

GENESEE COUNTY PARKS



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



A Commission of Genesee County

MISSION STATEMENT

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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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a year this has been! With everything going on in the world today, I think this is a year we would like to forget but, unfortunately, it is a year we will remember for a long time. COVID 19 has changed the way we live, work, and play. Here at Genesee County Parks, we have adapted to the new normal of social distancing and the shutdowns earlier this spring. While difficult, staff has done a remarkable job of keeping our parks open and clean for our residents.

For the first time since it's opening, Crossroads Village was closed for the summer season. Out of concern for the safety of volunteers, employees, and visitors, the Park Commission made the decision to close the park with the hope of reopening for Halloween and Christmas. Regrettably that did not happen. We felt it safer to limit these two seasonal programs to drive through events only. While disappointed, we were extremely pleased with the attendance for both Halloween and Christmas events. We were initially overwhelmed by the number of vehicles for the opening weekend of the Christmas drive through but were able to make some quick changes to help with the crowds. We have plans for the future to improve this experience for our visitors.

One positive to come out of this year is the tremendous increase in the usage of the walking trails and bike paths. Many residents concerned for their health and safety took advantage of the great outdoors to bike, walk, or run on the numerous trails throughout the County. They felt safe to use the Parks to just get out of the house for a while.

With the closure of Crossroads Village this year, it allowed staff to complete many of the jobs on our "to do list" that there never seemed time to do. I think everyone can understand jobs that you can never get to. All the little tasks and bigger projects will help us in the long run continue to provide the best possible park system for our residents.

Another responsibility of the Genesee County Parks is the managing of the Keep Genesee County Beautiful program. With a generous grant from the Ruth Mott Foundation, this program has provided upgrades to many parks in the City of Flint. New playground equipment, resurfacing of basketball courts, and picnic facilities are all some of the benefits received by neighborhood parks. In addition, the Genesee County Parks contracts with the City to maintain many parks in the city. Under the oversight of the KGCB program, many of the City of Flint parks have been adopted by neighborhood groups, businesses, local churches, local unions, and concerned citizens. These groups help keep the parks clean of trash, brush, and other debris so local residents can have pride in their community.

With the New Year approaching, the Commission is making plans for numerous projects in 2021. We are hoping to develop plans and obtain bids for upgrades and expansion at Wolverine Campground. Many of the proposed improvements will enhance the camping experience for our visitors. Planning continues to bring the residents of the City of Flint closer to nature. As always, the Commission works hard along with staff to seek grant funding sources for many of these projects.

It is the hope of Park Commissioners that we can return to some sort of normal next year. Until then, we will continue to do the best we can to offer our residents the opportunity to have some respite from the stresses of everyday life by providing you with the best county park system in the state.

- Joe Krapohl, President Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

2020

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 NEELY

EX-OFFICIO

Day Use Parks



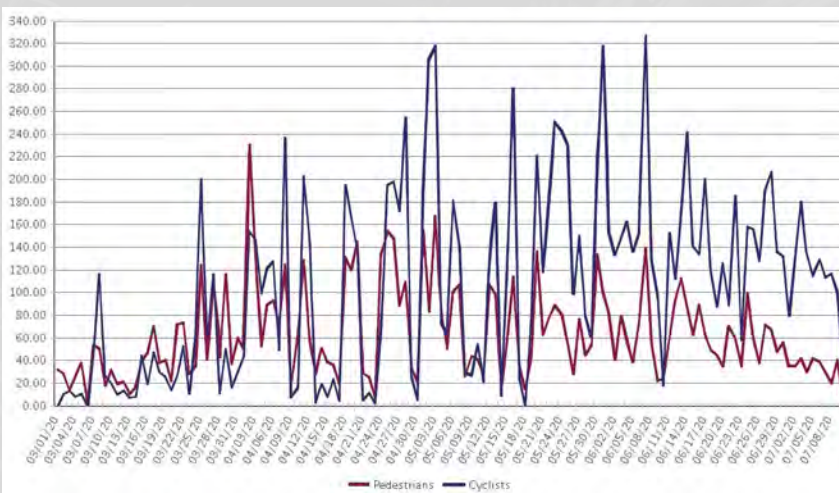
New section of Iron Belle Trail, Richfield County Park

When you look up the word recreation in the dictionary the definition is “activity done for enjoyment when one is not working”. This was never truer for the parks than in 2020.

The parks have long been a place for quiet and solitude. A place for relaxation from the days stresses. No one knew that this year would bring an even better reason to get away, right away.

With the onset of a statewide lock down and indefinite lay-offs, many people looked to the outdoors as a newfound refuge. There were record-breaking numbers of visitors to our trail systems and day use parks this spring and summer, many of whom had never utilized the park system. According to the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, the number of visitors to the Flint River Trail from May-July was an average of 1,292 people a day. With 54% cyclists and 46% walkers. The sheer volume of foot traffic was tremendous throughout all of the our day use parks. Parks offering fresh air and time to think were the perfect retreat from the confines of home.

Even during a pandemic the Parks Mission Statement says it best; Genesee County parks is dedicated to quality recreational opportunities for everyone and preservation of natural resources.



*Flint River Trail Usage at Genesee Rd.
3/1/2020 - 7/10/2020*

	2019	2020
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	430	201
TOTAL SEASONAL	403	181
TOTAL FULL TIME	27	20
KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL	9	4
MAINTENANCE	100	62
CROSSROADS VILLAGE	134	4
HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD	20	9
FOR-MAR	27	4
MOUNDS	10	15
TOLLBOOTH	10	11
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	34	30
PARK RANGERS	59	42

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

Despite shutdowns and 229 fewer staff members due to the pandemic, the Parks were able to make many repairs and improvements to our Day Use Parks in 2020. A new section of multi-use trail from Irish Rd. to Richfield Park was completed. New park entrance signs were installed in many of our parks, beginning a 5 year plan to replace all park signage. All park playgrounds received new blown in engineered wood fiber to improve the level of safety in the playground safety surfacing. Buell Lake’s fishing dock was repaired and refinished. Trails at Bluegill Boat Launch and Bluebell Beach had cracks repaired and were seal-coated. New culverts were installed at Elba Equestrian Complex and Atlas County Park and erosion control work was completed in Richfield Park to the Zufelt drain. The infrastructure upgrades made to the parks this year will benefit park patrons for years to come.



New entrance sign at Richfield County Park

For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum



For-Mar staff showed growth in change with all of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. The efforts focused on teaching and how staff delivered programming to the community.

The year started with in-person programming and multiple presentations, staff presenting at both the annual mParks Conference and Stewardship Network Conference. For-Mar staff members were able to share information on topics such as in school programming, the Butterfly House, using nature as therapy through adaptive recreation programs and the partnership with the Flint River Watershed Coalition's iKayak program.



For-Mar staff presented on the Butterfly House at the MParks Conference in January 2020

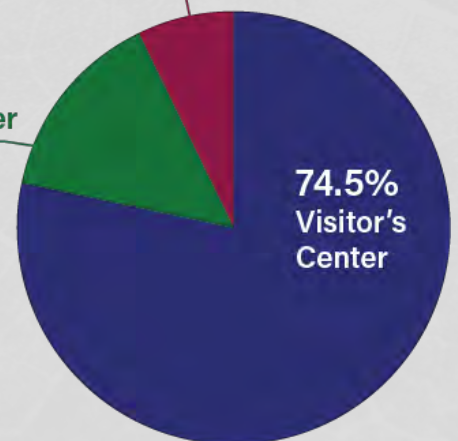


Outdoor Explorers, Owl Pellet Dissection. New 100% outdoor program

9.7%
Treehouse Visitors

15.8%
Dewaters Center

74.5%
Visitor's Center





50th Birthday Party October 31, 2020

FOR-MAR'S 2020 GRANTS	
GRANTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
STELLA AND FREDERICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$10,000
STELLA AND FREDERICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$6,000
MERKLEY CHARITABLE TRUST	\$4,000
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR	\$5,000
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$7,000
FLINT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION	\$5,000
GENISYS CREDIT UNION SPONSORSHIP	\$5,000



The 6th edition of the Superhero Comic Book that centers around Michigan and For-Mar History. This comic was put up on the trail in May 2020



Teachers adopt a tree



Staff removing invasive species



New arbor for the Four Seasons Garden



Before (top) and after (bottom) trail maintenance

The grounds and arboretum saw many improvements in 2020. Staff pruned over 100 trees within the arboretum , resulting in better sight lines and easier access for visitors.

There was a push for invasive species control throughout the park by treating plants such as purple loosefire, phragmites, bristly locust, Vinca and Japanese knotweed and treatment of smaller populations. Trail maintenance operations began to widen the trails that were overgrown with invasive shrubs and vines. This provided clearance for mowing and better site lines for park patrons.

The Four Seasons Garden received a new arbor, constructed by staff, to replace the original arbor, which was in poor condition. This area is a popular venue for weddings at For-Mar.

Huckleberry Railroad

The Railroad staff kept right on track with improvements and new equipment builds.

Infrastructure improvements included replacing bridge #2 with a new culvert, replacing 700 ties on the main line and track extensions on both tracks 5 and 6, adding 250 feet to each. The Railroad purchased two narrow gauge dump cars from the Durango and Silverton Railroad in Colorado to assist in Right of Way Maintenance.

The staff were also busy with heavy restoration on car #306. This work utilized the Sawmill and its equipment by cutting new beams and replacements for rotted wood in the car. The windows and floor of car #306 were also restored. Car #102 had the floor sanded and re-varnished, new windows and heat duct installed and roof repaired.



New railroad ties on the main line



*Car #306 interior wood walls restoration
Left: Before Right: After*



*Car #102 freshly painted with new windows installed
Inset: Restoring and rebuilding windows for train car restoration*

Crossroads Village

The 2019-2020 fiscal year started with a bang at Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad with the annual Ghosts & Goodies event. This brought nearly 35,000 guests to the Village. Christmas was no different with attendance numbers reaching 47,700, putting the 2019 season within the top ten. (Based on the attendance records dating back to the first Christmas at Crossroads Holiday Magic event in 1984.) The summer season was of course a different story. The negative affect of the pandemic was most apparent in our revenue producing parks, with Crossroads Village being a key producer.

For the first time the Village was closed the entire summer season, causing the cancellation of planned events such as the first annual Genesee County Day & Village Fest, Day Out With Thomas and Railfans Weekend.

The inactivity of summer programming allowed for many long awaited projects to be finished. Much-needed restoration and paintwork was completed on the Atlas Grist Mill, Coldwater Chapel, George H. Durant Law Office and the Mill Street Warehouse. The chinking was finished on the Salter Cabin. The Blacksmith Shop, Buzzell House and Pony Cart all received a roof replacement.



Freshly painted Chapel



Painted and restored Atlas Grist Mill



Sawmill open enclosure building

The split rail fencing was replaced along the Homer H. Dowdy Parkway, and our Parks volunteer and master sign painter completed several new and improved Village signs.

The Saw Mills 2nd phase was finished with the completion of the open enclosure building. This will allow the Sawmill to operate during inclement weather and provide protection against the elements for the antique equipment.

There were new upgrades to our reservations software, Rec-Trac along with successful training for staff across all Village locations.

All of these accomplishments will prove fruitful for seasons to come.



New chinking on the Salter Cabin



Period accurate hand painted signs

The Mounds, Wolverine Campground & Tollbooths

Despite a late start due to state regulations regarding the Covid 19 pandemic, park usage was at an all-time high for Wolverine's 2020 camping season. The Campground was at 100% capacity every weekend except one for the summer operating season. Fall camping was added for the first time in many years and customer feedback was extremely positive. The campground was consistently over 50% capacity despite a lack of ideal camping weather during this time.

Important campsite modifications were made to allow for easier access. Several site posts and fire pits were adjusted based on camper feedback. Included in this process, all electrical boxes were labeled with the campsite number to reduce confusion. A major overhaul of Campground maps and brochures began in preparation for the

upcoming 2021 season to reflect the changes made and to better convey camping information to our customers.

Our Park Horticulturist and Maintenance staff have worked diligently to improve, preserve, and maintain our natural resources for the long term health of the campground. This year they focused on planting new trees for shade during the fall and pruning existing trees for the safety of our campers. The long term goal is to responsibly operate a safe and healthy shaded park which in turn would help reduce the strain on our electrical system during the summer.

Our Rec-Trac recreation software and computers were updated along with changes to the registration and check in processes, which allowed the Campground to better serve our customers. These updates helped to reduce wait times and eliminated long lines during an extremely busy season.

Numerous other park maintenance and building improvements were also made for the 2020 season.

2020 MOUNDS, CAMPGROUND and BOAT LAUNCH TOLLBOOTH NUMBERS	
THE MOUNDS	9,218 PASSES SOLD
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	10,689 NIGHTS RESERVED
BOAT LAUNCHES	9,379 PASSES SOLD



Campsite 165 on a chilly October morning

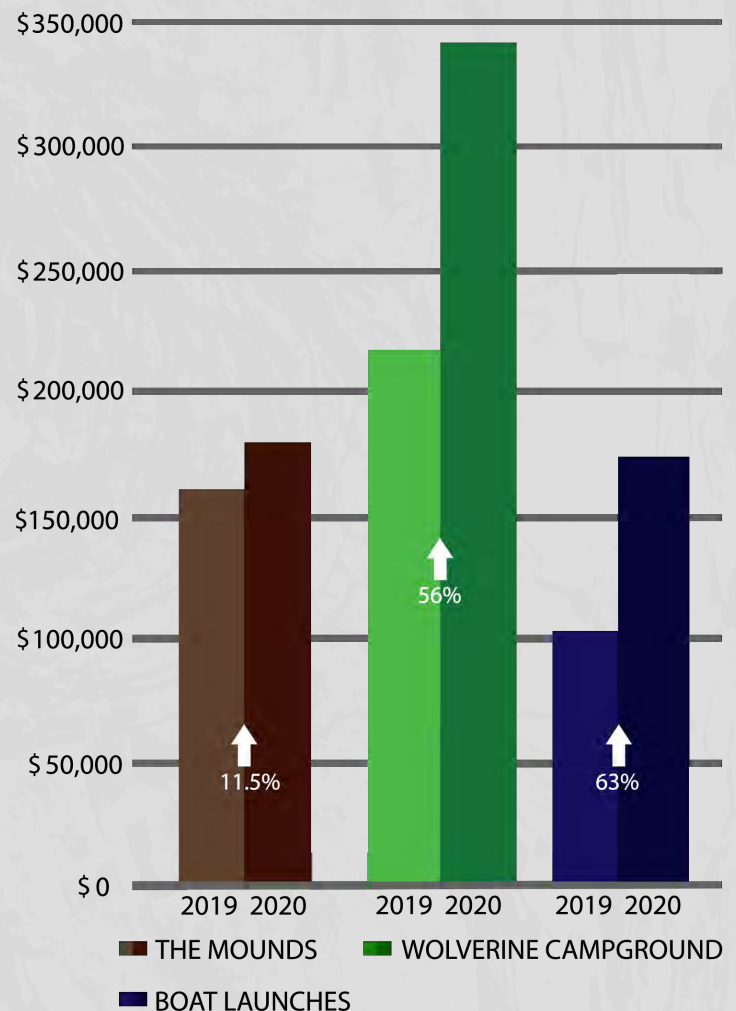


Autumn Blaze Maple tree planted at Wolverine October 2020

Our restroom facilities got a much needed face lift as all exterior bathrooms received a fresh coat of paint. A charcoal vent filter was added to our registration roof vent to improve air quality in the area. In early spring park grills were replaced at Buttercup Beach and Old Beaver picnic area. Parking areas at Buttercup Beach and the shower building were defined to improve traffic flow.

The Genesee County Parks Boat Launches had a sizeable increase in usage this year as boaters flocked to the Holloway Reservoir when summer temps sizzled. With the loss of some northern Michigan boating recreation, many county residents and non-residents stayed closer to home and enjoyed a new summer boating opportunity on the Holloway Reservoir.

REVENUE INCREASE FROM 2019-2020



Keep Genesee County Beautiful



Monarch Waystation located at N. Saginaw and Austin

Keep Genesee County Beautiful spent much of 2020 bringing capital improvements to City parks and Gateway Gardens. Three new playgrounds were constructed and new pieces of equipment were installed in two parks. Multiple parks received new benches, grills, picnic tables, porta-johns and playground repairs. More than 1,816 plants and bulbs were planted this year in addition to brush clearing and tree removal. Arrangements for weekly curbside trash pickup were also made.

KGCB teamed up with the Flint Public Art Project adding public art on utility boxes as well as a mural by artist Kevin Burdick. The Flint Farmers Market saw the completion of a new monarch waystation and themed gardens.

- *Total number of volunteers - 827
- *Total number of volunteer hours - 4,800
- *Value of volunteer hours - \$130,571
- *Lbs. of garbage collected - 80,800
- *Lbs. of yard waste collected - 54,840

KGCB 2020 GRANTS	
GRANTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	\$25,000
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	\$25,000
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	\$55,000
GENESEE AREA FOCUS FUND	\$64,480
KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL	\$10,000
NATIONAL RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION	\$10,000
RUTH MOTT FOUNDATION	\$390,000
SAGINAW BAY WIN	\$1,000
WALMART	\$750



Peace Garden at the Flint Farmer's Market



Kearsley Park small playground located near the Grand Pavilion

Marketing

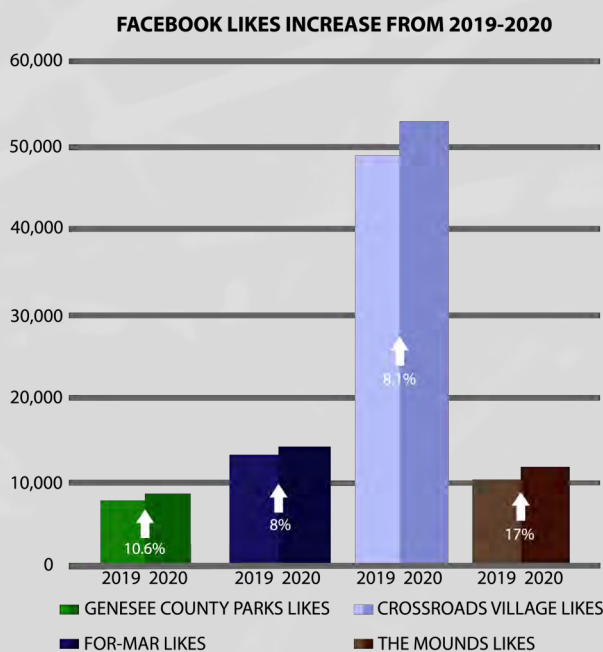
The definition of marketing is the action or business of selling products or services, including market research and advertising. The latter part of the 2019/20 fiscal year has somewhat skewed that definition for the Parks. In previous years, efforts were focused on the planning of extensive multi media campaigns for special events and seasonal openings, whereas this year it was placed on educating the public, reminding visitors of all the natural beauty the parks had to offer and that social distancing in nature really is a good thing!

There was a push for public service announcements more than ever before. Not only were there messages of safety protocol, the Parks also made a conscious effort to encourage visitors to get out and get active through ongoing, weekly ABC 12 segments

that aired every Thursday during the 6:00am and noon news hours. These segments had the potential of reaching over 122,500 viewers weekly.

Social media played a huge role in reaching those that the pandemic left feeling disconnected. For-Mar offered visitors programming via virtual segments on Facebook and YouTube. Guests were encouraged to get out and get much-needed fresh air on the extensive trail system. This brought record numbers of people out to hike, bike, walk and paddle throughout the entire park system.

Looking back over the entire fiscal year, social media brought an unprecedented increase in numbers to the Crossroads Village and Genesee County Parks Facebook pages, with over a quarter of a million people reached with one post alone! This goes to show, how the move from traditional marketing to digital marketing is making an impact on Park's advertising.



- *Total visits to the website - 429,669
- *Website visits from all 50 states
- *41,347 website visits came from social media



Parks Director in a public service announcement in April 2020.

Park Rangers

The year 2020 saw some changes within the Ranger Division. First and foremost, the Ranger Division saw the retirement of Chief Kevin Shanlian. Chief Shanlian brought great leadership and positive change to the Ranger Division for roughly a decade. His leadership will be greatly missed. Chief Shanlian led by example and laid a strong foundation to build on. Taking Chief Shanlian's place is Chief Brian Warden. Chief Warden is a Swartz Creek native and came to the Parks from the City of Burton Police Department, where he was Lieutenant. The Ranger Division will continue to provide an all-inclusive, safe, family friendly, and quality experience for everyone who attends the Genesee County Parks to enjoy.

2020 PARK RANGERS STATS	
PATROL MILES	229,031
CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS	368
CALLS FOR SERVICE	1,346
PUBLIC ASSIST	516
COMMUNITY POLICING CONTACT WITH PATRONS	36,077
FELONY ARRESTS	15
MISDEMEANOR ARRESTS	239



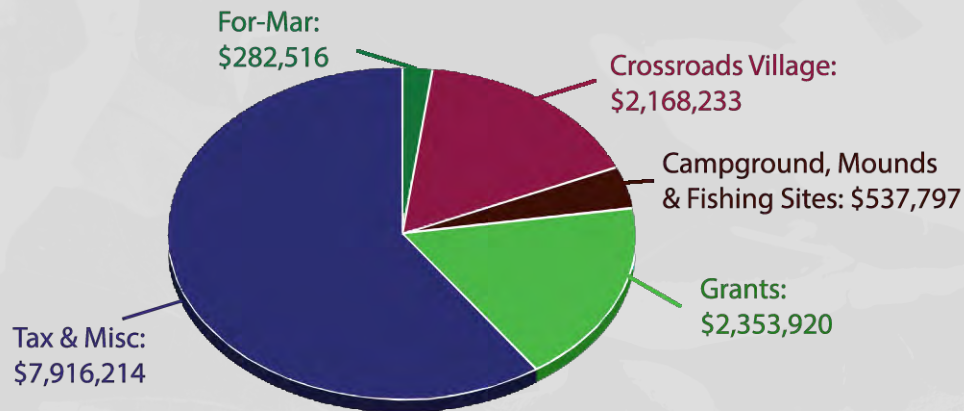
K-9 unit on graduation day

The Ranger Division graduated a new K-9 handler in August of 2020. The Ranger and his K-9 have been a great asset to the Genesee County Parks, its patrons and the jurisdictions that border our parks. Since graduating the K-9 academy in August the K-9 unit has been responsible for:

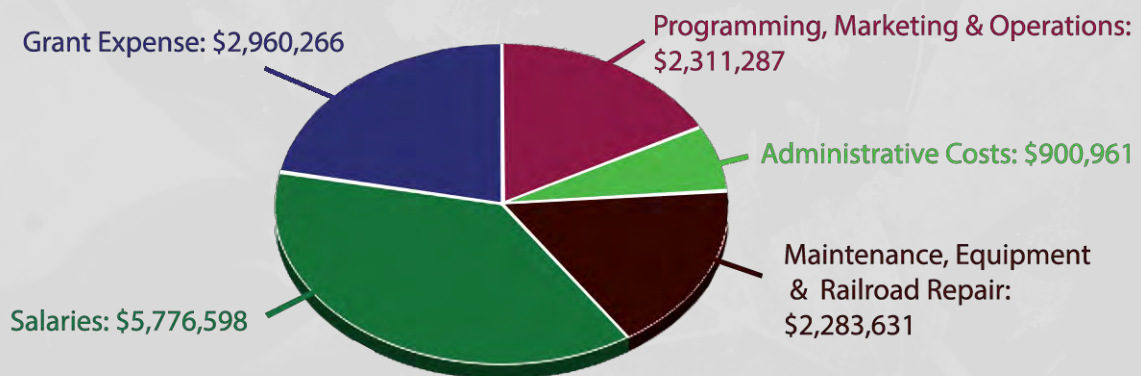
- Explosive Searches: 34
- Article Searches: 49
- Vehicle Searches: 3
- Tracks: 28
- Building Searches: 5
- Felony Arrests: 2
- Misdemeanor Arrest: 1
- Track and Found Missing Endangered: 1

FY 2019 Actuals

2019 Revenue



2019 Expense



Economic Impact FY-2018

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission (GCPRC) makes a significant economic impact to the local community through tourism, local purchasing and local payroll. The national economy has had a negative impact on the Crossroads Village (CRV) revenues, but even with economic downturn, CRV continues to make a significant positive impact through tourism. PROS Consulting Inc. performed an economic impact analysis to measure the economic benefit from the operations of the Parks Commission.

TOTAL COMMISSION ECONOMIC IMPACT		
DESCRIPTION	ECONOMIC IMPACT	JOB
TOURISM	\$6,702,048	146
COMMISSION OPERATIONS	\$10,466,340	161
TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	\$17,168,388	307

TOTAL ANNUAL CROSSROADS VILLAGE VISITOR SPENDING			
DISTANCE TRAVELED TO	ESTIMATED VISITORS BY DISTANCE	TOTAL SPENDING PER VISITOR	ESTIMATED TOTAL SPENDING
0 -25 MILES	51,860	\$11.50	\$596,390.00
25-50 MILES	44,684	\$19.63	\$877,146.92
50-75 MILES	21,781	\$38.75	\$844,013.75
75-100 MILES	8,953	\$49.50	\$443,173.50
100-150 MILES	3,546	\$61.75	\$218,965.50
150-200 MILES	1,564	\$91.75	\$143,497.00
200-250 MILES	3,495	\$127.75	\$446,486.25
250 MILES AND OVER	108	\$178.50	\$19,278.00
TOTALS	135,991		\$3,588,950.92

The Final-demand Value-added factors include direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts. This economic benefit is estimated to be \$4,737,997 with a local job increase of 103 full-time jobs.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

FISCAL YEAR	NUMBER OF HOURS	VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS
GENESEE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION		
2018	20,000	\$445,200
KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL		
2018	25,000	\$556,500

GCPRC benefits from a successful volunteer program. The Commission estimates the hourly value volunteer hours at \$22.26 per hour. The value of the 2018 Park volunteer hours is \$445,220. The value of the KGCB 2018 Park volunteer hours is \$556,500.

The Day Out with Thomas event not only provided a quality family event for the citizens of Genesee County, but also produced nine hundred thousand dollars in economic benefit from tourism.

TOTAL DIRECT SPENDING BY DAY OUT WITH THOMAS VISITORS

DISTANCE TRAVELED TO	ESTIMATED VISITORS BY DISTANCE	TOTAL SPENDING PER VISITOR	ESTIMATED TOTAL SPENDING
0 -25 MILES	1,329	\$21.50	\$28,573.50
25-50 MILES	3,917	\$35.38	\$138,563.88
50-75 MILES	2,832	\$48.75	\$138,060.00
75-100 MILES	1,062	\$59.50	\$63,189.00
100-150 MILES	747	\$71.75	\$53,597.25
150-200 MILES	330	\$101.75	\$33,577.50
200-250 MILES	378	\$137.75	\$52,069.50
250 MILES AND OVER	47	\$188.50	\$8,859.50
TOTAL DOWT VISITOR SPENDING			\$516,490.13

COUNTY PAYROLL DETAILS

2018	PAYROLL
IN COUNTY WAGES	\$3,877,033.10
OUT COUNTY WAGES	\$319,925.91
TOTAL PAYROLL FY 2018	\$4,196,959.01

Final economic impact of Commission local payroll is estimated to be \$5,347,190.



GENESEE COUNTY PARKS

Get away. Right away.

5045 STANLEY ROAD, FLINT, MI 48506

