



FIND *your* WILD

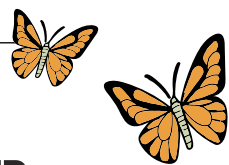


Great Parks

2022 Annual Report

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PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE

Great Parks is proud to carry the torch of stewarding public lands for generations to come. Over the years, we've listened closely to you, our community of leg stretchers, day trippers, weekend seekers, and group gatherers, and in 2022, we planted a new seed with the launch of a new acorn logo and new tagline, Find Your Wild.

Our spirit is reinvigorated, and with this energy, we completed the largest trail connection project in the history of Hamilton County, the Beechmont Connector. We also began an intentional shift from events and programs that don't align with the agency's conservation values and reimagined what new traditions can look like when we remove barriers to the natural world and empower our guests to explore.

This report offers a small glimpse of the impact Great Parks has in protecting your lands for future generations. On behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners, thank you for helping us grow mighty oaks from small acorns as we fulfill the potential of your Great Parks.

Be wild, be well.

Todd



Todd Palmeter
Chief Executive Officer



2022 Board of Park Commissioners
(Left to Right) Marcus Thompson, Caren Laverty, Joseph C. Seta, Stacey DeGraffenreid, William J. Burwinkel



Judge of Probate Court,
the Honorable
Judge Ralph E.
Winkler

GREAT PARKS
DESIGNS + DELIVERS
destinations beyond distraction,
YET WITHIN
your reach.



THIS IS OUR MOMENT TO GO BIG

The past few years have reinvigorated our purpose. In 2022, the natural world rolled out an oversized welcome mat, and exploded with possibility. We continued to see thousands of new faces benefit from the power of wild and the promise of well within the big lands of Hamilton County.



*THE POWER OF
WILD AND THE
PROMISE OF WELL
IS WITHIN THE
BIG LANDS.*

In October 2022, we reached a pivotal milestone in our 92 year history. We've been actively listening and learning from you to hear your vision for our future together, and in 2022, we planted a seed with the launch of a reinvigorated visual identity and messaging expressed through a new acorn logo and Find Your Wild, our first tagline.

The rollout of Find Your Wild included the launch of a roadshow across our destinations and FindYourWild.com, a fun approach to putting our guests in the driver seat to help them discover wide open wonder at Great Parks like never before.

SHAKER TRACE
NURSERY IN
MIAMI WHITEWATER
FOREST PRODUCES
NATIVE PLANTS
FOR PRAIRIE
AND WETLAND
RESTORATION
PROJECTS.



BIG LANDS, BIGGER IMPACT

As modern life continues to put up more barriers to the natural world, we are holding our ground.



BIG footprint

In 2022, Great Parks acquired an additional 79 acres of land. **As the largest landowner in Hamilton County, Great Parks protects 17,832 acres.**



wild WITHIN REACH

6.5 million guests enjoyed our wide open spaces in 2022.

People all across the community demonstrated that accessible green spaces continue to be important for relaxing and recharging.

accessible ACRES

Our residents can find **22 parks and conservation areas, 84 miles of trails, and 25 miles of river frontage** nestled between neighborhoods.



OXYGEN factories

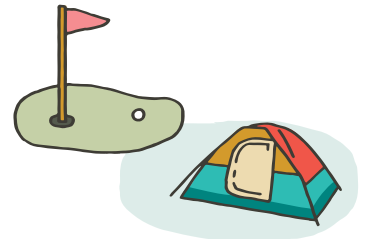
3,904 trees planted across the park district.

Staff and volunteers came together to expand our forests for guests to enjoy.



NON-STOP nature

Populations of protected bats were found at two Great Parks destinations, including the big brown bat, which is a species of concern, and the federally endangered Indiana bat.



WIDE OPEN welcome

57,715 people attended Great Parks programs in 2022.

Between golf outings and nature programs, from Adventure Outpost to Parky's Farm, guests of all ages and abilities discovered new ways to find their wild.



BRIDGING THE GAP + MAKING CONNECTIONS

The Beechmont Connector is a major leap forward in growing the regional trail system, linking miles of Hamilton County trails that were previously unconnected. This critical, half-mile link was the final phase of a larger trail project designed to fill a major gap in connecting the statewide Ohio-to-Erie Trail and the 78-mile Little Miami Scenic Trail. This project creates a safe, shared-use trail, entirely separated from roadway traffic on the Beechmont Bridge, for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel across the Little Miami River.

Collaboration with other local agencies and organizations was critical in completing the Beechmont Connector. Great Parks partnered with the City of Cincinnati, Anderson Township, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, among others, to make this long-planned project become a reality. Great Parks secured funding for the \$9 million project; including using more than 30% from Great Parks' capital project funds, netting a local match for state capital improvement funds, and utilizing federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Program funds.



PLANNING A PLAY SPACE FOR ALL

REIMAGINING THE SHARON WOODS PLAYGROUND



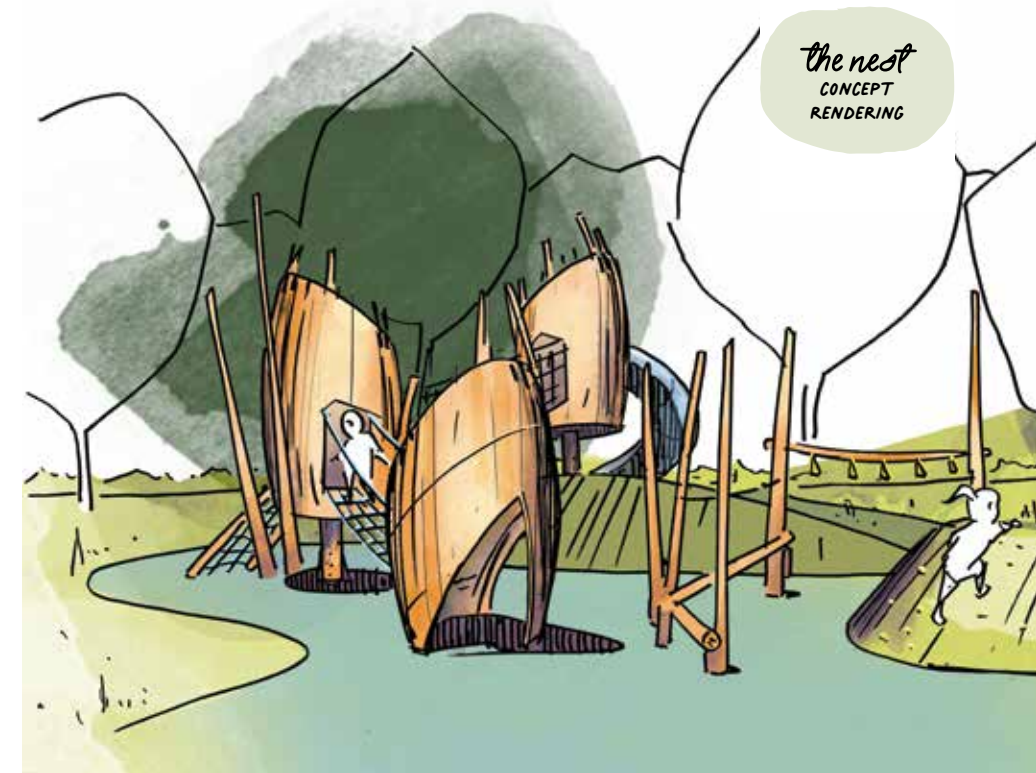
In June 2022, Great Parks hosted two children's workshops, asking kids to show us their ideas for a new outdoor playground at Sharon Woods.

Participants used clay, sticks, blocks, and other craft supplies to build features like super-tall climbing towers, curling slides, and animal-shaped structures, telling Great Parks project managers exactly what they liked in a playground and why.

We also received some useful suggestions, like colors to avoid so playground equipment doesn't get too hot in warmer months, or seating options

for parents and caretakers. Public feedback is incredibly important to giving current and future users a chance to weigh in.

The information from these workshops supplemented input from nearly 500 survey responses Great Parks received in 2020. With feedback from the public, subject matter experts, and staff, we produced concepts to share with the community in fall 2022. The new playground theme will include an accessible design capturing all the reasons Sharon Woods has been such a special place for generations.





*GUESTS MET
AND INTERACTED
WITH LOCAL FIRE
DEPARTMENTS,
FIRST RESPONDERS,
EMERGENCY
SERVICES, AND LAW
ENFORCEMENT.*

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

GREAT PARKS RANGERS OFFER WIDE OPEN WELCOME

Leading into 2022, the Great Parks Rangers continued an initiative to facilitate stronger connections with members of our community across Hamilton County. The Rangers hosted a series of free, open-to-the-public events, offering residents the chance to enjoy new experiences and become better acquainted with the Park Rangers.

In August 2022, this initiative continued with the Rangers hosting Great Parks' first National Night Out. Held at Winton Woods Harbor, guests

enjoyed visiting different stations to learn more about local fire departments, first responders, emergency services, and law enforcement.

Guests looked inside SWAT vehicles and police cruisers, got up close with emergency helicopters, participated in a driving safety course, saw K9 unit demonstrations, and more. Great Parks interpreters hosted animal ambassador encounters, teaching guests all about native wildlife.





HOLIDAYS ON THE FARM

REIMAGINING HOLIDAY TRADITIONS



*RETHINKING A
TRADITION & ESCAPING
THE ORDINARY TO
DISCOVER WIDE OPEN
WINTER WONDER WITH
GREAT PARKS.*

In 2022, Great Parks debuted a new winter celebration: Holidays on the Farm. Hosted at Parky's Farm in Winton Woods, this event created a wide-open winter welcome for guests to experience the season in a farm environment.

With an increase in visitors since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Great Parks wanted to create an event that reinforced how much visitors value the wellness benefits of exploring outdoor spaces. Holidays on the Farm provided

a gathering space for people to recharge and reconnect with their family and friends outdoors, all while discovering the beauty of big lands in winter and the festive sights of Parky's Farm.

With fun for all ages—including lighted nature trails in the woods, hayrides, scavenger hunts, a festive beer garden, live carolers, animal meet-and-greets, and Santa Claus. Holidays on the Farm is proof the outdoors is four-season friendly.



**WILD
IDEAS
in action:**

**370 new
recycling bins**

+

**10
cellphone
recycling bins
across the park
district**

THE MITCHELL MEMORIAL FOREST PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE CLEAN OHIO GREEN SPACE CONSERVATION FUND AND THE WHITEWATER RIVER CORRIDOR RESTORATION WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO FUNDING FROM INTERNATIONAL PAPER AND DUKE ENERGY.

ACTIVATING OUR ACRES

Throughout the year, Great Parks continued numerous sustainability, conservation, and restoration projects. Among these initiatives, Great Parks served residents through recycling programs, tree planting, and restoring habitats.

Think Outside the Trash

In spring 2022, Great Parks started the Think Outside the Trash program. Funded by a grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and matching funds from Great Parks, we installed 370 new recycling bins in high-traffic areas across the park district.

Great Parks also partnered with Louisville-based company ECO-Cell to install cellphone recycling bins at 10 park facilities. Cellphone recycling reduces negative impacts on the environment and helps protect sensitive habitats around the world.

Restoring Our Forests

Additionally, employees and volunteers planted trees and removed invasive species across the park district, including Mitchell Memorial Forest and the Whitewater River Corridor. These initiatives support Great Parks' Park and Facility Master Plan, which includes restoring forest landscapes.



Whitewater River Corridor Restoration

In 2017, Great Parks acquired a new parcel near Campbell Lakes Preserve through the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program. The acquisition further established a buffer along the Whitewater River where former buildings once stood. In 2022, Great Parks staff and volunteers planted 1,000 shrubs and trees at this site, including native species such as sycamore, swamp white oak, and bitternut hickory. In addition, there are now abundant seed sources from several species of nearby trees that will contribute to healthy growth through natural regeneration.



2022 green team

GOING GREEN

DEVELOPING FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY STEWARDS

In 2022, Great Parks welcomed our second Green Team, an innovative youth workforce development program created in partnership with Groundwork Ohio River Valley. Throughout the summer, four students and one youth lead worked at multiple parks, learning hands-on skills related to jobs in the environmental field. Together they were able to clear 18.36 acres of invasive plants and enhance 2.76 miles of trails.



SHOWING OUR BIG LANDS BIG LOVE

Our big lands thrived under the care of volunteers last year. Between long-term volunteers, community groups, and corporate volunteers coming together, **these dedicated individuals served a collective 26,488 hours and made a significant impact.**



COLLECTED
949 bags
OF GARBAGE



REMOVED
33 tires
FROM PARK
GREEN SPACE



COLLECTED
85 bags OF
RECYCLING



PLANTED
2,926 trees

AWARDS + RECOGNITIONS



Government Finance Officers Association’s (GFOA) Award of Financial Reporting Achievement

Director of Finance Kathy Volk and Chief Financial Officer Andrew Collins

This award is presented to the individuals designated as instrumental in the governmental unit achieving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.



Ellequate, Bronze Level Leader in Workplace Equity

Great Parks of Hamilton County



Park Law Enforcement Association, Lifetime Achievement Award

Ranger Captain Dale Steele



Best Prehistoric Hike
Gorge Trail at Sharon Woods



Project of the Year
Beechmont Bridge Connector Trail



Best Golf Course
Sharon Woods Golf Course



PGA of America, 2022 Youth Player Development Award, and 2022 Patriot Award
Matt Starr



Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Awards of Excellence, Third Place in Capital Improvement Projects \$2.5 million and Up
Beechmont Bridge Connector Trail



Links Magazine, Midwest American Dream Course (East)
The Mill Course

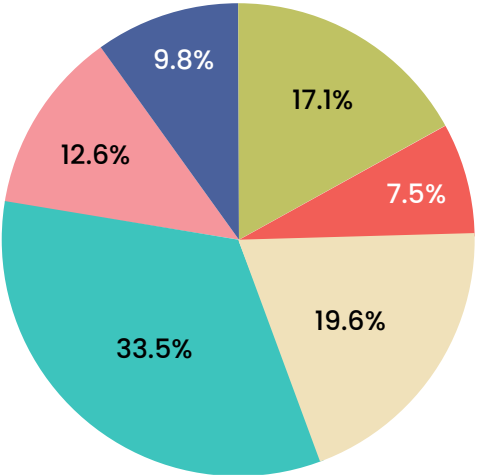


Golf Range Association of America, Top 50 Stand Alone Range
Meadow Links & Golf Academy

2022 FINANCIALS

EXPENSES

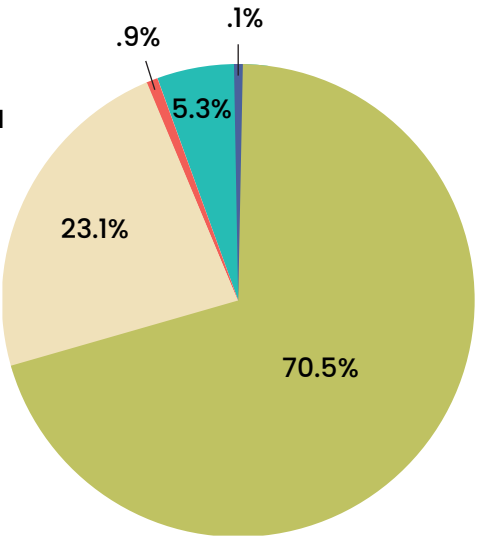
- Guest Experiences
- Conservation & Parks
- Capital Projects
- Administration
- Rangers
- Planning



TOTAL EXPENSES:
\$38,830,941

REVENUE

- Taxes & Intergovernmental
- Activities
- Interest
- Miscellaneous
- Grant



TOTAL REVENUES:
\$60,697,478



WILD IDEAS,
WELL FUNDED

The philanthropic partner for Great Parks, **Great Parks Forever** plays an active role in the preservation of the region’s big lands for generations to come. Along with a community of donors and doers, we’re ready to activate our acres as assets to position the region as a vibrant and healthy place to live, learn, work, and play.

In 2022, our donors WENT BIG, and generously invested \$1,233,665. Great Parks Forever also received a \$5,000,000 pledge and 145 new donors became supporters of our big lands.

help us plant the seed

There are many ways to invest in Great Parks Forever, including an IRA qualified charitable distribution, giving through a donor-advised fund, stock gifts, and planned giving. **More information is available at GreatParksForever.org/legacies**



We are the only conservation agency THAT PRIORITIZES PEOPLE
AND ACTIVATES BIG LANDS TO UNITE THE POWER OF WILD WITH THE PROMISE OF WELL.

Great Parks of Hamilton County

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Cincinnati, OH 45231
513-521-7275 | greatparks.org

2022 Board of Park Commissioners

William J. Burwinkel, Stacey DeGraffenreid,
Caren Laverty, Joseph C. Seta,
Marcus Thompson

Chief Executive Officer

Todd Palmeter



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