

# ERIE METROPARKS



## Biennial Report *2021-2022*





# Erie MetroParks

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E-Mail: [behere@eriemetroparks.org](mailto:behere@eriemetroparks.org)

## Commissioners

Don Miears, Chairperson

Troy Wisehart, Vice-Chairperson

Margaret Murray, Vice-Chairperson

\*Commissioners meet the second Wednesday- 1PM at Osborn MetroPark  
in the Maple Grove Center, 3109 Hull Rd. Huron, OH.



## Executive Director

Amy Bowman-Moore

419-625-7783 ext. 226

E-Mail: [amoore@eriemetroparks.org](mailto:amoore@eriemetroparks.org)

# Letter from the Executive Director

## Amy Bowman-Moore

The following pages contain an overview of the activities and accomplishments of YOUR Erie MetroParks for 2021 and 2022. We continue to strive for excellence in being stewards of YOUR funding and, more importantly, YOUR lands.

Both 2021 and 2022, with your support, continued to be outstanding years for your Park District. Things have changed coming out of the Covid years. However, the parks keep being used by more and more people. The staff here at Erie MetroParks is proud of the park lands we steward for you, the visitors and residence of Erie County.

The following pages highlight notable improvements, efficiencies, statistics of interest and changes realized in 2021 and 2022. Also, maybe the most exciting project; the beginning design and imminent construction of a new nature center. Construction will begin in 2023.

The staff continues to improve and evolve the Park District by concentrating on the following areas: capital improvements, policies, planning, programming and natural resource management.

The following listed highlights are mentioned in the upcoming pages:

- Many capital improvements have been completed in the past two years. The Milan Towpath bridge was restored.
- New social media platforms were designed and implemented to serve the residence and viewers. The staff invented many social media interactions due to the ease of which a participant could attend a program. Fun and interesting programs such as Erie MetroParks Trivia, Erie MetroParks podcasts, and Erie MetroParks Trail walks/scavenger hunt were developed. The social media reach has increased to over 50,000 users.
- The Operations Department continues to care for all park areas to a level of excellence. Some new equipment purchased for the care of the park lands include a new Fecon attachment for a heavy duty ATV. This implement will churn up invasive weeds by the roots, so eradication is much quicker and more permanent than before.
- Marketing excelled in keeping the Park District information timely. Letting people know what programs are coming up for the week, thus increasing the attendance to our many offered programs.
- Visitors and Erie County residents alike, continued to use Erie MetroParks for recreation, education, and conservation services at record levels.

The staff continues to bring outstanding programming and stewardship to your Park District. The Erie MetroParks staff is a very qualified group. With degrees and certifications varying from Wildlife Management to Recreation Administration to Environmental Policy, most members of the staff are CPR/AED and First Aid certified and some are First Responders for their communities.

Please review and enjoy the following pages recounting 2021 and 2022. The staff of Erie MetroParks and I are proud to serve you.

Once more, the Board of Commissioners, the staff, and I thank you for your support and participation. Please come out and see what your Erie MetroParks has to offer.

## Meet our staff-

*Our staff is a diverse group, ranging in service from eight months to three employees with twenty five plus years of service to the residents of Erie County.*

## Administration-

Amy Bowman-Moore, Executive Director

Melissa Price, Deputy Director

Sue Daniel, Administrative Coordinator

Beth Ferback, Financial Administrator

Roseanne Pole, Accounting Clerk

Sandy Flittner, Visitor Service Coordinator (& Volunteer Coordinator)



## Operations-

Jay Yochem, Park Manager

Derek Siesel, Park Manager

Mark Malone, Park Manager– Capital Projects

Rob Dunn, Park Maintenance Technician

Troy Nemitz, Park Maintenance Technician

Mike Wheeler, Park Maintenance Technician

Steve Pickard, Park Maintenance Technician

## Natural Resources-

Tara Kauffman, Natural Resources Manager

Brad Phillips, Environmental Projects Coordinator

## Programs-

Mike Hensley, Program Manager & Naturalist

Cheryl Kilmer, Naturalist

Martyn Drabik-Hamshare, Naturalist

Mollie Knighton, Naturalist & Special Events Coordinator

Kippie Loughlin, Digital Media & Information Technology Coordinator



## **2021-2022 ADMINISTRATION**

Erie MetroParks is largely supported by two general property tax levies that allow us to serve our local community. Erie County property taxes made up \$2 million of an approximately \$2.5 million dollar operating budget each year, approximately \$36.31 annually for a homeowner with a valued home of \$100,000.

The current Frost Center building at Osborn MetroPark was constructed in the 1930s and hosts the nature center. Erie MetroParks diligent and responsible budgeting produced a healthy carryover to inspire a new project. In 2021, the Board of Park Commissioners approved Resolution 2021-16 to establish a Capital Projects Fund and a transfer up to \$2,500,000.00 out of the General Fund and into the Capital Projects Fund to be allocated for the designing, bidding, and construction of a nature center at Osborn MetroPark. In 2022, the Capital Projects Fund was created and \$2,500,000.00 was transferred from the General Fund into the Capital Projects Fund. In addition, Erie MetroParks received numerous donations beginning in 2022 from individuals and organizations towards the completion of a new nature center. The official groundbreaking ceremony took place on Sept. 24, 2022 at the first annual Osborn Fall Fest event. The public, the Board of Park Commissioners, partners, and staff celebrated this exciting official step (as seen in the photos below). This massive undertaking is focused to provide the citizens of Erie County with a brand-new nature center to enjoy and utilize for generations to come.



In the last two years, Erie MetroParks received ODNR grant monies that funded a sprayer, pump, and torches for prescribed burns. Additionally, Erie MetroParks was the proud recipient of \$10,070 from two Erie County Community Foundation grants toward the new Nature Center!

Additionally, the park district awarded \$69,481.00 to smaller government entities for park improvements across the county. Recipients included Groton Township, Margaretta Township, Milan Township, the Village of Milan, Oxford Township, Perkins Township, the City of Vermilion Parks Department, the City of Sandusky, The Village of Castalia, Village of Kelleys Island, and the Village of Bay View.

The Erie MetroParks Employee Guide underwent its biennial audit. Existing policies were reviewed, evaluated, and updated according to state laws.



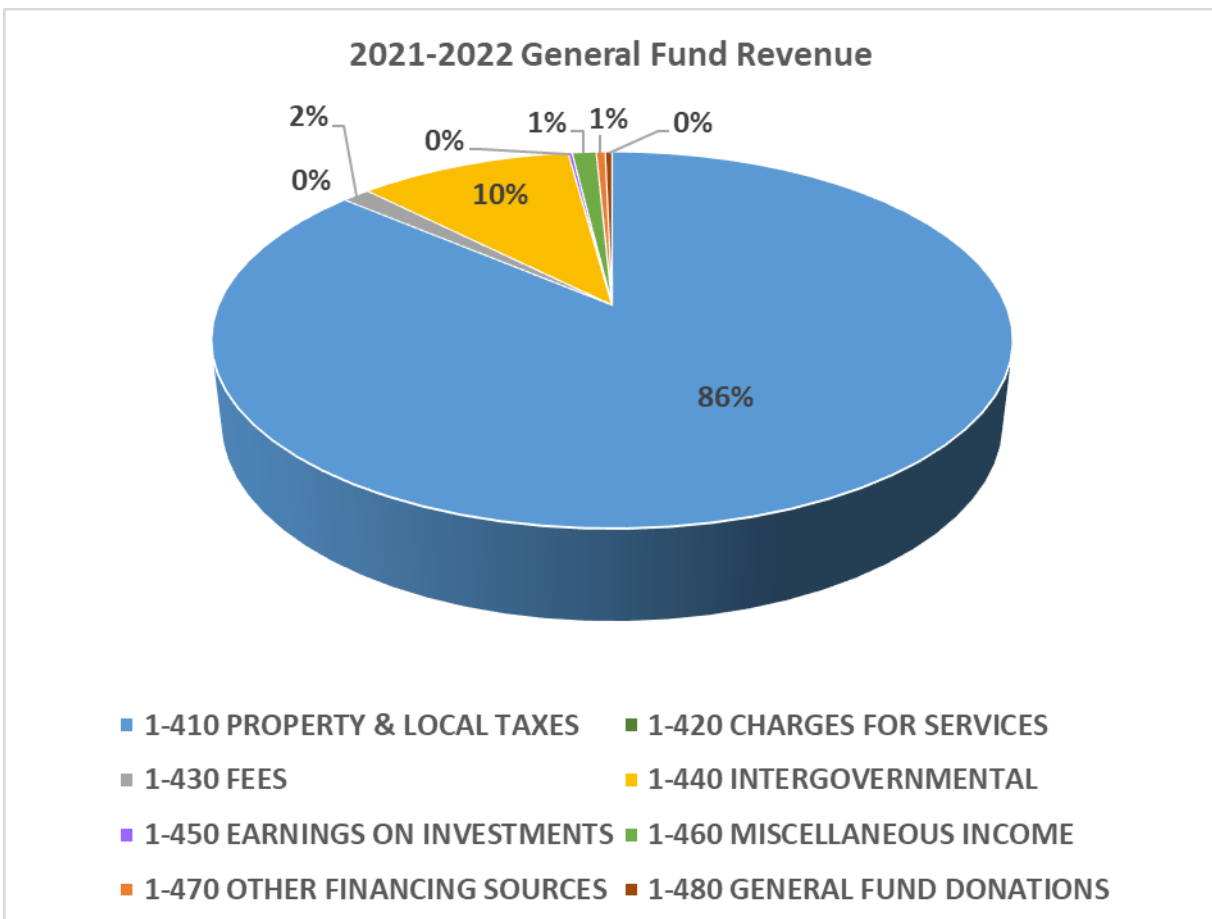
Finally, park team members worked diligently to remain within the budget established by the Board of Park Commissioners. Erie MetroParks' staff members supported local vendors with approximately \$2,600,000.00 in park purchases and poured 60% of Erie MetroParks budget back into revenue within our local economy.

Four staff members were honored for their continued service to Erie MetroParks, Jay Yochem- 30 years, Sue Daniel and Sandy Flittner- 25 years, and Melissa Price- 20 years.

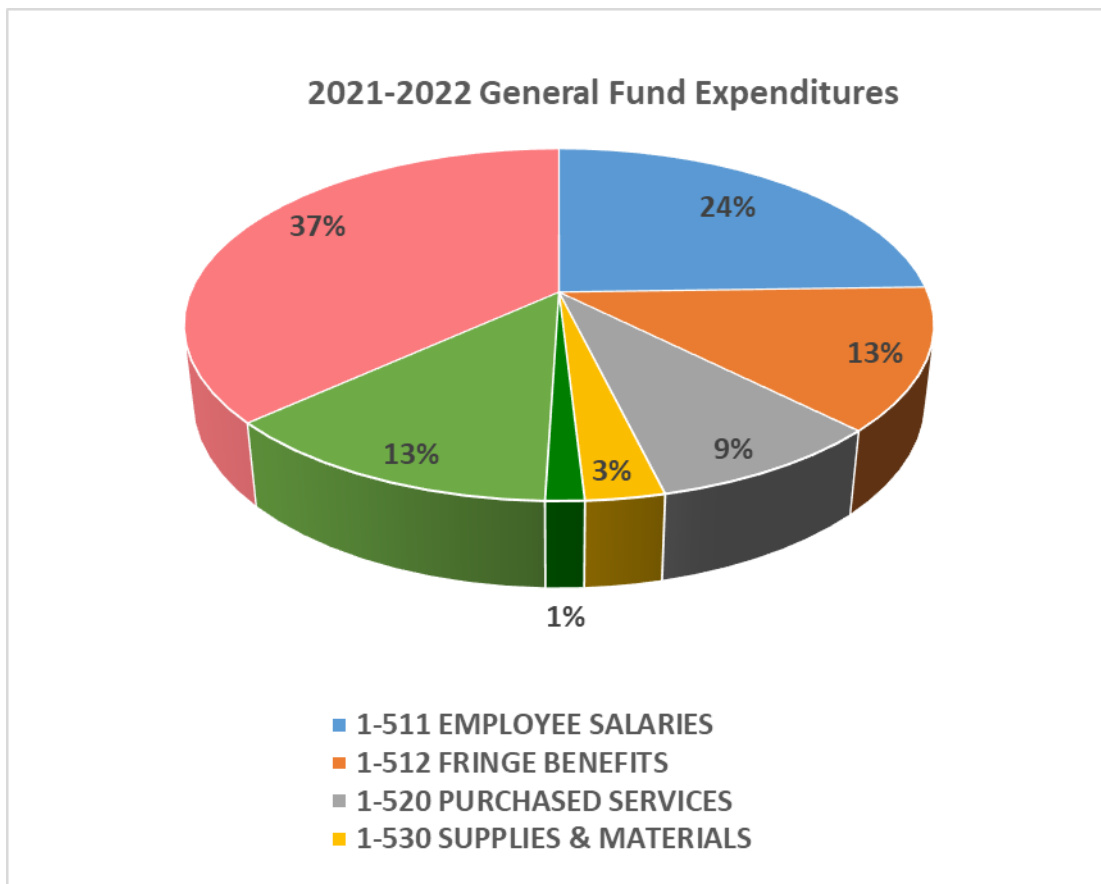


See the breakdown of Erie MetroParks' revenue and expenditures over the biennium from the General Fund below:

General Fund	Revenue	2021	2022	Total
1-410	PROPERTY & LOCAL TAXES	\$ 2,302,230.05	\$ 2,354,021.52	\$ 4,656,251.57
1-420	CHARGES FOR SERVICES	\$ -		\$ -
1-430	FEES	\$ 29,250.00	\$ 43,673.25	\$ 72,923.25
1-440	INTERGOVERNMENTAL	\$ 164,113.41	\$ 392,026.63	\$ 556,140.04
1-450	EARNINGS ON INVESTMENTS	\$ 4,599.54	\$ 5,746.36	\$ 10,345.90
1-460	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	\$ 37,608.82	\$ 25,227.50	\$ 62,836.32
1-470	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	\$ 6,177.50	\$ 17,169.80	\$ 23,347.30
1-480	GENERAL FUND DONATIONS	\$ 15,833.10	\$ 1,989.10	\$ 17,822.20
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>\$ 2,559,812.42</b>	<b>\$ 2,839,854.16</b>	<b>\$ 5,399,666.58</b>



General Fund	Expenses	2021	2022	Total
1-511	EMPLOYEE SALARIES	\$ 760,990.01	\$ 906,304.47	\$ 1,667,294.48
1-512	FRINGE BENEFITS	\$ 407,226.36	\$ 477,503.57	\$ 884,729.93
1-520	PURCHASED SERVICES	\$ 264,764.99	\$ 324,698.82	\$ 589,463.81
1-530	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	\$ 85,412.36	\$ 110,345.91	\$ 195,758.27
1-540	OTHER EXPENSES	\$ 46,488.78	\$ 49,123.47	\$ 95,612.25
1-550	CAPITAL OUTLAY	\$ 375,240.92	\$ 490,620.53	\$ 865,861.45
1-590	OTHER FINANCING USES	\$ -	\$ 2,500,000.00	\$ 2,500,000.00
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,940,123.42</b>	<b>\$ 2,358,596.77</b>	<b>\$ 4,298,720.19</b>

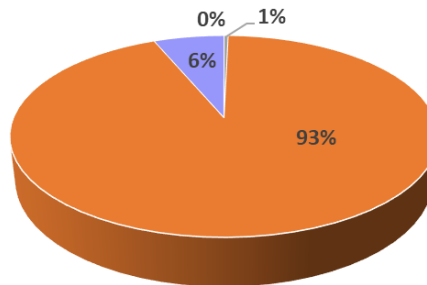




See the breakdown of Erie MetroParks' revenue and expenditures over the biennium from the Capital Projects Fund below:

Capital Projects Fund		Revenue	2021	2022	Total
8-440	INTERGOVERNMENTAL		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
8-460	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME		\$ -	\$ 10,070.00	\$ 10,070.00
8-470	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES		\$ -	\$ 2,500,000.00	\$ 2,500,000.00
8-480	CAPITAL PROJECT FUND DONATIONS		\$ -	\$ 170,238.29	\$ 170,238.29
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>			<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 2,680,308.29</b>	<b>\$ 2,680,308.29</b>

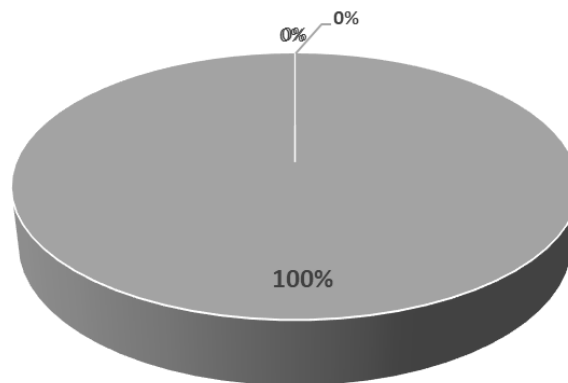
2021-2022 Capital Projects Fund Revenue



- 8-440 INTERGOVERNMENTAL
- 8-460 MISCELLANEOUS INCOME
- 8-470 OTHER FINANCING SOURCES
- 8-480 CAPITAL PROJECT FUND DONATIONS

Capital Projects Fund		Expenses	2021	2022	Total
8-520	PURCHASED SERVICES		\$ -	\$ 276,407.54	\$ 276,407.54
8-530	SUPPLIES & MATERIALS		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
8-550	CAPITAL OUTLAY		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
8-590	OTHER FINANCING USES		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 276,407.54</b>	<b>\$ 276,407.54</b>

2021-2022 Capital Projects Fund Expenditures



- 8-520 PURCHASED SERVICES
- 8-530 SUPPLIES & MATERIALS
- 8-550 CAPITAL OUTLAY
- 8-590 OTHER FINANCING USES



## 2021 Donors

Charles & Carole Rau  
James & Judy Smith  
Frank & Beverly Deramo  
William & S. Erline Trsek  
Martha Moeller  
Marlene Gulas  
David Sapp & Heidi Sapp  
Sharon & Robert Barnes  
Phyllis Winans & Family  
Sharon Hixon  
Allen & Nancy Short  
Virginia Neuman  
Norma Short  
Ken & Elizabeth Short  
Linda Skillman  
Firelands Area Pickleball Association

M2 Media Group  
Maureen Penman  
Lawrence & Eloise Miller  
Thomas & Anita Scanlon  
Martha Ryan  
Mary Lou Frazier  
Page & Doug Wichman  
Dora Ortiz  
Mr. and Mrs. David Clark  
Mr. Don Kleist  
Marsha Scott  
Amy Jones  
Ann Pullano  
Friends of Erie MetroParks  
Daryl & Joyce Deering  
Providence Care Center

## 2022 Donors

Louis & Jan Young  
Ann Voight  
Various  
Terry & Diane Isaac  
Diana Leonard  
Martha (Marty) Sawicki  
Margaret Urban  
Roger Howe  
David & Barbara Doerner  
David & Arlayne Mischler  
David & Virginia Robinson  
Cintas  
Meijer Store #142  
Larry Bettcher  
Michael F. Heydinger  
Paul & Alea Dahnke  
School of Hope  
Charles & Margaret Kingsley  
Firelands Pioneer Power Association  
Envirotech Consultants Inc.  
Shayna Wozniak

Elliot Loughlin  
Vacationland Credit Union  
Friends of Erie MetroParks  
Daryl & Joyce Deering  
Margaret Murray  
Patrick & Louise Murray  
Valerie Deehr  
Margaret Kuhl  
Lois & Jan TerVeen  
Mr. & Mrs. David Clark  
Faith Lewis  
Patty Pascoe  
Sharon McDonald  
Christine Yochem  
Rock & Roll Express  
Randolph J. & Estelle M. Dorn Foundation  
Rita Bartholomew  
Vernon Yoder  
Norma Wible  
Thomas & Ann Lang  
Julie Sowecke

## 2022 Donors continued

Chuck & Carolyn Rainger	Marcia Kingsley
Reminger Co. L.P.C.	Gary & Jan Dugan
Paul & Deborah Leslie	Phil & Margaret Barbour
Kit Wysor	Barbara Berg
Mark DeLong	Donna Fry
Keith & Louise Newton	Thomas Roberts
Jamie Steinemann	Ned & Diane Shoemaker
Dr. James & Kathleen O'Neill	Julie Dively
Christine Routh	Ron & Carolyn Cull
Mary Anne Grachek	Patricia & Roger Dow
Richard & Rosemarie Kuharick	Tom & Deborah Miller
Timothy & Pamela Baur	Jim & Molly Sass
Carol Kerslake Phillips	Jonathan Granville
Therese Roth	Suzanne Kaufman
Barbara Ringle	Larry & Dawn Schlessman
Mollie Knighton	Gene & Sandy Wright
Gerald & Cynthia Kasper	Diane Hahler-Johnson
Cynthia Clark	Jane Doyle
Katherine Archibald	The Decker Family
June Copper	Austin Rospert
Jeffrey & Sally Green	Jen Wensink
Jeffrey & Laurie Huber	Beki Hinline
Nancy McKeen	Gary & Judi Griffith
Jean Wieber	Civista Bank
Martha Smith	Martha Ryan
Dr. Richard & Mrs. Michael Keller	David & Jen Voight
Jean Ryan	Al & Lori Peugeot
Greg, Carol, Brent, & Joshua Zimmerman	J. Rex Stanforth
Roger & Barbara Edgerly	Joe Ellen Myer
Michele Washburn	Troy & Barbara Wisehart
John E. Jackson Jr.	Fred & Sue Nottke
Dr. Harry & Kathryn Stenzel	Karoleen Wood
Sally Burger	Carol & Randy Simpson
Brian & Julie Deering	Dave & Sharon Herzer
Patricia Johns	Ruth Brink
Carol Dreffer	Chris Dorland
Ronald & Sherry Mischler	Mary Kathryn & Ed McClendon
Larry & Kay Krogh	

## 2022 Donors continued

Lynn Sparks

Lo Wong

Ron & JoAnn Krock

Richard Dolbeer

Kathie & David Hammond

Martin Beursken

Dick & Kathy Wollenberg

Jennifer Clark

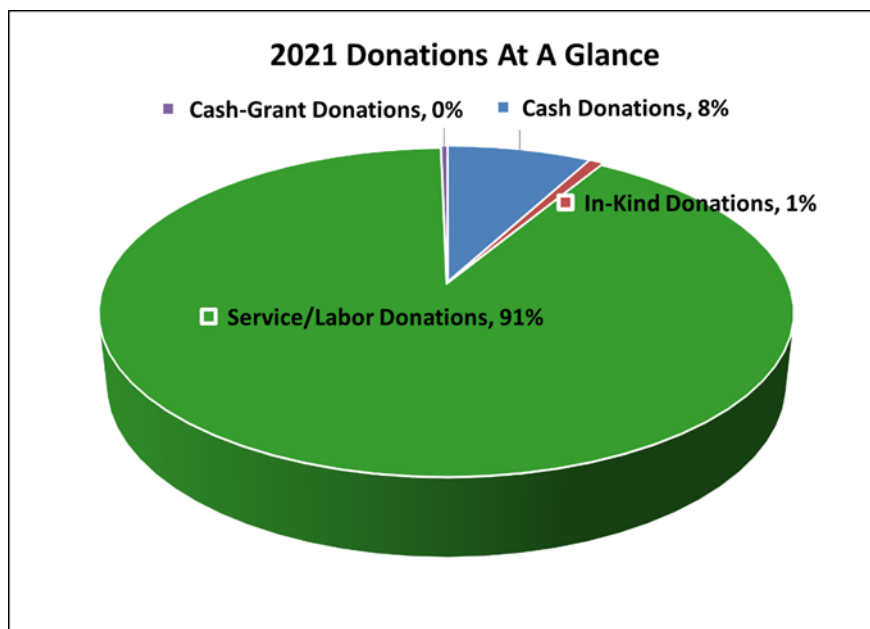
Ken & Sharon Hill

Jeffrey Chen

The donation of labor and volunteer service time comprised a large portion of our donations in 2021 and 2022. Our volunteers are an invaluable resource here at Erie MetroParks. In 2022, Erie MetroParks received donations for the Generation to Generation Campaign towards the completion of the new Nature Center and is reflected in the increase both in cash-grant and cash donations.

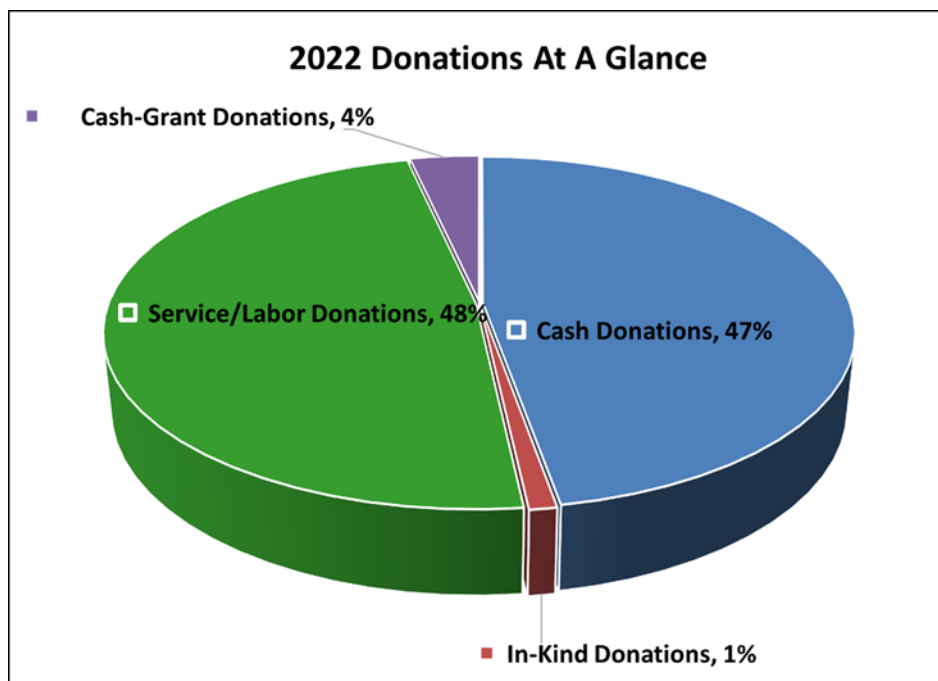
## Summary of 2021 Donations

Cash Donations	\$ 15,833.10
In-Kind Donations	\$ 1,585.00
Service/Labor Donations	\$ 182,627.46
Cash-Grant Donations	\$ 656.00
<hr/>	
2021 Donations Grand Total	<b>\$ 200,701.56</b>



## Summary of 2022 Donations

Cash Donations	\$ 172,227.39
In-Kind Donations	\$ 3,767.65
Service/Labor Donations	\$ 176,031.13
Cash-Grant Donations	\$ 12,850.95
<hr/>	
2022 Donations Grand Total	<b>\$ 364,877.12</b>



### GRANTS

Erie MetroParks received and deferred a grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation for roadways surfaces in 2022. The value of the grant is approximately \$45,000.00. Erie MetroParks chose to defer the grant toward the new parking lot at Osborn MetroPark in 2024 to pair along with the completion of the new Nature Center.



## **2021 HIGHLIGHTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS – OPERATIONS**

### **Various Parks**

- Mowed back trails at all of the parks.
- Bird boxes maintained and new ones were installed.
- Forestry mowing with Natural Resources Department to control woody invasives.
- Prescribed burning with Natural Resource Department.
- Made benches for the park out of saw mill and epoxy.



### **Birmingham School MetroPark**

- Safety inspections.

### **Castalia Quarry MetroPark**

- CQR Observation Deck was pressure washed and re-stained.
- Large failing trees at CQR were removed.
- Removed graffiti from structures.

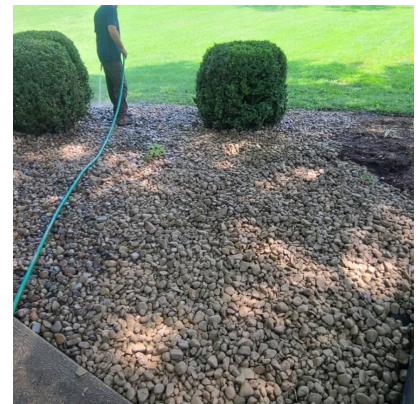


### **James H. McBride Arboretum**

- JMA brush cut mowing of special areas with MX 8 mower.
- Provided 359 hours of horticultural assistance in the maintenance of the Arboretum grounds.

### **Osborn MetroPark**

- Surveillance cameras where added at the park.
- Fixed the mud hole issues at the entrance to the Erie MetroBark Park.
- OPK garden drainage issues fixed.
- Planted new trees to replace dead and declining trees around park.
- Forestry mowing with Natural Resources Department to control woody invasives in the meadows.
- Southwoods trees trimmed along property line that were over hanging homes.
- Frost Center south side sink hole repairs.
- Improvements made to the Perimeter Path.
- Public Garden Plots were plowed and prepped for the season and cleaned up afterwards.
- River gravel was added to beds in front of the Maple Grove Center.
- Replaced ADA sensory panel at the Rotary playground.



## **East Sandusky Bay MetroPark**

- Forestry mowing at the Steinen Life Estate.
- Food plot was planted on Parcel A at the Steinen Wildlife Area.
- Food plot was planted at the Life Estate.

## **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

### **Osborn MetroPark**

- Demolished the old barn at the Barnyard and added an addition to the Bicentennial Barn.
- New pickleball fence and wind screens where added to the east court.
- Maple Grove Center had repairs done. New door, soffit and gutters where installed and tree in front was trimmed.
- Frost Center had work done to the rotten wood on the exterior of building.
- Updated the Firelands room kitchenette.
- Frost Center– north wing flat roof leaks were repaired.





## Milan Towpath MetroPark

- The bridge was temporarily fixed with plywood deck.
- Milan Warehouse was slated for demo then leased to the Village of Milan.



## East Sandusky Bay– Enchanted Cottage area kayak launch

- New dock and ramp was installed at the Enchanted Cottage to fix the changing water levels and make it more accessible.





## Edison Woods MetroPark

- New restroom Installed at Mason Road equestrian lot.
- Tree work around lot was completed.
- High lines where installed by the Erie County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council.



- Trail work on Thornapple and West Oak Hickory Trails.



Barn at the Smokey Road office was painted and roof sealer was installed.





Daily life in the Operations Department...





## **IN-HOUSE WORK/ PROJECTS**

Projects which resulted in substantial cost savings to the Park District.

- Manufactured trash cans.
- Built a bench made of wood and epoxy, using the sawmill.
- Salt Spreader added to plow truck.
- Back up cameras added to Bobcat skid steer loader.



## **IN-HOUSE MECHANICAL WORK SAVINGS**

98 hours of in house work done by staff x \$20.52= \$2,010.96

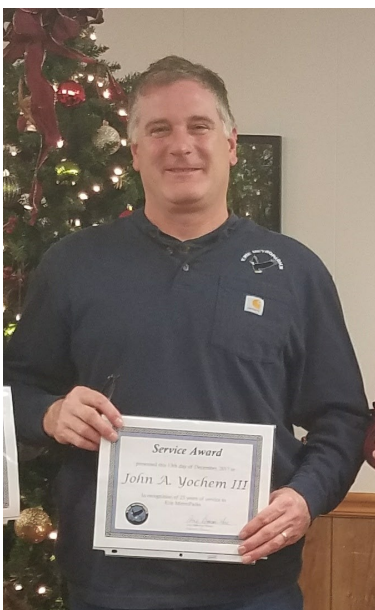
98 hours of work done at a dealership X @\$90.00= \$8,820.00

For an average savings of at least \$6,809.04 for the year.





# The DreamTeam!









## **EQUIPMENT ACQUISITIONS FOR 2021**

- 2021 John Deere Z970R Z Trak Mower.
- 2021 Ford F250 2 wheel drive.
- Bobcat Rock Hound attachment.



## **2021 TRAINING, CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

- Woodland, Wildlife and Water Conference (Virtual).
- Pesticide Applicator License Renewals all staff.
- In-house EMP safety training (including seasonal employees).

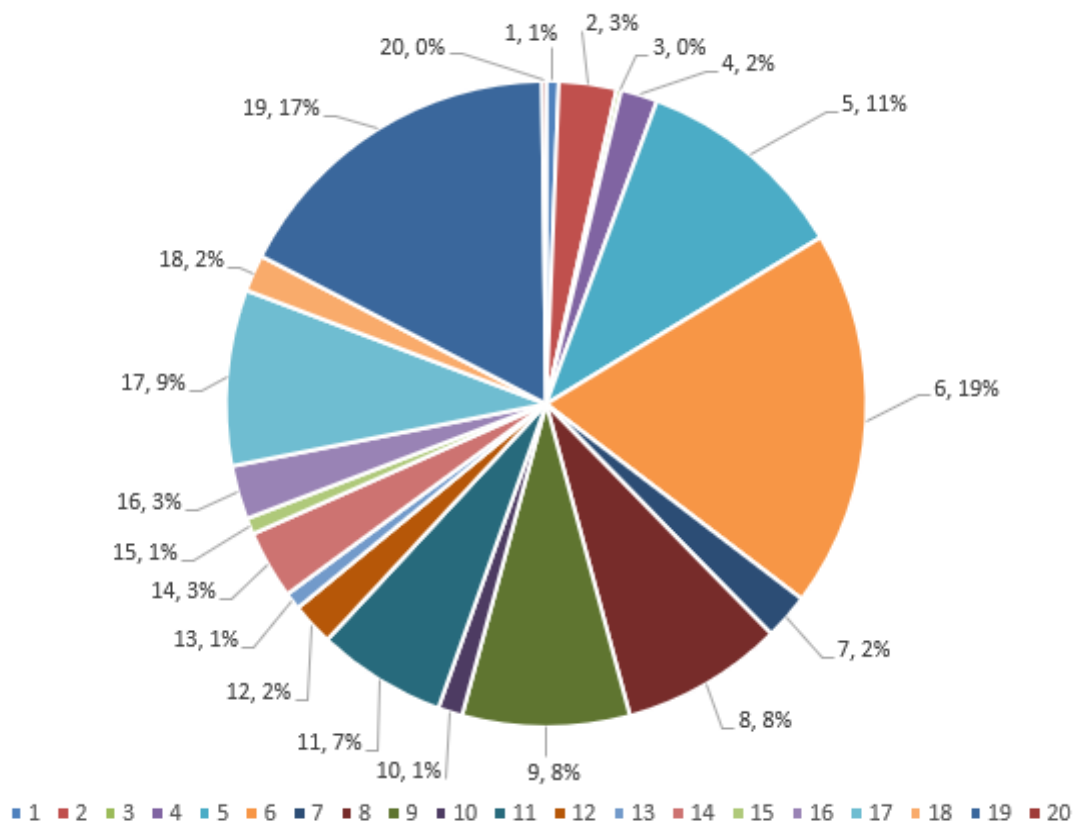
## **SPECIAL EVENTS THAT OPERATIONS STAFF PROVIDED PREP AND SUPPORT, HOST PARK**

- Cancelled due to Covid-19

## Tracking of Hours Spent On Each Task in 2021

Total hours spent on each task in 2021																					
2021	Task	BRM	CQR	TCR	DPM/HRP	ESB-EP	ESB-EC	ESB-PM	ESB-SWA	ESB-Wy	ESB-Barne	EWP	HFM	JMA	MTM	OPK	Offsite	PP	WBM	TWM	TOTAL
1	Invasive Species Control	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	4	20	4	34	0	0	20.50	0	0	0	0	82.5
2	Landscape Maintenance	4	0	1	0	3	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	3.5	0	330.50	0	0	28	0	379
3	Turf Maintenance		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	28.00	0	0	0	0	31
4	Lawn/Weed Control	4	0	10	0	1.5	17.5	1.5	1	1.5	0	24	2	26	1	149.50	0	0	2	0	241.5
5	Facility Maint./Repairs	11.5	112	108.5	9.5	4.5	23	0	0.5	10.5	2	59	10.5	0	13.5	1030.00	0	4	4.5	0	1403.5
6	Mowing	74.5	58	71.5	68	82	23.5	24	98	72	13.5	332.5	42	207.5	36	1203.50	0	32	31	0	2469.5
7	Lot/Driveway Maint.	0	20.5	56	6	5	1	0	26	2.5	0	6	8	0	0	169.00	0	0	0	0	300
8	Office Work/Mtg.	7	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1049.50	5	0	0	0	1067.5
9	Restroom Maintenance	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1097.00	0	0	0	0	1103
10	Snow Removal	0	21	9	4.5	2	4	0	0	1.5	0	19.5	5.5	0	2	91.00	0	1	0	0	161
11	Trail Work	0	241	7.5	13	34	0	0	4	4	14	268.5	17	0	32	195.00	0	19	0	0	849
12	Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	176.50	104	0	0	0	280.5
13	Tree Work	5	12	0	1	2	0	0	2.5	0	0	8	0	16	0	65.00	0	0	0	0	111.5
14	Spring/Fall Cleanup	8	4	26	6.5	22	26	0	0	2	0	52	4	106	2	183.00	0	1	5	0	447.5
15	Safety Ins/ Service Chks	6	6	23.5	0	3.5	9.5	0	0	0	0	13	3	0	10	26.50	0	1	4	0	106
16	Offsite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	352	0	0	0	352
17	Shop Time	0	16	10	0	0.5	2	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	1106.00	0	0	0	0	1148.5
18	Spec. Ev./Prog Asst.	0	1	0.5	0.5	2	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	166	0	0	0.5	65.00	2	0.5	0	0	240
19	Imp. Of Sites	0	0	19	1	0	237.5	0	0	0	0	823.5	0	0	9	1148.50	10	0	0	0	2248.5
20	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	4	0	0	0	0.00	5	0	0	0	27
	Totals	120	498.5	343.5	111	162	349	25.5	159.5	117.5	33.5	1825	93	359	107	8134	478	58.5	74.5	0	13049

**TOOTAL HOURS SPENT ON EACH TASK 2021**



# PARK MAINTENANCE

The grass needs mowed, trash needs picked up, and the park bathrooms need a fresh a coat of paint. Those who perform these necessary tasks often go unnoticed ... but we salute you for the job you do behind the scenes. No department could survive without you.

**The Erie MetroBark Park at  
Osborn MetroPark will be CLOSED  
Thursday, July 22, from  
7am to 1pm for routine maintenance**





## **2022 HIGHLIGHTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS – OPERATIONS**

### **Various Parks**

- Mowed back trails at all of the parks.
- Bluebird boxes maintained and new ones were installed.
- Forestry mowing with Natural Resources Department to control woody invasives.
- Prescribed burning with Natural Resource Department.
- Replenished engineered wood fiber mulch at all play areas.



### **Birmingham School MetroPark**

- Safety inspections.
- New fence toppers on ball field.

### **Castalia Quarry MetroPark**

- Ongoing trail improvements.
- Stabilized signage.
- Removed graffiti from structures.



### **James H. McBride Arboretum.**

- Brush cut mowing of special areas with forestry head mower.
- Work with arm mower and rock hound to improve areas.
- Provided 399 hours of horticultural assistance in the maintenance of the Arboretum grounds.

### **Edison Woods MetroPark**

- Erie County Chapter of Ohio Horseman's Council completed many hours of volunteer work to improve trails through out the park.
- Assisted Natural Resource Department with the Annual Controlled Deer Hunt.
- Staff restored benches and added retaining walls around them.



### **Osborn MetroPark**

- Continued to fix the mud hole issues at the entrance to the Erie MetroBark Park.
- Community garden area drainage issues fixed.
- Planted new trees to replace dead and declining trees around park.
- Forestry mowing with Natural Resources Department to control woody invasives in the meadows.

## **Osborn MetroPark continued**

- Removed shed from Maple Grove Center.
- Created a manure containment center at the Barnyard.
- Added mulch to all the areas around parks
- Trail improvements to the Southwoods trails.
- Volunteer painted the Northwoods restroom, staff replaced sinks.
- Improvements made to the Perimeter Path.
- Public Garden Plots were plowed and prepped for the season and cleaned up afterwards.
- Hazardous trees were removed from around the Maple Grove Center.
- Secured openings from bees entering at the Rotary playground.
- Replaced boards along the dog park fence.
- Volunteers revamped all the flower beds around the park.
- Retaining walls installed around the main entrance signs.
- Poured entry and table concrete pads around the park.

## **East Sandusky Bay MetroPark**

- Forestry head mowing at the Putnam Extension.
- Food plot was planted on Parcel A at the Steinen Wildlife Area.
- Food plot was planted at the Putnam Extension.
- Weed harvesting at Putnam Marsh Nature Preserve.

## **Wakefield MetroPark**

- All Operations staff workday to clean up the beach and green space.





## CAPITAL PROJECTS

### Osborn MetroPark

- Replaced the 30+ year old playground near Shelter #1 with a new one with safer surfacing.



- Tennis court was resurfaced and painted after vandalism.





- Finished renovations at the Barnyard area including a new fence and gate along the road and free manure containment area.





## Milan Towpath MetroPark

- The bridge deck was removed, a company was contracted and structurally repaired the underside of the bridge and staff replaced the decking and completed the project.
- The Jenkins Warehouse was slated for demo, then leased to the Village of Milan. A friends group is working to try to save the building and make it a historical/public space.



## East Sandusky Bay– Enchanted Cottage area

- New kayak launch was fabricated and installed by staff to make it more accessible, and easier to get the boats down to the water.
- Upgrades were made to the garage building to securely house water sport equipment.





## Edison Woods MetroPark

- Started working on the upgrades to the Adventure Walkway and it's signage, will continue in 2023.
- Staff revamped the entrance to the State Route 61 parking lots.



## Huron River Path MetroPark

- Installed the new roof on the Kara Deering Deck.





Daily life in the Operations Department...





## **IN-HOUSE WORK/ PROJECTS**

Projects which resulted in substantial cost savings to the Park District.

- Manufactured racks to hold tanks and other equipment in the Nature on Wheels (N.O.W.) Trailer.
- Manufactured rack to hold the Salt Dogg spreader.

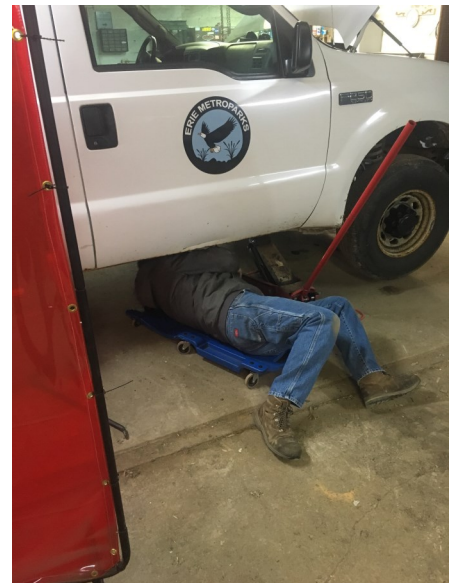


## **IN-HOUSE MECHANICAL WORK SAVINGS**

164 hours of in house work done by staff x \$21.26= \$3,486.64

146 hours of work done at a dealership X @\$90.00= \$13,140.00

For an average savings of at least \$9,653.36 for the year.









## **EQUIPMENT ACQUISITIONS FOR 2022**

2022 Tailgate mounted lift gate

2022 John Deere 333 G loader with mulching head and forks

2022 Ford F150 for programming

2022 Bobcat UW56-Toolcat



## **2022 TRAINING, CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

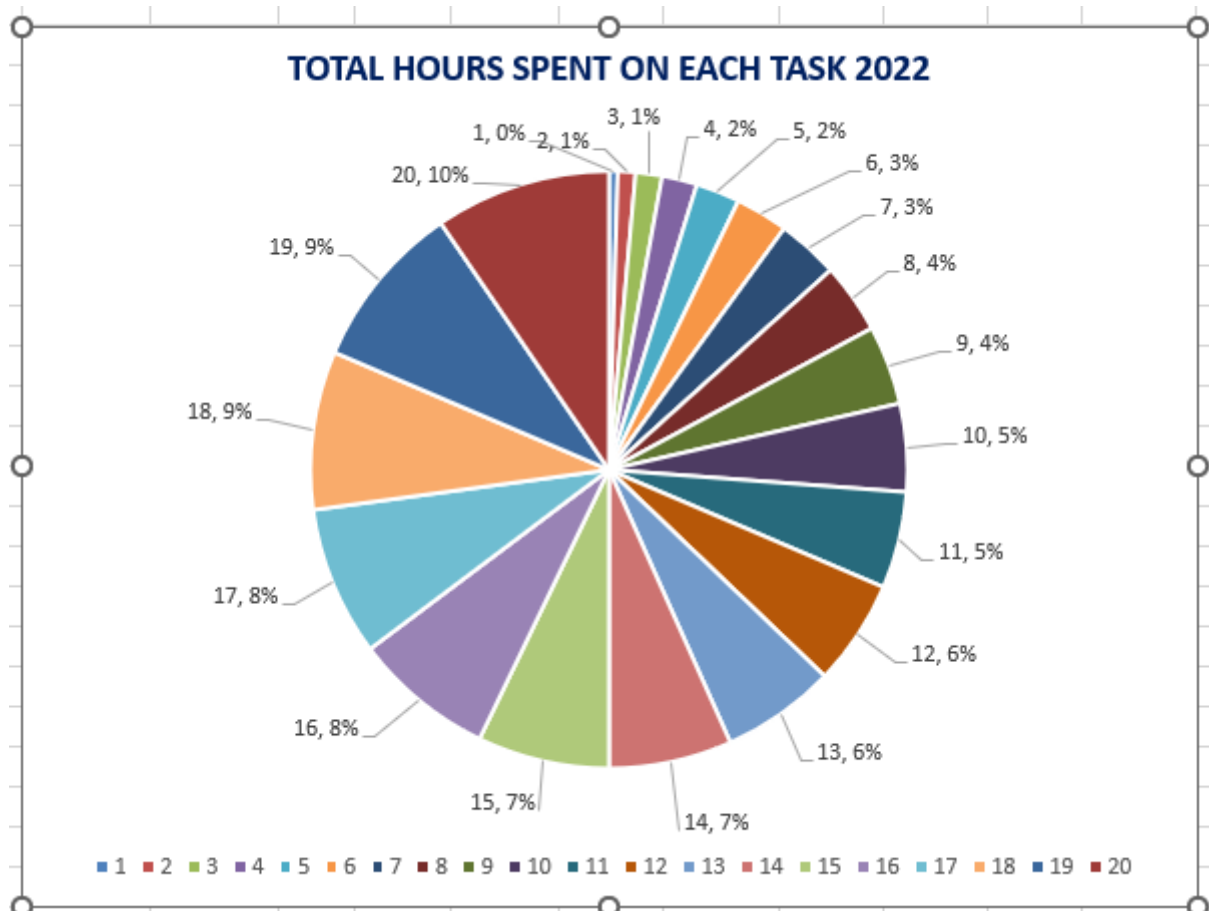
- Woodland, Wildlife and Water Conference.
- OPRA Conference and Trade Show-several employees.
- OPRA Leadership Summit- one manager.
- Pesticide Applicator License Renewals all staff.
- In-house EMP safety training (including seasonal employees).

## **SPECIAL EVENTS THAT OPERATIONS STAFF PROVIDED PREP AND SUPPORT, HOST PARK**

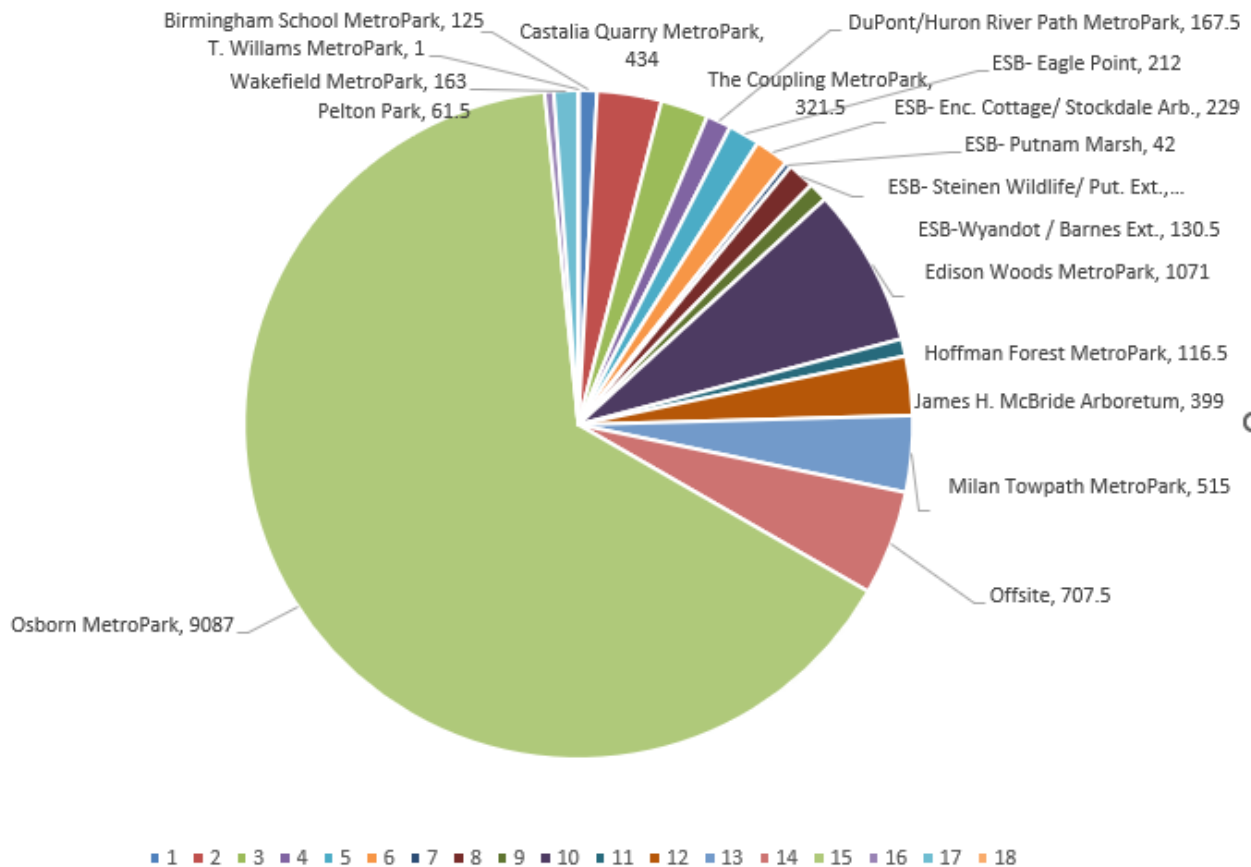
- Maple Sugaring Day
- Easter Egg Trail
- Earth Day Extravaganza
- Osborn Fall Fest

## Tracking of Hours Spent On Each Task in 2022

2022		Total hours spent on each task in 2022																					
Task	BRM	CQR	TCR	DPM/HR	ESB-EP	ESB-EC	ESB-PN	ESB-SWA	ESB-Wy	EWY	HFM	JMA	MTM	Offsite	OPK	PP	WBM	TWM	TOTALS				
1 Invasive Species Control	0	2	0	0	28	0	0	45	15	32	6	22	0	0	31.00	0	0	0	181				
2 Landscape Maintenance	0	0	0	0	18	6	0	0	0	0	0	48.5	0	0	218.50	0	0	0	291				
3 Turf Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	14	0	0	98.00	0	0	0	126				
4 Lawn/Weed Control	0	0	2	3	0	11.5	1	0	0	3	0	40	2	16	149.00	0	4	0	231.5				
5 Facility Maint./Repairs	23	110	149	25.5	5	7	0	5.5	10	130.5	14	7	12.5	0	1329.00	4	13	0	1845				
6 Mowing	59.5	55.5	73.5	41	70	39	37	82	70	268	42.5	161	29	15	1084.00	34	53	0	2214				
7 Lot/Driveway Maint.	12	20.5	8.5	13	16	0	4	5	3	13	6	0	0	0	32.00	0	0	0	133				
8 Office Work/Mtgs.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6.5	0	4	2	2	3.5	17	1077.00	1	5	0	1119				
9 Restroom Maintenance	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	1616.00	0	0	0	1632				
10 Snow Removal	4	32.5	2	27	4	2.5	0	0.5	0.5	23	4	0	4	0	115.50	2.5	1	0	223				
11 Trail Work	0	164	26	24	49	29	0	12	17	301	37	0	36	16	142.50	10	0	0	863.5				
12 Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	194	124.50	0	0	0	321				
13 Tree Work	15.5	12	6	13	0	4	0	0	0	48.5	1	23	0	21	109.50	9	3	0	265.5				
14 Spring/Fall Cleanup	6	25.5	13.5	0	12	49.5	0	0	0	5	2	80.5	0	0	170.50	0	71	0	435.5				
15 Safety Ins/ Service Chks	5	1	28	9.5	2	8	0	10	5	17	2	0	3	0	51.00	1	0	1	143.5				
16 Offsite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	367	0.00	0	0	0	367				
17 Shop Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	25	0	1	0	0	1505.50	0	0	0	1532.5				
18 Spec. Ev./Prog Asst.	0	0	0	7	4	0	0	0	0	124	0	0	0	13.5	240.50	0	0	0	389				
19 Imp. Of Sites	0	0	13	3.5	4	72.5	0	0	10	69	0	0	422.5	8	983.50	0	13	0	1599				
20 Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	40	9.50	0	0	0	53.5				
Totals	125	434	321.5	167.5	212	229	42	182.5	130.50	1071.00	116.50	399.00	515.00	707.50	9087.00	61.50	163.00	1.00	13965.5				



### TIME SPENT AT EACH PARK 2022



2022			
TOTAL HOURS SPENT AT EACH PARK			
		Hours	Labor Cost
1	Birmingham School MetroPark	125	\$ 2,657.50
2	Castalia Quarry MetroPark	434	\$ 9,226.84
3	The Coupling MetroPark	321.5	\$ 6,835.09
4	DuPont/Huron River Path MetroPa	167.5	\$ 3,561.05
5	ESB- Eagle Point	212	\$ 4,507.12
6	ESB- Enc. Cottage/ Stockdale Arb.	229	\$ 4,868.54
7	ESB- Putnam Marsh	42	\$ 892.92
8	ESB- Steinen Wildlife/ Put. Ext.	182.5	\$ 3,879.95
9	ESB-Wyandot / Barnes Ext.	130.5	\$ 2,774.43
10	Edison Woods MetroPark	1071	\$ 22,769.46
11	Hoffman Forest MetroPark	116.5	\$ 2,476.79
12	James H. McBride Arboretum	399	\$ 8,482.74
13	Milan Towpath MetroPark	515	\$ 10,948.90
14	Offsite	707.5	\$ 15,041.45
15	Osborn MetroPark	9087	\$193,189.62
16	Pelton Park	61.5	\$ 1,307.49
17	Wakefield MetroPark	163	\$ 3,465.38
18	T. Williams MetroPark	1	\$ 21.26
Totals		13965.5	\$296,906.53





# ATTENTION RESIDENTS

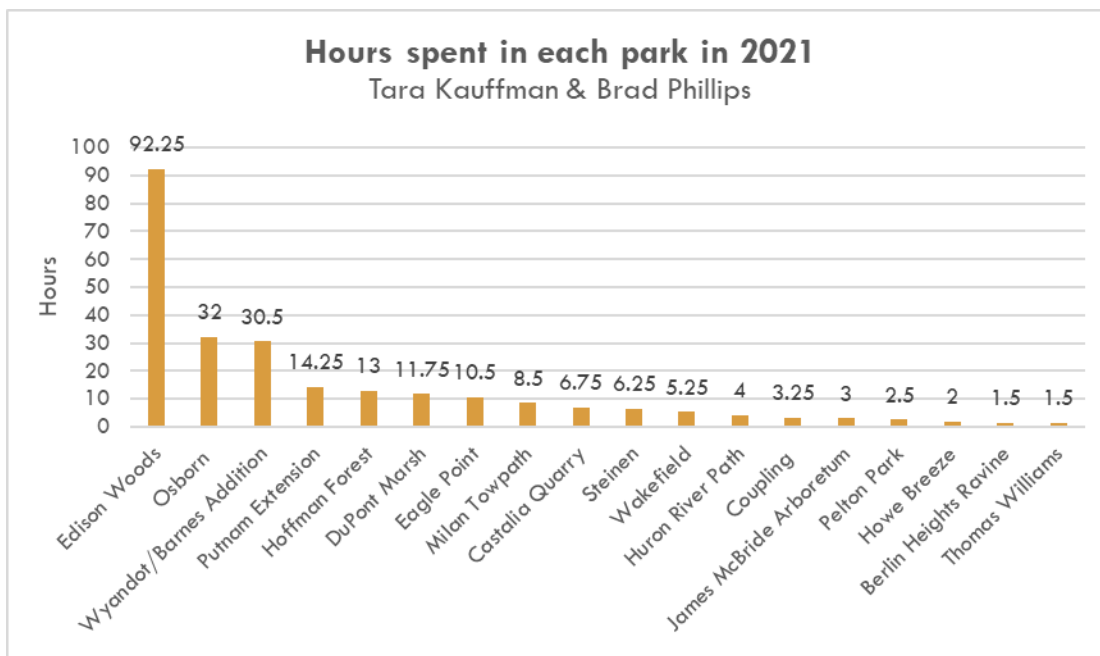
**PLEASE REMOVE OR  
SECURE ALL VALUABLES  
FROM YOUR VEHICLE  
WHEN VISITING OUR  
PARKS. ALSO, LOCK  
YOUR CAR AND TAKE  
YOUR KEYS. THANK YOU.**

## **2021 NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

This report entails a summary of natural resources projects and updates throughout the park district. Conservation efforts and management decisions are carried out by Tara Kauffman and Brad Phillips.



Below is a graph showing our hours spent in each park throughout the year. Note Tara Kauffman was out on maternity leave for 3 months.



### **Controlled Burns/ Meadow Management**

The burn season in 2021 was again hampered by wet spring conditions and early green-up. Burns were completed at Edison Woods, Wyandot Meadows and McBride Arboretum. The east half of the field at Mason Road and the main field at Wyandot burned very well. The prairie planting areas as well as the northeast meadow at McBride Arboretum burned fairly well. Overall burns totaled 120 acres





Due to wet conditions and limited time with the mowing fecon attachment, most of the areas that were planned to be mowed in 2021 did not happen. A small section in the phase II area of the dog park was mowed at Osborn MetroPark in addition to a small section in field 2, off route 61 at Edison Woods MetroPark.

### **MetroPark Property Projects**

Lakeside Daisy, a state endangered, and federally threatened species continued to be monitored in 2021 on the North Rim, West Cove and Upper South Rim at Castalia Quarry MetroPark. Seedlings and flowering plants were found at all three locations and are increasing and spreading each year. There was minimal damage noted, a pile of daisies was found pulled out of the ground. Since establishment in 2012, seeds have been dispersed yearly by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this year's seeding took place in November. A 5-year census was completed in 2021 to evaluate the population. The census results estimated there was 66,711 individual plants at Castalia Quarry MetroPark.

Map 8. Castalia Quarry





The Inland Sea Rocket (*Cakile edulenta*) at Wakefield MetroPark was once again abundant in 2021. The plants are still found a little higher on the beach as the sand has moved higher up to the grass area with weather patterns and beach grooming in past years. Common milkweed is still abundant around the areas the sea rocket is growing. These plants were flagged so they would not get mowed down as it is an important source for Monarchs.

Milkweed seeds were harvested during the fall from several parks to allow us to have a seed bank for future seeding. Seeds were dispersed at both pollinator patches in late fall and offered to the public. We also coordinated with First Energy to give away Red Bud tree saplings to the public in celebration of Earth Day.

### **Property Updates**

The land clearing project at Putnam Extension (former Steinen Life-Estate property) began in 2018. 7 acres of nursery stock were cleared, root raked, and seeded with Annual Rye. In 2019 the 7 acres was seeded with a bird, buck, and brood mix and a cool season grass mix. Also, the thick understory was cleared out around the Locust trees. In 2021, this field was dominated by Sweet Clovers, with other legumes in smaller amounts. Goldenrod, Queen Ann's Lace, Chicory, Foxtail and various other weedy species were also found. Small areas were cultivated and planted to annual food stocks for wildlife.

### **Invasive and Nuisance Species Control**

Crowley's was contracted out to spray an estimated 26 acres of Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife at Eagle Point & Steinen Wildlife Area Parcel A. They also sprayed an estimated 2 acres of Phragmites within Hemminger Ditch.

Aqua Doc continued their 3 plant sampling surveys in Putnam Marsh. 17 different plants were sampled. The density of Eurasian Watermilfoil was found to peak in June and decline later in the growing season. Sago Pondweed, Coontail and Eel Grass remain the dominate plants within the bay. High growth years such as 2021 can be correlated with lower lake levels and high-water clarity. It was proposed to use the chemical ProcettaCOR to cut down on a section of heavy growth. We may move forward with this recommendation if conditions remain the same come 2022.

A test plot was set up at Eagle Point in a small (.2 acres), enclosed body of water to test the treatment of European Frog-bit with the use of Clipper SC. The 3-part program included initial application, site visit/re-treatment, and final evaluation with written report. The EFB test plot with Clipper SC was successful. It went from 100% biomass to none after the first treatment and no EFB at the follow up visit. This spot was unique as it was a dense layer of EFB with not a lot of other vegetation mixed in. This chemical would also kill other aquatic vegetation and EFB is typically intermixed with other aquatic vegetation.



Park staff continued with efforts to manage, monitor and map invasive and nuisance plant species in 2021. **Purple Loosestrife** at Edison Woods, Barnes Addition, Steinen (A), and Eagle Point. **Callery Pear** at Osborn. **Lesser Celandine** at DuPont Marsh, Edison Woods, Huron River Path and Hoffman Forest. **Poison Hemlock** at Edison Woods, Milan Towpath, and Wyandot/Barnes Extension.

The primary materials used for control are Glyphosate based products, which include Roundup and other brands for uplands and Rodeo brand for wetland applications. A Triclopyr based product (Element brand) was used for woody plant control on a spot treatment basis

### **Controlled Deer Hunt & Steinen Youth Lottery**

Erie MetroParks has conducted a yearly deer count since 2012 to determine the estimated deer population. Those population numbers along with documentation of deer browsing has supported having small, controlled hunts to reduce the deer herd and provide Ohio sportsman hunting opportunities. 103 deer, 89 within park boundaries, were counted during an aerial deer count on January 29th, 2021. Erie MetroParks successfully conducted the 10th controlled hunt in 2021.

During a portion of the state-wide deer gun week (November 29th – December 3rd) a controlled deer hunt was put on at Edison Woods MetroPark. A lottery card drawing was held for an adult only deer gun hunt. Each application was \$5 to apply, and multiple applications were permitted.

For each day, Monday-Friday, 6 names were drawn totaling 30 hunters. Each of those selected hunters could bring a partner to hunt on a designated day until noon, for a total of 60 hunters. On Thursday we had one no show group and on Friday we had one group call off. 3 mobility impaired hunters were drawn this year. A hunting blind was set up on the boardwalk in Zone 8 for easy accessibility. Rules and Regulations, Erie MetroParks permit, location map and zone maps were sent out to each hunter in advanced, giving each hunter an opportunity to scout out their zone prior. We received a total of 498 entries for the controlled hunt.

20 deer were harvested during the 5-day hunt. Of those 20, 5 were bucks or button bucks and 15 were does. We continue to receive positive feedback on the hunting opportunity we provide.



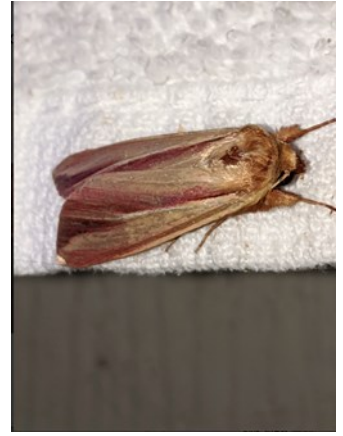
Once again, the Ohio Division of Wildlife had the Steinen Youth Lottery all online and offered permits for archery only. 5 youth archery permits were issued.

### **Wildlife/Plant Surveys**

In anticipation of a public Bio-blitz to showcase the Putnam Extension, an overall biological inventory was begun in 2020 by staff and continued in 2021. Total species found on the property came to 644 species, with 162 bird species, 336 plant species, and the rest were in other categories like reptiles, mammals and invertebrates. The higher lake levels have enhanced a wetland habitat along the north edge of the property, and numerous native wetland species were found there. Surveys of the property will continue in 2022.

Mike Hensley and Martyn Drabik-Hamshare, park Naturalists documented several endangered, threatened, species of concern and special interest plant and animal species within the park system. The Endangered Unexpected Cynia moth (*Cynia collaris*) (first image below) was found again at Eagle Point. Threatened species include Prairie Ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*) (second image below), Newman's brocade moth (*Meroplon ambifusca*) (third image below), Pink streak moth (*Dargida rubripennis*) (fourth image below), Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) at Eagle Point and Trumpeter Swan were found at Wyandot MetroPark. Species of concern were American Coot, Great Egret, Prothonotary Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Big Brown Bat and Eastern Fox Snake. Ohio's special interest species include American Black Duck, Blue-headed Vireo, Brown Creeper, Canada Warbler, Common Merganser, Dark-eyed Junco, Gadwall, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Green-winged Teal, Hermit Thrush, Magnolia Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Shoveler, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Redhead.





Following the Division of Wildlife's bat roost monitoring protocols, 2 surveys were conducted in 2021 at Edison Woods, Smokey Road, house where bat presence has been observed in previous years. The first survey took place in June before the bats had pups. 103 were counted leaving the attic of the house. The second survey was in July once the bats had pups. 116 bats were counted leaving the roost. This data was submitted to the Division of Wildlife. Bat guano was collected by Martyn Drabik-Hamshare and Tara Kauffman and sent off for DNA analysis at Northern Arizona University to determine bat species. Results determined that the species is Big Brown Bat. A follow up winter survey was done to determine if these bats overwintered at this roost. We found no winter bat activity. However, we did find 1 dead Big brown bat in the rafters.



Monica Klarer, one of Erie MetroParks volunteers monitors the boxes that are at Osborn MetroPark. Out of the 16 boxes she monitored, she had 4 successful bluebird nest and 3 fledglings, 10 tree swallow nests and 22 fledglings. She is moving on from being our bluebird volunteer so the natural resources and programming department will be picking it up and incorporating monitoring into some public programming.

A new wood duck box was installed at Eagle Point in the first marsh you come to headed to the observation deck. An Eastern Screech-owl box was put up in the South Woods to provide some overwintering habitat (see pictures below). Also, 4 Prothonotary Warbler boxes were installed at Eagle Point and Barnes Addition from Western Reserve (see picture below).



As in prior years, sites visits were done at Berlin Heights Ravine, Thomas Williams MetroPark, Wakefield MetroPark and Howe Breeze Hill Farm to check on compliance with the easement restrictions. Walk-throughs with Western Reserve were done at Milan Towpath and Hoffman Forest. Most other parks were visited at least once, if not more, to record bird and other wildlife species. Over 200 bird species were found in our parks both in 2020 and 2021, thanks to increased study by our naturalist staff new species found include Lark Sparrow at Putnam Marsh and Black Vulture at Edison Woods. Over 230 bird species have been found by staff in the last 25 years.

Several special permits are issued every year for numerous studies and projects throughout Erie MetroParks properties. The following permits have been issued for natural resource related projects.

John Lavelle continued to catalog the microscopic animals that live in the waters of wetlands and ephemeral pools throughout the parks. A one-liter sample of water will be removed several times a year for this study. His permit has been approved to continue into 2022.

### **Edison Woods MetroPark:**

The University of Akron Research Foundation along with John Blakeman were permitted to collect soil samples, up to 5 vertical bores one meter in depth from forest soils within Edison Woods. These soil samples will be used to authenticate the soil chemistry analysis of new, portable soil chemistry devices under development. With those devices soil chemistry of both farm and forest soils will be accurately assessed, for a multitude of conservation purposes.

Bowling Green State University continued research in conjunction with data collected previously by the US Forest Service on the Emerald Ash Borer. 3 plots will be set up to assess native and non-native plants, canopy openness, tree species diversity and population dynamics of surviving ash populations. Sticky purple traps for EAB will be placed near the plots at the beginning of the summer and taken down in the fall.

Ohio Department of Health was authorized to conduct tick surveillance by dragging a white cloth along the ground over vegetation at the edge of the trails for a minimum of 750 meters. Ticks will be removed for identification.

### **The Coupling MetroPark/ Hoffman Forest MetroPark:**

Terri Nagao with USDA APHIS PPQ requested to hang 5 tree-hanging insect traps for the purpose of conducting the 2021 USDA Exotic Woodboring/Bark Beetle Survey. The 2021 survey was to begin in late March and continue through September. USDA technicians will set the lured Lindgren and cross-vane panel traps, as well as perform collections and trap maintenance every two weeks throughout the survey season.

Jennifer Bucheit of Old Woman Creek NERR and participants were permitted to collect water samples at Hoffman Forest MetroPark and The Coupling MetroPark as part of their Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program. All samples were returned to the stream after they have been identified.

### **Steinen Life-Estate:**

West Huron Youth Club authorized to hunt and trap on park property in designated areas during appropriate seasons. They are also permitted to hold a club event, which included campfire, fishing release arrows and tomahawks in designated areas, shoot bb guns and have dogs off leash.

### **Wyandot/Barnes Extension:**

Gary Toll was authorized to place duck boxes in various locations along East Sandusky Bay, they will be put in mid-March and removed in mid-October. He also put-up fencing to protect turtle eggs in May-June at Barnes. It will remain up until the turtles are ready to be released in August and September.



## **Social Media Outreach**

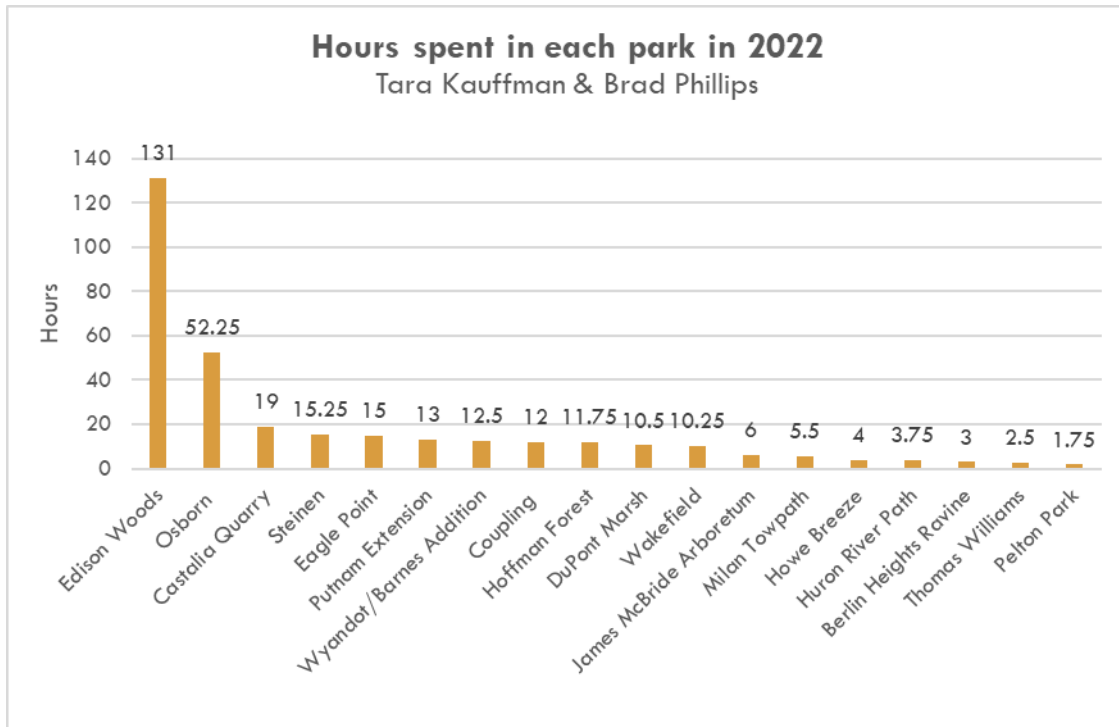
Since the pandemic Erie MetroParks has ramped up their educational outreach through social media. Information was posted on Facebook and Instagram stories weekly featuring different topics related to natural resources and what we were doing in the field during that time. Below is a list of some of those topics.

SWA open to the public, what is your favorite MetroPark?  
Invasives in your backyard, resource for controlling them, resource for planting alternatives  
Exploring nature in winter, eagle nest, ducks, tracks, CQR  
Nest boxes, Eastern Screech Owl videos utilizing a wood duck box  
7 species of woodpeckers in Ohio, video/pictures/facts  
All about Beech Leaf Disease and what you can do to help  
All about Spotted Lanternfly, identification and where to report sightings  
Skunk mating season and facts  
Phragmites facts  
Wood duck box maintenance  
Installing Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes  
Red tailed hawk nest at Putnam Extension, hawk live cam  
Celebrating National Native Plant Month  
Prescribed burning education at Edison Woods, Mason Road  
Controlled deer hunt reminder  
Milkweed seed outreach  
CWD Kiosk, drawing hunt names  
Showcasing Hoffman Forest MetroPark and the park features there  
All about Wolly Bear Caterpillars  
Bluebird box maintenance  
Installing Eastern Screech-owl nest box and why  
Deer hunt, Edison Woods reopening  
What can you do with our live Christmas tree after the holidays? Wildlife habitat

## **2022 NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

This report entails a summary of natural resources projects and updates throughout the park district. Conservation efforts and management decisions are carried out by Tara Kauffman and Brad Phillips.

Below is a graph showing our hours spent in each park throughout the year.



### **Controlled Burns/ Meadow Management**

Our overall strategies in meadow management aim to arrest woody succession, delaying the normal process of woody plants returning open areas to woodlands. This fits our overall goal of maintaining high habitat diversity. Our strategies include burning, mowing, and chemical control.

The burn season in 2022 was again hampered by unfavorable winds and early green-up. Burns were completed at Steinen Wildlife Area and McBride Arboretum. The east portion at SWA burned well near the road, but less well at the north end. The prairie planting areas as well as the northeast meadow at McBride Arboretum burned fairly well. Overall burns totaled 70 acres.





Our in house feacon mowing attachment was utilized to mow woody sections throughout the park system where prescribed burning and chemical control wasn't as effective. 15 acres within the Osborn MetroPark meadows was mowed. At James McBride Arboretum thick woody patches within the meadows off Boos Road were mowed. A perimeter path was mowed in the front section of Putnam Extension re-opening the drive lane. Parts of field 2, off route 61 at Edison Woods was mowed with the feacon unit to reduce brush cover that was growing in a wet zone. Thick patches within field 12, off of Smokey Road was also mowed at Edison Woods

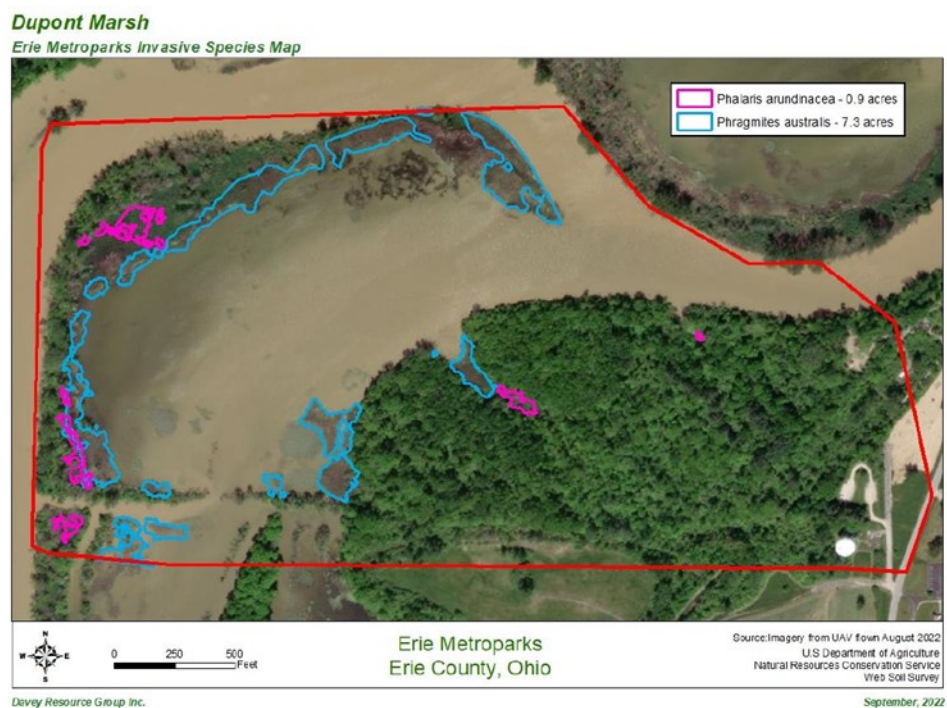
### **Invasive and Nuisance Species Control**

Crowley's was contracted out to spray an estimated 12 acres of variable coverage of invasives such as Honeysuckle, Phragmites, Red Cedar, Privet & Glossy Buckthorn at Castalia Quarry MetroPark within the mitigation area. The treatment area encompassed the northern portion of the park along the mitigation pools. Crowley's was also awarded a job at Barnes Addition to treat Common and/or Cut-leaved Teasel and Reed Canary Grass during the spring once teasel rosettes were large enough to be seen.

Aqua Doc continued their 3 plant sampling surveys in Putnam Marsh. A total of 15 sampling points were collected from the treatment's areas, with 5 control sampling points outside the treatment area. 15 different aquatic plants were sampled. The mean biomass was slightly less than observed in 2021, however the plant composition was less desirable, being dominated by invasive Eurasian Watermilfoil. A significant amount of growth of Coontail, Southern Naiad and Sago Pondweed was also found, although these species are native. Recommended in 2021, we decided to move forward with an aquatic herbicide application in 2022 in Zone 1 to primarily target invasive Eurasian Watermilfoil, Southern Naiad and Coontail to reduce dense vegetation, which turned out to be a highly effective treatment strategy.

An Eco harvester was hired by the residents along the chausse to “remove” vegetation along the boating channel to improve navigation. Additional vegetation removal by the Eco harvester was completed per Erie MetroParks. Short term results did seem to improve navigation but may not be cost effective for long term management.

To put some management focus at DuPont Marsh State Nature Preserve, we hired Davey Resource Group to do an invasive species survey of the marsh so we could get a better idea of invasive cover for management decisions. They utilized their specialized drone to do a fly over to gather data. The marsh portion was dominated by Phragmites 7.3ac and Reed Canary Grass .9ac of the site. Chemical treatment is recommended to combat the invasives mentioned, which will be considered in 2023.



Park staff continued with efforts to manage, monitor and map invasive and nuisance plant species throughout the park system in 2022.

**Japanese Knotweed** was cut and chemically treated in the NE section at Wakefield in a response to clean up the area of overgrown vegetation to allow for a better view scape to Lake Erie/Vermilion River.

**Purple Loosestrife** was chemically treated along the edge of the North mitigation pool Edison Woods MetroPark to reduce the spread and risk of choking out Rose Mallow and other desirable wetland plants.





**Autumn Olive** and **Callery Pear** that was scattered throughout the meadows was chemically treated at Osborn and Steinen Wildlife Area. Treatment was necessary because some of these areas are not responsive to prescribed fire and grow back when mechanical control is used.

**European Frog-bit** was still found along Putnam Marsh/Plum Brook shoreline but further away from the shoreline because of the dropped Lake Erie water levels. No large accessible patches were found to justify any hand pulling efforts. The small, enclosed body of water that was a chemical treatment test plot in 2021 at Eagle Point remained free from EFB.

**Lesser Celandine** at DuPont Marsh, Edison Woods and Hoffman Forest continues to be spot treated as found. Overall population was down, but number of locations found remains high.

**Poison Hemlock** at Edison Woods, Milan Towpath, DuPont and Wyandot/Barnes Addition. This is found in small populations along the Railroad at EWP, under the power line on the towpath, a couple plants at Dupont and several patches at WMP. All were sprayed as found.

**Teasel** flowering heads were cut at Wyandot to prevent seeding.

The primary materials used for control are Glyphosate based products, which include Roundup and other brands for uplands and Rodeo brand for wetland applications. A Triclopyr based product (Element brand) was used for woody plant control on a spot treatment basis.

The pollinator patch at Osborn MetroPark was starting to get some woody growth, so cut and chemical treatment was done to remove those plants.



### **Species Updates**

The rare Inland Sea Rocket (*Cakile edulenta*) continues to be found yearly on the east part of the beach at Wakefield MetroPark, however fewer plants were found this year. Common milkweed is continuing to spread around the area as well. These areas were marked by flagging to protect them from the mow crew. Lake levels continued to decline in 2022 from record highs, though still above average. The beach is ongoing maintenance as debris washes up on shore often. A workday was organized to clean up the overgrown vegetation and the abundance of driftwood.

Milkweed seeds were harvested during the fall from Osborn MetroPark and Steinen Wildlife Area. Seeds were dispersed in the pollinator patch and meadows at Osborn in late fall. Dried seeds were offered to the public and given out during a program as well.

The threatened Leafy Blue Flag or Zigzag Iris (*Iris brevicaulis*) that has been previously found in/along the creek bed at DuPont Marsh was found on again 6-17-2022. 6 plants were growing in the creek bed. There was some woody growth in and around the iris population, so it is planned to cut the woodies and open that area up in 2023.

### **Controlled Deer Hunt & Steinen Youth Lottery**

Erie MetroParks has conducted a yearly deer count since 2012 to determine the estimated deer population. Those population numbers along with documentation of deer browsing has supported having small, controlled hunts to reduce the deer herd and provide Ohio sportsman hunting opportunities. 75 deer were counted during our in-house deer survey. Erie MetroParks successfully conducted the 11th controlled hunt in 2022.



During a portion of the state-wide deer gun week (November 28<sup>th</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup>) a controlled deer hunt was put on at Edison Woods MetroPark. A lottery card drawing was held for an adult only deer gun hunt. Each application was \$5 to apply, and multiple application was permitted. For each day, Monday-Friday, 6 names were drawn totaling 30 hunters. Each of those selected hunters could bring a partner to hunt on a designated day until noon, for a total of 60 hunters. We had 1 no show group on Monday, Thursday, and Friday due to illness. On 2 of the hunt days there was a group that had just 1 hunter due to their partner not being able to. Rules and Regulations, Erie MetroParks permit, location map and zone maps were sent out to each hunter in advanced, giving each hunter an opportunity to scout out their zone prior. We received a record total of 735 entries for the controlled hunt.

Edison Woods Controlled Deer Hunt Totals											
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Deer Totals	19	18	21	11	10	23	22	25	27	20	11



Once again, the Ohio Division of Wildlife had the Steinen Youth Lottery all online and offered permits for archery only. 5 youth archery permits were issued.

## **Wildlife/Plant Surveys**

During one of our hikes in Barnes Addition and Edison Woods MetroPark a few Beech trees were discovered showing signs of distress like what is being found with European Beech Disease. Early symptoms include dark stripes between veins of leaves and crinkling of leaves, which is what was noted on the trees we found. No treatment is currently available for trees affected. Affected trees were reported via the Tree Health Survey app where the information was verified.



Langdon's Root Moth



Newman's Brocade Moth

While doing moth surveys Naturalist, Mike Hensley found another uncommon moth called the Langdon's Root Moth (*Polygrammodes langdonalis*). It is unique due to only being found in small populations in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. This is the furthest record North so far. Also state threatened Newman's Brocade Moth, and the rare Unexpected Cynia moth were all found at Eagle Point in 2022.

Following the Division of Wildlife's bat roost monitoring protocols, 2 surveys were conducted in 2022 at Edison Woods, Smokey Road, house where bat presence has been observed in previous years. The first survey took place in June before the bats had pups. 57 were counted leaving the attic of the house. The second survey was in July once the bats had pups. 33 bats were counted leaving the roost. Numbers were lower than the first count, when we expected them to be higher. It is unknown if the bats left the roost sooner or were exiting from another unknown spot on the house. This data was submitted to the Division of Wildlife.

Erie Environmental was hired to do a complete attic clean-up at the Smokey Road house at Edison Woods, removing all bat guano that had been building up for years. They did a thorough job and our operations staff laid tarps down in the attic to hopefully allow for easier cleanup in the future.





Natural resource and program staff carried out bluebird monitoring in the 16 boxes at Osborn MetroPark in 2022. Monitoring consisted of checking each nest box twice a week March through July and filling out data sheets on nesting activity. All data was inputted into NestWatch at the end of the season. Below are the summary results for the bluebird box trail. There were 27 Tree Swallows and 10 Bluebirds that fledged. There were 2 House Wren nesting attempts that was not successful. 4 House Sparrow nesting attempts which we intervened and removed. House sparrows can cause many problems for native birds, including competing for nesting sites, even killing adult birds, hatchlings, and eggs. They take over food sources and reducing diversity at feeders; and crowding out less aggressive birds from traditional ranges and habitats.



Several special permits are issued every year for numerous studies and projects throughout Erie MetroParks properties. The following permits have been issued for natural resource related projects.

John Lavelle continued to catalog the microscopic animals that live in the waters of wetlands and ephemeral pools throughout the parks. A one-liter sample of water will be removed several times a year for this study. His permit has been approved to continue into 2023.

Ohio Department of Health was authorized to conduct tick surveillance by dragging a 2-3 foot white cloth along the ground over vegetation at the edge of the trails for a minimum of 750 meters. Ticks will be removed for identification. The study was approved for Osborn, Wyandot, Joseph Steinen Wildlife Area, and Edison Woods.

#### **Putnam Marsh:**

Authorization was given to Roger Franklin and the Cedar Point Road Residents to hire and pay a private company to use a marsh mower along Putnam Marsh. They will “mow” a 1.5 mile by 100-200 foot swatch from shore. The clippings will be removed to a preauthorized lot to be dried and disposed of at a later date.

#### **Hoffman Forest:**

Jennifer Bucheit of Old Woman Creek NERR and participants were permitted to collect water samples from the stream at Hoffman Forest MetroPark to perform a macroinvertebrate study. All samples were returned to the stream after they have been identified.

Dr. Bossley and participants in the Stone Lab Aquatic Invertebrates Class are permitted to collect specimens of macroinvertebrates at Hoffman Forest as part of their aquatic class. Kick seine nets, dip nets, and buckets will be used.

#### **Steinen Life-Estate:**

West Huron Youth Club was authorized to hunt and trap on park property in designated areas during appropriate seasons. They were also permitted to hold a club event involving shot guns and bows and arrow, including firearm safety and training for youth. In addition to a “Day in the Outdoors” event which included cooking over a campfire, fishing, archery, tomahawk throwing, bb gun target shoot, and a dog retrieving show for the youth.

#### **Wyandot/Barnes Addition:**

Gary Toll was authorized to place duck boxes in various locations along East Sandusky Bay, they will be put in mid-March and removed in mid-October. He also put-up fencing to protect turtle eggs in May-June at Barnes Addition. It will remain up until the turtles are ready to be released in August and September.



**Pelton Park:**

Erie Soil & Water Conservation District received a special permit to perform a short-term, bat monitoring study, to understand where, when and how bat populations change over time. Bat detectors were placed within Pelton Park April through August which recorded bat calls within the area.

Mark Janowich from the Erie County Health Department was approved to apply a granular larvicide material to prevent mosquito breeding in standing water areas around Pelton Park. Chemical name and chemical application and authorization record sheet will be obtained prior to application.

**Castalia Quarry:**

The Chicago Botanic Garden Science Department was granted permission to collect leaves from the Lakeside daisy at Castalia Quarry MetroPark. 1 flowering head from 35 individual plants would be taken to be stored in Chicago Botanic Garden for DNA extraction, and then will be destroyed because of the process.

**Social Media Outreach**

Below is a list of topics that was featured on Facebook and Instagram stories related to natural resources and what we were doing in the field during that time.

Erie county eagle nest, winter eagle nest viewing

Animal tracks in the snow, can you ID this track?

OPRA networking event in Akron

Checking big brown bat roost to see if they are overwintering, image

How to make a pinecone bird feeder (winter storm)

Skunk mating season facts

New mobility hunting blind

Wood duck box maintenance

Cleaning out blue bird boxes

No seagulls, all gulls have a scientific name, picture of largest gull

April National Native Plant month—highlighted 4 native plants

April National Native Plant month—highlighted Wild Geranium, Common Buttonbush, and a plant this not that image

## **Social Media Outreach continued**

April National Native Plant month—highlighted Jewelweed, Swamp Milkweed and Redosier Dogwood

April National Native Plant month—highlighted Mayapple and scarlet beebalm

Prescribed burn at JMA

Bluebird box check, first bluebird egg of the year

Birding—biggest week in American birding (warblers)

Lakeside Daisy at CQR

Beech Leaf Disease

Inland Sea Rocket survey

Reporting and viewing monarch migration on journey north

Pollinator week, facts about pollinators

Steinen youth archery lottery details

Zig-zag iris at DuPont Marsh

The day on the Wildside fishing event

The Edison Woods deer hunt notice

SWA native plants

New gray rat snake—grey treefrog

Building bat boxes with Erie Conservation

Marking hunt zones at Edison Woods

Monarch life cycle—chrysalis picture found at OPK

Bat box installation at Edison Woods

Perkins Police Senior Health Safety Fair

Controlled Hunt winners notified

When and how to collect and extract milkweed seeds

Trail camera footage

Edison Woods Closed

CWD station at Edison Woods



# 2021 Volunteer Department Summary Report

Volunteer activities were able to resume in limited ways during 2021. There were new visitors interested in volunteering as a way to get outside and to give back. Opportunities were found for these individuals to help and to stay safe. Some of the volunteer activities included trail monitoring, an Eagle Scout Project, train rides, bee keeping, and trail improvements.

Erie MetroParks is also very fortunate to have three organizations that support the park system; Friends of Erie MetroParks (FEMP), Erie County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council (OHC), and the Erie Metro Live Steamers (EMLS). These groups contribute through both time and financial support and have a positive impact on the communities awareness of Erie MetroParks.

The Friends of Erie MetroParks were able to hold worknights and help with the trail refurbishment at Edison Woods MetroPark. The organization also contributed financially by helping with the purchase of a large TV for the Program Department.

Erie Metro Live Steamers were able to begin their train runs for the public again in 2021. They were thrilled! Although the organization met and worked on the tracks and equipment in 2020, their true passion comes from running their trains so others can enjoy them throughout the season.



The Erie County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council continued to help Erie MetroParks staff with improvements at Edison Woods MetroPark. There were 10 members who spent 335.75 total hours working on putting in the tie lines at the new Mason Road parking lot and trail improvements on the Thornapple Trail and West Oak Hickory Trail. Of those hours, two members, Tim Sparks and Dan Fultz, put in 198 hours improving the Thornapple Trail.

Above: Tim Sparks and Dan Fultz of OHC work on the Thornapple Trail at Edison Woods MetroPark.

Pre-pandemic, Erie MetroParks would have various groups interested in one time, or occasional volunteer opportunities within the parks. In the fall of 2021, Firelands Area Pickleball Association did a two day group project. The group took on the project of re-staining the Frost Center front deck, ramp, and railings. Their time gave Erie MetroParks staff an opportunity to continue with other projects.

Right, Eagle project completed at The Coupling MetroPark by Riker Arwood, Troop 236, Berlin Heights.



Left, Joe Margetiak presenting an Eagle Program April 2009

Right, Jerry Eakin working on the Castalia Quarry Old Crusher Millhouse Trail September 2008



Throughout the years, Erie MetroParks has been fortunate to have many long-time, active volunteers. This year brought the passing of two of those volunteers; Joe Margetiak and Jerry Eakin. Some of the activities these individuals were involved in included programs, photography, maintenance, and bee keeping.

According to Independent Sector, the dollar value of a volunteer hour in Ohio in 2021 was \$28.54. According to Erie MetroParks recorded number of volunteer hours, the work completed is valued at \$182,627.46. Erie MetroParks is extremely fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers who contribute so much to our park system. In the following page, you will find the breakdown of the volunteer hours for 2021.

\* On the following page, you will find the figures for 2021 showing the volunteer hours for the year.

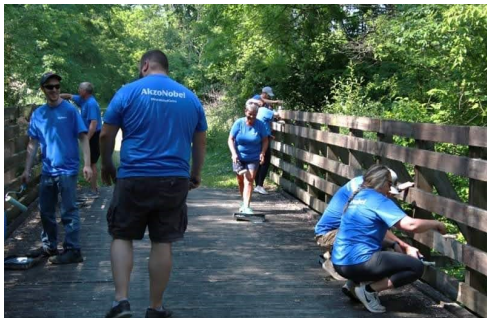


2021 Volunteer Summary							
	Area	Park	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT	General Office	OPK	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Board of Commissioners	OPK	421.00	432.00	432.00	432.00	243.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		421.00	432.00	432.00	432.00	243.00
PROGRAM DEPARTMENT	Barnyard Programs		37.00	10.00	16.00	0.00	0.00
	Barnyard Operation		1101.00	866.00	910.00	1000.00	1095.00
	Interpretive Programs		11.00	0.00	40.50	0.00	0.00
	Nature Camp		56.00	55.00	54.50	0.00	0.00
	Butterfly Monitoring		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Bluebird Monitoring		17.00	16.00	26.00	12.00	8.00
	Bee Keeping Programs		n/a	5.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
	Bee Keeping Operations		n/a	35.00	36.00	20.00	42.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		1222.00	987.00	1086.00	1032.00	1145.00
RECREATION	Canoe/Kayak Programs		0.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	11.50
	<b>TOTALS</b>		0.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	11.50
SPECIAL EVENTS	Earth Day Extravaganza		47.00	0.00	14.50	0.00	0.00
	Erie County Fair		31.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	0.00
	Easter Egg Hunt		7.00	0.00	24.00	0.00	0.00
	Harvest Happenings		197.00	70.50	83.00	0.00	0.00
	Party In The Parks (one year only)		n/a	9.50	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<b>TOTALS</b>		282.00	80.00	130.50	0.00	0.00
OPERATIONS	Construction/Maintenance		415.25	32.00	240.00	0.00	56.00
	Projects/Horticulture		44.00	245.00	0.00	2.00	2.00
	Eagle Scout Projects		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00
	Adopt A Park		1049.00	0.00	11.50	12.00	16.00
	Prescribed Burns		14.50	9.00	0.00	6.75	9.75
	<b>TOTALS</b>		1522.75	286.00	251.50	20.75	103.75
DEPARTMENT TOTALS			3447.75	1785.00	1908.00	1484.75	1503.25
EMP Group Information							
	Area	Park	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
FRIENDS OF EMP	Annual Gathering	Various	180.00	180.00	180.00	50.00	0.00
	Board & Committee Members		1442.50	1465.00	1306.00	947.00	910.00
	Committees & Miscellaneous		306.00	60.00	264.00	98.00	13.00
	Special Events		232.00	113.00	335.00	0.00	0.00
	Organization & Communications		64.00	62.00	105.00	34.00	10.00
	Workdays		180.00	93.00	199.00	67.00	54.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		2404.50	1973.00	2389.00	1196.00	987.00
ERIE METRO LIVE STEAMERS	Site Work, Runs, Meetings, etc		2499.00	2699.00	2659.00	1438.00	3573.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		2499.00	2699.00	2659.00	1438.00	3573.00
OHIO HORSEMAN'S COUNCIL	Trail Work Edison Woods MetroPark		n/a	632.00	538.00	148.75	335.75
	<b>TOTALS</b>		0.00	632.00	538.00	148.75	335.75
PRIDE ACADEMY SANDUSKY HS	Program Services		117.00	336.00	84.00	32.00	0.00
	Administratio		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Operations		325.00	0.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		442.00	336.00	196.00	32.00	0.00
GROUP TOTALS			5345.50	5640.00	5782.00	2814.75	4895.75
TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS 2021			8793.25	7425.00	7690.00	4299.50	6399.00

## 2022 Volunteer Department Summary Report

Volunteering in the MetroParks ramped back up in 2022. With programming back in full swing, groups and individuals could again help out. Volunteers were used for the Maple Sugaring Day at Osborn MetroPark, the Earth Day Extravaganza, and the new Osborn Fall Fest. It was a pleasure seeing old and new volunteers helping and having fun at the same time.

Erie MetroParks welcomed some new individuals and groups to the Volunteer Program. Among the new individuals were, Cliff and Debbie Wood. They began in June and worked tirelessly on the front garden bed, the garden area by the playground, the beds by the front sign, and the planting area by the Interpretive Panels. Between the two of them, they accumulated 198.5 hours. There was a new small group from Life Out Loud who began volunteering monthly. In 2022 they helped clean tables and chairs in the Firelands Room, Erie Room, and Shelter 4. They gave The Depot a deep cleaning, picked up trash along the heavily used trails at Osborn MetroPark, and folded brochures. Many of these young adults had volunteered previously with the Pride Academy students so they were familiar with the park system and happy to be back helping. A group of 15 from Akzonobel Coatings volunteered for two days at the Huron River Path and the Huron Cub Scouts picked up trash at Osborn MetroPark.



**Volunteers from Akzonobel Coatings**

While we loving seeing new faces, we are also happy to have volunteers return. One of those welcomed back this year was the Sandusky High School Pride Academy. This group has been a dependable group but were unable to volunteer during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The kids always enjoy coming here and they are a great help. Some of their volunteering days have included washing pumpkins for the Osborn Fall Fest, putting up Christmas decorations, folding brochures, and general cleaning.



**Left, Pride Academy decorations for Christmas.**

**Right , Life Out Loud small group completes a cleanup of Shelter 4.**

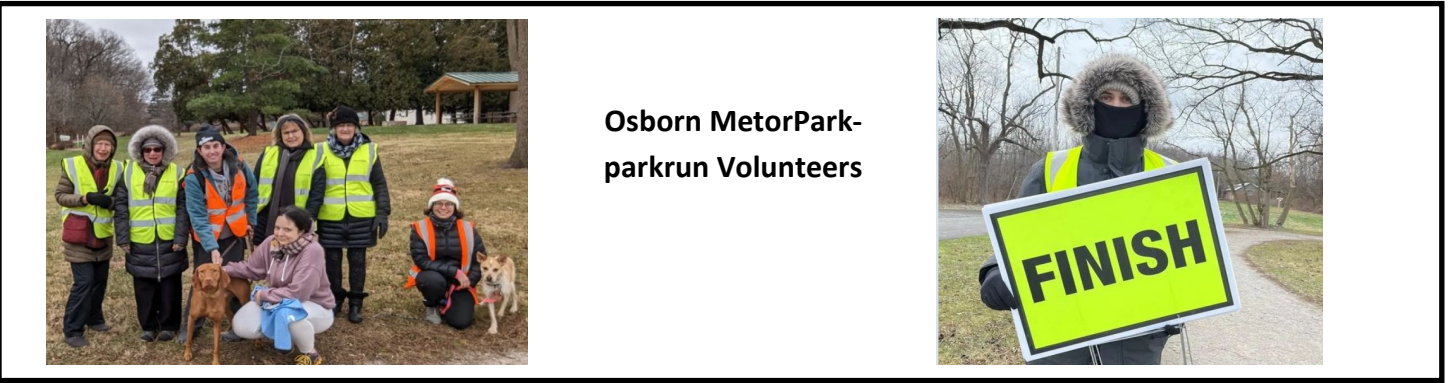




The Volunteer Department was also fortunate to continue a great partnership with Friends of Erie MetroParks (FEMP), Erie County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council (ECOHC), and Erie Metro Live Steamers (EMLS). These groups are the backbone of our volunteer program,. FEMP was able to meet on a more regular basis, increasing their hours from the previous year. ECOHC did trail cleanup, helped with Earth Day and Osborn Fall Fest, and helped plant a pollinator garden at Mason Road. EMLS volunteer hours dropped in 2022, while they continued their rides, no new major projects were added last year.



In addition to all the other volunteer projects, a unique volunteer opportunity came about this year with the addition of Osborn parkrun. This event began in July by one of our naturalists and is held every Saturday at Osborn MetroPark and other parks across the world. While the people are volunteering for parkrun, these volunteers still work hard at Osborn MetroPark and help promote the parks. These numbers are not included in the volunteer hours report. Across the 23 events, there were 205 volunteers. With estimate of an average of 1 hour per volunteer per week, that's 205 volunteer hours.



According to independent Sector, the dollar value of a volunteer hour in Ohio in 2022 was \$29.95. According to Erie MetroParks recorded number of volunteer hours, the work completed is valued at \$176,031.13. Erie MetroParks is extremely fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers who contribute so much to our park system.

- On the following page, you will find the figures for 2022 showing the volunteer hours for the year.

2022 Volunteer Summary							
	Area	Park	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT	General Office	OPK	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.25
	Board of Commissioners	OPK	432.00	432.00	432.00	243.00	365.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		432.00	432.00	432.00	243.00	405.25
PROGRAM DEPARTMENT	Barnyard Programs		10.00	16.00	0.00	0.00	22.00
	Barnyard Operation		866.00	910.00	1000.00	1095.00	1095.00
	Interpretive Programs		0.00	40.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Nature Camp		55.00	54.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Butterfly Monitoring		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Bluebird Monitoring		16.00	26.00	12.00	8.00	0.00
	Bee Keeping Programs		5.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Bee Keeping Operations		35.00	36.00	20.00	42.00	71.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		987.00	1086.00	1032.00	1145.00	1188.00
RECREATION	Canoe/Kayak Programs		0.00	8.00	0.00	11.50	23.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		0.00	8.00	0.00	11.50	23.00
SPECIAL EVENTS	Earth Day Extravaganza		0.00	14.50	0.00	0.00	5.00
	Erie County Fair		0.00	9.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Maple Sugar Day (new 2022)		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.50
	Harvest Happenings/Osborn Fall Fest 21		70.50	83.00	0.00	0.00	36.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		80.00	106.50	0.00	0.00	59.50
OPERATIONS	Construction/Maintenance		32.00	240.00	0.00	56.00	206.00
	Projects/Horticulture		245.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	198.50
	Eagle Scout Projects		0.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
	Adopt A Park		0.00	11.50	12.00	16.00	100.00
	Prescribed Burns		9.00	0.00	6.75	9.75	3.25
	<b>TOTALS</b>		286.00	251.50	20.75	103.75	507.75
DEPARTMENT TOTALS			1785.00	1884.00	1484.75	1503.25	2183.50
EMP Group Information							
	Area	Park	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
FRIENDS OF EMP	Annual Gathering	Various	180.00	180.00	50.00	0.00	160.00
	Board & Committee Members		1465.00	1306.00	947.00	910.00	1130.00
	Committees & Miscellaneous		60.00	264.00	98.00	13.00	154.00
	Special Events		113.00	335.00	0.00	0.00	30.00
	Organization & Communications		62.00	105.00	34.00	10.00	26.00
	Workdays		93.00	199.00	67.00	54.00	40.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		1973.00	2389.00	1196.00	987.00	1540.00
ERIE METRO LIVE STEAMERS	Site Work, Runs, Meetings, etc		2699.00	2659.00	1438.00	3573.00	1708.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		2699.00	2659.00	1438.00	3573.00	1708.00
OHIO HORSEMAN'S COUNCIL	Trail Work Edison Woods MetroPark		632.00	538.00	148.75	335.75	233.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		632.00	538.00	148.75	335.75	233.00
PRIDE ACADEMY SANDUSKY HS	Program, Administration, & Operations Depts.		336.00	196.00	32.00	0.00	168.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		336.00	196.00	32.00	0.00	168.00
Life Out Loud Small Group	Program, Administration, & Operations Depts.		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	45.00
	<b>TOTALS</b>		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	45.00
GROUP TOTALS			5640.00	5782.00	2814.75	4895.75	3694.00
TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS 2022			7425.00	7666.00	4299.50	6399.00	5877.50



# 2021 Visitor Service Summary Report

The Visitor Service Department, located in the Frost Center, continued to adapt and change as needed, as the pandemic continued. Reservations for park facilities were closed during the first part of 2021, and resumed in June. As a way to allow and open facilities to the public, time periods for reservations were adjusted to one per day per facility. This was well received by the public who commented how nice it was to have the facility all day. Due to issues at the Enchanted Cottage, it was closed to reservations beginning in September until repairs were completed.

The Nature Center/Erie Room was updated. The public was happy to be able to once again come in and explore. Many families used Osborn MetroPark as a meeting place and there were many new faces that stopped in. The center also had many regulars who came in as a break from the playground and sun. The Visitor Service Department was thrilled to be able to welcome back the regulars as well as introduce the new visitors to Erie MetroParks and all it has to offer!

Use of the recreational fields and courts continued to increase. Bay Area Soccer League (BASL) was able to hold both the Spring and Fall recreational soccer leagues at Osborn MetroPark. Firelands Area Pickleball Association (FAPA) reserved the pickleball courts for morning and evening play as well as for three tournaments. With Harvest Happenings put on hold again for 2021, Huron High School was able to use the Osborn Complex for their cross country invite for a second year. Approximately 450 participants, coaches, and spectators enjoyed the accommodations. For the first time since its inception, The Chris Greene Invite was not held at Osborn MetroPark. Due to the pandemic, St. Mary's cross country program decided to go a different avenue for their annual Invite.

Community Garden Plot reservations slowed this year. The 2020 gardening season had been very wet, making it difficult for the many beginner gardeners who had registered for plots. Most of the new gardeners did not return for 2021. There is optimism for a better year in 2022. Inquiry's have been made from the new OSU Extension Agent and other groups regarding the gardens for the upcoming season.

In 2021, 32 Special Permits were issued. These permits included research, police officer training, drone use, different sporting events, along with many other activities. This was an increase of 11 in 2020 and 10 less than the average of 42 pre-pandemic.

The Visitor Service Department has worked hard for a smooth transition from the pandemic through the re-opening process. Many calls from visitors trying to make plans for life events were handled with understanding and compassion as the uncertainty of 2021 continued.

\* On the following pages, you will find the figures for 2021 showing all reservations made by the public. Numbers will reflect that Erie MetroParks facilities were closed from January through May 2021.

## 2021 Year End Summary Report

	Ogden MetroPak												Male Grove Center												Stevens												Shelburne																						
	Firearms Room 2017				Firearms Room 2018				Firearms Room 2019				Firearms Room 2020				Firearms Room 2021				Male Grove Center 2017				Male Grove Center 2018				Male Grove Center 2019				Male Grove Center 2020				Male Grove Center 2021				Stevens 2017				Stevens 2018				Stevens 2019				Stevens 2020				Stevens 2021		
	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders	Attendance	Stakeholders									
January	17	410	9	200	8	150	11	360	n/a	n/a	1	15	3	52	2	30	1	15	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a									
February	13	285	14	325	10	163	16	560	n/a	n/a	1	15	1	9	3	40	2	30	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a									
March	22	694	19	610	17	428	10	300	n/a	n/a	2	30	2	37	3	35	1	10	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a									
April	16	353	14	375	12	330	0	0	n/a	n/a	2	30	1	6	1	10	0	0	n/a	n/a	4	125	2	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a									
May	18	465	17	525	20	618	0	0	n/a	n/a	2	30	2	30	3	40	0	0	n/a	n/a	24	880	23	785	35	1333	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a								
June	19	490	30	1144	27	792	0	0	14	478	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	51	1940	59	2412	56	2245	0	0	34	1289	0	0	38	1434	0	0	39	1521	0	0	34	1289	0	0	38	1434	0	0	34	1289									
July	17	684	20	710	20	646	0	0	14	478	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	56	2082	49	2085	56	2050	46	1985	0	0	56	2082	49	2085	56	2050	46	1985	0	0	56	2082	49	2085	56	2050	46	1985	0	0	56	2082							
August	18	450	22	605	20	478	0	0	14	455	2	30	1	15	1	15	0	0	1	8	51	2330	46	2045	46	1985	0	0	51	2330	46	2045	46	1985	0	0	51	2330	46	2045	46	1985	0	0	51	2330	46	2045	46	1985	0	0	51	2330					
September	21	600	17	540	17	441	0	0	17	480	1	15	2	30	2	30	0	0	1	25	32	1176	24	910	35	1325	0	0	32	1176	24	910	35	1325	0	0	32	1176	24	910	35	1325	0	0	32	1176	24	910	35	1325	0	0	32	1176					
October	18	479	17	509	16	388	0	0	14	507	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	7	340	11	290	8	355	0	0	7	340	11	290	8	355	0	0	7	340	11	290	8	355	0	0	7	340	11	290	8	355	0	0	7	340					
November	12	280	14	407	15	449	0	0	13	317	2	30	3	35	4	70	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a									
December	10	299	11	349	11	325	0	0	11	302	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a									
Totals	201	5489	204	6299	193	5208	37	1220	92	2819	14	210	15	214	20	276	5	60	6	71	225	8873	214	8577	236	9293	0	0	153	5781	0	0	153	5781	0	0	153	5781	0	0	153	5781	0	0	153	5781	0	0	153	5781									

2021 - due to COVID-19 Facilities were not available January 1 to May 31

2020 - due to COVID-19 Facilities were not available from mid March through December 31, 2020

2017 - in May, Shelter 1 was not available for reservations as it was getting a new chimney



# 2022 Visitor Service Summary Report

The Visitor Service Department, located in the Frost Center, continues to serve both the public and the staff in the day to day operations of running a park system. This year, in response to the Generation to Generation campaign, writing of donation letters increased tremendously .

Tracking of phone calls and visitors began in February of this year through December. During that time period the front desk answered the phone 1851 times and greeted 1769 visitors. By helping the public learn about the different parks and their histories, facilities that are available and how to reserve them, the programs that are offered and how to register, the Visitor Service Department “connects the community with nature” per the Erie MetroParks mission.

## Reservable Facilities

- The Enchanted Cottage remained closed for the year due to improvements
- The Coupling MetroPark saw a marked increase in usage
  - Single day usage went from 5 reservations in 2021 to 18 in 2022
  - Overnight usage went from 10 in 2021 to 14 in 2022 with an increase of 10 additional nights
  - Canoe reservations increased by 9 from the previous year
- Edison Woods MetroPark Primitive Camping saw an increase in usage by other Horseman Councils

## Sportsman Reservation Software

- Improvements were made to make public navigation easier
- Created a way for the public to donate on-line through our website

## Special Permits

- 33 Special Permits were processed

## Community Gardens

- 31 garden plots were reserved by the public
- A newsletter was created and sent to plot holders by a Master Gardener

The coming year promises to be one of exciting change for Erie MetroParks and the Visitor Service Department. Changes include the closing of Shelter 3 for the year due to construction of the new Nature Center, and later in the year, the Firelands Room will close to the public when the Nature Center is complete.

\* On the following pages, you will find the figures for 2022 showing all reservations made for the public.

[illegible]

2020 - due to COVID-19 Facilities were not available from mid March through December 31, 2020



# 2021 Marketing & IT Department Report

2021 proved to be a successful year for the Marketing department at Erie MetroParks. We saw big changes to the way we used social media and the way we advertised our parks and programs. We also made some big changes when it came to information technology, mainly with our social media and new telephone system. In this report we will break down some of the tactics and strategies implemented by Erie MetroParks when it came to marketing, digital media, and IT in 2021.

## MARKETING:

There are several ways we market Erie MetroParks. One is our paid advertisements.

**Paid** (radio/TV ads, banners and flyers, social media ads, etc.). Coming out of a quarantined pandemic, many of our in-person programs were cancelled. We resumed in-person programming on June 1. We kept our paid marketing to a minimum this year. Although we did not do a lot of paid marketing, we did do some. Here is what we did:



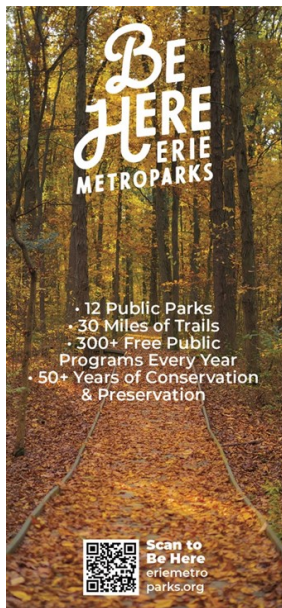
**Placed a banner on the newly renovated Jack-  
Street Pier.**



**son**

We placed program ads in local news publications such as the Morning Journal, Woolly Bear Guide, Lake Erie Shores & Islands Magazine, and the Ohio Magazine. These ads were placed to bring awareness to our parks and programs. We also introduced a scan code in our advertisements.

[illegible]

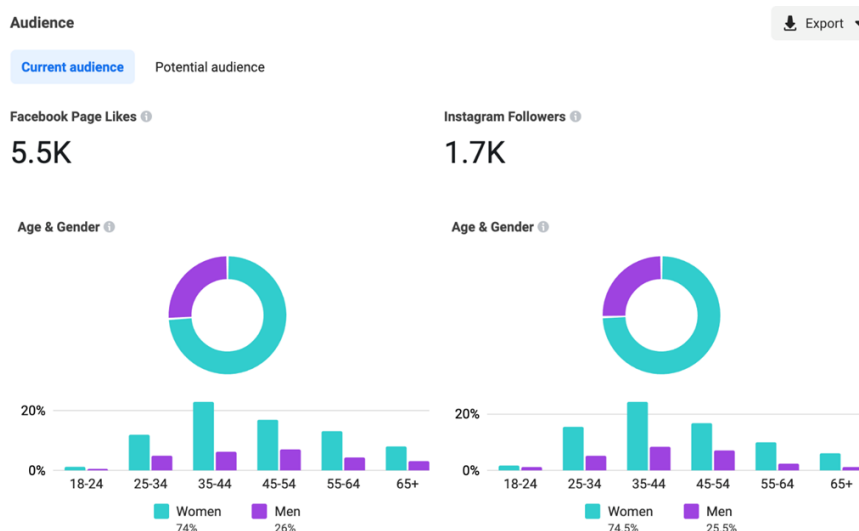


In addition to paid print advertisement, we made quite a lot of signs and ordered a variety of marketing tools such as **mugs, cutlery, buttons and stickers**. Again, the Marketing Department kept spending low, but we were able to fully utilize the tools that were purchased. We also continued our partnerships with The Huron Chamber, The Vermilion Chamber, and the Erie County Chambers of Commerce.

Another way we market is through **unpaid marketing**. This includes existing relationships such as news outlets, partnerships with local business, etc. In 2021 we utilized partnerships with entities such as the Sandusky Register, Lake Erie Shores and Islands, local libraries, the local school district, and the City of Sandusky. We also partnered with local businesses such as Wild Birds and New Departure Films to help promote our parks and programs. We were featured in the Sandusky Register almost every week and businesses shared our posts hundreds of times. We also turned to local businesses such as Loris Printing and Custom Sign and Design to make our signs this year.

## Digital Media

Our biggest marketing tool was our **organic marketing** (word-of-mouth, social media posts, podcasts, digital media, flyers, etc.). Erie MetroParks saw upticks on all our social media platforms. Our viewership and follower numbers grew exponentially.





Our social media interactions were up by 50% on Facebook and 900% on Instagram. With the addition of Martyn and Mollie, our programmers have really turned up the digital content. Infographic posts by Martyn, Mike, Mollie, and Cheryl drew the most interactions. We also dealt with backlash from a post that was viewed over 32k times. We gained an average of 42 likes a month on Facebook and 10 new followers a month on Instagram. We had over 300K impressions on Facebook and a reach of 126K. Reach numbers are unique visitors, impressions are how many times a post was seen.

All these organic posts and interactions led to successful programs throughout the year and helped build better relationships with the community. We also attended a marketing seminar and learned about new trends. We also attended, assisted, and photographed several programs in 2021. Being part of the programs really helps to market them.

## Social Media

### Results

#### Facebook Page Reach ⓘ

126,036 ↑ 47.7%



#### Instagram Reach ⓘ

22,541 ↑ 894.3%



[See results report](#)

### Content ⓘ

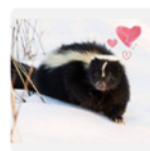
Sort by: Reach ▼



Wed May 5, 7:01am  
**Morel mushroom season ...**  
Post  
Reach 31.2K



Sat Nov 20, 9:01am  
**Edison Woods MetroPark ...**  
Post  
Reach 16.6K



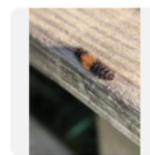
Wed Feb 24, 7:01am  
**Breeding season for skun...**  
Post  
Reach 14.2K



Tue Aug 24, 9:32am  
**Erie MetroParks is hiring ...**  
Post  
Reach 13.7K



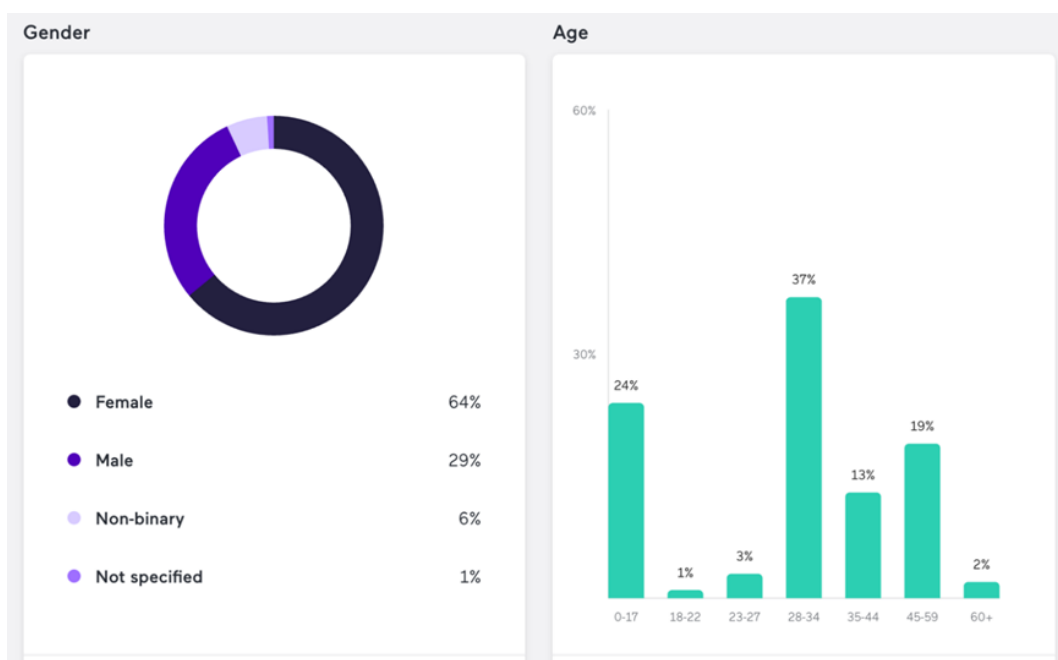
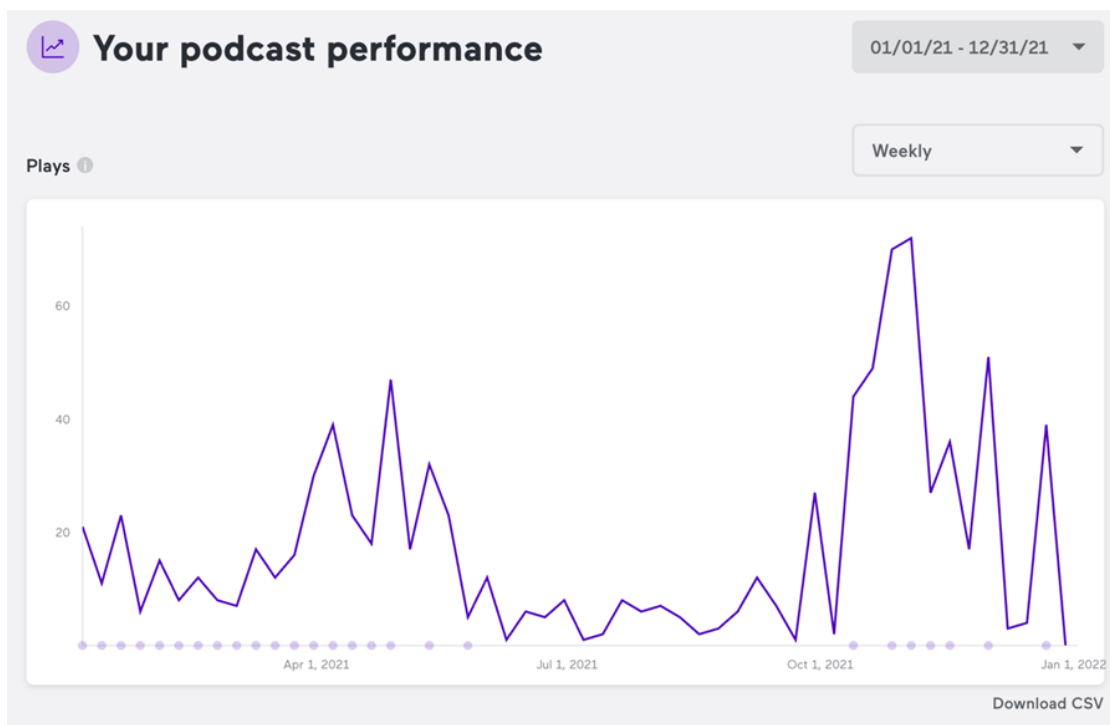
Fri Jan 22, 11:01am  
**#funfactfriday**  
Post  
Reach 12.7K



Sun Oct 3, 12:00pm  
**Happy Moth Sunday! As t...**  
Post  
Reach 11.9K

Facebook and Instagram were our biggest marketing tools in 2021, but our **podcasts** brought a lot of attention to Erie MetroParks, and we gained many weekly/monthly listeners over the past several months. We have had over 1,000 plays of our episodes and have a loyal audience of about 35 an episode, with 40+ unique listeners a week. The Sandusky Register has featured our podcasts in several articles.

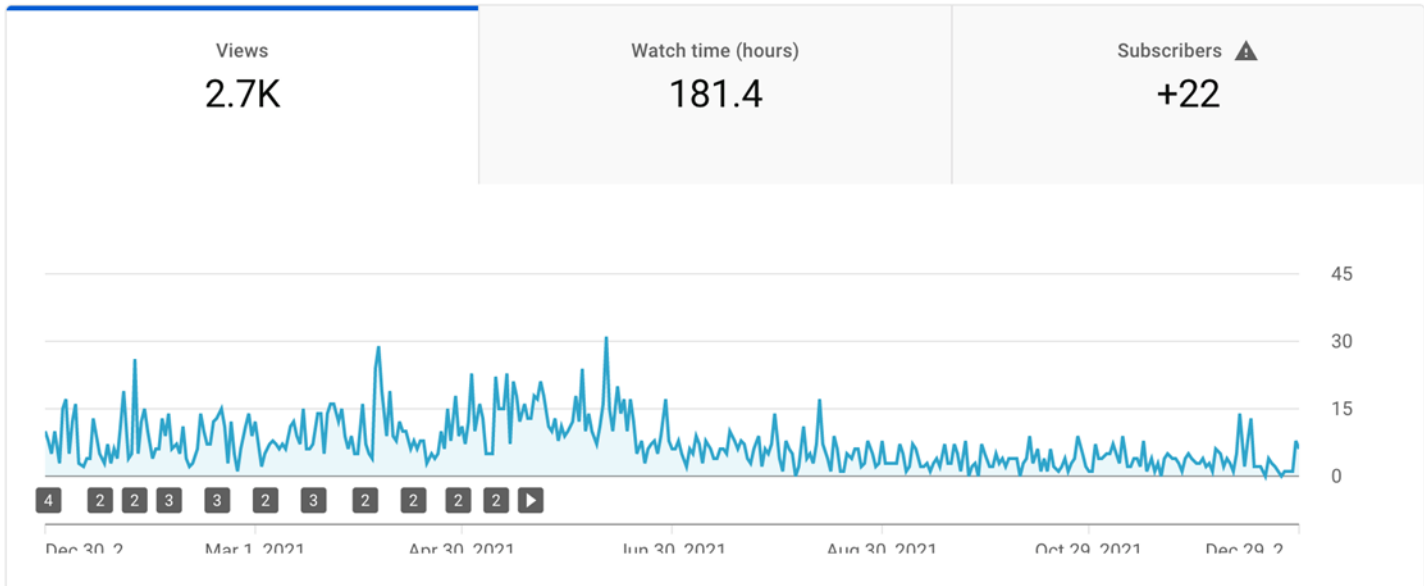
<b>Plays</b> ⓘ <b>1,017</b> All-time	<b>Estimated audience</b> ⓘ <b>44</b> Based on recent episodes	<b>Unique listeners</b> ⓘ <b>45</b> Last 7 days	<b>Current balance</b> ⓘ <b>\$0.00</b> <a href="#">How to use Sponsorships</a>
--	--	---	--






In addition to podcasts, posts, and stories, we have started making reels and video content that are both fun and informative. With social media's ever-changing landscape, our programmers and marketing team are staying up to date. YouTube and Twitter are valuable resources, but their growth and viewership were lacking in 2021. YouTube still made some positive strides, but we stopped using Twitter completely in April of 2021.

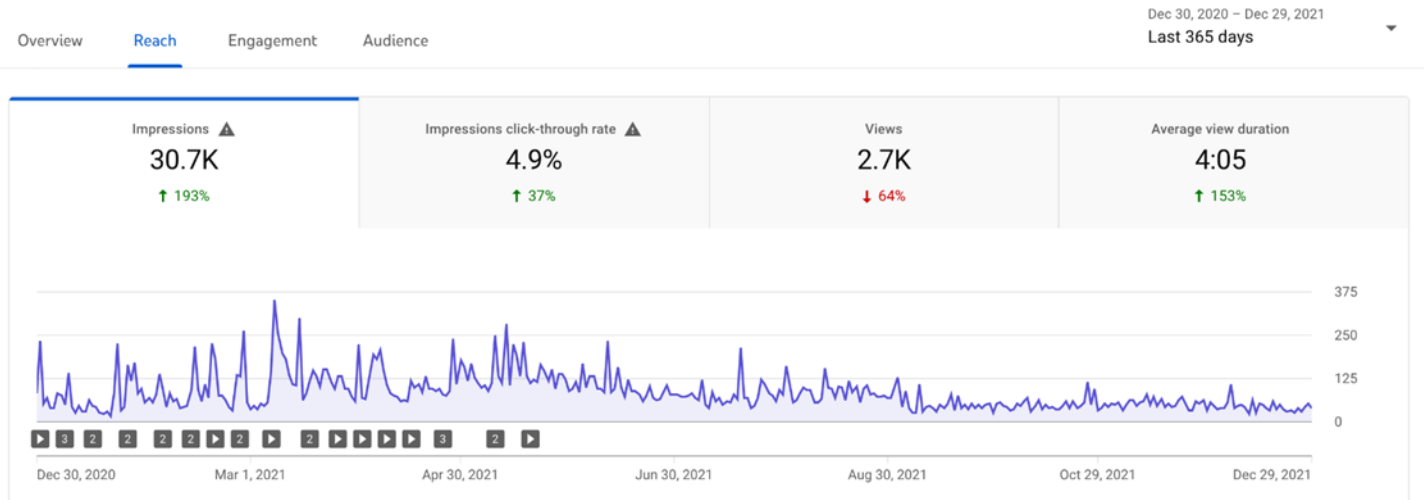


YOUTUBE



Your top videos in this period

Video		Average view duration	Views
1	 Common birds of Ohio Dec 23, 2020	3:09 (40.9%)	1,152
2	 Tour of Castalia Quarry MetroPark Aug 3, 2020	3:39 (12.3%)	51
3	 American Lotus at Erie MetroParks Jul 20, 2017	1:06 (68.9%)	42



## Top playlists

Watch time · Last 365 days

Get Fit Club Online • Yoga	47.3%
Get Fit Club Online • Tai Chi	33.2%
Get Fit Club Online • Barre	5.8%
Get Fit Club Online • Yoga II	5.8%
Get Fit Club - Barre II	4.0%

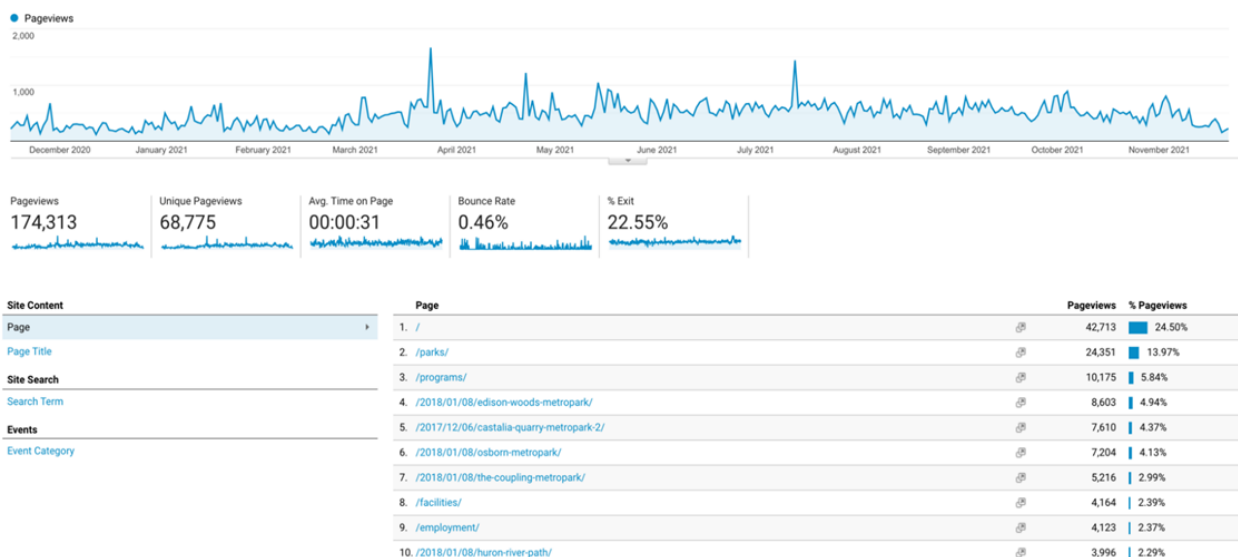
[SEE MORE](#)

Our top videos were all from previous years. Park videos and animal videos were the most watched. We only have playlists from the “Get Fit” series, but people continue to watch these videos regularly. During the pandemic we released dozens of videos with positive feedback. We recently finished an Erie MetroParks video that will be released in 2022.

Another way we market our parks is through our **“owned” platforms** such as our website, bulletin boards, flyers, brochures, signs, etc. There were a few changes in these areas.

## WEBSITE

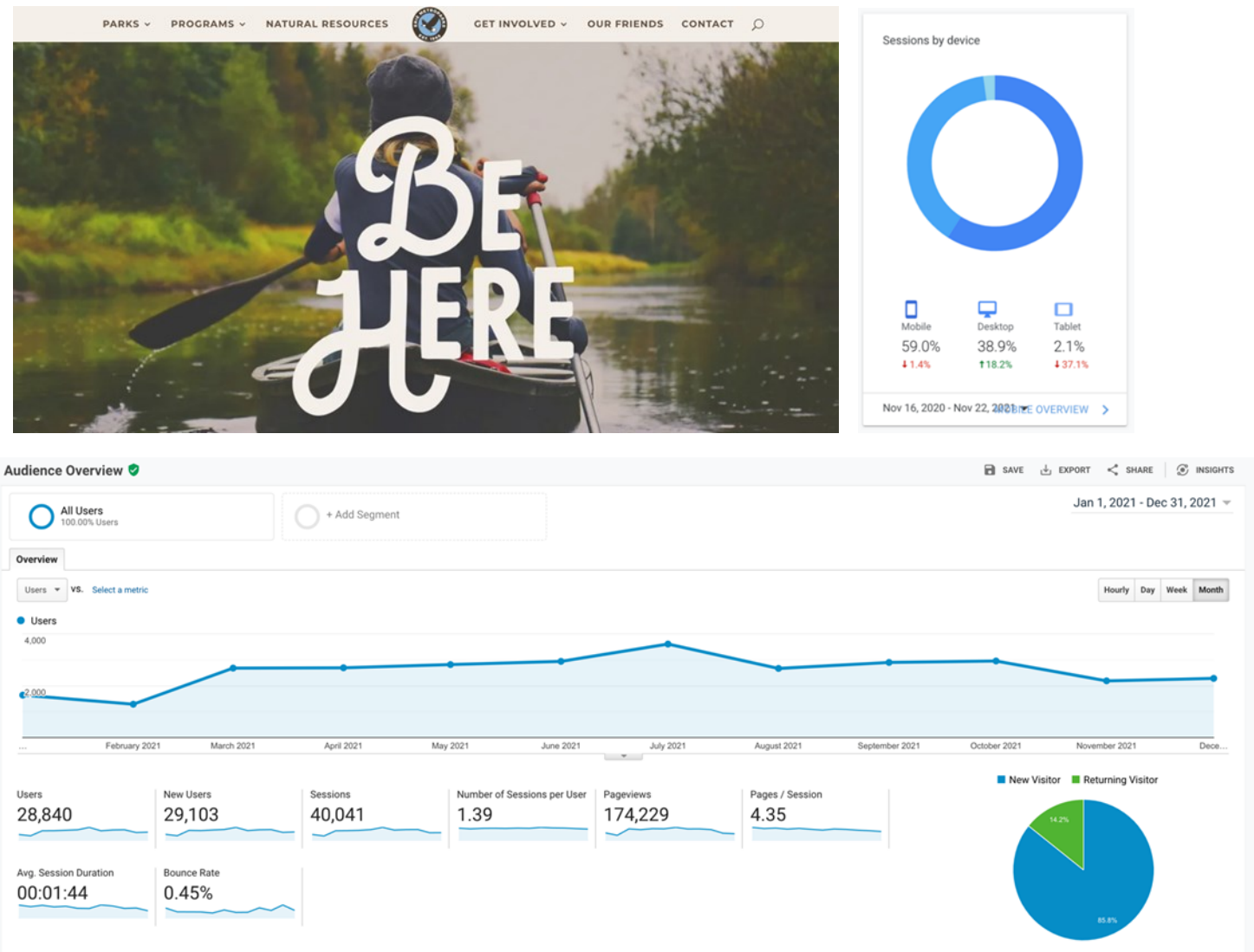
Erie MetroParks’ Website (eriemetroparks.org) is the single most comprehensive source of information about the organization available to the public. Users of the website can locate a MetroPark on a map, view information about each park, see a list of all programs, register for programs and events, access natural resources management plans, view board meeting minutes and more. In addition to these resources, we were able to add a program calendar this year, as well as a landing page for educators and requested programs. We also added a new Disc Golf page, 50-Mile Challenge sign-up, and more. The website was updated, and many areas reworked. We updated the FEMP page, updated all of the information and photos of staff, we updated the 3D tours of our shelters, we also started implementing scan codes in advertising to make reaching our website easier. Here are some -- website numbers.





## Summary of Social Media and Website Traffic

Although Facebook and Instagram continue to give Erie MetroParks the greatest return on investment for shared advertisement and promotion, our website is also invaluable with over 174,000 page views this year alone.



## EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Erie MetroParks continued to send emailed newsletters under the title The Inside Trail. The newsletter contains information about upcoming programs and events, as well other useful information pertaining to our parks. The current audience number is 2,754. The graph below shows the percentage of emails opened on average for each campaign. It also shows the percentage of recipients who clicked a link within the email.

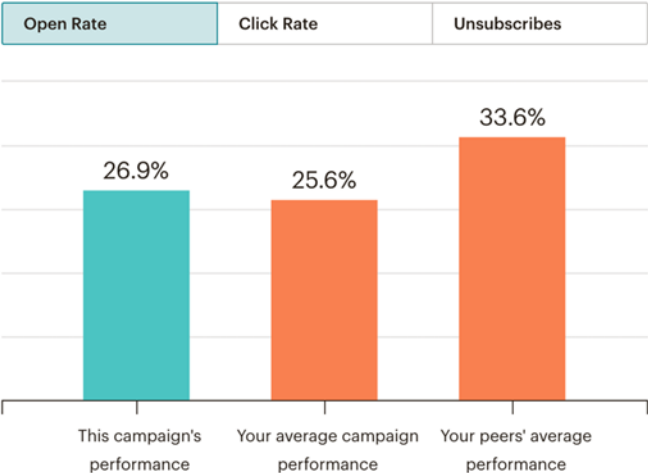
Characteristics you and your peers share

Industry  
**Government**  
Your industry was either self reported or predicted using natural language processing techniques. You can update it in [your settings](#).

Audience demographics  
**Over 65% Female, from 45 and up**

Audience size  
**2,000 - 10,000**

How your email campaign compares



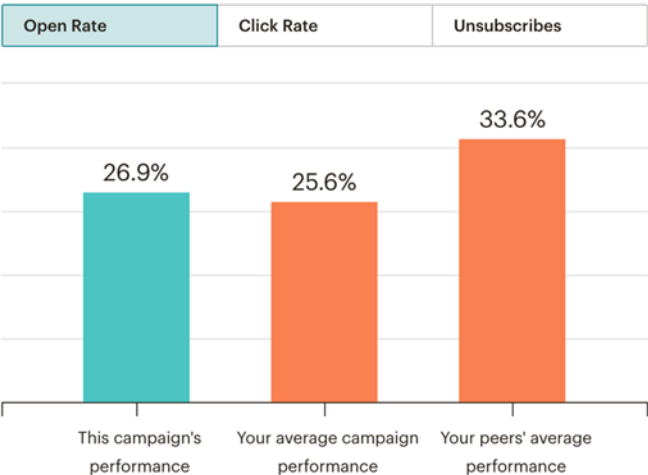
Characteristics you and your peers share

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Your industry was either self reported or predicted using natural language processing techniques. You can update it in [your settings](#).

Audience demographics  
**Over 65% Female, from 45 and up**

Audience size  
**2,000 - 10,000**

How your email campaign compares



Physical

Physical assets owned by Erie MetroParks provide countless opportunities for the agency to communicate with the public through signage, brochures, flyers, interpretive panels and other materials. This year we were able to update all the park brochures, the employee style guide, employee business cards, employee name tags, the shelter reservation signs, program banner flags, Edison Woods Controlled Hunt signs, car magnets, The Discovery Trail, and various other signs and materials this year. Below are some examples of the materials produced by the Marketing department in 2021.

## Shelter Reservation Signs Canoe & Kayak Signs



## NEWLY CREATED DISCOVERY TRAIL BROCHURE



### DISCOVERY TRAIL

The Discovery Trail is a unique trail where kids can experience nature education while exercising on the trail's many structures.

Have you ever wondered what an 8-foot-tall butterfly looks like? How about what it feels like to journey into a bee's honeycomb? I know you've stood on the top of an 8-foot mushroom, right? If you have not, prepare to be amazed!

The Discovery Trail is incorporated into Osborn MetroPark's existing trail system and features five nature-themed play pods containing unique play structures for kids ages 5 to 12. The trail is around one-mile long and can be explored from several starting locations. Grab some friends and start to explore the Discovery Trail.

### WHERE IS IT?

The Discovery Trail is located within Osborn MetroPark. Follow the signs and begin your adventure into the magical world of insects, trees, and boundless possibilities. There are many ways to begin your journey on the Discovery Trail and lots to explore. You never know what you may find.



### 1 Fungi

Mushrooms are fungi. Fungi are a group of living organisms which are classified in their own kingdom. This means they are not animals, plants, or bacteria. See these fungi up close and personal.

### 2 Butterflies

In just 9 to 14 days the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly is complete. See bet's together and larger than life.

### 3 Trees

Many different types of animals can be found living in the trees, including insects, arachnids, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Can you find these trees' inhabitants?

### 4 Bees & Pollinators

While trees and woods are essential to filter our air, bees are vital to both pollinate the food we need to survive, and pollinate many of the trees and flowers that provide habitat for wildlife. Without bees, much life would cease to exist.

### 5 Story Time

Story time will evoke imaginations and give kids a chance to write their own story. While sitting on the magic acorn, be sure to listen for the enchanted sounds coming from the nearby garden. If you're feeling musical, visit Harmony Place and create your own melody.

- ||| Crosswalk
- Educational Panel
- Wayfinding Sign





## **DISCOVERY TRAIL**

With the help of Operations staff, we were able to remove the badly placed trail maps and install 32 new wayfinding signs. We also added Discovery Trail stickers to the educational panels, corrected a couple informational errors on educational panels, and add new brochure racks at the three entrances to the Discovery Trail. All these changes make navigating the trail much easier. We also installed path lines and are restructuring a portion of the path to keep traffic flowing on the trails and off the service road.

### **Summary**

Erie MetroParks Marketing continued to extend its reach in 2021, gaining more followers on social media and engaged users through other marketing means. We forged great relationships with the community and brought more awareness to our parks, our mission, and our programs.

We really turned up marketing on our programs this year and were able to get programs listed in many new places. We were able to connect with many local businesses that now carry our brochures and share our posts. The Sandusky Register was a huge help this year, listing our programs every week and featuring our park and its staff monthly. Our network grew by leaps and bounds. We also submitted dozens of photos to OPRA and will be presenting in 2022 at the Small Park Forum.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:**

IT was one of the most trying departments this year. We encountered quite a few problems and we saw some very needed upgrades. Below are some of the projects we completed this year.

IT established a back-up procedure and learned to create specific folders for employees through the server. We renewed our contract with Meraki and continue to have a great partnership with Cisco and how we keep our information safe and accessible at the same time. We also updated our IT specifics with our insurance company.

### **Upgraded Phone System**

The biggest task we took on this year was the upgrading of our telephone system. Nineteen phones were upgraded, and the old bell system retired. We all had to learn to operate from the cloud and change the way we communicate through the system. A powered ethernet hub was added and everyone was introduced to the digital age of phone service. We were able to work with our new cloud phone provider (CCI Tel) and Buckeye Cable to keep the monthly costs increase at a minimum. The service is 1000 times better. We were able to have twenty phones donated to Erie MetroParks at no cost. Those phones are now our property and fully insured by CCI Voice. Our phone system is now modern and dependable. Everything was updated, from extensions to greetings.

### **Upgraded Computers, Monitors & Other Electronics**

Several employees received upgraded computers and monitors this year. A replacement schedule was created and back up computers were restored for future use. We also added two new programmers and their computers were upgraded and newer monitors installed. We also installed QuickBooks on an upgraded computer for the Friends of Erie MetroParks. In addition, we upgraded many of the batteries in our power back-up modules. The drone's batteries were also upgraded.

### **Updated Front Door Lock**

The front door at the Frost Center had been giving issues and had to be replaced. We installed a newer lock with a weather shield. I also learned how to program the locking system.

### **Surplused Items**

With the phone upgrade came a huge surplus undertaking. We went through every electronic device within our organization. Anything that was beyond repair or not cost-effective to fix was surplused. This included a server, several monitors and older computers, dozens of old phones and several older docking stations.

### **Summary:**

There were a lot of IT issues that arose this year. IT learned how to trouble-shoot server issues, computer issues, printer issues, camera issues, issues with the printer, door locks, and more. IT learned to fly a drone and navigate between macs and PC's and I learned our phone system and our projectors. EMP utilizes dozens of technological entities that keep our organization running smoothly (WordPress, Workplace, Meraki, Flywheel, Event Calendar, GoDaddy, CCI, Buckeye, Mailchimp, Apple, Microsoft, etc.). An ordering regiment was established to ensure we always have what we need.

### **Remote Pilot License**

Additionally, Kippie Laughlin, Digital Media & Information Technology Coordinator, received the FAA Remote Pilots License to fly the EMP drone. This is used to gain marketing, operations and natural resource material.

# 2022 Marketing & IT Department Report

2022 proved to be a fruitful year for the Marketing Department and Erie MetroParks. We saw big growth in social media and website traffic. We tweaked the way we advertised our parks and programs by utilizing radio and other campaigns. We also won a few awards and held two very successful events. We also finished the redesign of the signs of Edison Woods MetroParks Adventure Walkway, redesigned our website, and created a fundraising campaign for the new Erie MetroParks Nature Center.

As far as information technology, there were no huge issues. We brought Sportsman to the internet and did away with the bulky calendar used on our website. This streamlined the sign-up process for programs. We upgraded a couple computers and started a digital plan for the new nature center. We also added a new drone and HD projector. In this report we will break down some of the tactics and strategies implemented by Erie MetroParks when it came to marketing, digital media, and IT in 2022.

## MARKETING:

There are several ways we market Erie MetroParks. One is our paid advertisements. **Paid** (radio/TV ads, banners and flyers, social media ads, etc.). We increased our paid marketing a good bit this year. We renewed our billboard downtown, advertised in many print and digital outlets, renewed our membership with Shores & Islands Ohio, utilized radio, and so much more. Here are some of the ways we used paid advertisement:

**Renewed our banner on the Jackson Street Pier.**





Advertising

We placed program and fundraising ads in local news publications and magazines such as the Morning Journal, Explore Huron Guide, Woollybear Festival Guide, Lake Erie Shores & Islands Magazine, Sandusky Living Magazine, Biggest Week in American Birding Magazine, 419 Fun Guide, Harlequins Community Theatre, and The Sandusky Register. These ads were placed to bring awareness to our parks, programs, events, and fundraising. We also utilized radio ads on WLKR & MIX 102 FM and updated our billboard downtown with a new graphic.









## Promotions

In addition to paid print advertisement, we made quite a lot of signs and ordered a variety of marketing tools such as mugs, stickers, buttons, pens, frisbees, magnets, temporary tattoos, tote bags, t-shirts, and notebooks. We also continued our partnerships with The Huron Chamber, The Vermilion Chamber, and the Erie County Chambers of Commerce.

Another way we market is through **unpaid marketing**. This includes existing relationships such as news outlets, partnerships with local business, etc. In 2022 we utilized partnerships with entities such as the Sandusky Register, Lake Erie Shores and Islands, local libraries, local school districts, and the City of Sandusky, Perkins & Vermilion to name a few. We also partnered with local businesses such as Wild Birds, New Departure Films, Rock n Roll Express, and others to help promote our parks and programs. We were featured in the Sandusky Register almost every week and local businesses shared our posts hundreds of times. We also turned to local businesses such as Loris Printing and Custom Sign and Design to make our signs this again this year.



Another form of free marketing we implemented was a trailer wrap for our mobile nature center called Erie MetroParks Nature on Wheels (EMP NOW). The program won an excellence award presented by OPRA and is currently in the running for the Governor's Award!

The marketing department also submitted various photos and essays to OPRA and Shores & Islands nominating Erie MetroParks and staff. All submissions won and/or were recognized.



## Fundraising Campaign for the Erie MetroParks Nature Center

This year the marketing department was tasked with creating a fundraising campaign for the new Erie MetroParks Nature Center. We had to design banners, flyers, folders, donation forms, and numerous digital media. Here are some of the items that were produced:



Our biggest marketing tool was our **organic marketing** (word-of-mouth, social media posts, podcasts, digital media, flyers, etc.). Erie MetroParks saw upticks on all our social media platforms. Our viewership and follower numbers grew exponentially. Here is a quick look at our biggest platforms.

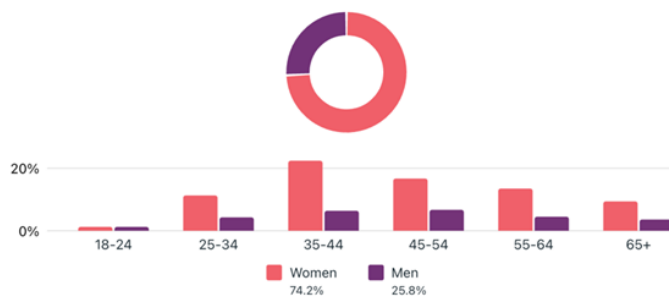
## Social Media

Our social media interactions were up by 38% on Facebook and 21% on Instagram from last year, which is huge! Infographic posts by Martyn, Mike, Mollie, Cheryl, and I drew a lot of interactions. We gained an average of 71 likes a month on Facebook (852 total for the year) and 12 new followers a month on Instagram (142 total for the year). We had over 300K impressions on Facebook and a reach of 126K. All these organic posts and interactions led to successful programs throughout the year and helped build better relationships with the community. We also attended and photographed several programs in 2022. Being part of the programs really helps to market them.

Facebook Page likes ⓘ

6,381

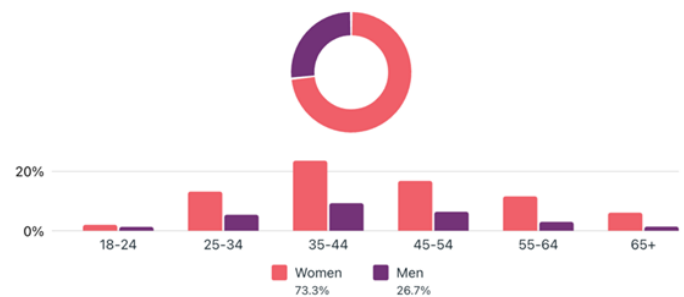
Age & gender ⓘ



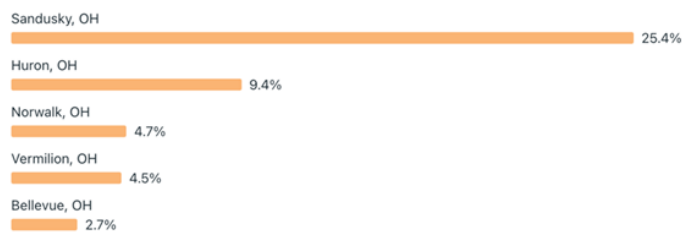
Instagram followers ⓘ

1,844

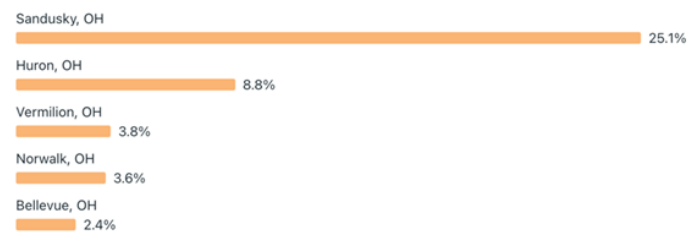
Age & gender ⓘ



Top cities



Top cities



In addition to podcasts, page posts, and stories, we made reels and video content that are both fun and informative. With social media's ever-changing landscape, our programmers and marketing team are staying up to date. Our biggest reel this year was a reel put out by Mollie about maple sugaring. The reel gained 20k views! <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CZxdRfNJfBq/>



While we still use YouTube to store and publish videos, it is not one of our stronger platforms (although valuable). We started off the year with 106 subscribers but ended the year with 500! We only published four videos this year. Each receiving a couple hundred plays, but one of our older videos titled, “Art in the Park Bunny Wreath,” that Cheryl did went viral! It received 70k views and garnered 1.3 million impressions. It boosted our subscribers by 394 completely revitalizing our channel. Park videos and animal videos were the most watched after the viral video.

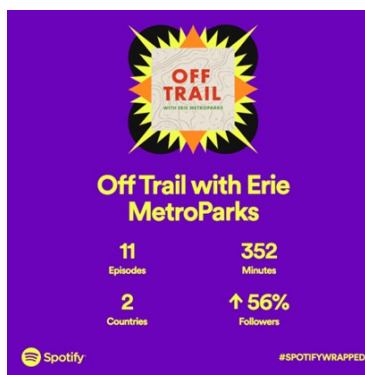
## Your videos got 72,635 views in 2022



## PODCASTS

Facebook and Instagram were our biggest marketing tools in 2022, but our **podcasts** brought a lot of attention to Erie MetroParks. The Sandusky Register has featured our podcasts in a couple articles. We were also able to collaborate with other entities and teach them the fundamentals of podcasting.

Our podcast program, Off Trail with Erie MetroParks, saw a 56% increase in followers and the episodes were played over 550 times, bringing our listening total to over 1540! Our most popular episode in 2022 was “Day of the Deuce” with 71 listens. January and February saw the most listens. In 2022 we created 352 minutes of content. That’s 68% more than other creators in the environmental category!

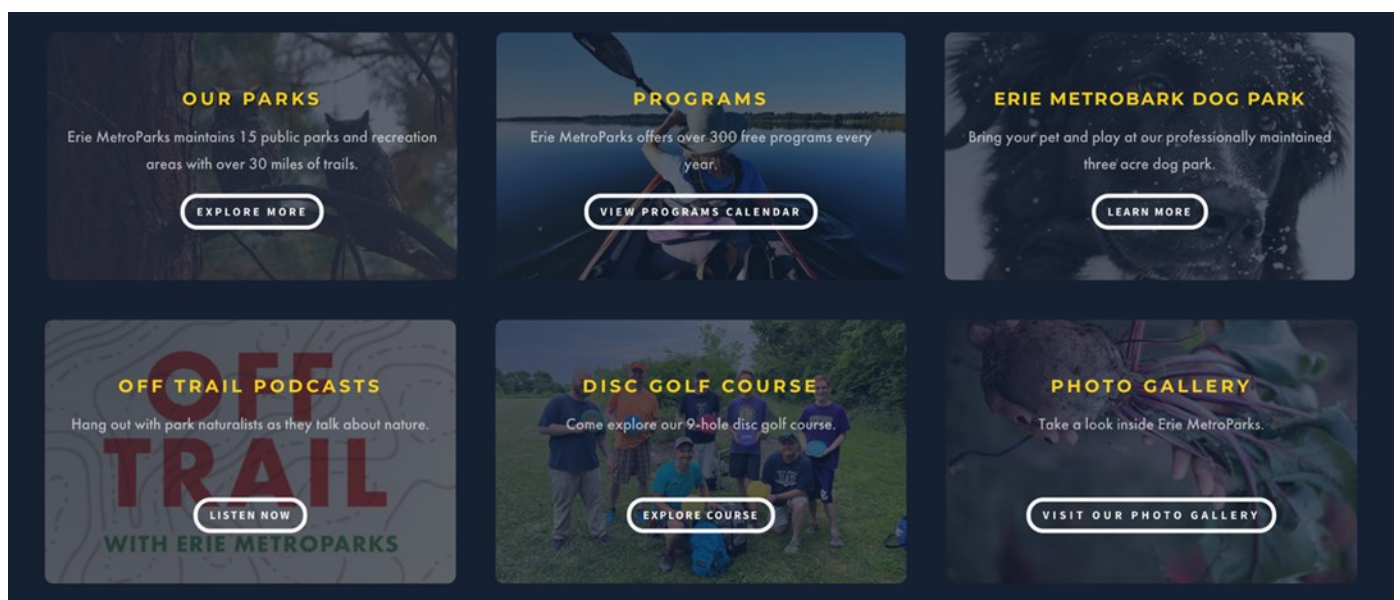




Another way we market our parks is through our “owned” platforms such as our website, bulletin boards, flyers, brochures, signs, etc. There were a few changes in these areas.

## WEBSITE

Erie MetroParks’ Website (eriemetroparks.org) is the single most comprehensive source of information about the organization available to the public. Users of the website can locate a MetroPark on a map, view information about each park, see a list of all programs, register for programs and events, access natural resources management plans, view board meeting minutes and more. We completely rebuilt the page this year and added a dozen new landing pages to the site. Here are some --website numbers.



## Summary of social media and Website Traffic

Although Facebook and Instagram continue to give Erie MetroParks the greatest return on investment for shared advertisement and promotion, our website is also invaluable with over 185,000 page views this year alone. In December, we completely redesigned the website and built several new landing pages.

## EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Erie MetroParks continued to send emailed newsletters under the title The Inside Trail. The newsletter contains information about upcoming programs and events, as well other useful information pertaining to our parks. The current audience number is 2,842. The graph below shows the percentage of emails opened on average for each campaign. It also shows the percentage of recipients who clicked a link within the email. We also started using email campaigns to reach people who sign up for certain programs. The 50-Mile Challenge added 101 new recipients.

### Characteristics you and your peers share

#### Industry

##### Government

Your industry was either self reported or predicted using natural language processing techniques. You can update it in [your settings](#).

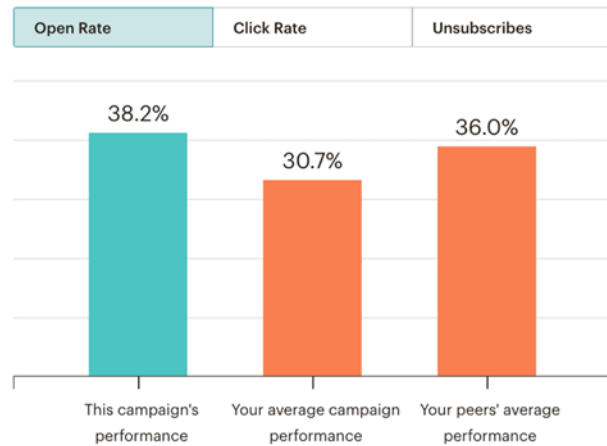
#### Audience demographics

Over 65% Female, from 45 and up

#### Audience size

2,000 - 10,000

### How your email campaign compares



## Physical

Physical assets owned by Erie MetroParks provide countless opportunities for the agency to communicate with the public through signage, brochures, flyers, interpretive panels and other materials. This year we were able to begin updating the signs on the Adventure Walkway, the Eagle Point Maps, design a fundraising campaign, and much more. Below are some examples of the materials produced by the Marketing department in 2022.



# ERIE METROPARKS OSBORN FALL FEST



## Marketing Summary

Erie MetroParks Marketing continued to extend its reach in 2022, gaining more followers on social media and engaged users through other marketing means. We forged great relationships with the community and brought more awareness to our parks, our mission, and our programs. I have continued to learn and develop new ideas and incorporate those ideas into our marketing.

We really turned up marketing on our programs this year and were able to get programs listed in many new places including the Erie County Health Department, Shores and Islands Calendar, and The Sandusky Register's Let's Go section to name a few. We were able to connect with many local businesses that now carry our brochures and share our posts. The Sandusky Register was a huge help this year, listing our programs every week and featuring our park and its staff monthly. Our network grew by leaps and bounds.

We continued adding QR codes to our advertisements. We continued to design and print brochures. We used countless tools to increase our reach. We were very successful in doing so. Numbers were up in every digital media and marketing outlet, thus increasing program attendance and park awareness.





Osborn Fall Fest is an annual event that happens every year towards the end of September. The event features dozens of activity stations & exhibits, live animals, and entertainment for the whole family.



## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

IT ran smoothly this year as we tried to learn the new phone system and get ready for the move to the Cloud in 2023. We added a new employee to the server and became a printer repair person. We upgraded one computer and repaired two others.

We learned a lot more about our servers this year. I established a back-up procedure and learned to create specific folders for employees through the server. We renewed our contract with Meraki. IT continues to photograph various structures, programs, and areas with the drone to fulfill park needs.

## Upgraded Computers, Monitors & Other Electronics

Several employees received upgraded computers and monitors this year. A replacement schedule was revamped and back up computers were restored for future use. We started to clean server folders and remove duplicates. We also started a surplus list of electronics that will continue to grow until we move in the new building. We also purchased and registered a new drone this year and acquired a new HD projector! We also created a list of electronic peripherals and cameras needed for the new nature center.

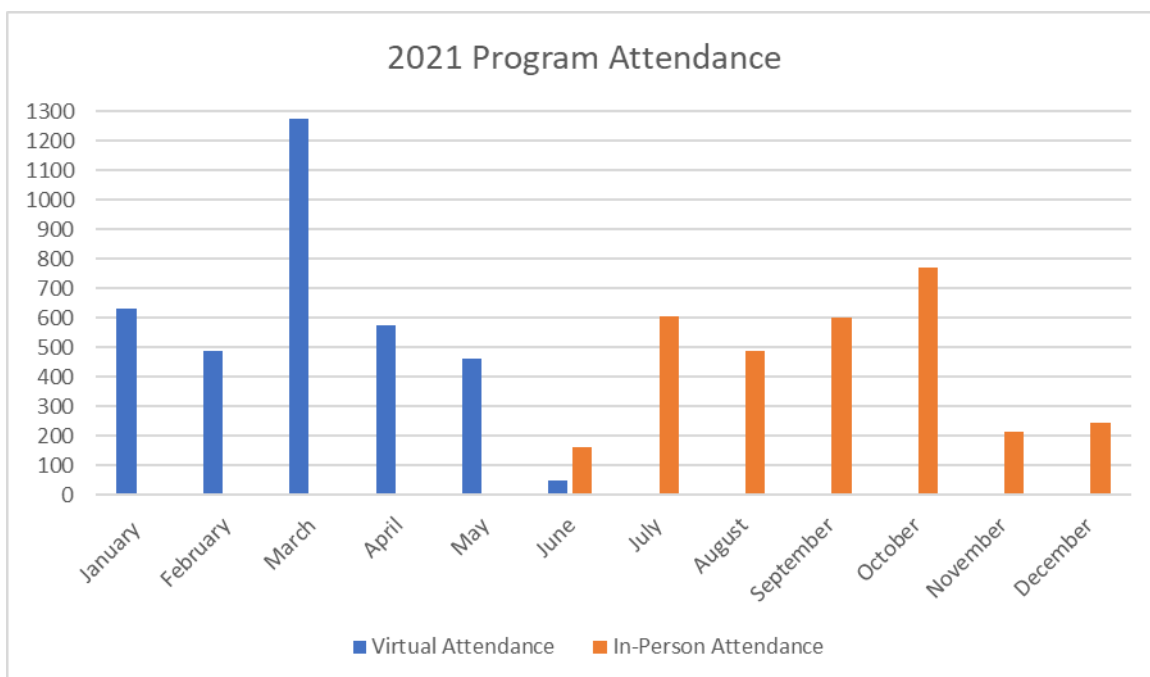
# 2021 PROGRAM DEPARTMENT REPORT



## Summary

2021 started off as an extension of 2020; programmers were fully immersed in virtual programming. In June, programmers were cleared to hold in-person programming and went right back to offering pre-COVID-19 programs focusing on outdoor programming. With only two staff members at the time, the programming staff was limited as to what they were able to offer. We did not hold nature camps in 2021 year due to fewer staff and the logistics of planning camp with the continued uncertainty of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, the Erie MetroParks Program Department had 3,482 virtual attendees and 3,085 in-person attendees for a grand total of 6,567 program participants. The year's total program attendance can be seen in the bar graph below, with the number of people represented on the y-axis.



In addition to hosting successful virtual and traditional programming, the department gained a new Program Manager, Mike Hensley, and hired two new Naturalists in 2021. Martyn Drabik-Hamshare joined the programming department in June and Mollie Knighton was brought on in late September.

The programming staff was able to meet two of their three strategic planning goals in 2021. We successfully executed virtual programming until we were able to offer in-person programs due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The stand-up paddle boarding grant will be completed by the end of 2022 from its initial start in 2019.

Due to changing staff and other challenges within the health department, EMP programming staff removed themselves from assisting with the “Walk with Ease” program and grant held by the health department. With no clear guidance of the program and no attendance recorded for an entire summer of programming, we felt it was necessary to make this decision.

### **Certifications**

Mike Hensley received his stand-up paddleboarding certification, and Martyn Drabik-Hamshare received his kayaking certification through the Division of Parks and Watercraft. In 2022, Mike, Martyn, and Mollie will all get certified in different domains.

Mike Hensley began his Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) Program in late 2021 and will train and certify programming and other staff as Certified Interpretive Guides in the fall of 2022. As we move forward, programmers will continue to look for additional educational training that provide staff and the community we serve with valuable resources.

### **Virtual Programming**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the year began with virtual programming and continued offering entirely virtual programming through May. As in-person programming was reintroduced in June, virtual programming was scaled back and offered on a more limited basis. In the first half of 2021, 107 virtual programs were offered, including Nature School, Off Trail podcast, and Park P.A.L.S., which had a combined total of 3,482 virtual attendees.

The Off Trail podcast has eclipsed 1,000 listeners and will continue to climb as we move forward with additional episodes and new topics.

We also were able to run a few other “virtual” or “self-guided” programs like the Great Pumpkin Hunt, 50/50 Challenge and our first ever photo contest which were all well-received. These programs had incentives and prizes to encourage participation and get the community in our parks without programmers guiding them. These programs will continue as the programming department moves forward.



## **In-Person Programming**

In June, while following all health and safety guidelines recommended by the CDC, the department began transitioning back to in-person programming. The second half of the year finished with a total of 167 in-person programs offered, including school programs, public, and requested, with 3,085 in-person attendees.

Programmers held a Schools Out program in December which was very successful and well received. The last day did get cancelled due to a few cases of Covid-19.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of Programs</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
January	15	633
February	13	487
March	27	1276
April	26	576
May	23	462
June	3	48
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>3482</b>

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of Programs</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
June	15	163
July	29	604
August	25	487
September	31	602
October	14	769
November	26	215
December	27	245
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>3085</b>

## **Collaborations & Teamwork**

Mike Hensley was able to work with Park Manager, Mark Malone, to develop a plan for the garage at the Enchanted Cottage so that it can be converted to a “paddle storage station” for SUPS and kayaks.

Cheryl Kilmer began making plans for the return of Walk it Out in 2022 while partnering with outside organizations. Cheryl also reintroduced Art-in-the-Parks and MetroPark Makers which are both collaborative projects with many organizations.

Martyn Drabik-Hamshare was able to work with the Natural Resource Department to identify and begin making a plan for the bats at the Smokey Road house at Edison Woods MetroPark.

In addition, programmers and the administrative department were able to make plans for our new nature center. This included setting up meetings with other parks and independent nature centers to review their facilities and make plans and preparations for our newest project; we visited between seven nature centers as a staff.



## **2022 PROGRAM DEPARTMENT REPORT**



(Left to Right: Woody Woodward, Kippie Loughlin, Cheryl Kilmer, Mollie Knighton, Mike Hensley, Martyn Drabik-Hamshare, Kristen Ottley)

2022 was a huge year for the programming staff; for the first time since the pandemic, the programming/naturalist department was fully staffed and ready to serve our community. The naturalist team was able to hit all our 2022 goals. In addition, we know Kippie is his own department, but we feel that excluding him from our team would be a disservice to the work he does with and for us so we can successfully do our jobs. Kippie is constantly promoting our programs and works very well with our community and staff to achieve our goals and fulfill our mission.

Our team sat down at the end of 2021 and went over a plan on how we could best serve our community. We came up with a vision, mission, and a set of values that our team would use to guide our department moving forward.



# Erie MetroParks Programming Department

## Vision

Erie MetroParks shall be a leader in programs and education to all of the county's citizens. Erie MetroParks provides programming in areas such as environment, natural history, conservation, wellness, recreation, and emerging trends regarding invasive information. Programs, events and information shall be offered by certified, qualified trained staff and/or experienced providers.

## Mission

To offer high quality, applicable programming to provide education, promote exploration, and inspire conservation.

## Values

**Excellence:** The programming department will be a reputable feature in Erie County. Erie MetroParks will provide high quality, fun, and educational programming opportunities.

**Network:** Erie MetroParks will strengthen connections, collaborations, and partnerships with other organizations to provide experiences and opportunities to better serve our community.

**Service:** Erie MetroParks will serve the county's multi-demographic and socioeconomic population by leading inclusive programming efforts that align with our mission.

**Unity:** The programming department will work together and support one another to accomplish personal and professional goals. We will prioritize teamwork, morale, and communication.

**Equity:** Erie MetroParks strives to identify and dismantle barriers to equity. Programming staff will pursue to advance reach, growth, and accessibility.

# Goals

Goal #1: Martyn Drabik- Hamshare was able to successfully start and maintain the Osborn MetroPark parkrun as run director. This program/event was unique and brought a different audience of guests into the park for a free weekly run or walk 5k. This program has also revamped some new and old volunteer interest for Erie MetroParks.



Goal #2: Mollie Knighton coordinates our special events with the help of Sue Daniel and other staff. Mollie was able to revamp and rebrand our annual “Harvest Happenings” event which is now known as the “Osborn Fall Fest”. The event has changed a little, moved to a one-day event, and has been moved into September to try and minimize competition with other fall seasonal events throughout the county. (Photos in Special Events)

Goal #3: Our Naturalist team was able to acquire new animals in preparation for moving into the Nature Center. We added a gray rat snake that was acquired by Cheryl Kilmer through Gorman Nature Center. Other additions include an Eastern Snapping turtle, Leopard frog, and a new rabbit named Sergeant Pepper which was voted on by the Erie County community.

Goal #4: Our team was able to work with our community partners to create the Erie MetroParks Nature on Wheels (EMP NOW) trailer, that was designed to increase nature activity and understanding in our underserved communities. This project was extremely successful and won an award through OPRA for Environmental & Interpretive Programs & Events. Mike Hensley also had the opportunity to speak at two national conferences National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and National Association for Interpretation (NAI) about this project in the hopes that other organizations could replicate the project and better serve their community.



## General & Requested Programming:

Programming staff was firing on all cylinders for general programming in 2022. With the addition of new staff and a great team, we have been able to offer new programs that serve our community and fulfill our mission. We served over 24,000 guests through our programming, which accounts for 1/3 of our county's population. Moving forward, the goal will be to increase that number, and will continue serve our community to the best of our ability.

The programming department added a few new programs for the 2022 season that were small but noteworthy for our team's creativity and dedication to serving our community. Cheryl Kilmer added Bubble Boogie, Monarch Tagging with the NOW trailer, and Nature Baby, which all provided great opportunities and fun for the community. In addition to her role as special events coordinator, Mollie Knighton added Virtual Trivia, Creativ-a-Tea, and the Spooky Pooch Parade which was very well attended. Martyn Drabik- Hamshare has made tremendous strides to help increase citizen science-based programs with his dedication to creating and monitoring our park's iNaturalist account, which helps us to track species within the parks and keep users connected. Martyn has also added disc golf, parkrun, and multiple new birding programs.

		Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YTD
<b>Program Attendees</b>		213	249	692	3,402	831	1,048	1,328	4,186	5,774	5,688	278	464	<b>24,153</b>
<b>Programs Offered</b>		19	21	25	36	42	44	54	42	44	43	28	39	<b>437</b>
	<i>Public</i>	18	17	21	28	29	35	40	32	32	28	21	29	<b>330</b>
	<i>Requested</i>	1	4	4	8	13	9	14	10	12	15	7	10	<b>107</b>
<i>Program Topics</i>														
	<b>Nature</b>	10	13	16	22	32	26	43	23	19	23	12	22	<b>261</b>
	<b>Art</b>	4	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	4	<b>27</b>
	<b>Recreation</b>	5	5	6	10	8	14	10	14	16	15	11	11	<b>125</b>
	<b>History</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	<b>2</b>
	<b>Other</b>	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	3	6	2	3	3	<b>24</b>

The programming staff did a few new programs in 2022 that were collaborative and creative that we would like to highlight.

Martyn, Mollie, and Tara partnered with Erie County Soil and Water for a Bat House workshop that was very successful. This was an extension of the bat work Martyn and Tara did on the Smokey Rd house to help maintain the Little Brown bat colony that has been monitored for the last few years.





## Mollie's Spooky Pooch Parade



## Nature Camp





### **Nature Camp:**

2022 was our first in person nature camp since 2019, and we went big with six weeks of nature camp offered instead of our normal four weeks. Naturalists led five weeks of camp for ages 6-12 years old and one week of camp for ages 10-15 years old. We were fortunate to have two amazing nature camp and program assistants for the 2022 season. Valerie Deehr and Hannah Mahr were very dependable and were both willing to take on any task we put in front of them. Valerie and Hannah also played a major role in helping our staff to roll out the EMP NOW trailer and staff it at various events and programs.

Nature Camp was switched from a daily registration to a weekly registration which proved to work more favorably for our registration team and naturalist staff. Camp themes were Things with Wings, Adventure Camp, Kid-venture Camp, Scales and Tales, Animal Kingdom, and H2Whoa.



### **Outdoor Recreational Programming:**

Outdoor recreational programming went well with 125 recreational programs, which included kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, parkrun, disc golf, and archery. We also partnered with Kelley's Island Field Station for kayaking and nature camp programming and will continue that partnership moving forward.



## **Special Events:**

### **Maple Sugaring Day**

2022 was a big year for new events and programming, including our inaugural Maple Sugaring Day event in which we served over 250 individuals pancakes and led hikes to show how maple sugaring has been done historically. We partnered with the Sandusky Lions Club which provided pancakes and sausage to our guests and Erie MetroParks provided the maple syrup. Overall, the park made around four gallons of syrup that was used on the day of the event.



### **Osborn Fall Fest (OFF)**

Mollie planned and executed Osborn Fall Fest for 2022 and did a phenomenal job. Mollie worked closely with Sue Daniel to plan and execute OFF and we could not have asked for better weather and turnout for the event. We also held the second annual photo contest that had over fifty participants. In addition to the event, we had a formal groundbreaking for our new Nature Center to show a layout of the location of the nature center location. We estimated 4,000 people attended our new re-vamped Osborn Fall Fest.





## **Earth Day Extravaganza**

This was our first large event in 2022 coming out of the pandemic, with over 2,000 attendees, and it was very successful. We had a new host of vendors and participants for this year's event. Mollie also held our first annual Ohio Wildlife Youth Art Contest which had over 200 entries. For the 2023 art contest, Mollie is teaming up with the Fireland Audubon Society (FAS) to increase participation and partnership with FAS.



## **Certifications:**

Mike, Mollie, and Martyn all received certifications through the Department of Parks and Watercraft in Canoeing and Stand-Up Paddleboarding for the 2022 season. Martyn and Mollie received certification in Wilderness First Aid through Old Women Creek. Mike and Cheryl both received a recertification for Archery Level 3 and Level 1 to continue offering archery to the public.

2023 certifications will be dependent on Nature Center progress and timing.

## **Grants:**

Mollie Knighton applied for and received an OPRA Program Improvement Grant for 2022/2023. Mollie will be creating a cave ecology program that will help add to our existing programming and options for teachers who request programs from our staff.

Naturalist/Programming staff will be applying for a few grants for the interpretive design of the Nature Center in 2023, so we felt it was prudent to apply for fewer grants during 2022.





