

2022

Annual Report

GENESEE
COUNTY
PARKS 



A Commission of Genesee County

ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

1. Mission Statement
2. Message from the President
3. Day Use Parks
5. For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum
8. Huckleberry Railroad
9. Crossroads Village
11. The Mounds, Tollbooths & Wolverine Campground
13. Park Rangers
13. Marketing
14. Keep Genesee County Beautiful
15. FY 2021 Actuals

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.

2022 TOTAL EMPLOYEES				406
TOTAL SEASONAL	370	TOTAL FULL TIME	36	
SUMMER YOUTH INITIATIVE	5	MAINTENANCE	134	
CROSSROADS VILLAGE	126	HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD	19	
FOR-MAR	32	MOUNDS	7	
TOLLBOOTHS	6	WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	21	
PARK RANGERS	56			

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year. 2022 was another great year in your Genesee County Parks! The Genesee County Park Commissioners would like to send a big thank you for your continued support. Last August you overwhelmingly approved a renewal of our operating millage. This will assure stable funding for the Parks for another ten years. Our goal is to continue to provide outstanding recreational opportunities for you now and in the future.

This operating millage generates approximately \$7,623,000 from property tax revenues each year for the maintenance and operation of the parks. In addition to these dollars, our staff works hard to leverage funds by seeking grant dollars from a wide variety of sources.

In 2022, staff was able to secure over \$1,000,000 in grant dollars to provide for programming in the parks, upgrades and improvements to facilities, and new projects.

Some of you may have noticed improvements at the Mounds ORV facility with the development of an obstacle course. The Mounds continues to be popular for those who like the challenge and thrill of the off-road experience. We also received a grant to improve the Branch Road fishing site. Making the dock handicap accessible along with improved parking should make it easier for many who like to fish at this site. Programming at For-Mar and an accessible paved pathway extension were both funded by grants.

The Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission (GCPRC) also manages the Keep Genesee County Beautiful (KGCB) program. This program is funded entirely through grant dollars from the Ruth Mott Foundation. With this grant, we can partner with the City of Flint for the maintenance and improvements of City of Flint Parks. Through the efforts of the KGCB staff, many city parks are experiencing a rebirth in their use, providing neighborhoods with a sense of ownership and pride in their community.

Another great project funded by grant dollars is the Summer Youth Initiative (SYI). Funded by the Flint and Genesee Group, this program allows us to hire area youth for summer work. The goal is to help these young people develop job skills that will help them in their future.

This summer will bring new restrooms and shower facilities at Wolverine Campground. Great news for campers. The big news however is the addition of 50 new campsites with full service and large lots. This general fund project will accommodate larger RVs and is currently under construction.

Behind the scenes, many of our maintenance facilities are being updated or replaced. We want to make sure that our staff has the tools and space needed to continue providing the level of safe, clean, and family friendly parks you deserve.

It takes an enormous amount of work to maintain our parks. Our staff works hard and takes great pride in their work. If you see one of our workers in the parks, a simple thumbs up or wave of the hand will let them know you appreciate the job they do every day.

Joe Krapohl, President - Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission

2022 COMMISSIONERS

Joe Krapohl
(Citizen Representative)

James Washington, PhD
(Citizen Representative)

Mike Lynch
(Citizen Representative)

Domonique Clemons
(County Commissioner)

Mike Keeler
(Citizen Representative)

Gary Peppin
(County Commissioner)

Bryant Nolden
(County Commissioner)

Jeff Wright
(Ex-Officio)

Cloyce Dickerson
(Ex-Officio)

Gloria Nealy
(Ex-Officio)

In Memorium:
Bryant Nolden
(1965-2022)

DAY USE PARKS



Multi-use pickleball and tennis courts

As our mission states, “Genesee County Parks is dedicated to quality recreational opportunities for everyone and preservation of natural resources.” It is an honor to be stewards of these spaces, and one Genesee County Parks does not take lightly. On August 2, 2022, the people of Genesee County voted in favor of a Millage Replacement. Thanks to Genesee County voters we can ensure the parks will be enjoyed for generations to come!

Flint Neighborhood Parks

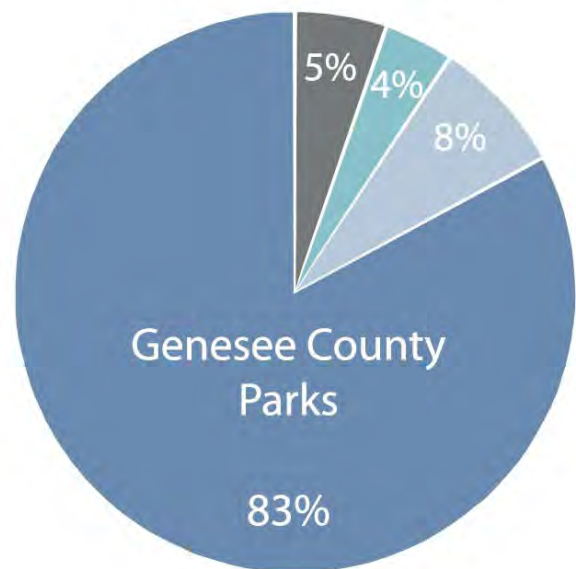
2022 marked an addition to our existing partnership with the City of Flint, funded by a \$500,000 grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation, providing limited maintenance at 55 Neighborhood Parks for trash removal and playground inspections. Over 2,400 cubic yards of waste was removed from neighborhood parks in only 6 months (in partnership with resident park adopters through KGCB).

Pickleball Courts

Staff transformed 3 existing tennis courts into multi-use courts for both pickleball and tennis users at Richfield and Flushing County Parks.

Genesee County Parks now owns or maintains 91% of public park land in Genesee County.

Public Park Space in Genesee County



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	1,800 Acres
LINDEN, FOR-MAR, BUELL & FLUSHING	950 Acres
TOTAL LAND	13,070 Acres

WATER AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION

MOTT LAKE	650 Acres
HOLLOWAY RESERVOIR	1,975 Acres
BUELL LAKE	178 Acres
FLINT RIVERFRONT	29 Miles



Park Adopters cleanup of Flint's Mobley Park

New Bluebell Beach Trail



Park Amenity Improvements

With a focus on providing a positive first and last impression for visitors, significant progress was made across the Genesee County Parks system to paint park entrance gates, pavilions, picnic tables and trash cans. Additionally, nearly 20 new porta-johns were added county-wide.

Bluebell Beach Perimeter Trail

A new walking and biking trail was completed at Bluebell Beach in Fall of 2022. This new amenity improves the safety of non-motorized users visiting the beach and serves as a trailhead to the statewide Iron Belle Trail and regional Flint River Trail.

FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE & ARBORETUM



7th Annual BioBlitz

On September 29 For-Mar held the 7th annual BioBlitz event (in partnership with UM – Flint). This event introduces students in Genesee County to career and college opportunities in outdoor career fields. During the event, 636 students, 142 teachers, parents and grandparents and 66 different volunteer presenters made up 844 people who participated in the 2022 BioBlitz.

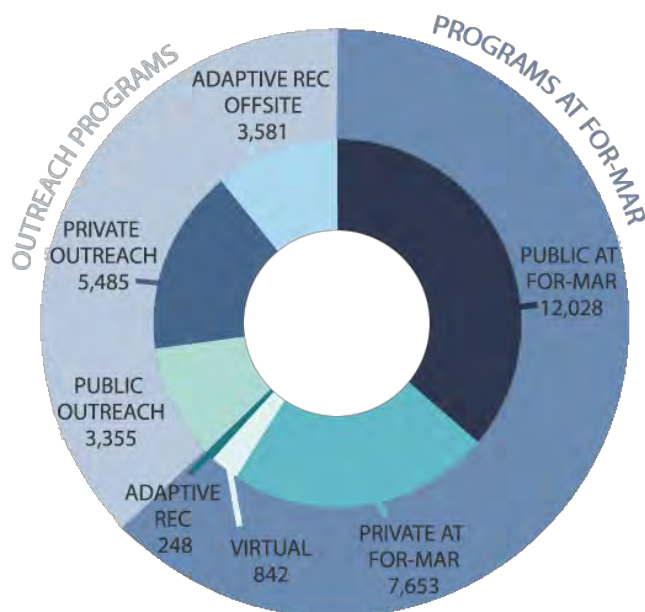
\$2,150 in funding was received to support the event, from The Friends of For-Mar Foundation, UM-Flint Natural Sciences Department and Voices for Flint. This funding allowed For-Mar to offer the event for FREE to schools and the public.

May 23–28 For-Mar hosted the Wilderness Inquiry Canoe Mobile program (funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation) at Bluegill Boat Launch. This weeklong experience engaged over 1,000 students and families in Genesee County. Students were able to canoe, fish, observe and identify water bugs and take part in live animal experiences.



Wilderness Inquiry Canoe Mobile Program

FOR-MAR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



For-Mar and the Genesee County Parks partnered with Davison Township Parks and Recreation and Grand Blanc Parks and Recreation to create a one-of-a-kind Parks and Recreation Month Challenge called the 'Explore YOUR Parks Challenge'. This free activity was developed using the Geocaching: Adventure Lab app and encouraged participants to travel around Genesee County to visit 10 different park locations. Each location had questions related to the park that participants had to answer. Park patrons were inspired to explore the unique landscape, history and wildlife that each unique space has to offer. 90 groups participated, visiting 608 park locations!

Along with these special events, the overall programming attendance at For-Mar increased by almost 50% from the 2021 season.

Partnerships with the Flint River Watershed Coalition, Davison Community Enrichment & Recreation (DCER), The Flint Public Library and Crim Sports helped to bring Flint families and others from Genesee County communities closer to their Genesee County Parks and nature.

The Outreach department utilized funds from the Friends of For-Mar Foundation to revitalize inclusive programming efforts at For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum and in the community. In the spring of 2022, funds were awarded to recruit ASL interpreters (from the Communication Access Center) for summer programming.



FOR-MAR'S 2022 GRANTS	
GRANTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
STELLA AND FREDERICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$10,000
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$1,500
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$7,000
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$3,400
MAEOE GRANT	\$500
FLINT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION	\$2,000
GENESEE COUNTY HERB SOCIETY	\$500
HAP SPONSORSHIP	\$1,470
CS MOTT	\$15,300



New Perennial bed at Flushing County Park



New bench planters at Bluebell beach



Pergola and lattice walls in the Butterfly House

For-Mar updated several flower beds throughout the parks system in 2022. The existing Flushing County Park Perennial Bed, originally planted in 2007, was removed and reduced to a smaller size to make it easier to maintain and give the area a refreshed look. A new raised bed and new plants were installed.

Bluebell Beach also received a facelift. Old raised planter boxes were removed and replaced with new bench planters built by For-Mar staff. Removable pots of annuals will be placed in the benches for the Summer and removed each year after the season has ended.

Improvements were made to many areas inside For-Mar as well. Plexiglass walls were installed permanently to the frame of the Butterfly house, leaving only the top to be covered by the removable net. A pergola for hanging baskets was built inside the house and a lattice wall for existing hop vines to grow on.

The bus parking area on the south side of the parking lot was renovated, adding an area to accommodate two school busses.

For-Mar has also continued the process of removing Black Locust trees (an invasive species). Trees were treated, cut down and stumps ground out around the Visitor Center to make space for more native trees and bushes.

HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD

The Railroad shop had another busy year repairing and improving Huckleberry Railroad's rolling stock and tracks.

Infrastructure improvements included replacing 600 railroad ties on the main line and installation of new LED lights at the Genesee Rd. crossing. The Railroad shop itself also received some much-needed updates, replacing the 45-year-old boiler with new fuel-efficient Trane heaters as well as new water softeners and heads.



Locomotive #152 during Christmas at Crossroads



Restored Locomotive #585

Railroad staff worked to give Locomotive #11 a facelift in 2022. This restoration included new paint, a new wood floor, new lights and new windows. #11's number was also changed back to its original #585.



New Railroad ties on the main line

CROSSROADS VILLAGE



New roof on the Lawyer's Office

Maintaining Crossroads Village is no small feat. This year the Stanley School House reopened after renovation was complete. The Lawyer's Office, Clayton Township Hall, Flint Meeting Hall and the Blacksmith Shop received new roofs. The Fox House got a refresh with new siding and fresh paint. The T.N. North and Son Bank building underwent brick restoration. These updates together with improvements to doors, windows, paint, artifacts, machinery and the installation of new porches and boardwalks show the Genesee County Parks' dedication to preserving Crossroads Village. A new gravel exit road was also constructed to help alleviate traffic when the Village is busy.

The Village is a unique attraction that requires equally unique employees. Artisans, vintage ride operators, historic reenactors and railroad operations staff all work together

to provide guests an excellent experience.

The addition of a new Assistant Manager, and a solid focus on training staff this year, ensured exceptional customer service throughout the year.



Brick restoration on the T.N. North and Son Bank building

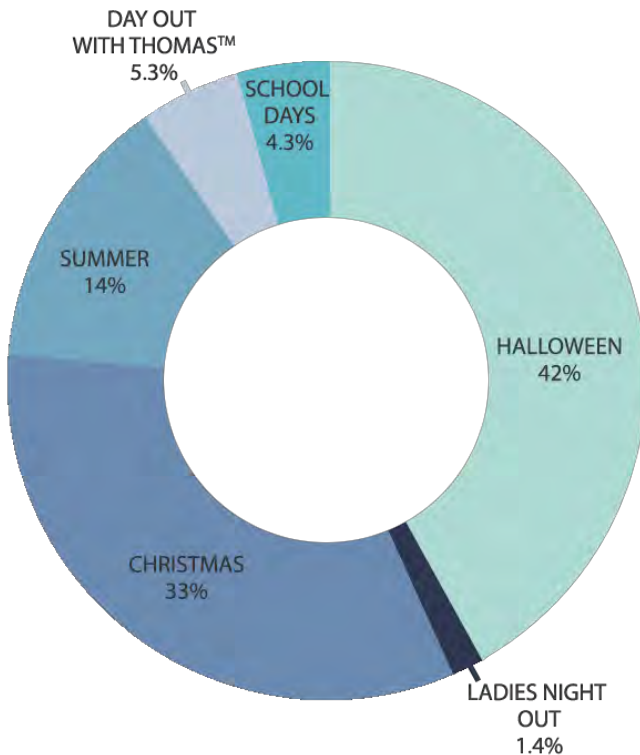


Community outreach at the Flint Farmers' Market



Crossroads Village School Days

VILLAGE ATTENDANCE



In 2022, a dedicated effort was made to spread the word about Crossroads Village. Improved marketing and increased community relationships were the goals. Village staff set up at the Flint Farmers Market several times throughout the year. The Village expanded its social media presence with more posts, videos and engagement, which helped gain over 61k followers on Facebook. On top of that, an Instagram page was created to offer an additional resource for up-to-date information.

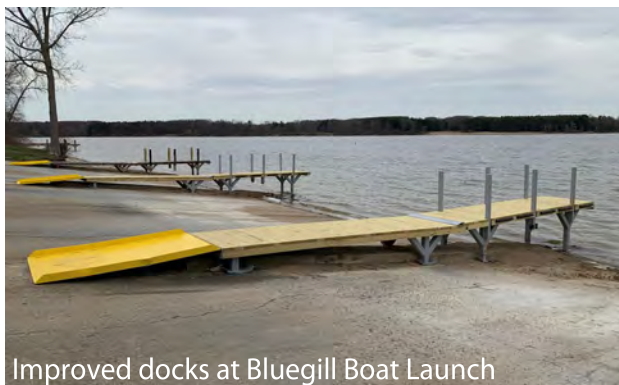
Crossroads holds a variety of themed events and activities throughout the year. This year the annual Genesee County Day was exceedingly successful. County departments, local businesses and volunteer groups made up over 30 vendors who greeted 2,979 visitors, an increase of more than 1,600 from 2021.

THE MOUNDS, TOLLBOOTHS &



New rock obstacle course - The Mounds

Over 7,500 passes were sold, including 573 seasonal passes, for the Mounds 2022 operating season, a slight decrease in park users compared to the record year of 2021. With grant funding from the Michigan DNR a new rock obstacle course designed for modified stock vehicles was built and ready for use near the end of summer. Many were thrilled to have a new feature challenge to enjoy.



Improved docks at Bluegill Boat Launch



Kayak rental at Bluegill Boat Launch

Both Walleye-Pike and Bluegill Boat Launches received much-needed improvements during the 2022 season. Docks at both locations had the framework painted and sealed along with the decking completely replaced. New Parks signage was installed throughout both launches for the safety and convenience of park users. Walleye-Pike Boat Launch's parking lot was chip sealed. At Bluegill an 8 Unit, solar-powered self-service kayak rental station was installed. Through a phone application, users can now experience the joys of kayaking scenic Mott Lake without having to own or transport bulky equipment. This new recreation experience pairs perfectly with an ADA accessible launch installed in 2021. 2022 saw unique facility improvements that will benefit park users for many years.

WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND



New concrete pad campsite at Wolverine Campground

Wolverine Campground opened in late April for the 2nd year in a row. Campers greatly enjoyed some of the new concrete pad campsites which increased site usage on previously unpopular campsites and made for an easier parking experience. 4 Benches were installed at Buttercup Beach to provide some much-needed seating. Wi-Fi towers were added which brought internet service to campers on sites 1-37 with plans to expand to all campsites in the future. An expanded variety of products in the camp store was an additional bonus for campers' convenience. Campground Revenue again hit a new record high of \$524,649 and the park was full almost every weekend during the summer.

Interest in expanded and improved recreational programming is in strong demand. For future seasons, staff is working diligently to offer some creative programs alongside the traditional camping experience.

2022 MOUNDS, CAMPGROUND & BOAT LAUNCH TOLLBOOTH STATS	
THE MOUNDS	7,619 PASSES SOLD
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	15,893 NIGHTS RESERVED
BOAT LAUNCHES	7,540 PASSES SOLD



Haunted Trail at Wolverine Campground in October

RANGERS

In 2022, the Park Ranger Division added a new Chief Ranger, David Dwyre, one full-time Ranger, 6 seasonal Rangers, and a new Detective Ranger. Along with law enforcement duties within Genesee County Parks, Park Rangers also assisted police agencies across Genesee and Lapeer Counties in apprehending multiple suspects accused of a variety of crimes including murder, assault and criminal sexual assault.

The Ranger Division had an outstanding season, maintaining order and safety at all Parks facilities. Additionally, they effectively controlled the crowd and traffic for major events including concerts at the Genesee County Fair and the Franklin Graham concert event at Crossroads. Thousands of patrons attended these events.

The Ranger Patrol boat, Patrol Bicycle and Patrol Vespa saw an increase in use on the trails and Holloway Reservoir. Multiple patrons made comments about the feeling of safety when seeing Rangers on the trail. Park Rangers also oversaw and regulated deer, duck and goose hunting at the E. A. Cummings Event Center and Holloway Reservoir.

Park Rangers were the first responders to follow the flow of pollution in the Flint River to its source from the Lockhart Chemical Company, then activated the Genesee County Emergency Management system.

Narcan was issued to Parks Rangers as an opioid overdose treatment in 2022. Within days of receiving it, Rangers administered treatments to victims of opioid overdose and saved 2 people. This is in addition to responding to medical emergencies that occurred within our parks throughout the year.

MARKETING

The Genesee County Parks' Marketing Department's goal is always to bring awareness to our communities about what the Parks have to offer. In 2022 that goal remained the same, with the added task of informing Genesee County Residents about the Replacement Millage on the August ballot. Digital marketing was combined with traditional printed materials to deliver answers to frequently asked questions about the millage. 100,000 FAQ postcards were distributed to Genesee County Residents as well as a 4-page spread in local newspapers to explain what the millage was for and its importance to the parks as well as the communities that welcome them. The Millage passed with 67% of residents voting yes.



2022 DIGITAL MARKETING STATS	
PEOPLE REACHED BY ADS	533,607
CLICK ON ADS	53,409
WEBSITE VISITORS	371,628
PEOPLE REACHED BY FACEBOOK POSTS	2,353,871

KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

2022 saw Keep Genesee County Beautiful (KGCB) arrange for capital improvements in City parks that included playground repair, gates, bleachers, benches, picnic tables, park signs, tree and brush removal, the creation of a soccer field and the renovation of a baseball field. Complete overhauls of multiple median gardens were also completed. Ongoing projects include the installation of flagpoles, complete renovations of basketball courts and the painting of murals on utility boxes in the City of Flint.

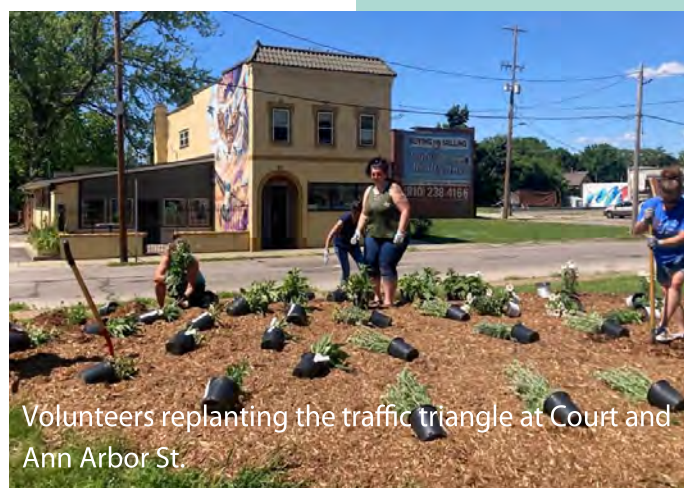
KGCB worked with the City of Flint to secure CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding for the renovation of Cronin Derby Downs, the Soapbox Derby Track, and also provided information to the Flint City Council that resulted in an allocation of \$5 million in ARPA funds for parks.

\$562,896 in grants were brought in from funders including the Ruth Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, the Genesee Area Focus Fund, the Sunrise Rotary and the FlintNOW Foundation.

An important part of Keep Genesee County Beautiful is its Park Adopters. KGCB worked with these volunteers to begin transitioning their role as the Genesee County Parks maintenance staff took on the removal of trash and minor repairs in the 55 parks included in the amended Partnership Agreement.



Basketball Court mural at Windiate Park

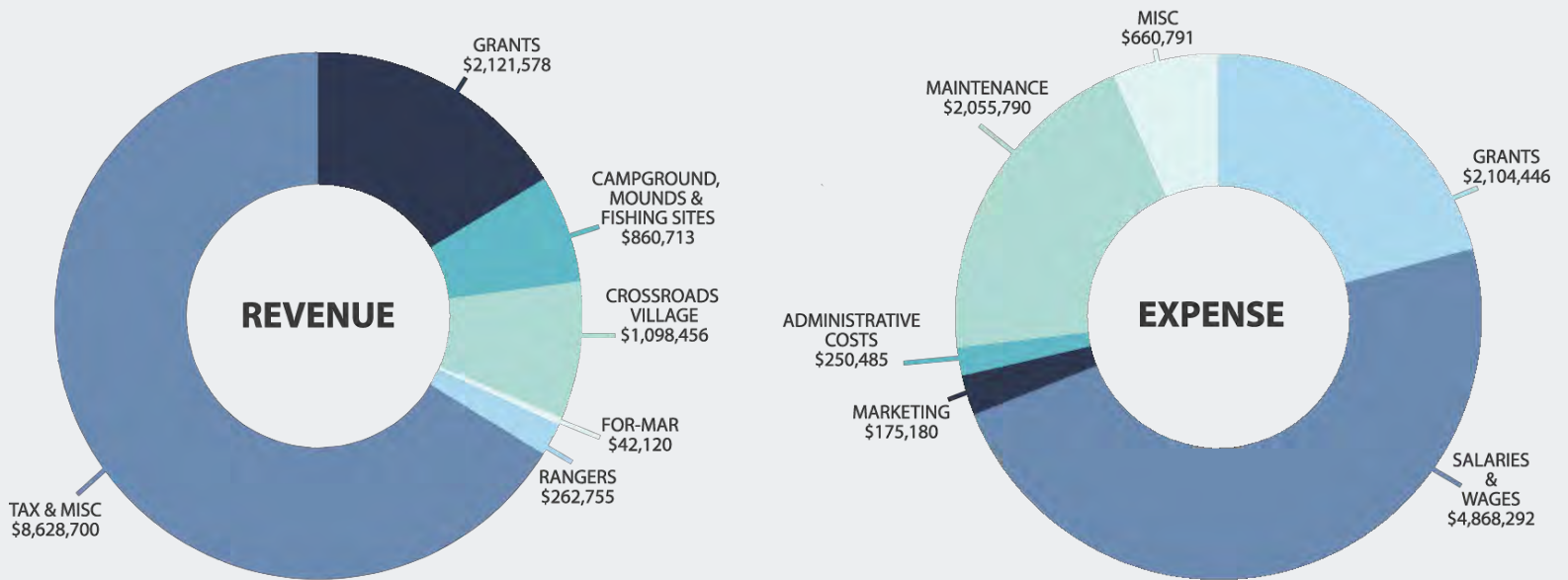


Volunteers replanting the traffic triangle at Court and Ann Arbor St.

2022 KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL STATS

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS	1,929
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS	13,113
VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS	\$374,245
LBS. OF GARBAGE COLLECTED	168,650
LBS. OF YARD WASTE COLLECTED	122,480

FY 2021 ACTUALS



GENESEE COUNTY PARKS
Get away. Right away.