

## 2019 Report

to the Community

The Foundation for All
Parks in Geauga County—
Building a Lasting Legacy
for All Generations



## Message from the President

Your Foundation for Geauga Parks is indeed the Foundation for ALL parks in Geauga County, and your Board of Trustees is working diligently to build a lasting legacy for ALL generations. As the newly appointed board president, it is my honor to look after the interests of each of you who trusts the Foundation to raise money to fund community engagement with nature in Geauga County.



Within this report you will read updates on recent accomplishments and catch a glimpse of what projects are on the horizon. The Board of Trustees is pleased to have added to our staff this year. Our new Director Gretchen Faro is a seasoned professional in development and operations. Paige Orvis, Associate Director, holds a long history in marketing and communications for our Geauga County parks. We feel this is a winning combination to build upon a strong foundation, as we extend our services to assist all parks and nature education projects in the county.

Thank you all who continue to demonstrate your confidence and support of the important work of the Foundation for Geauga Parks. Together we can ensure a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Yours in nature,

ADAM HENRY

Board President

## Our Mission

The Foundation for Geauga Parks is an independent, non-profit organization created to raise money to fund community engagement with nature through education, preservation, conservation, and appreciation of the unique natural character of Geauga County.

### **2020 Foundation Trustees**

Adam Henry - President Linda Brown Mary Beth O'Neill
Claudia Toth - Vice President Matt Burnham Jennifer Salo
Jonathan Green - Treasurer Sue Lundstrom Sheryl Vernon

Carl Langer – Secretary Heidi O'Neill Richard Frenchie - Emeritus Trustee

The Board of Trustees extends gratitude to Keith Corkwell, Casey Forbes and Jeff Hyde, who completed their Board terms in 2019. Their contributions have been immeasurable.

Staff

Gretchen Faro - Director

Paige Orvis - Associate Director

## Message from the Director

It was in reference to Geauga County that I first learned the word "bucolic" as a youngster. (It might have been in context of the then-proposed extension of Route 422, but I don't want to date myself.) Even as the region's population has spread out from the city center and inner ring suburbs, the county has maintained much of its idyllic nature, due in no small part to community investments in our township and district parks.

Any number of studies have demonstrated that parks offer a variety of benefits to citizens, both residents and visitors. There are certainly many environmental benefits, including preserving habitats, decreasing air pollution, and providing water filtration. Parks also create economic benefits for both governments and individuals by exerting a positive influence on property values and attracting visitors from outside the county. But topping the list of benefits is what parks contribute to our personal quality of life - lovely settings that encourage both a physical and an emotional connection with the natural world.

The Foundation for Geauga Parks is honored to play a role in delivering these benefits. Over the years, the Foundation has helped to raise money for some remarkable parks and projects, from The West Woods to Observatory Park to Munson Township's Scenic River Retreat. We are proud to support programs that inspire our young people to appreciate nature and are equally glad to be the trusted partner in raising and stewarding funds that will underwrite future enhancements to parks and trails throughout the county.



I hope you enjoy learning more about the Foundation in this report. Thank you to all our donors and sponsors who have made this work possible!

Director

**Statement of Financial Position** (as of December 31, 2019)

Support & Revenue	2019 Unaudited	2018 Audited
Contributions & Other Income	161,196	97,305
Investment Income (Loss)	95,541	(10,178)
Total Revenue	256,737	87,127
Expenses		
Program	30,575	33,573
General & Administrative	53,418	42,295
Fundraising	17,891	14,339
Total Expenses	101,984	90,207
Net Assets		
Change in Net Assets	154,753	(3,080)
Beginning Net Assets	777,451	780,531
Ending Net Assets	932,104	777,451

Assets	2019 Unaudited	2018 Audited	
Current Assets	163,064	104,645	
Other Assets	13,946	17,509	
Marketable Securities	760,874	658,589	
Total Assets	937,884	780,743	
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities	5,780	3,292	
Net Assets			
Unrestricted Net Assets	78,979	207,310	
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	416,200	291,094	
Perm. Restricted Net Assets	282,172	282.127	
Change in Assets	154,753	(3,080)	
Total Net Assets	932,104	777,451	
Total Liabilities & Equity	937,884	780,743	

# SUPPORTING Nature Education





"I really enjoyed star gazing and learning how to use binoculars. The volunteers made these activities very interesting and fun! Thank you for coming to Kenston Intermediate School."

— ELI LITTLE Nature Scopes class of 2020

## **Nature Scopes**

The Foundation for Geauga Parks is the lead fundraiser for Geauga Park District's Nature Scopes, the first binocular-focused nature education program of its kind in the country. It was established in response to research showing that close encounters with nature create a direct, personal involvement with the outdoors which cannot be matched by classroom discussion or photos in textbooks.

This school year-long program supplements science instruction by providing hands-on lessons matched to the Ohio Content Standards for fifth-grade science education. Fifth-grade students participate in a total of six interactive sessions involving outdoor exploration using binoculars, concluding in May with a field day where students are awarded their own binoculars and field guides for participating in the program.



Students completed Nature Scopes training 2003-2019



Fifth-grade classes enrolled in Nature Scopes for 2018-19 school year



851
Students awarded binoculars and field quides for 2018-19 school year

## **School Field Trip Funding**

One barrier schools face is having the funds available to bus students to parks for nature education programs. The Foundation for Geauga Parks is removing this barrier by offering transportation grants to Geauga County schools.



1,083

Students received field trip transportation in 2019 to attend naturalist-led programs and activities in the parks

### **Nature Education Scholarships**

In the interest of preparing the next generation of conservationists, the Foundation collaborated with Protect Geauga Parks in 2019, providing \$1,000 to fund one of three \$1,000 scholarships awarded to students entering college for studies in natural or environmental sciences.





Left to right: Kaylie Malloy of Chardon High School, Kaden Knake of West Geauga High School, Amy Weeks-Dunham of Hershey Montessori Upper School



Did you know Geauga County has a nationally recognized dark sky park?

In 2019, the Foundation helped launch the Geauga Skywatchers Club with the goal to inspire and encourage learning about and engaging with the night sky. In collaboration with other Geauga County organizations, we help provide hands-on astronomy education at monthly meetups around the county.

To make night sky viewing more accessible to all, in 2019, the Foundation donated five high-quality telescopes to Geauga County libraries where they are now available to checkout for free.



## **Geauga Skywatchers Club Partners**











# SUPPORTING New Trails



In 2019, the Foundation helped fund a new one-mile trail in Munson Township's Scenic River Retreat. This trail provides access through woodland and wetlands to explore the unique natural features in Munson Township.

"The new trail in Scenic River Retreat became a reality thanks to the funding and support of the Foundation. We couldn't have completed the project without the Foundation and appreciate that they have stayed involved."

—IRENE McMULLEN *Chair, Munson Township Trustees* 

Photo courtesy of Paige Orvis

## Natural Resources Conservation

#### ON THE HORIZON

## **Piloting Pollinator Gardens Program**

Countless studies have confirmed that pollinators around the world, such as bees, butterflies, birds, and mammals, are facing threats from habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. Our plan is to build a partnership of organizations in the county committed to raising awareness and encouraging practices that will reduce

pollinator habitat loss and fragmentation.

The collaboration will result in demonstration gardens and educational opportunities for students and the general public. We will provide updates through Foundation communications as the program progresses.

The Foundation for Geauga Parks extends deep gratitude to the Cleveland Foundation Lake-Geauga Fund for its support of this important program.







Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park. Photo courtesy of Jim Marquardt

## **Explorers Series**

The Foundation for Geauga Parks established its monthly "Explorers Series" as a way for like-minded individuals to connect and explore a different park in Geauga County by boot, bike, paddle, or skis. Each experience provides a fun way to get outdoors, meet new people, and learn more about the natural, historic, and cultural beauty of our county.

The activities are geared for people of all ages and typically take about an hour to an hour and a half. Many are led by a park naturalist or a knowledgeable individual who shares insights about the natural and historic aspects of the park.

## 2020 Explorers Series Calendar

February 1	The Rookery	August 1	Bass Lake Preserve
March 7	Beartown Lakes Reservation	September 12	Thompson Ledges Park
April 11	The West Woods' Affelder House	October 3	Scenic River Retreat, Munson Twp.
May 2	Big Creek Park	November 7	Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve
June 6	Veterans Legacy Woods	December 5	President's Choice TBA
July 11	Punderson State Park		

Would you like to stay up to date on Explorers Series and other Foundation activities?

Join our mailing list at www.foundationforgeaugaparks.org/pages/explorers-series

## **Making a Difference Together**

The Board of Trustees offers its deepest thanks to those who supported our work during 2019. Whether you made a donation, sponsored or attended our Twilight Soiree, or contributed an in-kind gift, we appreciate your generous support!

#### \$10,000 +

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#### \$500 - \$999

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Linda L. Brown

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Protect Geauga Parks

#### George Reeder

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#### **Geauga Park District**

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#### **Geauga Skywatchers**

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Newell and Ann Howard

Gerald Lackey

Lubrizol Foundation

Rachel McKinney

O'Neill Brothers Foundation

Ronald Pellettiere

William and Virginia Roth

Tawana and Mike Thorn

Raymond and Louisa Warner

Sonny Williams

#### Nature Education

(including Nature Scopes)

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Chervl Bessette

Daniel and Nancy Best

Gary and Betsy Bryant Robert and Rosemary Bradt

John Bucchieri

Brian Cancelliere

Chardon Rotary Foundation

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Jeanette Clague

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Mike Costas

Cory Deibel

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www.FOUNDATIONFORGEAUGAPARKS.org

## SAVE THE DATE Twilight Soirce

August 22, 2020 | 5:30 – 9:30 PM Veterans Legacy Woods, Newbury Twp. This magical evening celebrates the natural world and the unique natural and cultural features of Geauga County. Join us for food and beverages provided by area restaurants, musical entertainment and nature-based silent auction items found nowhere else.

Tickets are \$100 per person — on sale now Buy online at www.foundationforgeaugaparks.org/pages/twilight-soiree







Photos courtesy of Heidi Campar

## **Twilight Soiree 2019 Sponsor and Donor Recognition**

Twilight Soiree is the Foundation for Geauga Parks' signature fundraising event. Proceeds support the mission of the Foundation and help ensure long-term sustainability. The Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to all those who made the 2019 event a great success.

#### **Twilight Soiree Sponsors**

Junction Auto Family

Kinetico Incorporated

Auxin Group Wealth Management

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Linda L. Brown

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Paul Davis Restoration

Sheoga Hardwood Flooring & Paneling

University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center

Vintage Wine Distributor

#### **In-Kind Donations**

Aladdin's Eatery

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Sugar Pines Farm

Claudia and Bert Toth

Jim Trombo

Warren's Spirited Kitchen

Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Trevor and Gail Wilson

WoodFire Baking

"We must begin thinking like a river if we are to leave a legacy of beauty and life for future generations."

—DAVID BROWER

Environmentalist
(1912-2000)



Photo courtesy of Abby Smith



## **Answering the Call Together**

If we consider the value of parks in our lives, we could assert that rivers protect natural communities, promote healthy living, improve quality of life, and enhance the local economy.

The Foundation for Geauga Parks was formed 30 years ago as a fundraising conduit to support Geauga County's rich natural resources, including its rivers, woodlands, wetlands and meadows, which are so important to our residents, businesses, and downstream neighbors. Together we are investing in land conservation projects, park and trail enhancements, and nature education to ensure the upcoming generations continue the legacy of clean air, clean water and a rich natural and cultural heritage. We urge you to join this effort.



**Thank you for your support!** Through your generosity we can continue a legacy of education, preservation, and exploration in Geauga County.

Donation Amount: \$	Name:	
I would like my donation applied to:	Street:	
☐ Greatest Need (Unrestricted)	City, State:	
☐ Park and Trail Enhancements	ZIP Code:	
☐ Nature Education	Phone:	
☐ Geauga Skywatchers		
☐ Bridle Trail Fund	Email:	
Donation matched by:	Please make checks payable to: Foundation for Geauga Parks	

Prefer to donate online? Go to www.foundationforgeaugaparks.org/pages/donate



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