

# ANNUAL REPORT



# 2011

## BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

The Hamilton County Park District was created in 1930 with the mission to protect local natural resources and to provide outdoor recreation and education for area residents. The Hamilton County Park District is a separate political subdivision of the State of Ohio, governed by the Board of Park Commissioners. The Board has been traditionally comprised of three individuals who serve three-year terms without compensation. In November 2011, the Board voted to expand the number of members to five Park Commissioners. Two new members are expected to join the Board in 2012. Board members are appointed by the Judge of Probate Court, the Honorable James Cissell.



*Honorable James Cissell*

**Robert A. Goering, Sr.**, Attorney-at-Law with the firm of Goering & Goering, was first appointed to the Board on January 1, 1994. He is Past President and Chairman of the Board of United Cerebral Palsy of Cincinnati, Inc., Living Arrangements for Developmentally Disabled and Find-A-Way, Inc. He has served as Adjunct Professor of Law at Northern Kentucky University, Chase Law School since 1970. Mr. Goering was reappointed January 1, 2012.

**John T. Reis** spent his career at Seasongood & Mayer Investment Securities and was first appointed to the Board on January 1, 2010. He is the Executive Director of the Greater Cincinnati Golf Association and has served as a rules official for 16 US Junior Amateur Championships, eight US Opens, seven US Senior Opens and 15 NCAA Division I Golf Championships.

**Joseph C. Seta** was appointed on January 1, 2011. He served as the President and CEO of Seta, Appleman & Showell, an advertising and graphic design firm, for 22 years. He has served on the advisory board for the College of Mount Saint Joseph and was a board member for the Central Academy of Commercial Art. He attended Xavier University and the Central Academy of Commercial Art.



*Commissioners John T. Reis, Robert A. Goering, Sr. and Joseph C. Seta*

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



During 2011, the Hamilton County Park District hosted a variety of exciting programs and events and continued its long tradition of preserving critical natural habitats while providing outstanding outdoor recreation activities. We had a banner year on many fronts including a 16% increase in new volunteers, now well over 750 in number, joining the Park District team. At the same time, the Park District was challenged by extraordinary rainfall throughout the year and the lingering effects of the slow economic recovery.

The Hamilton County Park District, like most other local political subdivisions throughout Ohio was notified in June, 2011 that its tax income would be significantly reduced as a result of changes in state law. As a result of this new legislation along with other factors, the Park District was alerted to prepare for significant reductions in future tax income - approximately \$10 million through the term of the current voted levy which is set to expire at the end of 2017.

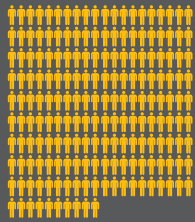
To address this new reality, the Board and staff carefully developed a revised budget for 2011 as well as a long range plan for the remaining five years of the current 1-mill levy term. The immediate budget adjustments ensured the Park District finished 2011 in a financially stable position. The subsequent action steps resulted in an 11% decrease in the Park District's expenditure budget for 2012, as compared to 2011, including a reduction in certain services and associated staff support. The long range plan positions the Park District to move forward in a fiscally prudent manner where it will continue to provide wonderful park experiences for many years to come.

While 2011 was considered one of the wettest years ever with over 72 inches of rain, the Park District continued to serve area residents with creative and exciting programs and events. In June, the Kids Outdoor Adventure Expo touched more than 4,000 kids and adults. This one-day event held in collaboration with The Ohio River Way's Paddlefest at Coney Island, earned the statewide Award of Excellence in Environmental Programming from The Ohio Parks and Recreation Association. Glenwood Gardens hosted the larger than life sculptural exhibit of David Rogers' Big Bugs during the summer attracting nearly 33,000 visitors. Great progress was made on two regional trail projects- Otto Armleder Memorial Park and Mitchell Memorial Forest. And the Stewardship Department continued its important work in wildlife management, habitat improvements and the newly established aquaculture program at Miami Whitewater Forest.

On behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners, I'm pleased to present this 2011 Annual Report and invite you to visit the Hamilton County Park District in 2012. Our goal is to: Enrich Lives and Connect People - We are the Pathway to the Great Outdoors!

Jack Sutton, Executive Director

# POWER IN NUMBERS IN 2011



Volunteer Services added

**190**

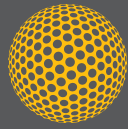
new volunteers, a 16% increase over 2010.



Volunteers recorded

**66,357**

hours of volunteer service, which equates to 32 full-time employees.



The golf courses hosted over **40** tournaments throughout the year.



**2,261**

naturalist programs were presented to 89,498 people.



**150,798**

Visitor Center guests in 2011.

**10,922**

In-Reach programs were presented to participants in 262 groups, a 6% increase in participants over 2010.

The annual Fall Plant Sale had the best revenue production in its history, a

**↑78%**

increase in value of sales over 2010.

**42,827**

guests visited Cotswold Visitor Center and Highfield Discovery Garden in Glenwood Gardens.

Park's Farm Fun in the Sun summer programs for groups had **3,251** participants in **180** programs, an increase over 2010.

Honey Harvest programs during Great Outdoor Weekend attracted **632** participants, an increase over 2010.

The top three largest contributions of volunteer service were donated to the Naturalist Department, Winton Woods Riding Center and Stewardship Department.

**223** Children's Celebrations parties were given with **5,087** children and adults in attendance, an increase over 2010.

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### Hamilton County Park District

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GreatParks.org



If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, ancestry, physical or mental disability, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with the Office of Equal Opportunity, Dept. of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.

# CAPITAL PROJECTS

## Otto Armleder Park Trail Extension to Lunken Airfield

In 2011, construction continued on the Armleder Trail Connection, a trail to connect Armleder Park with Lunken Playfields. The project includes a 150-foot span bridge over Duck Creek, a trail under Beechmont Avenue Bridge and restoration and stabilization of Duck Creek's stream bank. The project is expected to be completed in late spring 2012.



## Francis RecreAcres Playground Installation

Corporate volunteers from Cincinnati region Target stores installed a universally accessible playground partially funded by GameTime Inc. The original 3,560 square foot playground was replaced with a 4,100 square foot playground including poured-in-place rubber safety surface and accessible play areas for all abilities.



## Miami Whitewater Forest Campground Shower Building & Playground Replacement

The previous Miami Whitewater Forest Campground shower building was demolished and construction began on a new, 900-square foot building that includes men's and women's restrooms, family restroom, family and unisex showers, mechanical room, and storage. Construction also began on the new playground, which is double the square footage of the previous play area and features a rubber playing safety surface, ground level decks and fitness components.

## Dry Fork Creek Stream Bank & Stabilization Project

Construction was completed on the Dry Fork Creek Stream Bank and Stabilization project at Miami Whitewater Forest, which addressed stream bank erosion issues along Timberlake Drive. The project was funded by a Clean Ohio Conservation Program.

## Miami Whitewater Forest Equestrian Trail Replacement

Staff coordinated the design and construction of a new section of equestrian trail at Miami Whitewater Forest. The new trail replaced a section of existing trail that was in poor condition due to erosion. The Park District's funding for the trail improvements was matched by funding contributed by trail users.



## 2011 LAND ACQUISITIONS

Tract	Date Acquired	Acreage	Cost
Fee Simple			
Chen, Christopher (1)	5/19/2011	.91	\$0
Subtotal		.91	\$0
Easements Acquired			
Village of Newtown Trail Corridor (2)	11/15/2011	.70	\$43,600
Subtotal		.70	\$43,600
Total		1.61	\$43,600

Total Greenspace preserved and protected by the Hamilton County Park District as of December 31, 2011 is 16,564 acres, including fee simple acquisitions, lease agreements, conservation easements, bike trail easements, out-leases and cooperative management agreements.

(1) A .91 acre parcel located at the southwest corner of Sharon Woods was donated to the Park District.

(2) A .70 acre permanent easement was purchased from the Village of Newtown for extension of the Little Miami Scenic Trail.

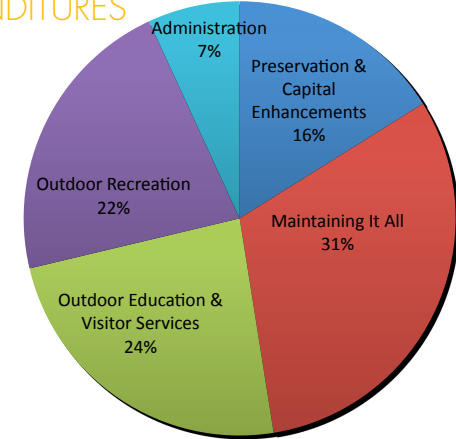
## 2011 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

General & Capital Funds	
Balance 1/1/2011	\$6,105,180
Unencumbered	\$4,671,245
Encumbered	1,433,935
Revenue Received	\$31,872,143
Total Funds Available	\$37,977,323
Less Appropriated & Expended	30,662,149
Balance 12/31/2011	\$7,315,174
Revenue	
Receipts	
Taxes	\$18,051,003
Earned Revenue	
Golf Courses	\$5,111,758
Recreation Services	3,191,989
Motor Vehicle Permits	1,896,626
Golf Merchandise	823,086
Riding Center	407,586
Nature's Niche	354,897
Guest Services	322,611
Athletics	302,671
Special Events	208,522
Parky's Farm	123,748
Outdoor Education	89,929
Glenwood Gardens	197,478
Adventure Outpost	42,086
Wet Play	126,601
Total Earned Revenue	\$13,199,588
Grants	235,860
Miscellaneous Receipts	385,692
Total Receipts	31,872,143

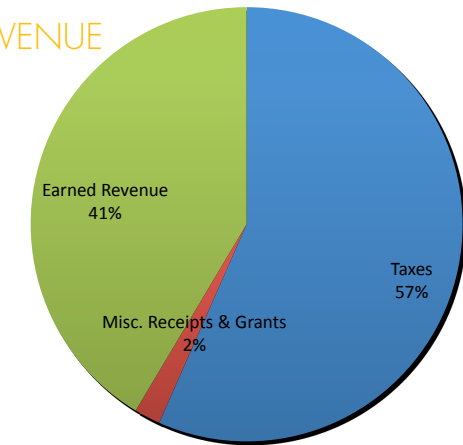
## EXPENDITURES

Operations	\$6,068,330	19.79%
Safety	3,797,895	12.39%
Land Acquisition	824,645	2.69%
Visitor Services	260,989	0.85%
Recreation Services	3,124,340	10.19%
Golf Management	2,097,469	6.84%
Administration	1,764,087	5.75%
Development	1,293,812	4.22%
Facilities	2,129,944	6.95%
Outdoor Education	1,009,657	3.29%
Golf Merchandise	762,693	2.49%
Glenwood Gardens	672,187	2.19%
Projects	435,097	1.42%
Communications	346,362	1.13%
Parky's Farm	482,967	1.58%
Stewardship	609,389	1.99%
Special Projects	456,679	1.49%
Construction Management	347,395	1.13%
Armlerder	1,308,831	4.27%
Guest Services	383,148	1.25%
Riding Center	410,783	1.34%
Nature's Niche	336,457	1.10%
Landscape	345,696	1.13%
Planning	348,264	1.14%
Athletics	247,189	0.81%
Information Systems	348,519	1.14%
Fernbank Park	169,416	0.55%
Adventure Outpost	169,980	0.55%
Volunteers	104,991	0.34%
Little Miami Trail	4,938	0.02%
2011 Total Expenditures	\$30,662,149	100.00%

## EXPENDITURES



## REVENUE



## 2011 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE PARK DISTRICT SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS

Fund Name	Balance 1/1/11	Revenue	Interest Revenue	Change in Value of Investments	Expenditures 12/31/11	Balance
Mitchell	\$3,113,875	\$128,533	\$96	\$(284,067)	\$(154,130)	2,804,307
Burchenal	1,525,007	34,148	110	51,573	(1,238)	1,609,600
Evergreen	1,553,686	179,274	1,171	N/A	(347,330)	1,386,801
Law Enforcement	6,563	-	5	N/A	-	6,568
Law Enforcement & Education	2,369	75	2	N/A	-	2,446
Drug Law Enforcement	10,796	2,020	9	N/A	-	12,825
FEMA	-	79,388	-	N/A	(79,388)	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$6,212,296</b>	<b>\$423,438</b>	<b>\$1,393</b>	<b>\$(232,494)</b>	<b>\$(582,086)</b>	<b>\$5,822,547</b>

The Hamilton County Park District engages in an annual financial audit in accordance with Ohio law, standards and procedures generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The Hamilton County Park District's most recent Comprehensive Annual Financial Report may be viewed at the following websites: [GreatParks.org](http://GreatParks.org) and [auditor.state.oh.us](http://auditor.state.oh.us).

The above reports were prepared internally and are unaudited.

The Hamilton County Park District garnered its 13th consecutive "Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting" by the Government Finance Officers Association for its 2010 Comprehensive Financial Statement (prepared in 2011). The Certificate Program, established in 1945, is designed to recognize and encourage excellence in financial reporting by state and local governments.

## STEWARDSHIP

Through the Park District's Deer Management Program, the donation of approximately 25,000 meals was made to local food pantries.

Six artificial Great Horned Owl nests showed activity in the spring; a pair of Great Horned Owls took over an abandoned Red-shouldered Hawk nest; and the confirmation of fledging of four owlets doubled 2010's total. This species continues to show signs of recovery since its high mortality during the West Nile Virus outbreak of a few years ago.

Volunteers donated more than 3,100 hours to the Stewardship Department working at the Shaker Trace Seed Nursery, the aquaculture pond facility, conducting stream assessments and walking property lines. Thirty-four volunteers completed a record 64 biological assessments on 19 streams in the parks.



The first year of operation of the aquaculture ponds facility at the Shaker Trace Seed Nursery was completed in the spring with a seining-out of the first crop of bluegills stocked in 2010. The fish were inspected, sized, weighed, and transferred to a new pond to complete a second year of growth before being stocked into park lakes in 2012.

Stewardship assisted the Mill Creek Restoration Project by providing site-resource staff at Winton Woods and Sharon Woods for six school groups who were recruited to assess area streams, and one class to train teacher volunteers in stream monitoring.

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The new Death, Darkness & Deserters program invited guests to travel back to Ohio's "shady" past. The first date in October was full more than a week prior to the program. A second date was added to accommodate guests on a waiting list. More than 100 people participated in the program.

New programs offered by the University of the Great Outdoors (UGO) included Walk Club 5K and Survival Day Camp. At Adventure Outpost, an international group from Northern Ireland participated in overnight team building adventures; Summit Academy took part in four days of programming while their school underwent repairs due to flooding; and the first private group overnight canoe trip for Girl Scouts was given.

In February of 2011, the Winton Woods Riding Center received a first place award from Ohio Parks and Recreation (OPRA) Special Populations Programming category for their Special Olympics Ohio Equestrian Competition.

Through the generosity of Winton Woods Riding Center volunteers and the VIP, Inc. grant program, an Equicizer was purchased, which is a mechanical horse that Special Riders Program and Special Olympics athletes can use to practice indoors.



## OUTDOOR RECREATION

Final work was completed on the golf course at Miami Whitewater Forest in preparation for its 50th Anniversary in 2012. Several holes were changed over the past several years which included new bunkers, new tees and converting hole #15 to a Par 3.

The 2011 adult soccer leagues had 18 teams, which was an increase of four teams from 2010.

The annual fall Bird Seed Sale was very successful, with a 17% increase over 2010.

The Easter Spectacular was a family event that included lunch and an Easter egg hunt at Parky's Farm. Additional seating was added in 2011, which allowed the department to accommodate 1,367 guests, a 41% increase over 2010.



# KIDS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EXPO



The Hamilton County Park District presented the Kids Outdoor Adventure Expo with The Ohio River Way, Inc. for its fourth outstanding year. Adventure Outpost staff organized the June event for a record-setting audience of **4,000 kids and adults!** Over 40 environmental and outdoor education organizations participated in the event, providing close to **50 exciting programs** that educated everyone about the water quality, renewable energy, pollution, aquatic habitats, recycling, water safety, weather, animals, plants and more. New in 2011 was the Riverworks Discovery tour of a real towboat on the Ohio River, Zumbatomics® exercise workout in Moonlite Gardens, "The Fishing Corner" presented by Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers, Hamilton County Park District climbing wall, along with many other programs. **The event also won an Ohio Parks and Recreation (OPRA) award for excellence in Environmental Programming.**



# DAVID ROGERS' BIG BUGS

David Rogers' Big Bugs is a traveling exhibit that was brought to Glenwood Gardens in the summer of 2011. Thirteen wooden bug sculptures were on display for 17 weeks, attracting nearly 33,000 visitors. Bugs included three 10-foot tall ants, an eleven-foot long assassin bug and a dragonfly with a 17-foot wingspan.

Glenwood Gardens staff delivered 1,509 programs to 39,554 people in 2011, with 1,135 of those programs delivered to 30,953 David Rogers' Big Bugs visitors.

Volunteers contributed 3,730.50 hours during David Rogers' Big Bugs. Volunteers assisted staff with planting and maintaining landscape beds, helping to conduct special events and naturalist programs and more.



## Big Bugs Sponsors:

- Fifth Third Bank
- Adopt-A-Plant Greenhouses
- Back Tree Service
- Bahl and Gaynor Investment Counsel
- Bobcat Enterprises Inc.
- The Brickman Group
- Century Equipment
- Greater Cincinnati Master Gardener Association
- Horan Associates
- Horizon Landscaping Services
- Humana
- Lang Financial Group Inc.
- Mobilcomm
- Natorp's
- Reading Rock
- Dig-It Landscape
- Ring Container Technologies
- Rumpke
- VIP Inc.
- The Ohio State University Extension

## Grants:

- Helen G., Henry F., And Louise Tuechter Dornette Foundation
- Highfield Foundation
- John A. Schroth Family Charitable Trust, PNC Bank, Trustee
- Charles H. Dater Foundation



# HAMILTON COUNTY PARKS FOUNDATION

Throughout 2011, staff continued to provide administrative support to the Hamilton County Parks Foundation, a charitable organization with the sole purpose of assisting the Hamilton County Park District in acquiring, protecting and enhancing regional parkland and providing outstanding outdoor recreation and nature education services. This included preparation for a capital campaign for the Simmonds Family Dog Park at Miami Whitewater Forest and advancing the Scholarship Program. Staff also coordinated the purchase and implementation of the Foundation's software for online donor management and contributions.



## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Scholarship Program was developed to give families and organizations the opportunity to send a child to a Park District program or camp with financial assistance from the Foundation. Through an application process, children under the age of 18 can take part in day camps, school and scout programs and nature programs.



## SIMMONDS FAMILY DOG PARK CAMPAIGN

The 230-acre Simmonds family property bequest in 2007, was designated by the Simmonds family to be used for park and education purposes. In 2011, the Hamilton County Parks Foundation received a lead monetary gift from the Earl and Florence Simmonds Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation for the purpose of constructing an 11-acre dog park. Construction plans were laid out in 2011, and when completed, the Simmonds Family Dog Park will include a parking lot, fencing, shade structures, water service, gravel compound, turf compounds, benches, landscaping and signage, and agility areas based on availability of funds. Capital fundraising campaign is scheduled for 2012 and construction is scheduled to begin in fall of 2012.



**Simmonds Family Dog Park**  
at Miami Whitewater Forest



 Hamilton County  
Parks Foundation

# VOLUNTEERING

## VIP, INC.

VIP, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization managed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is supported by the Hamilton County Park District Volunteer Services Department.

In 2011, VIP, Inc. managed 23 weddings at the Wedding Setting at Withrow Nature Preserve, a 35% increase over 2010.

Also in 2011, VIP, Inc. awarded four grants to the Hamilton County Park District through the VIP, Inc. In-Park Grant Program; \$200 was awarded to Adventure Outpost to send a volunteer to American Canoe Association Kayak Instructor Certification class; \$1,000 matching grant was awarded to the Winton Woods Riding Center for the purchase of a mechanical horse to provide therapeutic benefits to special riders in a classroom setting; \$1,500 was awarded to Parky's Farm for the purchase of adaptive fishing gear to enable guests with physical disabilities to fish independently; and a \$2,000 matching grant was awarded to the Hamilton County Parks Foundation for outdoor education scholarships for disadvantaged youth. These donations reflected a 33% increase over 2010 giving.



## GRANTS

The Golf Department received a grant from the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation in the amount of \$1,700 in support of the SoloRider golf program.

The Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation presented a \$1,800 donation to purchase and install mulch and upgrade landscape areas at Embshoff Woods for an Adopt-a-Park project with US bank volunteers.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Five corporations brought 257 volunteers to the Hamilton County Park District in 2011 and donated 703.50 hours of service to help with park clean-ups, tree planting, mulching, weeding and other landscape tasks.

## TARGET & FRANCIS RECREACRES PLAYGROUND COMMUNITY BUILD

The Hamilton County Park District's first community-build event was held at Francis ReCreAcres in fall 2011. Close to 30 Greater Cincinnati Target Store volunteers, along with team members from the Hamilton County Park District and David Williams & Associates assembled a new universally accessible playground that featured accessible ramps, low decks, features that encouraged play and coordination and more. A grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony was held upon its completion.



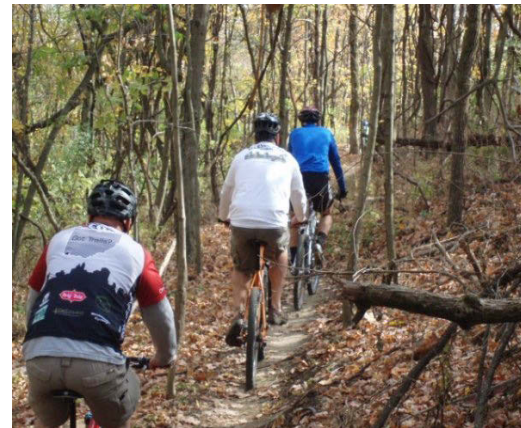
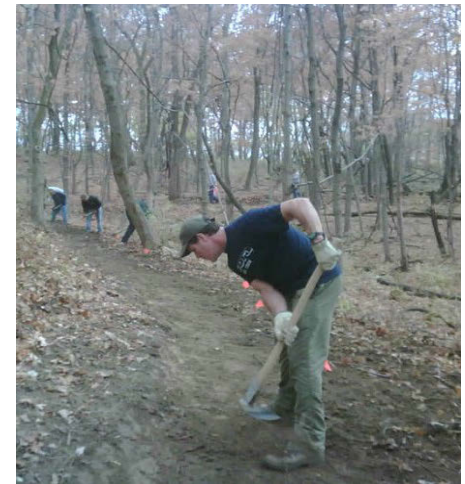
## CORPORATE & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

- The GE Elfun group donated time and funding for three planting areas in Glenwood Gardens in preparation for the David Rogers' Big Bugs exhibit.
- GE volunteers helped with mulching at Sharon Woods.
- Nearly 50 US Bank volunteers assisted with mulching and planting at Embshoff Woods Nature Preserve.
- Thirty volunteers with BKD mulched and painted an information kiosk at Steamboat Bend Campground in Woodland Mound. They also removed two truckloads of litter and driftwood from the boat ramp area.
- Cub Scouts summer camp volunteers helped with mulching at Mitchell Memorial Forest.
- Eagle Scouts built safety railing along a section of the Miami Fort trail in Shawnee Lookout.
- Clark Montessori student volunteers spent one day in the spring and three days in the fall picking up debris and litter, planting, mulching and put finishing touches to park grounds and plantings.



## CORA & MITCHELL MEMORIAL MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

Hamilton County Park District staff coordinated the construction of a four mile extension to the Mitchell Memorial Mountain Bike Trail, the first of its kind in Hamilton County. Much of the work was accomplished by Cincinnati Off Road Alliance (CORA) volunteers who worked at various times, clearing out trees and vegetation for the trail. The opening of the mountain bike trail extension is set for spring 2012.



## FOREST PARK ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS PROGRAM & WINTON WOODS CLEANUP

In 2011, the Winton Woods Cleanup had approximately 150 volunteers who picked up 3.4 tons of litter and debris in less than three hours. Over the last 24 years that Forest Park Environmental Awareness Program has conducted the event, the cleanup has had over 7,450 volunteers who collected approximately 138 tons of litter.





*It's Great Outdoors!®*  
**GreatParks.org**

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