

LAKE METROPARKS

report to the COMMUNITY



PATRICIA GREENE

Lake Metroparks ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2008

Fiscal Stewardship/Responsibility

- Earned the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 17th consecutive year for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
- Received the "Making Your Tax Dollars Count Award" presented by Auditor of State Mary Taylor.

Park Improvements

- Improved accessibility at Veterans Park and Lakeshore Reservation by paving or re-paving trail segments.
- Constructed an observation deck and two new stairways at Paine Falls Park.
- Golf course and building improvements made at Erie Shores Golf Course and Pine Ridge Country Club.

Education and Programs

- Education programs were provided to 58,023 students by staff from Farmpark, Children's Schoolhouse and the Wildlife Center.
- 136 programs were held for the adapted community including Special Olympics, recreation and fitness programs.
- 483 recreation outreach programs were provided to teach lifelong outdoor recreation skills.
- Hosted the Senior Games for Northeast Ohio.
- 158 students completed the 40-hour hands-on Spirit of America Youth Boating Education Program (the largest class yet).
- The first "Big Campout" was held at Penitentiary Glen Nature Center and was a great success.
- Several new exhibits were opened at Penitentiary Glen Nature Center including the Nature Calls kiosk and a taxidermy bird display. A new exterior microphone system was also added in the Window on Wildlife.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

- Purchased land within the Gully Brook valley (in Willoughby) to protect a quality natural area and to allow for the creation of a park reservation in western Lake County (will next work toward public access).
- Began floodplain restoration at Pleasant Valley Park (in Willoughby Hills) including cleanup of old nursery material.
- Ongoing repair and replacement of amenities such as parking lots, playgrounds and restrooms across the park system.
- Began implementing a geographic information system (GIS) to allow for improved efficiency to record and monitor habitats.

Environmental Learning Center

Opened in fall 2008, the Lake Metroparks Environmental Learning Center is a state-of-the-art science and educational facility that connects people with nature. It features educational exhibits, fully equipped high-tech classrooms, an astronomical observatory, a biology/biotechnology lab and a weather station.

Located on approximately 250 acres of beautiful and ecologically diverse open space rich in both cultural and natural history, Big Creek and Jordan Creek are protected on this property.

A partnership with the Lake County Educational Service Center relocated the award-winning Porter Program for Science and Mathematics to the Lake Metroparks Environmental Learning Center. Currently 15,000 third, fourth and fifth grade students from Lake and Geauga Counties participate in science programs through the Porter Program. Future partnerships with educational institutions will expand environmental education opportunities for grades pre-K through 12 along with college level classes, internships and professional development for educators.

The Environmental Learning Center is open for scheduled classes, pre-registered programs or by appointment only.

LAKE METROPARKS CELEBRATED ITS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY IN 2008!

To prepare for the future and improve its services, Lake Metroparks commissioned an independent research firm to conduct four surveys in May, August and September 2008: a survey published in Lake Metroparks' activity guide; a survey hosted on lakemetroparks.com; a survey of park employees; and a stratified random sample of 400 registered voters in Lake County. In October, three focus groups provided residents' perceptions of the parks today and in the future. Each group consisted of a mix of participants by ages, gender and park use; group placement was determined by residence in the east, west or central parts of Lake County. Results among the surveys were very similar: 96% of the respondents value Lake Metroparks.

Lake Metroparks has a 96% approval rating

Respondents indicated high satisfaction with and public trust in Lake Metroparks. Detailed survey data reinforced that people are using and enjoying the park system.

Overall, respondents expressed that the parks are a good investment and Lake Metroparks should continue to preserve open space and maintain the quality of its parks.



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LAKE METROPARKS BY THE NUMBERS

How well do you know your park system? Breeze through these fast facts* to find out:
*from the 2008 calendar year unless described otherwise

- 0 New operating levies in the past 25 years
- 20 Years of Trees for Wildlife, Bug Day and senior hiking programs
- 25 Years of miniature train rides provided by the Lake Shore Live Steamers
- 50 Years of conserving and preserving the natural resources of Lake County
- 96 Percent of Lake County residents rate Lake Metroparks favorably
- 100+ Rare species documented within Lake Metroparks
- 476 Pounds of wool shorn by Farmpark sheep
- 1,400+ Programs and events offered to Lake County residents annually
- 1,636 Native Ohio wildlife accepted for care at Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center
- 1,696 Trees planted throughout the parks
- 2,000 People attended Snakes n' Such event to get close to reptiles and amphibians
- 2,588 Calls Rangers responded to for service across the park system
- 3,466 Fish and 100 pounds of minnows stocked in rivers, lakes and ponds
- 3,500 Feet of trail developed at Hogback Ridge Park
- 7,675 Acres within the park district
- 16,904 People took the mile-long ride through the dark forest at Halloween Hayrides
- 30,693 Patrols conducted by Lake Metroparks Rangers throughout the park system
- 72,966 Hours logged by 2,216 volunteers in the parks
- 84,558 Toys produced at Santa's Workshop at Farmpark's Country Lights event since 1990, including a record 8,507 in 2008
- 97,092 Pounds of milk produced by Farmpark cows
- ∞ Infinite thanks to Lake Metroparks volunteers and supporters



DAVE MILLS

Conservation Corner

In 1958, a local commitment to conservation led to the creation of Lake Metroparks. This dedication continues today as the agency stewards its natural resources with a conservation ethic true to that original philosophy.

Lake County is a very special place with more than 32 miles of Lake Erie shoreline as well as portions of both the Chagrin State Scenic River and the Grand Wild and Scenic River. Located on Lake Erie's south shore, Lake County provides habitat for hundreds of unique plants and animals.

Lake Metroparks continues to monitor the 100+ rare species documented on park properties. Utilizing the latest in geographic information system (GIS) technology to survey species, Lake Metroparks has taken great strides toward inventorying and recording its natural resources and ecological features.

Over the years, the agency has evolved its active management to include techniques from the changing field of natural resource science. For example, Lake Metroparks conducts controlled burns of meadows to promote high quality grassland habitats.

Several stream corridors have benefited greatly from bioengineering efforts. These bank stabilization projects have been successful in protecting and enhancing critical stream habitats on sites degraded by increased stormwater runoff.

The construction, maintenance and monitoring of several hundred artificial nest structures is an important part of wildlife habitat enhancement as well as an opportunity for unparalleled wildlife watching.

The monitoring and treatment of invasive, exotic plant species continues to be a high priority. Efforts to control the spread of these species have been slow but sure. Careful monitoring and targeted eradication of infestations has proven successful.

Many of the conservation principles upon which the park district was founded guide the agency today. Evolving methods, a commitment to habitat protection and a solid conservation ethic propel Lake Metroparks into a bright, green future.



For more information about Lake Metroparks visit lakemetroparks.com or call 1-800-669-9226

Lake Metroparks respectfully acknowledges:

LAKE COUNTY PROBATE JUDGE Ted Klammer

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Ellen Foley Kessler • Mark P. Oesterle • Frank J. Polivka