

GENESEE  
COUNTY  
PARKS



# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Get Away. Right away.

# ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

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## VISION

Parks bring people together

## MISSION

Genesee County Parks is dedicated to quality recreational opportunities for everyone and preservation of natural resources.

## CORE VALUES

**Vision:** We see, anticipate and lead with integrity of character and create positive change.

**Consistency:** We maintain a standard of serving the community and doing business that treats all the same.

**Customer Service:** We strive to provide our guests with a quality experience from all interactions in our parks.

**Integrity:** We can be trusted to do what we say we are going to do with consistency, character and transparency.

**Stewardship:** We are committed to the responsible management of our natural resources.

**Teamwork:** We recognize the strength in our collective knowledge and skills to provide a greater service to our community and guests.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Did you ever wonder how the Genesee County Parks got started? Well it took the vision, of Charles Stewart Mott along with the determination, and cooperation of many people years ago to realize what the Parks are today. The first inkling for developing recreational opportunities started with an idea from a residential planner in the late 1950's. From there, the Genesee County Board of Supervisors (the precursor to the current Board of Commissioners) voted in 1966 to establish the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission. In between these dates, many hours of planning, presentations, and community buy-in were necessary to see the vision come true.

The current Parks Commission still uses this forward-looking concept to continue to bring a variety of recreational opportunities for all the residents of Genesee County. We are aggressively working at developing non-motorized walking and bike paths throughout the County. At the end of 2018, we completed a section of the Iron Belle Trail in the parks that enables you to ride a bike from Richfield County Park in eastern Genesee County all the way to Genesee Valley shopping center. We are also partnering with other governmental units to develop bike paths in their areas.

The Park Commission is focused on providing safe, family-oriented facilities for our residents. In the past years, many of our parks have seen upgrades and improvements, generally by using grant dollars from various sources. We have been blessed with tremendous support from the Mott Foundation and Ruth Mott Foundation. Their generosity helps us to provide many of these improvements to the parks.

As a lifelong resident of Genesee County, I've had the opportunity to use all the parks in our system. The best part is that most have free admission. Many family reunions were spent at Byrum Lake in Linden County Park, summers hanging at Flushing County Park, and lazy days boating on Holloway Reservoir; they all bring back memories of good times in the parks. My family also has a long history with Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad. We enjoy Halloween and Christmas at Crossroads the best. This special historic facility attracts visitors from around the state and even the country. It is definitely the jewel of the County Parks system.

For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum is a gem, providing many educational programs for schools in the county. With the addition of the treehouse built by Treehouse Masters, attendance is soaring. If you haven't had the chance to visit For-Mar, put it on your schedule. You will not be disappointed. With over 11,000 acres of parkland in the Genesee County Parks, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

The past 50 years of the Genesee County Parks has provided a multitude of recreational opportunities for the residents of the county. As we look forward to the next 50 years, the Parks Commission is committed to continuing the work of those visionaries that saw what could be, and made it happen.

Joe Krapohl, President  
Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

## 2019 COMMISSIONERS

- Joe Krapohl  
(Citizen Representative)
- James Washington, PhD  
(Citizen Representative)
- Mike Lynch  
(Citizen Representative)
- Ted Henry  
(County Commissioner)
- Mike Keeler  
(Citizen Representative)
- David Martin  
(County Commissioner)
- Bryant Nolden  
(County Commissioner)
- Jeff Wright  
(Ex-Officio)
- Cloyce Dickerson  
(Ex-Officio)
- Gloria Nealy  
(Ex-Officio)

# DAY USE PARKS

## Vassar Road to Irish Road Extension

There are even more miles and miles of trails in your Genesee County Parks. Walk, hike or bike your way through the beautiful Genesee Recreation Area landscape!

The Michigan Iron Belle Trail is the longest designated state trail in the nation and you can hike, bike or walk between Belle Isle Park in Detroit and Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula. Our newest section extends the existing trail from Vassar Road another 1.3 miles to Irish Road, as it winds through a beautiful landscape along the Flint river on a smooth, barrier free, asphalt trail. The trail offers spectacular views of foliage and wildlife. It is particularly beautiful in the Fall as the leaves change to vibrant shades of yellow, orange and red. An accessible trail head has been provided near the entrance of Richfield County Park.

The trail was constructed in cooperation with the Genesee County Road Commission and the Genesee County Planning Commission, and was funded by a combination of Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant dollars and a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund.



TOTAL EMPLOYEES IN 2019	430
TOTAL SEASONAL	403
TOTAL FULL TIME	27
SUMMER YOUTH INITIATIVE	9
MAINTENANCE	100
CROSSROADS VILLAGE	134
HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD	20
FOR-MAR	27
MOUNDS	10
TOLLBOOTH	10
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	34
PARK RANGERS	59

A partnership with The Greater Genesee County Area BMX Parents Association brings multiple races to the Richfield County Park BMX track each year.

Multiple improvements were made throughout the Park system. There were drainage improvements made to Elba Equestrian Center as well as the roadway at the E. A. Cummings Event Center. Fishing docks were repaired at the Buell Lake County Park, Bluegill Boat Launch and the Genesee Road Fishing Access site. Linden County Park saw improvements to the boat launch area as well as regrading of the beach and the addition of sand to the volleyball area.

Special Events play a big role in day usage and 2019 brought 59 unique events to our parks.

That includes BMX events, horse shows, 5k run/walks, fundraisers, fishing tournaments, RC boats, disc golf, celebrations and meetings, a tractor drive, the Genesee County Fair, the FirstTry Triathlon, and the Warrior Dash.

GENESEE COUNTY PARKS ACRES	
LAND AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION	
GENESEE RECREATION AREA	4460 Acres
HOLLOWAY REGIONAL PARK	5860 Acres
CITY OF FLINT PARKS PARTNERSHIP	484 Acres
LINDEN, FOR-MAR, BUELL & FLUSHING	950 Acres
TOTAL LAND	11,754 Acres
WATER AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION	
MOTT LAKE	650 Acres
HOLLOWAY RESERVOIR	1975 Acres
BUELL LAKE	178 Acres
FLINT RIVER FRONT	29 Miles



Atlas County Park, our newest acquisition, underwent improvements in 2019. These improvements included a new road and culverts for better access to the rear of the park. This access gives opportunities for park visitors to hike trails and enjoy the natural areas that are offered. Our partner Atlas Township provided 50% of the costs for these improvements.

## 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan

After the Park's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary it was recognized that many of the facilities were reaching the end of their useful lives and needed to be refurbished or replaced. The Five Year Plan starts to identify and prioritize the infrastructure and facilities that will require those updates or replacements.

# FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE AND ARBORETUM



International Mud Day



Wilderness Inquiry Paddle Program



Artist Kevin Burdick was busy over the week of September 9<sup>th</sup> painting a new mural on the back wall of the For-Mar Visitor's Center – Animal Exploration Room. Paid for with grant funding, the mural was inspired by native pollinators and wildflowers.

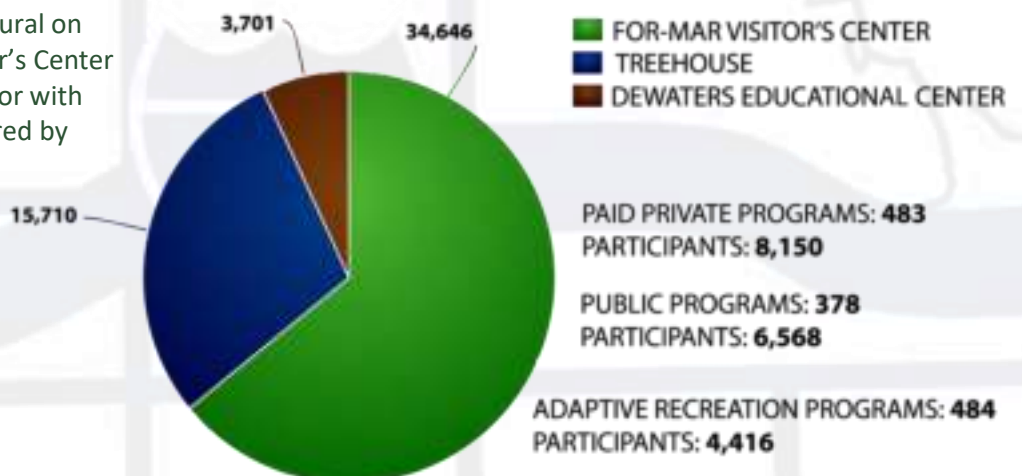
For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum brought Nature programming to Genesee County in a big way in 2019. For-Mar partnered with Bentley Community Schools in the 2019 school year and began working with Bentley's new Nature Focused Kindergarten programs and the Nature Focused GSRP. This was the second year of the partnership and they increased their reach from 2 classrooms to 4 classrooms that visit For-Mar weekly. These two programs are paid for by the school district and bring in close to \$30,000.00 that pays for staffing, supplies and building use.

For-Mar joined forces with the Wilderness Inquiry program out of Wisconsin to put on 4 days of programming at Bluegill Boat Launch. This program gives students the opportunity to ride in 10 person voyager canoes, try fishing first hand and learn about the bugs in their water. Programming for local schools was held May 16 and 17 and had over 350 students from our community out on our waterways. On May 18 and 19 we had public programs that anyone in our community could take part in. This program was funded by the CS Mott Foundation.

In June For-Mar hosted International Mud Day. This is a long running program, but this was the first year it was held at For-Mar. Over 400 participants came to play in the mud. This event would not have been possible without For-Mar's partner, the Burton Fire Department.

The 6th Annual School Days BioBlitz was postponed a month due to the EEE Virus to November 8<sup>th</sup> and despite the colder weather still had over 700 students participate and over 25 community partners who presented on outdoor careers and research.

## FOR-MAR VISITORS



For-Mar was featured as a field trip stop during the national Place Based Learning Conference. The outreach coordinator was able to introduce 10 participants from across the country to outreach efforts used to connect students, neighbors and community members to nature and the parks.

For-Mar on the Road saw success in its Adaptive Recreation programs this year. Adaptive Recreation encompasses audiences such as children and adults that are differently abled, adults living in rehabilitation and assisted living centers, and active older adults.

Adaptive Recreation For-Mar on the Road style, consists of nature exploration/discovery, gardening and adaptive fishing. There are Outreach staff that are trained as adaptive kayak paddle guides for the program IKAYAK, a program of The Disability Network and The Flint River Watershed Coalition. IKAYAK programs put in at Bluegill Boat Launch. Outreach staff have also hosted adaptive fishing during other IKAYAK events.



Held on August 17th For-Mar had 284 people join in the butterfly fun. Participants had the opportunity to learn about Monarch Migration, life cycles, and so much more.



The traveling garden exhibit, Truck Farm, is approaching its tenth season. A unique tool in the outreach division’s programming tool box, Truck Farm has engaged 10,576 budding garden enthusiasts and connected them to the Genesee County Parks and For-Mar.

2019 FOR-MAR ON THE ROAD		
PROGRAM	#OF PROGRAMS	#OF PARTICIPANTS
IN-SCHOOL	278	6,276
COMMUNITY EVENTS	107	11,694
PAID PRIVATE PROGRAMS	820	9,283
PARK PROGRAMS	140	1,942
TOTAL	1,345	29,195



Participants taking part in For-Mar on the Road summer program, “worm races”.

## FOR-MAR'S 2019 GRANTS

GRANTORS and FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
STELLA AND FREDRICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST GRANT	\$5,000
MERLEY CHARITABLE TRUST GRANT	\$5,000
STELLA AND FREDERICK LOEB FOUNDATION GRANT	\$10,000
FRIEND OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$10,000
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER FLINT GRANT	\$7,000
C.S. MOTT FOUNDATION	\$10,000
BENTLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL	\$15,000

In January 2019 the For-Mar Hoop House was transitioned to the Outreach division for educational programming. Over the summer months Truck Farm programs were held at the hoop house and a variety of annual flowers and vegetables were grown. In September the plans for the new space were finalized and staff worked to remove existing rows, install four raised planting beds and install landscape fabric.



The Butterfly House and larval host gardens at For-Mar were supplemented in 2019. The new plantings will increase butterfly population densities and allow for a greater population of insects within the house, while not jeopardizing the interior plant populations.

## For-Mar Maintenance and Updates

New fence was installed around For-Mar, as well as a new entrance gate and signs.



The Four Seasons garden underwent a redesign and replanting. Started in the Fall of 2019, it will be completed next Spring. This garden is a high visibility garden that is often used for photo shoots and weddings.



Assessment of trails at For-Mar was completed. Now staff can begin to address the needs of each individual trail and provide for a more enjoyable experience by visitors. Widening of trails for maintenance aspects, removal of invasive species and culvert replacements are being addressed.



Management of the sugar bush stand at For-Mar also started this year. Park staff began clearing the stand of downed debris and will continue with a stand density assessment, followed by a thinning to create a sustainable sugar bush stand.



# HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD

2019 saw the Huckleberry Railroad Engine #152 back in service after being restored last year, and was the main locomotive for Summer and Winter seasons.

The Railroad Shop was busy this year making repairs and improvements to Huckleberry Railroad's track and trains. Five passenger cars have been repainted with their end beams fully replaced. A new reverse osmosis water system was installed to improve the water quality in the engine boiler.



## 2019 RAILROAD NUMBERS

# OF VOLTS OF TRAIN HEADLIGHT	32
# OF LUMENS OF TRAIN HEADLIGHT	1,610
# OF SPIKES ON THE RAILS	48,000
# OF PEOPLE WHO RODE TRAIN	112,571
# OF MILES TRAVELED	4,592

Genesee County Parks purchased a new diesel / electric locomotive from McHugh Locomotive for the Huckleberry Railroad. In the upcoming year the build will begin so that locomotive can be in service.



Before



After



•••• The Railroad Shop staff undertook the replacement of end beams and a new coat of paint for the passenger cars.

# CROSSROADS VILLAGE

Crossroads Village had a year filled with themed weekends and special events. From the 47th Annual Sloan Museum Auto Fair, and Day Out With Thomas™ to the Independence Day celebration and Mystery weekend there was a lot going on in the Village in 2019.

This was also the first year the Village has hosted Genesee County Day, where different County departments attend to provide information about the services they provide with free admission to Genesee County residents.

Day Out With Thomas™ enjoyed it's 13th year in the Village with a special media event held just prior to opening day. The "All Aboard For School Supplies Drive" invited attendees from 6 venues across the country to donate school supplies. These supplies were then donated to two Flint pre-K programs, Cummings and Educare, during a special ceremony held at the Village.



Classic cars line the streets of Crossroads Village for the 47th Annual Sloan Museum Auto Fair.

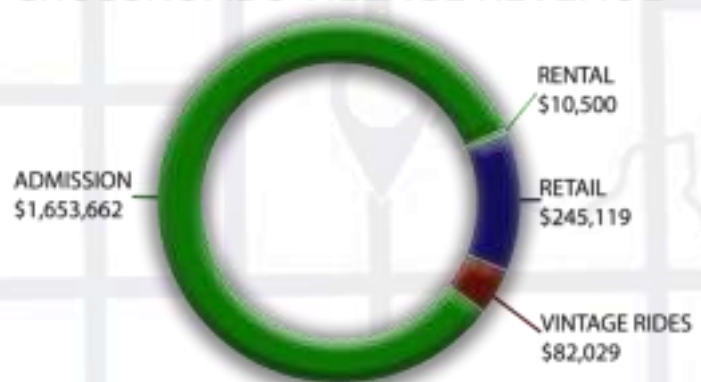


Timber Days at Crossroads Village featuring Paul Bunyan Events, log rolling, and cross cut sawing.



Day Out With Thomas™ is a family event that offers aspiring engineers and their families the unique opportunity to take a ride with the classic storybook engine.

## CROSSROADS VILLAGE REVENUE



# Crossroads Village Maintenance and Updates

Masonry repairs were made to the Fenton Opera House. Including rebuilding the parapet walls, replacement bricks and tuck pointing on the exterior walls, a new flat roof and a new rooftop air conditioner unit.

The George H. Durand Law Office and The JE Barbour Doctor's office were resided, repainted and structurally repaired.

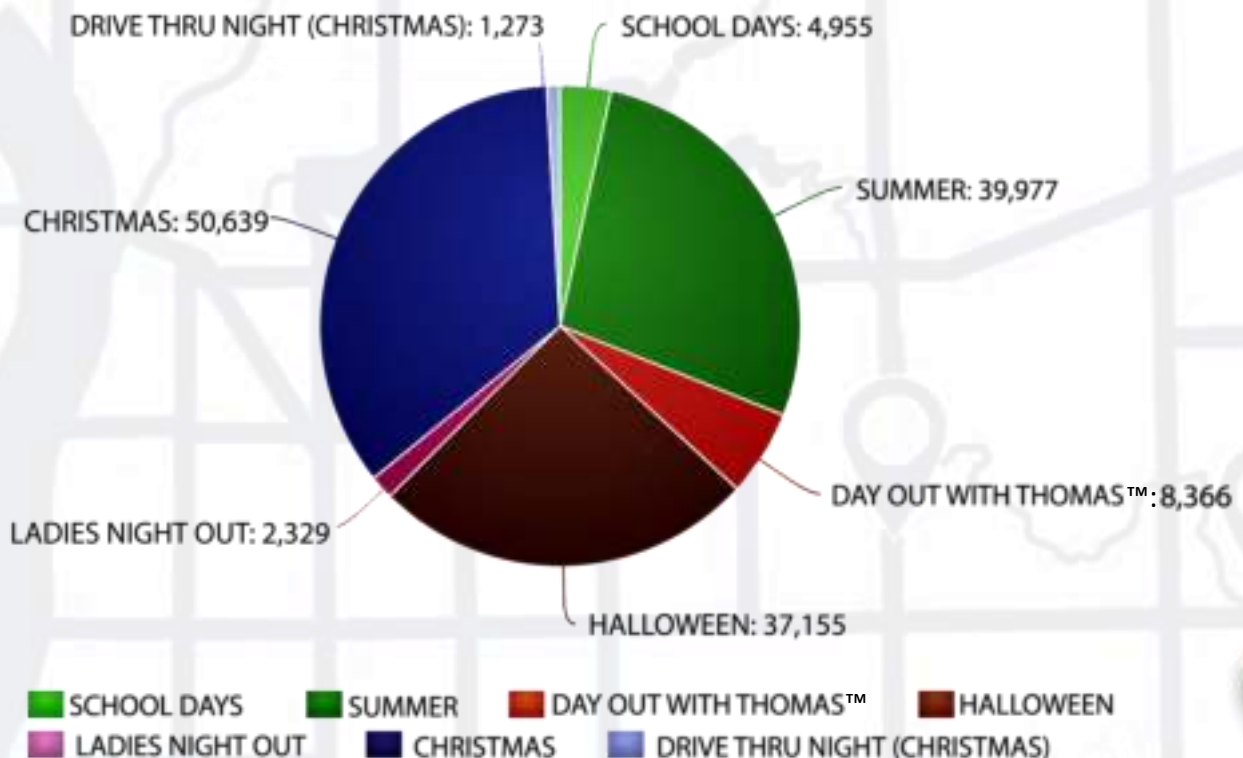


Crossroad Village volunteer, Loren Smith painted a mural with a working train headlight of Locomotive #152 on the back wall of the General Store.



A major improvement on the Crossroads Village Sawmill was also completed after a roof was installed to help protect the equipment from the elements. All the lumber used to construct the Sawmill structure came from Park land and was processed at the sawmill.

## CROSSROADS VILLAGE ATTENDANCE



# THE MOUNDS & WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND



2019 MOUNDS, CAMPGROUND and BOAT LAUNCH TOLLBOOTH NUMBERS	
THE MOUNDS	9,019 PASSES SOLD
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	11,597 NIGHTS RESERVED
BOAT LAUNCHES	5,816 PASSES SOLD

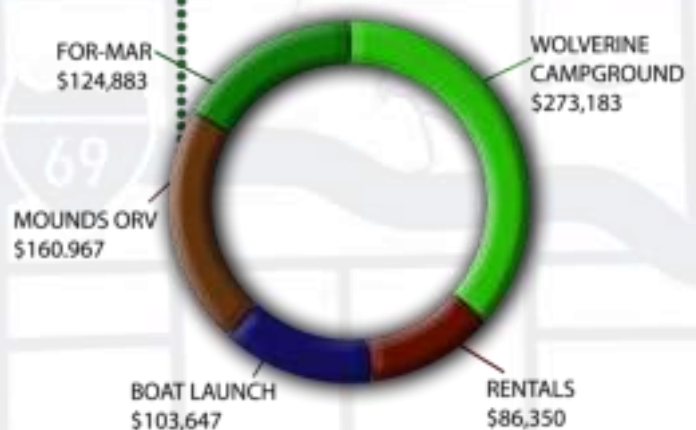
Genesee County Parks staff worked to map the Mounds ORV park trails, fencing and other assets this year, using ArcGIS technology. ArcGIS is a geographic information system (GIS) for working with maps and geographic information. These maps are sure to benefit Mounds patrons for years to come.



Primary Trail Use	Features
All Off-Road Vehicles	Rock Crawl
Quads/ATVs/Dirt Bikes	Mud Feature

Working with Richfield Township and the Road Commission, improvements to Baxter Road were made. The road, which leads to Wolverine Campground had new ditches and gravel installed, greatly improving the entrance to the Campground. We also added 4 new dump stations that are in service. Electrical improvements were made by upgrading the electrical capacity for all the distribution panels serving electrical sites. Additional upgrades to lighting were made at the restrooms, shower building and registration building. A fishing dock was also installed between the primitive camping sites and the beach as a new amenity.

## EARNED INCOME



Example of new mapping done at the Mounds.

# KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL



New backboards being installed.



Volunteers plant flowers as part of the Cultivating our Community program.

Keep Genesee County Beautiful has grown in 2019, both in parks and people. Of the 70 public spaces and parks that the City of Flint owns, 64 have now been adopted through KGCB's Adopt A Park program. There were 34 new/maintained gardens, green spaces and gateways with more than 1000 plants, flowers and bulbs planted through the Cultivating Our Community program and staff are working with the Flint Farmers Market to replant all of their flowerbeds.

Playgrounds were installed through partnerships with Make An Impact Foundation, the United Way, the Community Foundation and the City of Flint in Basset and Windiate Parks. A new playground was installed at Bundy Park and there will be a new playground at Iroquois Park as well as new equipment to replace old equipment at Rollingwood Park. Many parks have had their basketball courts resurfaced and new backboards installed, including Windiate, Martin, McCallum and Hasselbring. Berston Field House had upgrades as well; including a net barrier between the ballfield and playground, playground equipment repairs and safety surfacing topped off. Cook Park received a gate at the end of the parking lot and Dewey Park's ballfield received a much needed facelift with some funding provided by the United Way and the Bruno Mars Foundation.

- Total number of volunteers—2,917
- Total number of volunteer hours-20,017
- Value of volunteer hours— \$509,032
- Lbs. of garbage collected—158,220
- Lbs. of yard waste collected—151,680

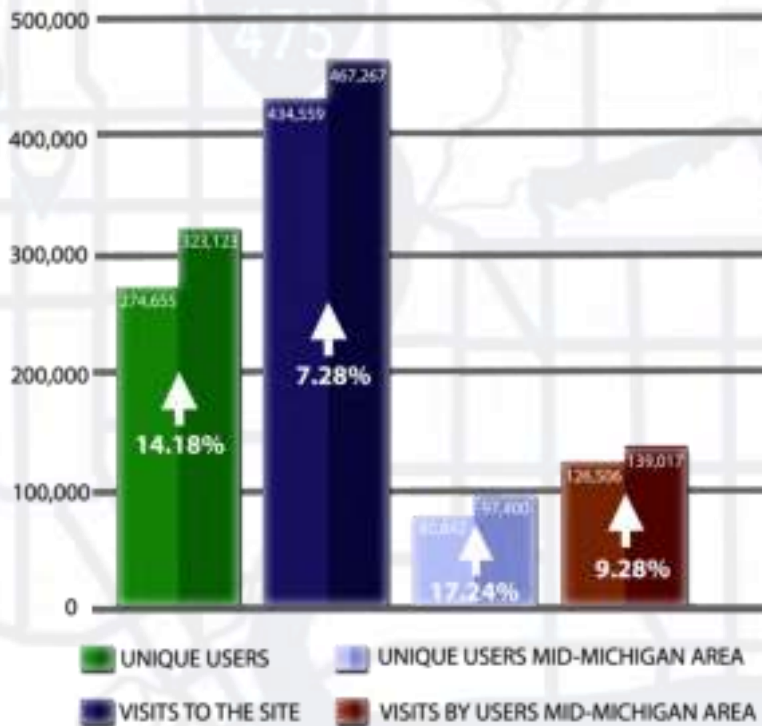
2018-19 GRANTS	
GRANTOR	AMOUNT
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	\$40,000
GREEN GIFT AWARD	\$2,500
GENESEE AREA FOCUS FUND	\$82,270
RUTH MOTT FOUNDATION	\$410,168
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$534,938</b>

# MARKETING

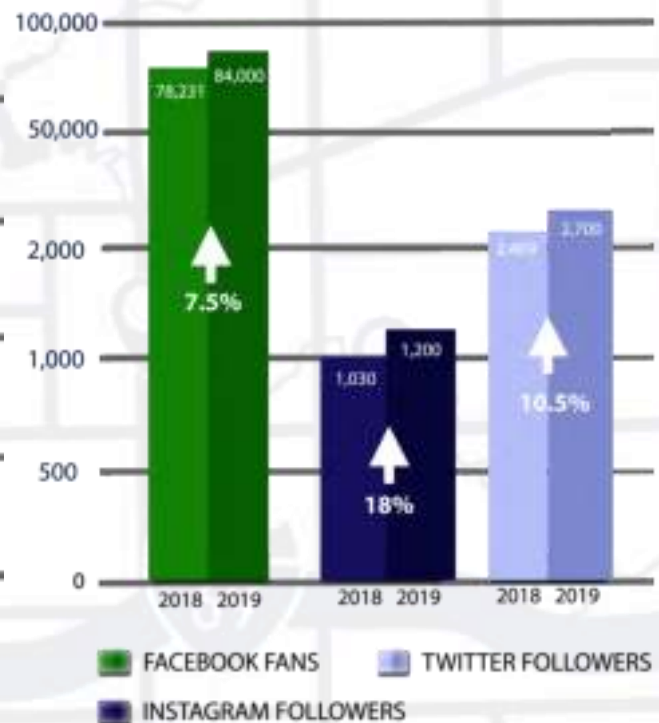
2019 proved to be a year of change and with that, there were decisions to stretch our media buys out past the county line. Social media has been a huge player in the way the Parks are marketed. In the past 4-5 years, the bar has been raised in this department by the implementation of Hootsuite Social Media Platform software to manage the multiple pages and accounts the Parks has. With an aim to better manage the software and further our education to acquire industry-leading skills; all Marketing staff have now completed the Hootsuite Social Marketing Certification. Another huge goal to accomplish is reaching the top of the Google organic list. This is a dream come true for any business. In an effort to push visitors to the website and increase that search engine optimization (SEO), hashtags and links were implemented into those social media postings that allowed it. With these efforts, we were able to increase traffic to the website. The following charts show these increases over the previous year. These trackable, tangible analytics show a step in the right direction.



**WEBSITE TRAFFIC INCREASE FROM 2018-2019**



**SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWER INCREASE FROM 2018-2019**



# RANGERS

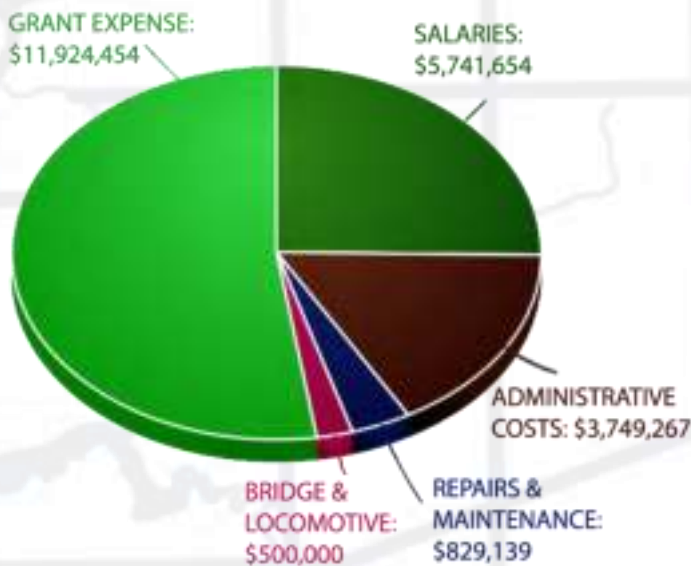
The end of 2018 saw an increase in Ranger Staff, which allowed the Ranger Division to increase patrols. This increase in patrols proved extremely effective in 2019 as it showed a significant drop in crime. This drop in crime was noticed by the F.B.I., who contacted the Ranger Division to see what different patrol tactics were employed.

The change in tactics resulted in the following:

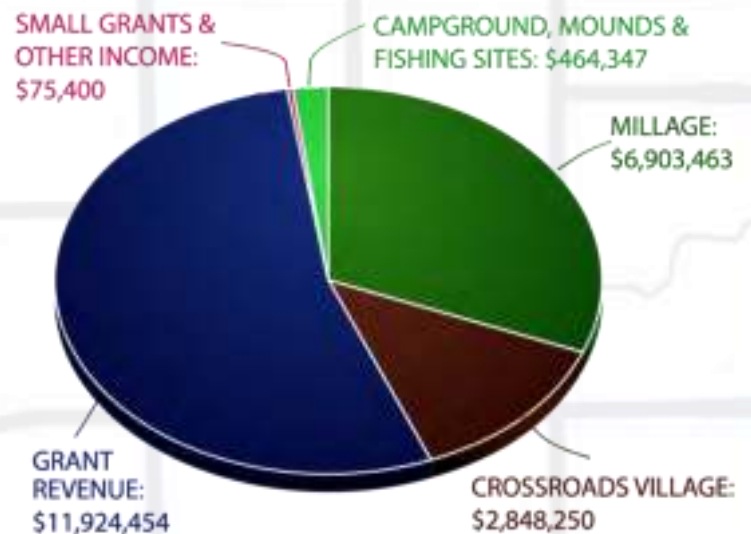
2019 PARK RANGERS STATS		
	2019	% +/- FROM 2018
CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS	419	-26%
FELONY ARRESTS	40	-65%
MISDEMEANOR ARRESTS	239	-9%
COMMUNITY POLICING CONTACT WITH PATRONS	48624	+8%
PATROL MILES	225924	+10%
<b>ILLEGAL DRUGS CONFISCATED</b> COCAINE/32 GRAMS ILLEGAL PILLS/263 ILLEGAL MARIJUANA/36.1 POUNDS		

## FY 2019 ACTUALS

### 2019 EXPENSES



### 2019 REVENUE





A Commission of Genesee County

**GENESEE  
COUNTY  
PARKS** 