

2024

Annual Report

GENESEE
COUNTY
PARKS



GENESEE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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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

Happy New Year. As we start this new year, I want to highlight some of the great happenings from 2024.

In April, the Parks Commission welcomed only the fifth Director in the history of the Genesee County Parks. Patrick Linihan was chosen to lead the Parks system as we continue to provide outstanding recreational opportunities for the residents of Genesee County. Patrick is no stranger to the Parks as he started as an intern and moved up through the ranks to oversee the largest county park system in the State of Michigan.

Last year also included the opening of 50 new full-service campsites at Wolverine Campground. Located on Walker Way, named for longtime Park employee Ron Walker, this addition has proved to be extremely popular. Upgrades to restrooms, shower facilities, and the installation of Wi-Fi throughout the campground provided our campers with a more enjoyable camping experience.

For-Mar Nature Preserve continues to expand programming for our residents. In addition, last year staff launched a State licensed six-week Nature Day Camp program for children from pre-k to 8th grade. With over 260 children in attendance, they had the chance to learn more about the Parks and the many wonders of nature.

Work to remove the Hamilton and Fabri Dams on the Flint River was successfully completed. Additional work in the river will enhance fishing and recreational opportunities.

The Parks Commission partners with many groups to improve our facilities. This year we will be working with Above Par Disc Golf Club to develop a 27-hole disc golf course at Linden County Park, at very minimal cost to the Parks. With the increase in popularity of this sport, this new course will provide the residents of the southern part of the County an opportunity to try something new. This will be the third disc golf course in the Genesee County Parks System.

Crossroads Village is also expanding specialized programming. Many new events were added last year with more to come in the future. Visit our website at geneseecountyparks.org to check out upcoming events.

A special shout out to the Genesee County Park Rangers. As certified police officers, their primary mission is to ensure the safety of visitors to the Parks. They provide a valuable service to the Parks and we appreciate their work.

Finally, all the great things happening in the Parks would not be possible if it wasn't for our great staff and employees. They work hard everyday to make sure the visitors to the Parks have a safe and enjoyable experience. If you had a great time in our Parks, please give the Rangers or employees a thumbs up. I'm sure it will make their day.

Joe Krapohl, President
Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission

2024 COMMISSIONERS

Joe Krapohl
(Citizen Representative)

James Washington, PhD
(Citizen Representative)

Anne Figueroa
(Citizen Representative)

Domonique Clemons
(Citizen Representative)

Mike Keeler
(Citizen Representative)

Michelle Davis
(County Commissioner)

James Avery
(County Commissioner)

Jeff Wright
Kevin Sylvester
(Ex-Officio)
Drain Commission

Cathy Lane
(Ex-Officio)
Road Commission

Gloria Nealy
(Ex-Officio)
Planning Commission

DAY USE PARKS



Mott Lake Regatta

Welcome to the Genesee County Parks' 2024 Annual Report. This report highlights our ongoing commitment to preserving natural resources, engaging with the community, and upholding our responsibility to the environment. Throughout 2024, our parks have continued to provide valuable spaces for recreation, education, and relaxation, benefiting both local residents and visitors.

In this report, we'll share the key accomplishments of the year, including enhancements to park amenities, infrastructure improvements, and new initiatives aimed at creating more sustainable and accessible spaces for all. As we move forward, we remain focused on expanding opportunities for outdoor enjoyment and education, ensuring our parks continue to thrive for future generations.

In 2024, Genesee County Parks hosted a wide range of events that brought the community together and showcased the diversity of recreational opportunities available:

E.A. Cummings Center: Hosted major events, including the Mudgirl Run, Midwest Invitational Rodeo, Genesee County Fair, and Genesee County 4-H Horse Leaders Association shows.

Bluebell Beach: Featured the Mott Lake Regatta and SUP Flint Paddle Boarding, offering exciting water-based activities.

Goldenrod Disc Golf Course: Held multiple disc golf tournaments, drawing enthusiasts from across the region.

Linden County Park: Hosted the First Try Triathlon, a recurring favorite that encourages outdoor fitness. A partnership agreement was formed for a new disc golf course at this location as well, expanding recreational offerings.

These events reflect Genesee County Parks' commitment to creating engaging and inclusive experiences for all visitors.

2024 TOTAL EMPLOYEES				440
TOTAL SEASONAL	395	TOTAL FULL TIME	45	
KGCB	5	MAINTENANCE	100	
CROSSROADS VILLAGE	118	HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD	17	
FOR-MAR	49	MOUNDS	9	
TOLLBOOTHS	8	WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	29	
PARK RANGERS	52			

GENESEE COUNTY PARKS ACRES

LAND AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION

GENESEE RECREATION AREA	4,460
HOLLOWAY REGIONAL PARK	5,860
CITY OF FLINT PARKS PARTNERSHIP	1,800
LINDEN, FOR-MAR, BUELL & FLUSHING	950
FLINT STATE PARK	234
TOTAL LAND	13,304

WATER AVAILABLE FOR RECREATION

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

Genesee County Parks continued its dedication to environmental stewardship through several initiatives aimed at enhancing and preserving natural resources. The perennial beds at Stepping Stone Falls were replanted with native and native-like species, while invasive lily-of-the-valley was removed and treated with herbicide. The MADD bed atop the Falls was also replanted with perennials donated by Walker Farms. Tree pruning efforts were carried out at Eastmooreland Drive in Davison Roadside Park, along the service drive from Potter Road to DeWaters, and through the Arboretum at



Vault Toilet installation at Branch Rd Fishing Site

For-Mar to improve both safety and the health of our trees.

The Branch Rd Fishing Dock was relocated to enhance accessibility for all visitors. A dilapidated building on an adjacent piece of land was demolished to make room for a new parking area, complete with accessible pathways to the dock. Additionally, a new vault toilet was installed to improve amenities. These improvements reflect our commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of mobility, can enjoy the park's offerings in a safe and convenient environment.



Plantings at Stepping Stone Falls

FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE & ARBORETUM



For-Mar Nature Day Camp

In 2024, For-Mar advanced its mission of environmental education and community engagement through new programs, partnerships, and infrastructure improvements. This section highlights the key initiatives and milestones that defined another year of growth and progress.

Project SEARCH Partnership

Genesee County Parks became the first Project SEARCH site in the county, launching a year-long work placement program for nine interns with disabilities. Through a partnership with the Genesee Intermediate School District and Project SEARCH, these interns gained hands-on experience at For-Mar, Crossroads Village, and Keep Genesee County Beautiful. At the end of the year, 89% of the interns secured employment.

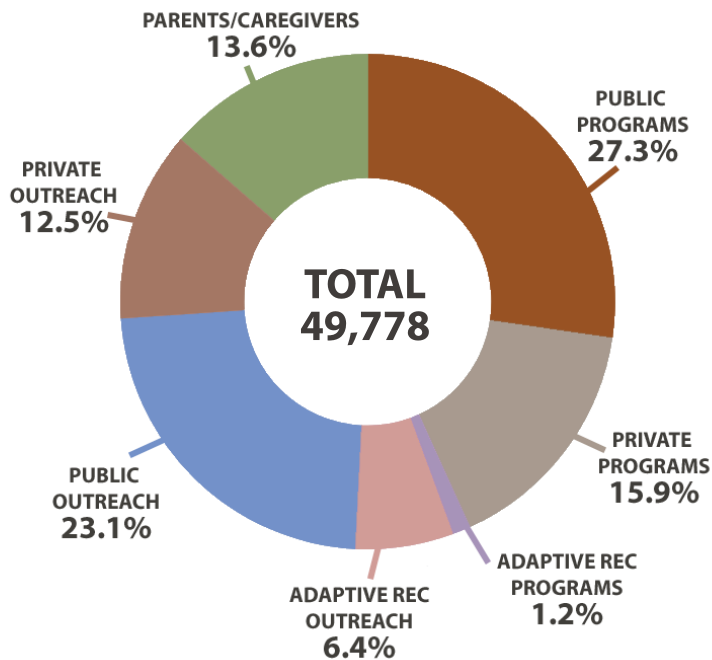
For-Mar Nature Day Camp

For-Mar successfully launched its first-ever Nature Day Camp, officially licensed by the State of Michigan. We welcomed 232 campers in the summer of 2024, with 17.2% of them receiving scholarships from the Community Foundation of Greater Flint. Campers participated in weekly field trips to locations like Goldenrod Disc Golf Course and Mott Lake for kayaking, and engaged with local groups such as MiDisc and the Flint River Watershed Coalition.

Summer Youth Initiative

In addition to the day camp, For-Mar supported six high school students through the Summer Youth Initiative (SYI) program. These students participated in outdoor adventures like kayaking and geocaching and earned professional training through Project Learning Tree. They applied their new skills by leading activities for the community later in the summer.

FOR-MAR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Community Outreach

Our outreach programs reached more people than ever before, connecting 17,918 individuals with environmental education—a 5,321-person increase from the previous year. Highlights included For-Mar’s participation in Michigan’s “Come Out and Play Day” and a solar eclipse campaign that distributed NASA materials. We also introduced a new mobile recreation unit, offering fun activities like inflatable archery and disc golf at parks and events throughout the county.

Infrastructure Improvements

For-Mar made several improvements to our facilities, enhancing accessibility and adding new features for the community. The Garden Exploration Space was renovated to accommodate visitors of all abilities, with wide pathways, raised garden beds, a farmer’s market stand, and a sensory-friendly bench. Over 20 trees were planted in the Arboretum, and additional woody plants were added at Flushing in memory of a past Parks Commissioner.

To better support year-round programs, we also installed custom wind panels on the pavilion to protect visitors from snow, rain, and wind during events.

In summary, 2024 was a year of growth and innovation at For-Mar, marked by meaningful improvements in our programs, outreach, and facilities. These advancements, coupled with expanded professional development opportunities like the Park Naturalist’s MiRegistry trainer approval, demonstrate For-Mar’s ongoing commitment to enhancing environmental education and community engagement. Through expanded programming, stronger community connections, and significant infrastructure upgrades, For-Mar continues to provide valuable resources and experiences that support and enrich our community.



Mud Day



Trees ready for planting in the Arboretum

FOR-MAR’S 2024 GRANTS & SPONSORSHIPS

GRANTORS & FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
STELLA AND FREDRICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$20,000
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER FLINT	\$11,942
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$15,352.75
VOICE OF FLINT	\$75
UM FLINT	\$1,000
CS MOTT	\$18,000
FUNDRAISER REVENUE GENERATED	\$3,585
TOTAL	\$69,955

THE MOUNDS, TOLLBOOTHS &



Moundsgiving mud

The Mounds ORV Park

Serving up another heavy dose of mud, The Mounds ORV Park peeled off into another year of above average attendance and continues to provide a premier ORV destination for ORV enthusiasts. The season's highlight was once again Moundsgiving, drawing over 1,200 vehicles. The summer and fall saw ongoing trail maintenance and grooming efforts, ensuring optimal conditions for riders. Looking ahead, we're focused on expanding seasonal events and continuing to offer a fun, safe, and unforgettable experience for all park users.

Wolverine Campground

2024 was a year of remarkable progress and growth at Wolverine Campground, further solidifying its reputation as a premier outdoor destination. This year, we added 50 new full-hookup campsites to accommodate a growing number of visitors, ensuring we could meet the increasing demand while preserving the campground's signature "Up North Feel." In addition to the new campsites, we completed the construction of three modern restroom and shower facilities, designed with a focus on privacy, safety, and comfort for all guests. To further enhance the experience, a significant infrastructure upgrade brought Wi-Fi accessibility to all 250 campsites, making it easier for campers to stay connected for work, education, or relaxation.

Summer at Wolverine Campground kicked off with a breathtaking natural phenomenon—a dazzling display of the northern lights that captivated both campers and staff alike. The summer season wrapped up with an unforgettable foam party, which was such a hit that it has now become a new staple event at the campground, set to return for years to come.

As we expanded our facilities, we were also mindful of the natural environment. Construction activities impacted large portions

Northern Lights at Wolverine Campground



WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND



Ribbon Cutting of the 50 new camp sites on Walker Way

of the property, so we launched a tree planting initiative to restore the landscape. With the support of Re-Leaf Michigan, MDNR Urban Forestry Division, Keep Genesee County Beautiful, the Flint River Watershed Coalition, and numerous volunteers, we successfully planted 565 native trees across the property. These trees not only provide much-needed shade for campers, enhancing their experience, but also contribute to the ecological balance of the area by supporting local wildlife and promoting sustainability.

2024 MOUNDS, CAMPGROUND & BOAT LAUNCH TOLLBOOTH STATS	
THE MOUNDS	8,010 PASSES SOLD
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	15,614 NIGHTS RESERVED
BOAT LAUNCHES	6,928 PASSES SOLD

Wolverine Campground’s growth in 2024 highlights our commitment to providing a memorable, enjoyable, and eco-friendly experience, ensuring it remains a top destination for outdoor enthusiasts for years to come.

Boat Launches

Genesee County Parks boat launches experienced a remarkable year, driven by high park usage, previous park enhancements, and an extended season that maximized our customer experience. For the first time our launches remained open and staffed through the month of September. Contributing factors included favorable weather conditions, expanded marketing efforts, and an overall increase in boating recreation. This season was highlighted by the 2nd Annual UAW Local 659 Get Youth Outdoors Day event at Bluegill and The Lake Nepessing Bass Clubs 43rd annual bass tournament at Walleye.



Get Youth Outdoors Day at Bluegill Boat Launch

CROSSROADS VILLAGE



2024 Curious at Crossroads: Oddities Fest

In 2024, Crossroads Village focused on enhancing visitor experiences, expanding programs, and improving infrastructure. From launching new events and upgrading facilities to strengthening community partnerships, these efforts have set a strong foundation for continued growth and success.

Food and Café Updates

The Crossroads Café operations were taken over by Crossroads Village staff. It was refreshed with new paint, hand-dipped Hershey's ice cream, coffee, hot chocolate and Crossroads Village's own branded soda pop. The new food service team serving food at the Millstreet Warehouse as well as Lakeside, introduced healthier menu options, supported special events, and received positive feedback.

Marketing Growth

The introduction of new billboard and digital signage in key locations, including downtown Flint and Oakland County. These strategic placements were designed to capture the attention of diverse audiences, extending our reach and raising awareness of the unique experiences offered by Genesee County. By leveraging high-visibility areas and engaging visuals, we successfully increased community recognition and drew more visitors to our attractions.

New Events

This year, we introduced two exciting new events that added fresh energy to Crossroads Village: Paranormal Tours and the Curious at Crossroads Oddities Festival. These events drew an impressive 3,000 attendees and featured over 100 vendors, showcasing the creativity and unique offerings of the community. Beyond their immediate success, these initiatives set the stage for even more innovative and engaging events in the future, as we continue to expand the variety of experiences available at the Village.



Touch-A-Truck



Project SEARCH Partnership

The first full calendar year of the Project SEARCH Transition-to-Work program resulted in several students obtaining jobs within the park system.

Operational and Facility Improvements

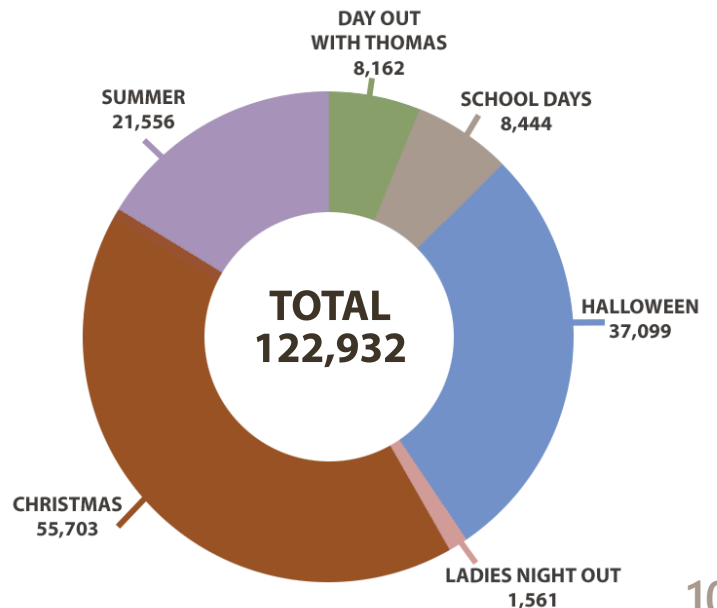
Network upgrades included new switches and improved connectivity. Facility updates included refinishing floors in the Print Shop, Eldridge House, and Flint Meeting Hall; replacing boardwalks; repainting the Carousel and Lakeside Grill; and repairing the star atop the Superior Wheel.

Field Trip Curriculum

Curriculum guides for schools were developed to align field trip experiences with classroom lessons, making trip planning easier for educators.

These updates reflect a year of steady progress and operational improvements at Crossroads Village.

VILLAGE ATTENDANCE



HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD



Firing up Engine #152



Interior of train car

In 2024, the Huckleberry Railroad made substantial progress in enhancing its infrastructure, locomotives, and railcars to improve safety, efficiency, and visitor experience.

Track Enhancements:

The railroad initiated efforts to tamp and level the rails for improved stability and ride quality. A new switch was installed for track 5, and extensive clearing of trees and brush allowed for the re-alignment of the track to reduce a sharp curve connecting to the main line. Additionally, 260 railroad ties were replaced to strengthen the overall track structure.

Locomotive Maintenance:

Significant upgrades were made to key locomotives, including the installation of a new dry pipe in engine #152 and the ongoing rebuild of engine #571. A modernized brake system was installed on car 260, and a new air filter system was added to engine #152 to enhance the reliability of its brake stand.

Railcar Updates:

Car improvements included the installation of a new end beam on car 100 and the replacement of couplers on car 112 to ensure secure connections and better performance.

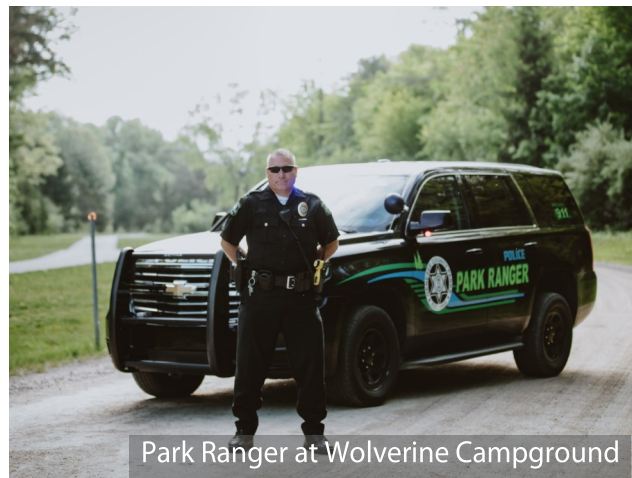


Close up view of train wheels and track

These upgrades reflect the Huckleberry Railroad's commitment to preserving its historic charm while meeting modern safety standards, ensuring a more reliable and enjoyable experience for future passengers.

PARK RANGERS

In 2024, the Genesee County Parks Ranger Division ensured safety and order across parks while fostering a welcoming environment. Their visible presence was vital during large events at Flint State Park, E.A. Cummings Center, Crossroads Village, The Mounds, Bluebell Beach, and Mott Lake. Visitors praised their professionalism and service throughout the summer.



Park Ranger at Wolverine Campground

Marine Patrol Success

The Marine Patrol Rangers logged over 700 hours on Holloway Reservoir, performing a water rescue, assisting with boat tows, and aiding the Lapeer County Sheriff's Office in a drowning victim search.

Law Enforcement Support

Beyond park duties, Rangers supported police agencies in Genesee and Lapeer counties, helping apprehend suspects in serious crimes, including murder and sexual assault.

New E-Bikes

Two e-bikes were introduced this year, enhancing patrol efficiency on paved paths and rural trails.

Flint State Park Patrols

A dedicated Ranger was assigned to Flint State Park, collaborating with community partners and maintenance staff to ensure safety, address hazards, and strengthen local relationships. This was made possible by the State Park endowment.

The Ranger Division's commitment to safety, innovation, and community partnerships continues to enhance park experiences.

MARKETING

In 2024, the Parks Marketing Team made significant strides in outreach and engagement:

Digital Signage and Billboards: Added to increase visibility and promote events and programs.

Cohesive Branding: Updated outreach materials, including tablecloths, banners, and giveaway items, ensuring consistent branding across all departments.

New Mounds ORV Park Rack Card: Developed to provide visitors with key information about the park.

User Feedback Surveys: Implemented to collect insights on park usage and event experiences, helping shape future improvements.

"Fridays in the Field" Social Media Campaign: Launched to give followers a behind-the-scenes look at the work that keeps the parks running smoothly, fostering a deeper appreciation for the team's efforts. These actions demonstrate a focus on enhancing communication, building community connections, and improving visitor experiences.



Digital sign advertising in downtown Flint

2024 DIGITAL MARKETING STATS

PEOPLE REACHED BY ADS	2,457,002
CLICKS ON LINKS	98,400
WEBSITE VISITORS	905,976
PEOPLE REACHED BY FACEBOOK POSTS	3,632,152

FLINT STATE PARK

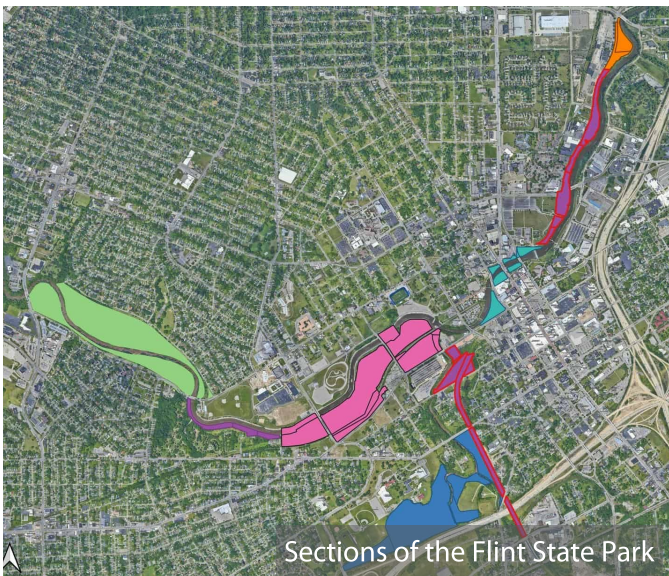


Looking upstream at the Fabri Dam

Significant progress has been made on the Flint River as part of the development of the new State Park in Flint. This project is a collaboration between the State of Michigan, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Genesee County Parks, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the City of Flint, and the Flint Community Foundation.

Key accomplishments include:

Dam Removal: The remaining parts of the Hamilton Dam and the superstructure of the Fabri Dam were successfully removed, while measures such as turbidity curtains were used to ensure water quality was maintained during the entire process.



Sections of the Flint State Park

Riffle Installation: Shallow, fast-moving sections of the river, called riffles, were strategically installed to improve water flow, create habitats for aquatic life, and enhance the river's natural function. Work on Riffles #1, #2, and #3 involved excavating materials, fine-tuning river grades, and preparing work areas for restoration. Progress continued on Riffles #4, #5, and #6, with access roads removed, areas seeded, and dam demolition completed.

Despite occasional challenges like fluctuating water levels due to heavy rains, the project remained on schedule. These efforts are transforming the Flint River into a healthier, more vibrant waterway and represent a major step forward in creating the new State Park—an accessible and valuable natural space for the community to enjoy.



In river work Flint River

KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

20-Year Anniversary:
KGCB celebrated two decades as a Keep America Beautiful affiliate, marking a milestone in community beautification and engagement.

New Location:
KGCB relocated to 630 W. Kearsley St., sharing space with the Flint River Watershed Coalition, fostering collaboration on environmental initiatives.

Summer Food Service Program:
Partnered with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan to host *Meet Up and Eat Up* locations in park spaces. From June to August, eight sites in the City of Flint park system and two in the County park system served as meal distribution points.

New Position and Expanded Programming:
Through funding from REACH and the Greater Flint Health Coalition, KGCB added an Activation and Engagement Coordinator position. This role enhanced outreach, strengthened partnerships, and supported volunteer programming and park reservations. Programs organized through this role included:

- *Art in the Park* with Flint Institute of Arts at Dewey, Hasselbring, Mott, and Windiate Parks.
- *STEM Series* with Sloan Museum of Discovery at Hasselbring, Brennan, and Max Brandon Parks.
- *Nature Quest and Foraging Programs* with For-Mar Nature Preserve at Mott Park (2), Kearsley Park (2), Durant, and Max Brandon Park.
- *Invasive Species Information Session* with the Conservation District at Mott Park Recreation Area.

These efforts demonstrate KGCB’s commitment to creating vibrant, engaging, and accessible spaces for the community.



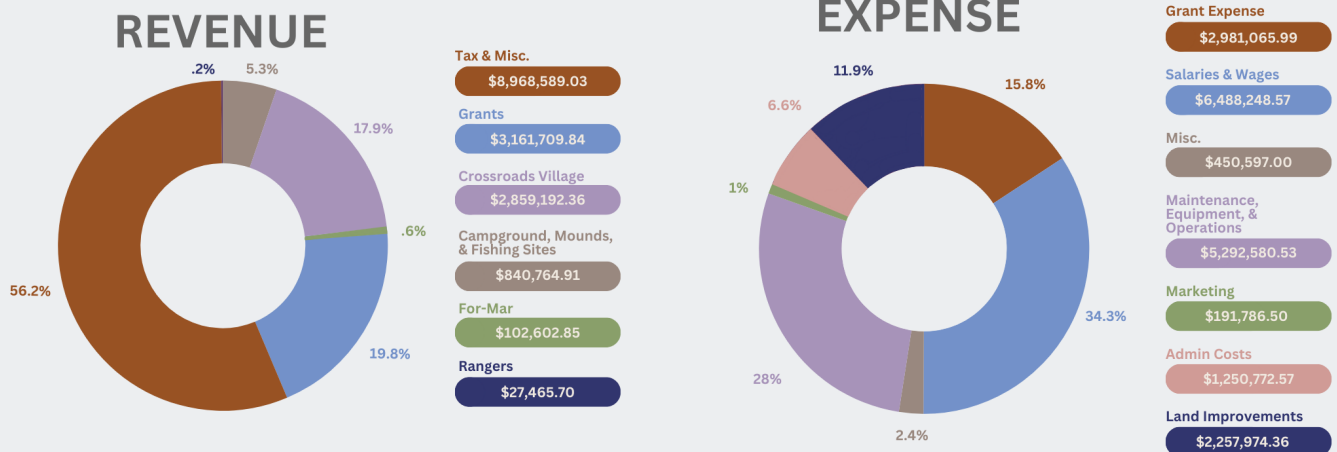
Volunteers at a park cleanup



Community beautification planters in downtown Flint

2024 KGCB STATS	
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS	4,766
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS	16,761
BAGS OF GARBAGE COLLECTED	1,961
BAGS OF YARD WASTE COLLECTED	2,069

FY 2023 ACTUALS



GENESEE COUNTY PARKS
Get away. Right away.



GENESEE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS