

2019 Annual Report

Quail Hollow Park
Photo courtesy of Lauren Weiner



STARK PARKS

TAKE TIME TO TAKE IT IN

Stark Parks' mission is to **preserve**, manage, and **connect** natural areas to **serve** the community through recreation, conservation, and education.

Vision: To be recognized as an essential community asset.

Values: Integrity/Trust • Teamwork • Customer Service • Environmental Stewardship • Work Ethic • Respect for Each Other • Community Partnerships • Have fun!

Relaxing in Petros Lake Park



Taking time is easier said than done. In a world of 40+ or more hours in a work week, extra shifts, kids' schedules, extracurricular activities, and, well, just surviving, taking time isn't always realistic. But taking time doesn't have to be hours. A 10-minute refresher can change your entire outlook on your afternoon. And with the importance of good mental health coming to the forefront, these few minutes can be crucial to staying strong for our families and ourselves. Luckily, with a variety of parks in most of our communities, there's likely to be one near you. And if there isn't, take a step out in the fresh air and sunlight and take a few deep breaths. It's amazing how getting out from those fluorescent lights can brighten your day!

If you're feeling adventurous, let those dishes stack up in the sink for an afternoon and grab your kids or your best friend - or both - and go! Stark County is fortunate to have a great park system, so why not use it? With free or low-cost programs and affordable rentals it should be pretty easy to spend that hour trying something new or simply enjoying the nature that's so close to all of us. There are so many ways Stark Parks can help make that precious time count. Try to make the most of your day and simply take time to take it in, even if it's only for a few minutes!

**Andrew Hayden, Chairperson Park Board of Commissioners
2019 Board of Commissioners**

Denise Freeland ● William Bryan ● Ralph Dublikar ● Patricia Quick

2020 Board of Commissioners

Andrew Hayden, Chairperson ● Denise Freeland ● William Bryan ● Patricia Quick ● Ralph Dublikar



STARK PARKS

Stark Parks

Legend



Trails

Future Trails

Parks

1-14

Towpath Trailheads

1. Canal Bend
2. Craig Pittman
3. Wooster St.
4. John Glenn Grove
5. Lake Ave.
6. Massillon Rec. Center
7. Towpath Court
8. Bridgeport Quarry
9. Forty Corners
10. Crystal Springs
11. Butterbridge Rd.
12. Lock 4
13. St. Helena Heritage Park
14. Lake Lucerne

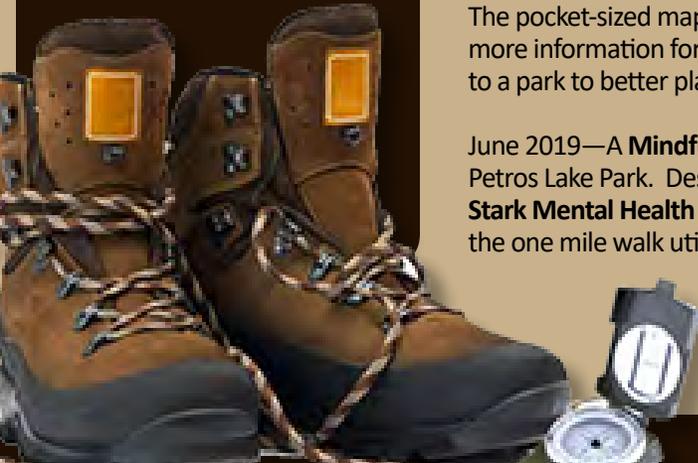


Trail & Greenway System (as of 1.23.2020)

Leased Acreage: 6,456.94
Owned Acreage: 1,794.81
Conservation Easements: 224.12

121.93 miles of shared trail
38.44 miles of equestrian trails

2019 New Parks & Trails
Tam O'Shanter Park Trails
Mindfulness Walk Trail



'19 Highlights.

January 2019—Thanks to the generosity of a local donor, a **new gazebo** with an accessible pathway is available at Sippo Lake Park North.

February 2019—Stark Parks brought back a **2nd place award** at the Ohio Parks & Recreation Association (OPRA) Conference for the **Capital Improvement Projects for the Wildlife Conservation Center**.

June 2019—Stark Parks unveiled new **map packs**. The pocket-sized maps are designed to provide more information for park users before they get to a park to better plan their trip.

June 2019—A **Mindfulness Walk** debuts at Petros Lake Park. Designed in conjunction with **Stark Mental Health and Addiction Recovery**, the one mile walk utilizes portions of the existing trails. Ten activity stations are located along the route; each station is signed to assist in achiev-

ing a state of mindful meditation.

August 2019—The Master Plan for **Tam O'Shanter Park** is released and features a great lawn, wetland areas, prairie, and future adventure area.

October 2019—the new **Market Ave./Rt. 43 Tunnel**, a connection between the Hoover Trail and the Middle Branch Trail, officially opened to the public.

November 2019—The **Mindfulness Walk** was selected by OPRA as the **winner of the Capital Improvement Projects Category 1** and was chosen as one of 3 finalists for the prestigious Governor's award.

November 2019—**Superstar volunteers** at Stark Parks were honored during a red-carpet themed dinner. Volunteers totaled an estimated **22,454 hours** serving the people, places, experiences, and wildlife in 2019.

Did you know? In 2019, Stark Parks natural resources crews and volunteers collected over a million seeds from various native plants species ranging anywhere from wildflowers to tree species. These native species will be used to help restoration efforts throughout the park.

Quality

Stark Parks is always trying to find ways to improve our user experiences. From clean-ups with volunteer groups - we had 42 this year - to larger replacement projects, we hope each enhancement makes us even a little better than before. Below are a few of the projects completed in 2019.

Spring 2019—The **boat ramp at Deer Creek Reservoir** was replaced using an ODNR grant.

Summer 2019—The Exploration Gateway upgraded the site and landscape lighting to LED, continuing our efforts toward energy sustainability, as well as renovated exterior building envelope.

Fall 2019—A **large cleanup effort** for the newest section of the Iron Horse Trail through Alliance was held with community help, including students from the University of Mount Union. Tires, televisions, and years of debris filled up a large dumpster.

Fall 2019—over **200 new trees**, a mix of 16 varieties, were planted and can be seen along the West Loop Trail of Tam O' Shanter Park. Funding came from \$800,000 in grants to fund site development.

Fall 2019—A **fresh coat of paint** was applied to the Manor House, Nature Center, and Gift Shop at Quail Hollow Park in partnership with the Quail Hollow Volunteer Association.

Fall 2019—**Several Seed Collection programs** were held with volunteers helping gather seeds and nuts at various parks to be planted in other areas (see note above).

Fall 2019—The practice of **“chip and seal”** was used on several wash-out areas to find an economical solution to improve trail surfaces.

Winter 2019—Tam O'Shanter Park got a few upgrades, including the grading of a **new sled riding hill!**

Winter 2019 —Park crews **recycled 3 truck loads of tires** that were dumped throughout our parks and trails totaling nearly 3 tons.



Health.

Stark Parks is proud to be the second park in Ohio to participate in **parkrun**. Born out of the UK in 2004, this international 5k is offered weekly and is free for anyone to come any time. Participants can run one or all of the weekly runs! Made possible by funding from the Friends of Stark Parks, the Sippo Lake parkrun kicked off in April of this year (making it the 30th in the U.S. and parkrun is now in 22 countries) and is led by more than 50 volunteers. For more info, check it out at StarkParks.com/parkrun.



Healthy Adventures is continuing to gain popularity among park goers looking to hit the trails more! Club members are challenged to finish a set number of miles in Stark Parks (based on whether they run, walk, or bike). They can participate in group programs or on their own. In 2019, the Hike-A-Hundred Walking Club continued their combined goal of 50,000 miles. They surpassed the goal again with 51,193 miles! The Let's Ride Biking Club set their first combined goal of 17,000 miles and blew it out of the water by collectively logging 24,217 miles! The Running Stark Club increased their goal to 10,000 miles and fell just short with 9,745, which is still an accomplishment to be very proud of!



Mental health has become an important topic among parks nationwide. Parks have been recognized as a tool to combat depression and anxiety. In response, Stark Parks and Stark Mental Health Addiction and Recovery (SMHAR) have partnered to create a **Mindfulness Walk** at Petros Lake Park in Perry Township. This pilot program consists of ten stations, encouraging users to be aware of their senses and the surrounding natural environment in a more conscious way.

Customer Services.

2019 was an *exceptionally* successful year, with revenue from sales and rentals strong across the Enterprises Department.

Marinas at Sippo Lake and Walborn Reservoir were particularly popular destinations for park patrons this summer season. Stand-up paddleboard rentals continued to grow, as kayaks remained the most frequently rented piece of equipment. **Overall marina rentals were up 13% from 2018. Total marina sales saw a 19% increase over the previous year with combined sales of over \$140,000.**

Facilities rentals also saw revenues exceed 2018, with shelters and Quail Hollow rentals combining to \$40,000 for the first time. **Combined facilities rentals reached a new high of \$85,770.**

The Lily Pad Gift Shop, located within the Exploration Gateway, experienced its most successful year in 2019, exceeding \$42,000 for the first time ever.

For a list of affordable rentals, visit StarkParks.com.



Stuffed animal hospital at Symphony Performance at Petros Lake Park

Stark Parks Public Safety Department continues to patrol the trails through a variety of methods, including ATVs, bikes, and boats. The rangers hosted several successful annual events including “Catfish with a Cop” in July and “Ranger for a Day” in September.

Safety.

Patrol hours in 2019 totaled 19,296 hours. This is an 11% increase from 2018.

2019 arrests totaled 39, a decrease of 45% from 2018.

2019 written warnings totaled 223, a decrease of 21% from 2018.

2019 verbal warnings totaled 913, an increase of 9% from 2018.



Deer Creek Reservoir, Photography courtesy of Jake Everetts.

Communication.

The focus of 2019 was to get people engaged in their surroundings. Not only to take the time, but to appreciate what Stark Parks offers and how it enhances the quality of life in Stark County.



Our social media outreach continues to grow and attract more users. Facebook saw a 12% increase in likes and a 28% increase in engagement, while Instagram had a 41% increase in followers - with an abundance of breathtaking photography to share - and a 2.3% increase in engagement.

Community outreach was the main focus to the communication plan in 2019. With a new ambassador outreach program underway, Stark Parks volunteers and staff were able to attend a record number of events totaling 92 community events and talking to over 12,000 people face-to-face! The requests to be at these valuable community events continue to increase, and we want to keep talking!

Furthermore, with the help of news releases, an estimated \$112,536.35 was received in "free" media in 2019.

Buzz Worthy in 2019

The decline of honey bees has been at the forefront of the news, highlighting the importance of this tiny insect. In 2019, Stark Parks natural resources crews began surveys to monitor bee populations and evaluate how we can improve their habitat (look at what plants they pollinate, which areas of the parks they use, etc.).

Bees found in 2019: 2,992 (7 species total!)

Locations include Fry Park, Quail Hollow Park, and Sippo Lake Park.

- *Apis mellifera* (Western honey bee)
- *Bombus bimaculatus* (Two-spotted bumble bee)
- *Bombus fervidus* (Golden northern bumble bee)
- *Bombus griseocollis* (Brown belted bumble bee)
- *Bombus impatiens* (Common eastern bumble bee)
- *Bombus perplexus* (Confusing bumble bee)
- *Bombus vagans* (Half-black bumble bee)

Most common bees

- *Apis mellifera* (Western honey bee)
- *Bombus impatiens* (Common eastern bumble bee)

Cool sighting!

The *Bombus fervidus* is listed as vulnerable and we had found it several times, including a couple queens!

2020 brings a Feed a Bee Grant with Sandy Valley Schools to create bee habitats at Fry Family Park in East Sparta!

Wildlife.



The Wildlife Conservation Center

2019 brought in an additional 23% of patients, totaling 2,079 orphaned or injured animals. The volunteers and staff worked hard to rehabilitate and release 63% of those wildlife.

2019 tidbits!

The center set a record of **38 opossum intakes in one day!**

2019 New Ambassadors - stop in the Center to meet them

- Jasper (Red Fox)
- Linguine (Eastern Milk Snake)
- Bunnacula (Eastern Cottontail Rabbit)
- Fezzik (Baltimore Oriole)

Programming

New series and events were introduced in 2019, offering a variety of opportunities for different interests. A few of the new programs include:

- **Murder Mystery Date Night**
- **Glow Archery**
- **Hoverball Archery**
- **Gaga Ball**
- **History Camp**
- **Backyard Habitat**
- **Wildlife Camp**

In 2019, Stark Parks held 634 public programs with 19,473 total participants! This is a **15% increase in programming** and **3% increase in attendance**. One of the most popular programs in 2019 was Mega Messy Play.

Stark Parks also offers services that extend to partnering schools and community agencies. Programs are tailored to the interest of the group and often include local history or live animals.

In 2019, 115 agencies (many of them schools) were presented with these free outreach programs, totaling 480 total programs with 13,547 participants. This is a **30% increase in requested programming** and **27% increase in people we reached!**





Canton South High School - South Stark Career Academy students constructing a large fish to collect and show the impact of recycling.

Our people are our success.

At Stark Parks, we're surrounded by great people every day. Volunteers are a crucial component in many areas of park operation. Our volunteers maintain our trail systems, rehabilitate wildlife, protect important natural, historic, and cultural resources, and assist in educating and engaging our local community to increase support for the parks. They make a vital contribution to Stark County and the community!

In 2019, **392 individual volunteers** and **42 organizations and community groups** graciously donated a total of **22,454 hours** in Stark Parks! This is a 16% increase in volunteers and 12% increase in hours.

Based on an hourly rate equivalent of \$25.43 per hour (valued by independentsector.org) volunteers have contributed the equivalent of almost 11 full-time employees!



Employee of the Year
Steve Smith, Enterprises Supervisor

Employee of the 1st Quarter
Allison Terlacher,
Education Programmer

Employee of the 2nd Quarter
Troy Myers,
Administrative Assistant

Employee of the 4th Quarter
Kenny Willaman,
Administrative Assistant



South Stark Career Academy



Lifetime Achievement
Yas Aral



Volunteer of the Year
Cynde McLaughlin



Volunteer of the Year
Mike Abrams



Rising Star Award
Jarrod Rizor



Rising Star Award
John and Pam Severa



Financial Report

| | | |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Park Levy | 7,040,065 | 40.88% |
| Grants | | |
| Federal (Emergency Management Agency-SRL) | 257,665 | 1.50% |
| Federal (The Conservation Fund-Nimisila Creek Nature Preserve Phase II) | 749,000 | 4.35% |
| Federal (Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program-Nimisila Creek Nature Preserve Phase II) | 1,473,990 | 8.56% |
| State (Ohio Attorney General-Law Enforcement Body Armor Program) | 4,599 | 0.03% |
| State (Ohio Department of Natural Resources-NatureWorks Deer Creek) | 103,318 | 0.60% |
| State (Natural Resources Advisory Council Clean Ohio Fund-Tam O'Shanter) | 2,638,948 | 15.32% |
| Note Sale Proceeds | 1,600,000 | 9.29% |
| Stark Library Share of Exploration Gateway Expenses | 228,107 | 1.32% |
| State Government Shared Revenue | 9,850 | 0.06% |
| Marinas | 137,501 | 0.80% |
| Lily Pad | 42,499 | 0.25% |
| Rentals and User Fees | 94,960 | 0.55% |
| Rentals and User Fees -Exploration Gateway | 38,892 | 0.23% |
| Fines and Forfeitures | 13 | 0.00% |
| Gifts and Donations | 116,412 | 0.68% |
| Investment Income | 51,182 | 0.30% |
| Jury Duty | 80 | 0.00% |
| Miscellaneous | 18,458 | 0.11% |
| Reimbursements | 32,720 | 0.19% |
| Royalties | 3,876 | 0.02% |
| Sale of Fixed Assets | 10 | 0.00% |
| Carryover from 2018 | | |
| Assigned | 1,694,100 | 9.84% |
| Unassigned | 704,689 | 4.09% |
| Restricted | 182,366 | 1.06% |

2019 Revenues **\$17,223,299 100%**

| | | |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Personnel & Fringes/Operating | 4,633,100 | 26.90% |
| Capital Projects | | |
| Bates School House | 18,000 | 0.10% |
| Deer Creek Boat Ramp | 19,600 | 0.11% |
| Equipment & Machinery | 152,387 | 0.88% |
| Exploration Gateway (EG) | 54,065 | 0.31% |
| Fry Family Park | 954,107 | 5.54% |
| Land/Land Related Exp | 255,658 | 1.48% |
| Magnolia Mill | 551,015 | 3.20% |
| Nimisila Creek Nature Preserve Phase II | 2,216,916 | 12.87% |
| Quail Hollow Park | 84,439 | 0.49% |
| Tam O'Shanter | 3,187,786 | 18.51% |
| Trails & Maintenance | 161,706 | 0.94% |
| Vehicles | 167,316 | 0.97% |
| Wildlife Conservation Center | 17,565 | 0.10% |
| Supplies & Materials | 423,503 | 2.46% |
| Utilities | 390,872 | 2.27% |
| Purchased Services | 760,871 | 4.42% |
| Payment on Note | 1,600,000 | 9.29% |
| Interest on Note | 36,000 | 0.21% |
| Sales Tax | 9,174 | 0.05% |
| Property Tax & Assessments | 48,952 | 0.28% |
| Miscellaneous | 8,380 | 0.05% |
| Reimbursements | 28,087 | 0.16% |
| Special Events/Projects | 141,294 | 0.82% |
| Carryover into 2020 | | |
| Assigned | 958,049 | 5.56% |
| Unassigned | 225,183 | 1.31% |
| Restricted | 119,273 | 0.69% |

2019 Expenditures **\$17,223,299 100%**

How is Stark Parks Funded?

Levy Income

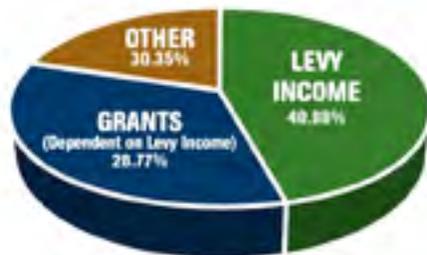
Generated from the 1 mill property tax which is collected 2013 - 2020. The levy does not renew automatically and must be approved by voters to continue funding. If the levy does not get approved, the funding is eliminated completely.

Grant Income

These grant funds from the state and federal government can only be used for specific projects and do not support general operating costs. Levy dollars are necessary to administer and implement the grants.

Other Income

This is generated from a variety of sources, such as rentals, sales in gift shops, and donations. This is not guaranteed funding and is based on varying factors.



| Park Levy | 7,040,065 | 40.88% |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Grants | | |
| Federal (Emergency Management Agency-501) | 257,645 | 1.50% |
| Federal (The Conservation Fund-Nimissila Creek Nature Preserve Phase II) | 749,000 | 4.35% |
| Federal (Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program-Nimissila Creek Nature Preserve Phase II) | 1,473,990 | 8.56% |
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| 2019 Revenues | | |
| | 517,223,299 | 100% |

Still have questions? Contact us at information@starkparks.com

