastructure, are
part of MetroParks' protected land.

25



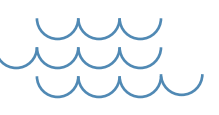
FACILITIES, including 18 parks, the
2nd Street Market and portions of six paved
recreation trails – as well as in 11 conserva-
tion areas, three publicly accessible.

160

**MILES OF
MANAGED TRAILS**
(for hiking, biking, mountain
biking and horseback riding)



270



**MILES OF RIVER
CORRIDOR**,
42 of which is cared for by
Five Rivers MetroParks

9⁺

EDUCATIONAL FEATURES

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:



Barbara Cox Center
for Sustainable
Horticulture



Inventors
Walk



Butterfly
House



Tree
Tower



Historical
Farm



Twin Valley
Welcome Center



Possum Creek
Farm



Children's
Discovery
Garden



Zorniger
Education
Campus

40⁺

NATURAL FEATURES

including Osage Orange Tunnel,
Three Sisters, Bob Siebenthaler
Natural Area and others



8⁺

OUTDOOR RECREATION FEATURES

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:



MoMBA
MetroParks
Mountain Biking Area



Carriage Hill
Riding Center



Twin Valley
Trail



Blue Heron
Disc Golf
Course



Mad River
River Run



RiverScape
River Run



RiverScape
Ice Rink



RiverScape
Bike Hub



RANGER EXPLORER PROGRAM

Launched in 2016, the Ranger Explorer program allows young men and women to discover the many career opportunities in law enforcement. Youth ages 14 through 20 receive educational, hands-on experience by volunteering for the community and participating in ride-alongs and other activities with MetroParks Rangers.

Apply online at metroparks.org/safety.



UPGRADES AT COX ARBORETUM METROPARK

Opened in May 2016, the Barbara Cox Center for Sustainable Horticulture (BCCSH) is the nexus of MetroParks' conservation efforts. Created from existing structures at Cox Arboretum MetroPark, the BCCSH features a repurposed and retrofitted grow house, greenhouses and support facilities that include sustainable, state-of-the-art infrastructure. In addition, permeable clay pavers and rain chains create a new rainwater collection system that is used to water plants.

The BCCSH enables volunteers and staff to increase plant production and survival rates. This allows MetroParks to have a more efficient and streamlined reforestation program that creates diverse, healthy habitats on the land it manages.

Because the BCCSH is also an experiential center of sustainability, interactive educational opportunities are available to park-goers, giving them tools to adopt practices that help them create a more sustainable lifestyle.

Read more about the Barbara Cox Center for Sustainable Horticulture at metroparks.org/sustainability-center.



MoMBA IMPROVEMENTS

In summer 2016, new amenities on and off the trails, with improvements for all types of riders, were opened at the MetroParks Mountain Biking Area (MoMBA) at Huffman MetroPark. Comfort amenities at the trailhead include a new restroom, water, fix-it station and parking area. New trails include a kid-friendly tot track; the Hilltop Flow Trail, which includes features for new and advanced riders; and the Talon, a double black diamond trail for MoMBA's most experienced riders. In addition, Saturday bike rentals for all ages were launched. The project was paid for primarily with funds from an Ohio Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trail Project grant, the first of its kind to be granted for a mountain biking-specific facility.

Learn more about MoMBA at metroparks.org/momba.



NEW METROPARKS.ORG

Launched in May 2016, the new MetroParks.org is streamlined, mobile-friendly, and allows users to easily register for programs and book reservations for picnics, campsites and other permits. The website upgrade makes it easy to plan outdoor adventures, as it features an improved programs and events calendar, information on how to enjoy parks by activity, quicker access to park amenities and information about how to support MetroParks. Additionally, the new site strengthens the public's understanding of MetroParks' conservation work.

Website visitors now spend 41 percent more time exploring the site, and online permit applications have increased by 71 percent since its launch.



CAMPSITE UPGRADES

Just in time for summer, frontcountry and backcountry campsites at Possum Creek, Englewood, Germantown and Twin Creek MetroParks were updated with new or improved picnic tables, fire rings and firewood boxes. Families, groups and individuals can also now reserve campsites online 24/7. Five Rivers MetroParks offers 23 tent camping sites at these four parks.

Learn more about camping in your MetroParks at metroparks.org/camping.



RIVERSCAPE RIVER RUN

The first in-river structure at RiverScape River Run in downtown Dayton was completed, and work began on the second in 2016. Both span the Great Miami River, with a passage for recreational paddlers and a whitewater play wave for kayakers – creating a new regional recreation destination and a catalyst for economic development in the river corridor. One structure is located at RiverScape MetroPark and another near the Dayton Art Institute.

Five Rivers MetroParks partnered with Kokosing, general contractor for the I-75 project, to reuse construction materials at the RiverScape River Run site. Repurposing these materials saved costs and helped MetroParks meet its mission to protect the region's natural heritage by making the project more sustainable. A mussel survey, which relocated these freshwater creatures to new homes prior to construction, also was held in 2016.

Learn more about RiverScape River Run at metroparks.org/river-run.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESSES



GOOGLE TREKKER PROGRAM

Five Rivers MetroParks partnered with Outdoor Adventure Connection to participate in the Google Street View Trekker loan program, capturing 360-degree imagery of Dayton-area trails. During the summer and fall, MetroParks staff and volunteers from Dayton Hikers trekked hundreds of miles of hiking, mountain bike, equestrian and water trails. The data has been processed and added to Google Maps so everyone will have online access to explore panoramic, street view-like “treks” of the region’s trails – aiding trip planning and showcasing the Dayton region as the Outdoor Adventure Capital of the Midwest.



INTERNATIONAL TRAILS SYMPOSIUM

American Trails – a national, nonprofit organization with a mission to create and protect America’s network of interconnected trails – selected Dayton as the host city for its 2017 International Trails Symposium after a competitive bidding process.

Learn more about the symposium at metroparks.org/2017ITS.



DAYTON REGIONAL ROWING

A partnership between USRowing, Five Rivers MetroParks, the Dayton Boat Club and the Greater Dayton Rowing Association, Dayton Regional Rowing is the nation’s only Community Olympic Development Program for rowing. In June 2016, Dayton Regional Rowing hosted their inaugural Try Rowing Olympic Day at Eastwood MetroPark. Featuring inspirational talks from Olympians, opportunities to interact with local clubs and a chance to experience the sport, 180 participants of all ages were able to try rowing in a safe and fun environment.



WAGNER SUBARU OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

MetroParks’ annual fall celebration of outdoor recreation, known as OutdoorX, had a new look in 2016 – thanks to generous support from Wagner Subaru, which became a title sponsor. This partnership is a key example of MetroParks’ efforts to work with businesses throughout the community to further stretch taxpayer dollars.

Learn more about this event at outdoorx.org.

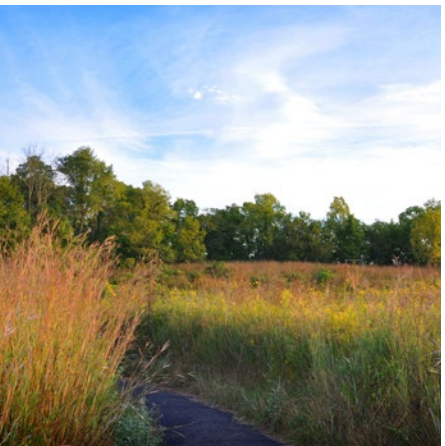


NEW SERVICE AT THE 2ND STREET MARKET

Nearly 30 vendors at the 2nd Street Market selling fresh food items began accepting SNAP/food assistance Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), thanks to a new partnership with Homefull, a nonprofit organization working to end homelessness. Customers who receive food assistance now have more options for stocking their kitchens with locally grown and produced food. In addition, Homefull Solutions began selling fresh produce grown by clients at its microfarm on Saturdays. The partnership is funded by a two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture aimed at increasing SNAP/EBT redemption at farmers markets in Montgomery, Greene and Preble counties.

Also in 2016, the Market celebrated 15 years of providing fresh, local food to the Dayton community.

Learn more about the 2nd Street Market at metroparks.org/localfood.



METROPARKS LAND HELPS CLEAN AIR AND WATER

The forests, wetlands and prairies on land Five Rivers MetroParks manages help clean local air and water – which is why protecting these habitats for the future is critical. During an average year, more than 11,000 acres of natural habitats in MetroParks filter an estimated 11 billion gallons of water, enough to fill 16,853 Olympic swimming pools. In addition, MetroParks land contains more than 170 acres of wetlands, known as “nature’s kidneys,” and MetroParks staff and volunteers created many of these wetlands.

Trees filter water and air. MetroParks land contains more than 6,000 acres of forest habitat – and staff and volunteers planted more than 20,000 trees as part of MetroParks’ reforestation program in spring 2016, in addition to tens of thousands more planted as part of earlier reforestation efforts. MetroParks forests remove an estimated 14 million pounds of gases and particles per year, along with more than 157,000 pounds of ozone per year.



FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS GETS MORE GREEN

In 2016, MetroParks completed efforts that better align the workplace with its conservation mission to protect the region’s natural heritage. All 16 staffed facilities were certified for the Dayton Regional Green (DRG) Green Business Certification.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Five Rivers MetroParks received two third-place 2016 Awards of Excellence from the Ohio Park and Recreation Association (OPRA): one in the capital improvement projects (\$1 million to \$2.5 million) category for the Barbara Cox Center for Sustainable Horticulture and the other for the new metroparks.org. In addition, Five Rivers MetroParks volunteer and Adventure Central participant Douglas May won a youth leadership award. Visit opraonline.org to learn more about the 2016 OPRA Awards of Excellence winners.

Five Rivers MetroParks facilities were recognized in three readers' polls in 2016:

- The 2nd Street Market was named "best farmers market" for the third year running in the Best of Ohio Readers' Ballot from Ohio Magazine.
- In the 2016 "Best of Dayton" readers' poll by Dayton Magazine, the 2nd Street Market was named "best farmers market" and Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark was named the best "place for a family day."
- In Dayton.com's Best of 2016 readers' poll, Sugarcreek MetroPark was named the "best park" and "best route for a walk or run," and the 2nd Street Market was named "best farmers market" and "best place to buy local."

Photo by Jan Underwood



FINANCIALS

THE MAJORITY OF FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS' FUNDING COMES FROM A PROPERTY TAX LEVY SUPPORTED BY MONTGOMERY COUNTY TAXPAYERS.

Five Rivers MetroParks takes its responsibility as steward of the public's funds very seriously and is committed to providing quality and value for the community.

Like so many governmental agencies, it has become increasingly critical that Five Rivers MetroParks diversify its revenue streams to fill the gap created by the permanent elimination of state funding and by eroding property tax revenues. Support from businesses, organizations, foundations and other community support helps bridge that gap.

In addition, MetroParks is focused on supplementing its taxpayer funding so the agency can continue to protect open space and provide the high-quality parks and programs the community expects and deserves. MetroParks is increasingly focused on developing new partnerships that maximize levy dollars and creating more balanced and sustainable finances, reducing costs wherever possible, and implementing fees for services and programs that benefit small groups or individuals. Other revenue sources increased 4 percent in 2016.

2016 REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Levy Income:	\$14,176,637
Intergovernmental:	\$2,493,262
Charges for Services:	\$830,255
Investment Income:	\$130,332
Gifts, Donations & Sponsorships:	\$98,424
Other Income:	\$611,748
MetroParks Operating Subsidy: *	\$1,391,619
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT:	\$19,732,277

2016 EXPENSES

Personnel:	\$12,638,897
Supplies and Operating Expenses:	\$2,703,405
Contracts and Operating Services:	\$2,476,961
Intergovernmental:	\$253,562
Capital Improvements & Equipment:	\$849,447
Other Expenses/Transfers:	\$810,005
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$19,732,277

*As part of its levy funding cycle, Five Rivers MetroParks budgeted to supplement revenues with reserves.

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



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

FOUNDATIONS, FRIENDS AND SPONSORS

Five Rivers MetroParks' mission and vision also are supported by the hard work of the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation, The James M. Cox, Jr. Arboretum Foundation, the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation and the Friends of Carriage Hill. Led by volunteer boards all are passionate about funding mission-driven projects, programs and services, and are exemplary stewards of donors' funds.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS FOUNDATION

A 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation was created as part of MetroParks' strategy in 2014 to secure philanthropic funding for special projects, programming and an endowment. The Foundation provides a way for donors to support Five Rivers MetroParks with charitable contributions that can be designated to all parks or a specific park. Donations also can be directed to support education and recreational services, as well as conservation initiatives.

FUNDING IN 2016 INCLUDED:

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS FOUNDATION

- Adventure Central kitchen renovation phase 1
- Conservation monitoring program
- Passport to Kindergarten and City Beets program support

THE JAMES M. COX, JR. ARBORETUM FOUNDATION

- Monet Bridge replacement
- Zorniger campus roof replacement
- Half-mile ADA-accessible paver path installation
- Park lighting
- Office renovations

WEGERZYN GARDENS FOUNDATION

- Spooky Evening in the Garden event sponsorship
- Patio umbrellas and chairs for the Children's Discovery Garden
- Children's Discovery Garden maintenance
- Paver cleaning, repair and placement throughout gardens

FRIENDS OF CARRIAGE HILL

- Farrier services
- Purchase of feed for animals
- Historical program and restoration support
- Steam engine maintenance and supplies

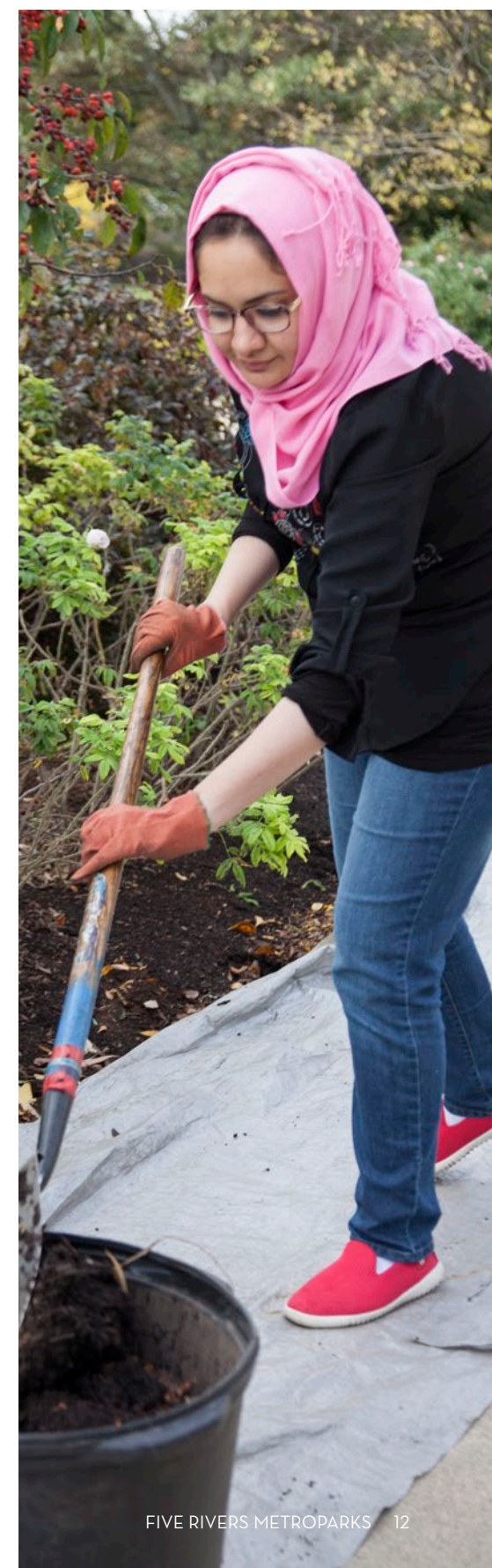
PARTNERS WITH US

Many area organizations and businesses partner with us to provide financial support, sponsorships and in-kind services.

LEAD CORPORATE & PRIVATE SUPPORTERS

- Affordable Mobility
- Bonbright Distributors
- Buckeye Health Plan
- Cox Media Group Ohio
- Dayton Power & Light Company
- Greater Dayton RTA
- Mechanical Systems of Dayton (MSD)
- Mikesell's Snack Food
- The estate of Dale Sanders
- Subaru of America
- Subway
- Thompson Hine
- Wagner Subaru
- Whole Foods Market

For more information: Visit metroparks.org/donate or contact Beth Redden, Five Rivers MetroParks Chief of Philanthropy, at 937-277-4369 or beth.redden@metroparks.org.



WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

PAY TRIBUTE, DONATE AND GET INVOLVED

TRIBUTE PROGRAM WITH COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

Honor a loved one or celebrate a holiday, birthday or other special occasion with a unique, lasting gift located at your favorite MetroPark. We offer a range of options that include benches, trees and, in some locations, swings.

GENERAL HONOR AND TRIBUTE GIFTS

Honor someone special and commemorate a special event by making a general donation to the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation.

MEMORIAL FUNDS

Establish a memorial fund in honor of a loved one to which others can contribute. We are happy to provide contribution envelopes that you can distribute at a memorial service or other commemorative event.

DONATE

Support our mission and your favorite MetroPark by making a donation to the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation. Your tax deductible gift will be used to support programs and special projects. Donations (made payable to Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation) can be mailed to: Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation 409 E. Monument Ave., third floor Dayton, OH 45402

Donate to your Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation online at metroparks.org/donate.



Photos by Jan Underwood

VOLUNTEERS

Thousands of dedicated volunteers helped MetroParks accomplish its mission and vision. Working side-by-side with staff, volunteers extend tax dollars and other resources.

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2016 INCLUDED:

- more than 40,000 volunteer hours
- Value of volunteer service: more than \$750,000

To learn more about how your company or organization can get involved, contact the Five Rivers MetroParks volunteer services at (937) 275-PARK (7275).

BECOME A 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 metroparks.org/volunteer.



LEADERSHIP



BOARD OF PARK 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 acquisitions, 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.

2016 PRESIDENT

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

2016 VICE PRESIDENT

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

2016 COMMISSIONER AT LARGE

Irvin Bieser Jr. is an attorney, supporter of the arts and conservationist.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



Becky Benná,
Executive Director



Mark Hess,
Chief of Public Safety



Karen Hesser,
Chief of Operations



Beth Redden,
Chief of Philanthropy



Carrie Scarff,
Chief of Planning
& Projects



Bill Tschirhart,
Chief of
Administration

TESTIMONIALS



DOUGLAS MAY

At Adventure Central, Douglas May is a prime example of this youth development program's impact.

Adventure Central – a partnership between Five Rivers MetroParks, 4-H, The Ohio State University Extension and the University of Dayton – was a springboard for May. He began his journey with Adventure Central at age 9 and has since applied to be part of the Job Experience and Training Program (JET) for teens ages 12-18, in addition to leading gardening programs and assisting with animal care.

May celebrated his 750th hour of service in 2016, the highlight being a reforestation project in which he led a group of peer volunteers in the propagation of 3,000 native trees and shrubs being grown for planting at various MetroParks sites. While his accomplishments are impressive, knowing he has done so while overcoming the challenges of autism makes Douglas an exemplary individual.

"Volunteering makes my mind feel lighter," May said.

May's attitude and dedication earned him the 2016 Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Youth Leadership Award.



MONIKA KALEPS

Monika Kaleps left her fears behind and found her passion on MoMBA's trails. Driving an hour from her home in the Columbus area, Kaleps visits the MetroParks Mountain Biking Area (MoMBA) at least twice a week, even in winter.

Kaleps experienced a fall that fractured her skull, resulting in a fear of heights and falling. After looking for activities to help tackle her fears, she found catharsis at MoMBA.

"My journey began with mountain biking," Kaleps said. *"I was terrified but strong, scared but confident. That's what mountain biking did for me: it took what is inherent in me—strength and confidence, which had been eroded with circumstance—and brought my inner invincible kid back."*

MoMBA, the Dayton area's first fully sustainable mountain biking trail system, includes more than nine miles of mountain biking trails for all levels of riders. In summer 2016, new trails and trailhead amenities opened at MoMBA that help seasoned riders such as Kaleps and new riders better experience the park and the sport of mountain biking.

"I have a goal each time I ride to try something new and that's in my reach," Kaleps says. *"When those goals are accomplished, my heart soars. Every ride is a learning experience, even learning how to fall."*



ANNABELLE HOWE

Annabelle Howe, a seventh grade student at Brookville Intermediate School and a Five Rivers MetroParks volunteer, is giving back to her peers through outdoor education.

Howe has always expressed an appreciation for nature, but it wasn't until Howe's mother enrolled her in MetroParks' Conservation Kids program that she flourished both as an environmental steward and social butterfly.

"Annabelle attended the Conservation Kids program about two years ago," said Howe's mother, Julie Howe. *"She loved her volunteer program leaders and learning about nature."*

Howe is on the autism spectrum and hasn't always found socializing an easy task. Conservation Kids – a program in which children complete a series of environmental education programs and a peer-based conservation project – helped Howe make a connection to nature and her peers. She now volunteers with her family as often as she can, educating her peers on the importance of insects and their role in the ecosystem.

"She likes to talk to people and teach them new things when she volunteers," Julie Howe said. *"She's in her element when she's outside."*

**FIVE RIVERS
METROPARKS**



It's our nature™

409 E. Monument Avenue, third floor,
Dayton, Ohio 45402
937-275-PARK

metroparks.org