

2021

Annual Report

GENESEE
COUNTY
PARKS



A Commission of Genesee County

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

It's been another good year at your Genesee County Parks. After the trials of the pandemic last year, the Parks returned to a sense of normal operations. All of the parks were open for business and we saw an increase in visitors to all facilities.

Crossroads Village reopened for the season to enthusiastic crowds and a return to business as usual. The Halloween and Christmas at Crossroads were once again popular programs. Visitors enjoyed the opportunity to return to the Village and marvel at the many holiday displays. Christmas at Crossroads opening ceremonies brought out crowds to watch the traditional lighting of the Christmas tree, participate in a community Christmas carol sing, and gaze at the fireworks show.

Wolverine Campground is experiencing a surge in popularity. Reservations continue to increase yearly with many weekends sold out at the beginning of the year. Due to interest from our camping visitors, staff recommended that we extend the camping season into October. The Commission agreed to this request and the results were very positive. We had many campers take advantage of the extended season and enjoy fall camping in Genesee County.

Campers will see the addition of new full-service campsites in the near future. Staff is diligently working to prepare the site for expansion of the campground to provide more opportunity for camping in Genesee County.

The walking and biking trails throughout the County are seeing tremendous use by residents for exercise and relaxing strolls of the many scenic views offered in the Parks.

Flushing County Park saw extensive damage from the wind storm that struck the area in 2021. Staff was able to respond quickly and perform clean-up to get the park open again for the public.

Plans are moving forward for projects on the Flint Riverfront Restoration Project. We hope to see improvements in the very near future. Stay tuned for more news on this transformational project.

Parks staff is eagerly looking forward to the coming year with new ideas and planned improvements in the Parks. Staff is always looking to offer new and exciting opportunities for our visitors and the hope the new year brings.

Park Commissioners are extremely proud and grateful of the job staff does each and every day. Without them, our Parks would not be what they are today. Our thanks also to the residents of Genesee County for their continued support of the Genesee County Parks. We strive to bring you a wide variety of recreational opportunities and hope we meet your expectations.

Joe Krapohl, President

Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

2021 COMMISSIONERS

- Joe Krapohl
(Citizen Representative)
- James Washington, PhD
(Citizen Representative)
- Mike Lynch
(Citizen Representative)
- Domonique Clemons
(County Commissioner)
- Mike Keeler
(Citizen Representative)
- Garry Peppin
(County Commissioner)
- Bryant Nolden
(County Commissioner)
- Jeff Wright
(Ex-Officio)
- Cloyce Dickerson
(Ex-Officio)
- Gloria Nealy
(Ex-Officio)

DAY USE PARKS

Genesee County Parks have always been places that are both recreational and social refuges. 2021 was no different. People turned to our spaces for exercise, reflection, fresh air and to simply take a break from the stress of the world.

Staff was up to the task to continue to make our parks safe, clean and relaxing destinations that are welcoming to all. 2021 saw a lot of projects in our Day Use parks that will improve our patrons experiences for years to come.



TOTAL EMPLOYEES	493
TOTAL SEASONAL	459
TOTAL FULL TIME	34
SUMMER YOUTH INITIATIVE	4
MAINTENANCE	116
CROSSROADS VILLAGE	161
HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD	16
FOR-MAR	50
MOUNDS	10
TOLLBOOTH	8
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	30
PARK RANGERS	64

New entrance signs were installed in most day use parks this year, as a part of a 5 year plan to replace all park signage. The bathrooms at Linden County Park and Everett A. Cummings Event Center were painted, A new document storage building was completed at the Parks Administration Office.

Large scale clean up efforts took place after storms in August affected Flushing County Park, Linden County Park and Clover Beach. Maintenance staff cleared down trees and debris after high winds swept through the area. The bleachers at Everett A. Cummings Center were completely rebuilt in time to be used for the Genesee County Fair in August. Richfield County Park's Pavilion #2 received a new roof that will last for years to come.

In partnership with the Disability Network, staff identified accessibility concerns for park patrons at Buell Lake County Park and were able to install a new accessible path between the parking lot and restrooms. Because this park is heavily used by adaptive recreation groups, it was of the upmost priority to complete.



Governor Gretchen Whitmer, as well as other local and state officials gathered at Chevy Commons on Wednesday, July 14th, 2021 to announce plans to transform it into a State Park.

As of this writing, Genesee County is the only County in Michigan that doesn't have a State Park.

Future plans for the park include the removal of the Hamilton Dam remnants and greater access to the river, improved lighting, landscaping and the addition of green infrastructure. The proposed State Park would include Chevy Commons, the Flint Riverbank Park as well as the Vietnam Veterans Park.

GENESEE COUNTY PARKS ACRES	
LAND AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION	
GENESEE RECREATION AREA	4,460 Acres
HOLLOWAY REGIONAL PARK	5,860 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	1,975 Acres
BUELL LAKE	178 Acres
FLINT RIVER FRONT	29 Miles



FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE & ARBORETUM

For-Mar safely re-opened the Visitor Center to the public on June 30th, 2021.

The animal exploration room was updated during the Covid-19 closure. New animal cabinets for tanks were installed and new murals of flora and fauna were added. This project was generously funded by the Friends of For-Mar Foundation.



With the help of the maintenance team the sugar shack was made more accessible through the addition of a viewing window and new limestone aggregate path next to the shack.



The new Geology Garden was completed in 2021, this garden replaces the ornamental grass garden at For-Mar. The grass garden was removed due to recent development of the non-native ornamental grasses beginning to seed out into the surrounding preserve. Its removal eliminates the potential threat of new invasive species at For-Mar. The Geology Garden will provide an interpretative opportunity for the public in the geological history of Michigan and create a place-making site for public activities.



For-Mar continued to develop and expand their educational reach through multiple programming formats. Virtual programming reached 38,621 Facebook users with 4,730 partial views and 366 full views from January through November.

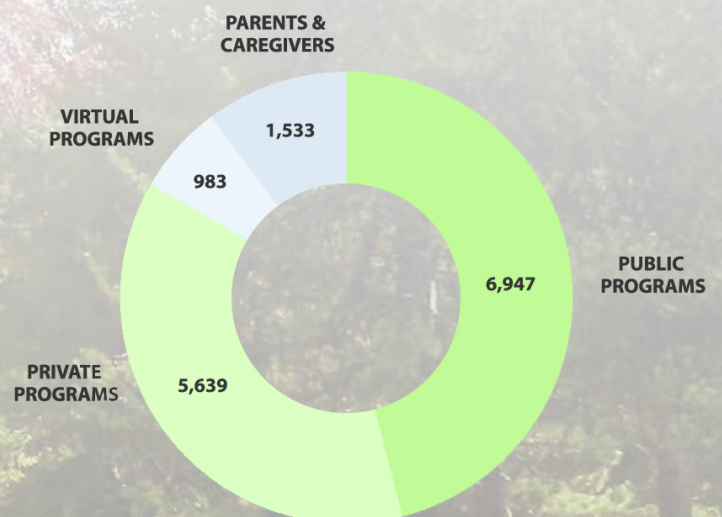
In-Person programs engaged 7,684 community members in nature education. Outreach educators ventured out to Genesee County Parks, community events, private programs, and Wolverine Campground, June through November to interpret seasonal occurrences and other nature-based science topics.



A new Garden Exploration Space was developed, providing garden education both directly and passively. An activity station was installed that provides materials for visitors to use during a program or during their own exploration. The station is removable and available to visitors of any age. This project was funded by the Friends of For-Mar.

We also made a point to partner with the Disability Network of Genesee County and the Flint River Watershed Coalition to provide inclusive kayaking (ikayak) trips at Buell Lake throughout the year.

FOR-MAR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



The garden at the corner of Davison and Genesee roads was renovated this year. Its renovation was driven by the desire to create a garden that was easier to maintain, required fewer resources (personnel and supplies), and provide a high level of aesthetic value, while projecting the essence of For-Mar to the traveling public. Timbers from the original memorial gardens at For-Mar were repurposed to create a tiered raised bed garden around a new park sign. The timbers showcase For-Mar's history, the lower tier of plants are native wildflowers and grasses that show For-Mar's commitment to a sustainable environment, and the top tier will be planted with annual vegetation that represents For-Mar's ability to change and flourish within the community.

FOR-MAR'S 2021 GRANTS	
GRANTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
STELLA AND FREDERICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$10,000
STELLA AND FREDERICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$10,000
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR	\$800
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR	\$1,303.12
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$3,000
FLINT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$30,103.12

Black locust is an introduced invasive tree that has taken root at For-Mar. The invasive nature of this tree threatens the natural environment by reducing habitat and limiting biodiversity. In order to reclaim this habitat, park personnel spent several weeks removing and disposing of a collection of these trees.

Over the years, the trails at For-Mar have begun to narrow due to the encroachment of both native and non-native plants. In an effort to open the trails and increase public safety, staff worked on widening these trails.



HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD

Newly rebuilt Diesel Electric Locomotive #12 arrived at the Huckleberry Railroad April 29th, 2021, after a two day journey from Pennsylvania. It was an exciting event and many staff members came to see its arrival, in spite of the cold and rain of the day.



#12 is a GE 50 ton Diesel Electric Locomotive with two Detroit diesel 671 engines. A narrow gauge center cab, #12 was built in 1957 for Bethlehem Steel.

Rebuilt by McHugh Locomotive, #12 was completed on April 24th, 2021.

The Railroad Shop was busy this year making repairs and improvements to Huckleberry Railroad's track and trains. 300 railroad ties were replaced and a new 250ft storage building was erected to protect railroad cars from the elements.

Premier Powder Coating of Flint helped prepare for the 2021 Summer season by donating all labor and materials as a way of giving back to Crossroads Village. The work completed includes: 28 wall brackets, 56 keepers, 56 arm brackets and 28 stanchions, all powder coated black and 28 arm rests that were powder coated in a chrome color with a clear coat on top.

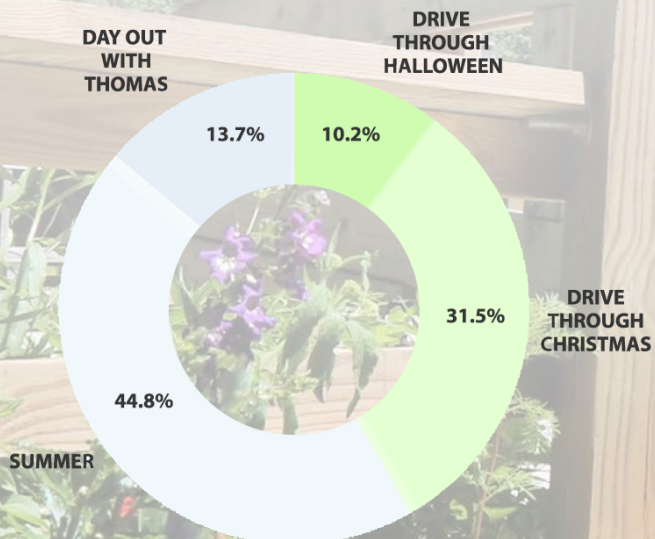


CROSSROADS VILLAGE



Fall of 2020 began with a new spin on Holiday traditions at Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad. Halloween and Christmas drive through did not bring the same kind of magic to families in Genesee County but still offered a safe alternative for guests to enjoy the village. The Halloween drive through had 7,120 cars and the Christmas drive through saw 21,868 cars. Volunteers prepared and handed out over 30,000 bags of candy.

VILLAGE ATTENDANCE



The Village reopened to the public Memorial Day weekend after being closed in 2020. New events in 2021 consisted of Michigan Timber Days and Tractor Show, Curious at Crossroads Oddities Festival and Huckleberry Railroads Enchanted Village. Genesee County Day grew this year, with many County Departments in attendance, as well as the edition of Food Trucks. Day Out with Thomas returned and had a great turnout with over 8,000 visitors.

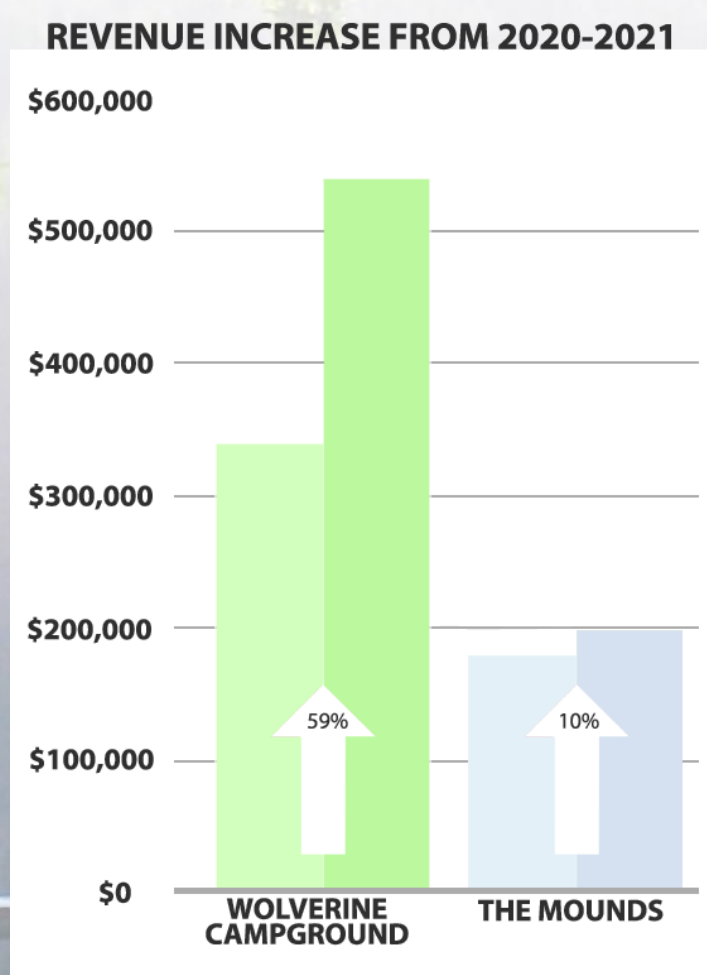
Crossroads Village maintenance worked hard all year on various projects. Many of the doors and windows throughout the village were restored, along with repairs of ramps and new porches were built. Several areas received new paint jobs and touch ups, including the Gazebo, our brochure kiosk and the volunteer booth. The Genesee Belle received a new cooler. The Fox House received all new siding and a partial roof and the Clayton Township Hall received an entirely new tin roof.



THE MOUNDS, WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND & TOLLBOOTHS

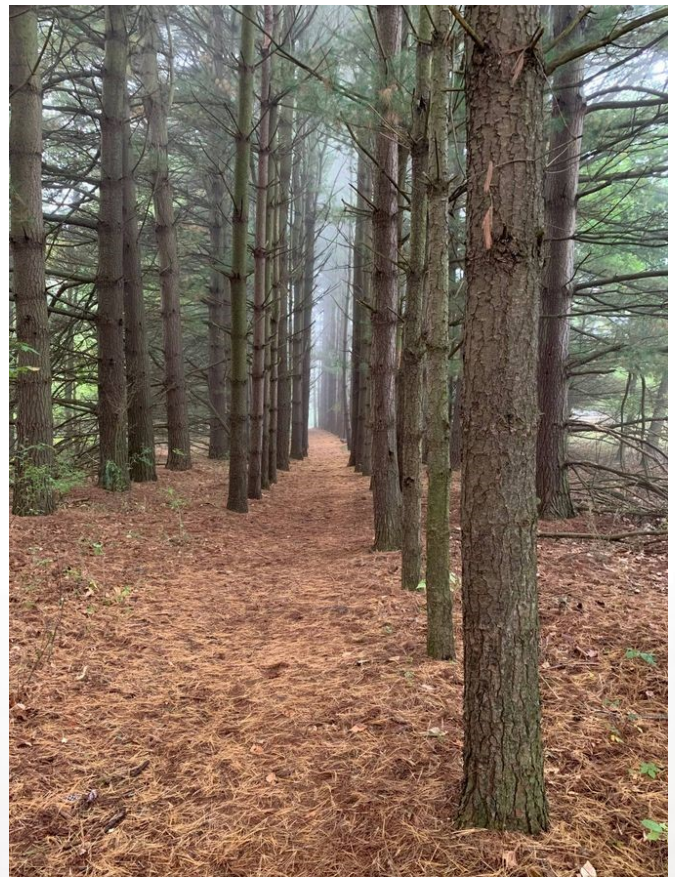


The Mounds ORV Park had a sizable increase in usage during the 2021 operating season. Over 10,000 passes were sold, including 713 season permits. Customer satisfaction is at an all-time high after noticeable improvements were made during the summer. New trail marker signs were installed throughout the park in addition to a new map and rules sign near the parking lot entrance. Maintenance staff worked diligently and added 800 tons of rock to improve and stabilize existing trails.



2021 MOUNDS, CAMPGROUND & BOAT LAUNCH TOLLBOOTH NUMBERS	
THE MOUNDS	10,338 PASSES SOLD
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	14,535 NIGHTS RESERVED
BOAT LAUNCHES	8,023 PASSES SOLD

Wolverine Campground opened April 29th in 2021, one month earlier than usual. This was the first time opening before Memorial Day and campers were eager to start the camping season. Yearly revenue reached a record high of \$539,000, a \$200,000 increase from the 2020 season. Numerous Park improvements over the past few seasons have contributed to an increase in usage and revenue. A new privacy fence was installed on the East side of the campground and campers showed great excitement with the recent upgrade of 37 campsites to 50 amp electric and water service. Usage in the peak of summer averaged 80-100% capacity on weekends. When fall arrived, staff planted 12 new trees including 6 maples and a variety of other native species. Tree planting is now a yearly project to responsibly maintain and preserve our natural resources for many years to come.



The Genesee County Parks Boat Launches experienced another busy summer on the Holloway Reservoir and Mott Lake. Expanded parking and signage was a great addition at Walleye-Pike Boat Launch to help meet demands during busy weekends. An ADA accessible kayak launch was added at Bluegill Boat Launch next to the existing docks. The new launch is universally accessible, making it easy to use for all park patrons and a great resource to allow disabled visitors access to our waterways.



RANGERS

The Ranger division stayed consistent with its values and mission over the course of 2021. Statistics remained relatively the same as the focus of the Ranger Division continues to be to provide an all-inclusive, safe, family friendly experience for everyone. With the thousands of miles driven and thousands of community police contacts we continue to show our presence in all the parks to make people feel safe and continue to return to the parks system to enjoy all we have to offer. In 2022 we will continue to ensure our policing remains focused in the Genesee County Parks system.

2021 PARK RANGERS STATS

PATROL MILES	216,230
CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS	387
CALLS FOR SERVICE	1,417
PUBLIC ASSIST	608
COMMUNITY POLICING CONTACT WITH PATRONS	37,675
FELONY ARRESTS	48
MISDEMEANOR ARRESTS	176

KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

2021 KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL STATS

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS	2,770
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS	17,366
VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS	\$495,611
LBS. OF GARBAGE COLLECTED	430,263
LBS. OF YARD WASTE COLLECTED	182,200

Keep Genesee County Beautiful brought in grants totaling \$535,625 from funders including: the Ruth Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, the Genesee Area Focus Fund, Keep America Beautiful, and the National Recreation and Park Association.

63 parks and 37 gateway gardens were maintained by volunteers and through partnerships for the 2021 season.

Porta-johns were placed in 24 City parks and arrangements made for Republic Services and Priority Waste to continue picking up trash curbside in all City parks.

Capital improvements were made in City parks and Gateway Gardens that included bleachers, benches, picnic tables, park signs, trees and brush removal, removal of hazardous equipment in 3 parks, and remediation of graffiti and installation of 6 new murals on Martin Luther King Ave. in partnership with the Flint Public Art Project.



FLINT RIVERFRONT RESTORATION PROJECT

The Flint River-Swartz Creek Confluence is an approximate 2.5 acre triangular patch of land bordered on the South by W. Kearsley Street, projecting North to a peninsula bordered on the West by Swartz Creek and the Flint River on the East.

Construction for the Swartz Creek Confluence Green Infrastructure project took place in the Spring and Summer of 2021. This project was designed to create recreational river access on this site and provide green infrastructure to detain and clean storm-water that flows across it. The design includes a natural stone kayak launch at the Swartz Creek shoreline, steps up the creek bank with a railing-kayak slide, bio-retention basins, sidewalks and a paved turnaround with parking.



MARKETING

This year brought a whole new set of challenges for the Marketing department. Many of the usual plans had to be altered to fit the changes in the way people were receiving messages. Due to the pandemic, many people had turned to digital and social media for their information. And the Marketing Department took on the challenge.

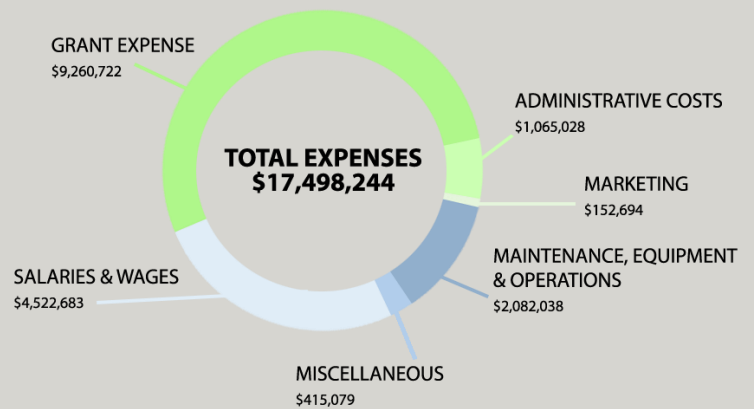
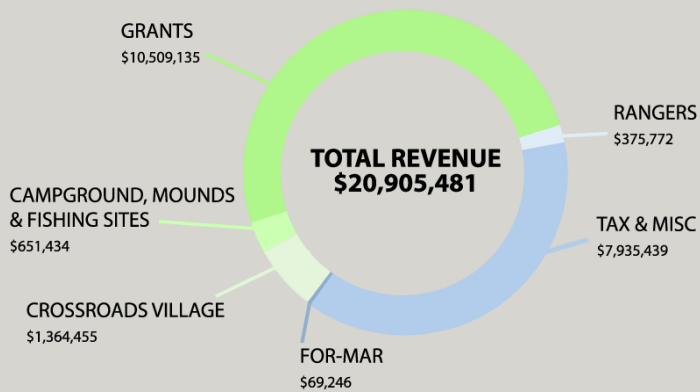
One of the biggest changes was how the Parks distributed the annual Family Fun Guide. The 2021 version was the biggest and best one yet. We offered the chance for other local Parks & Rec organizations to join us in sharing all there is offered in the county. Both Davison and Grand Blanc joined in and made it a huge success. The information was shared in a digital format via the Parks website as well as Davison and Grand Blanc's websites, giving access to countless families in Genesee County.

2021 DIGITAL MARKETING STATS

PEOPLE REACHED BY ADS	544,197
CLICKS ON ADS	59,027
WEBSITE VISITORS	296,724
PEOPLE REACHED BY FACEBOOK POSTS	1,137,758

This year also gave us the opportunity to finish the Parks History project. This nearly year-long endeavor of compiling interviews, old news stories, annual reports, and first-hand accounts of happenings over the last 50 plus years was completed by James Woolcock, a local author. This will serve as a basis for additional chapters in our ongoing story.

FY 2020 ACTUALS



GENESEE COUNTY PARKS
Get away. Right away.