



# METROPARKS 2020



# MAKING HISTORY IN 2020



Manhattan Marsh Preserve dedication, October 14



## *Thank you, Lucas County!*

An eventful chapter in Metroparks 92-year history concluded in 2020 as the next chapter was already being written, thanks to a community that supports conservation like no other.

Since approval of a 2002 land levy, Metroparks has protected an additional 5,000 acres of land for clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat and the many other benefits natural areas provide. In the last decade, the park system has grown from 9 to 19 parks and added new experiences in nature for people to enjoy close to home.

With the decisive passage of an issue on the November 2020 General Election ballot, the next chapter will include improvements to all parks, and a new greenway along the Maumee River that will change the face of the region forever.

Thank you, Lucas County. It's all because of you.



**WE WERE HERE**

**PARK OPEN**

**RESTROOMS CLOSED. PLEASE FOLLOW SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES: GIVE EACH OTHER 6 FEET.**





## *Safe Places to Go*

Of all the events that made 2020 unforgettable, the most memorable was the “lockdown,” when the Coronavirus pandemic turned our lives upside down, and the Metroparks were among the few places we could go. Visitation began to increase around St. Patrick’s Day and remained higher than usual well past Labor Day as families sought safe places to get away.

Metroparks responded to the health crisis by working closely with local public health professionals, advocating for keeping parks open and providing virtual content for families to enjoy on their own.

Attendance swelled some weeks by 60 percent over 2019, which was already a record year with 5.5 million visits.

**NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL WINNER**





## *Metroparks Named No. 1 Park System in America*

Metroparks Toledo is the recipient of the 2020 National Gold Medal Award for excellence in parks and recreation management, the most prestigious honor in the parks and recreation industry.

Metroparks received the Grand Plaque in Category I (large park systems) October 27 from the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association. Other finalists were Dallas, Mesa, AZ and E. Baton Rouge.

“Each step of Metroparks progress since 1928 reflects a community that values natural resources and the role these treasured parks play in creating a great place to live,” said Scott J. Savage, president of the Board of Park Commissioners.

# RIVERFRONT UPGRADE







## *Glass City Metropark Transforming Toledo*

As phase 1 of Glass City Metropark neared completion, Lucas County voters approved a ballot issue that will continue the progress along Toledo's riverfront.

Future phases will include an ice skating ribbon, a campground and renovation of International Park. It will also include Glass City Riverwalk, a five-mile greenway on both sides of the Maumee connecting six neighborhoods from Garfield in East Toledo to Vistula, downtown and the Middlegrounds.

In the next few years, with additional funding from private and public partners, the transformation of our riverfront promises to attract private investment such as residential and retail developments. It's already happening!



# METROPARKS PROMISES KEPT

Promises Kept.  
A Park Within 5 Miles.

Metroparks Toledo



Metroparks Toledo Foundation president Joe Napoli and Metroparks executive director Dave Zenk tour Manhattan Marsh.



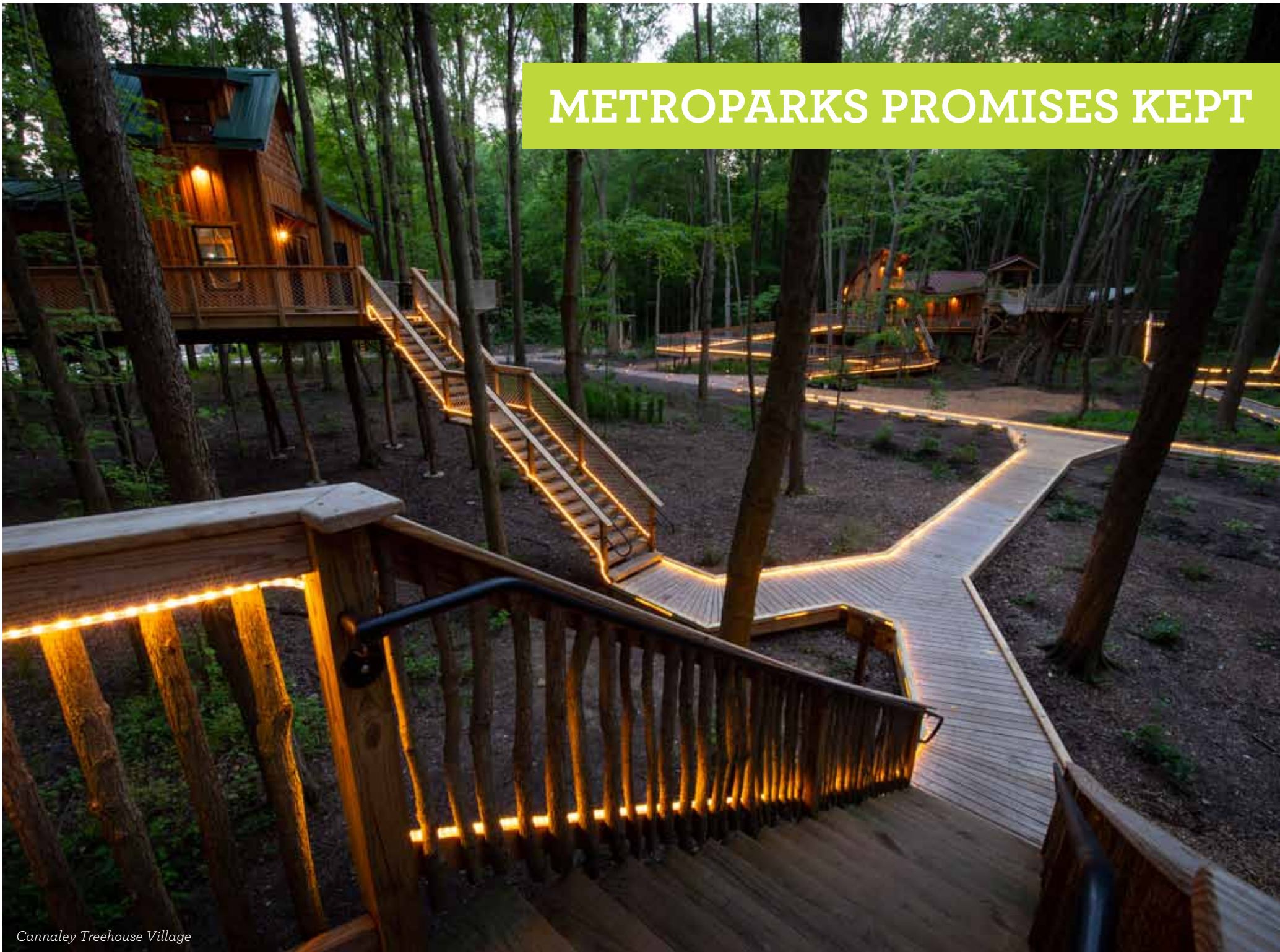
## *There is a Metropark Just Minutes Away*

The opening of Manhattan Marsh Preserve in the North River neighborhood is special for several reasons. It is the fourth Metropark in the city of Toledo (until 2016 there was only one), the first Metropark in the northern part of the community, and it fulfills a promise from the Board of Park Commissioners to place a Metropark within five miles of every home in the county.

Manhattan Marsh has a 1.3-mile trail with nearly 1,500 feet of concrete “boardwalk” to get you close to the marsh, overlooks for scenic views, parking on Clifford Street and a connection to neighboring Chase STEM Academy so students can use the park for their science-based studies.

Manhattan Marsh is one of the last remnants of a much larger marshland that once surrounded Maumee Bay.

# METROPARKS PROMISES KEPT





## *Nation's Only Public Treehouse Village Now Open*

The Cannaley Treehouse Village, named for lead donor Linda Cannaley, opened in July at the Beach Ridge Area of Oak Openings Preserve. It is the first treehouse village in a public park anywhere in the country.

A common treehouse available for day uses, four overnight cottages in the trees and three platforms for camping in the canopy provide new ways to immerse families in the natural surroundings of the largest Metropark.

Paid for with corporate and private contributions secured by the Metroparks Toledo Foundation, the treehouse village was truly a communitywide effort that has put the region on the radar as a destination for outdoor adventure.



# METROPARKS PROMISES KEPT





## *New Park Advances Goal of Oak Openings Corridor*

The Covid crisis preempted the kind of grand opening celebration typical for the dedication of a new Metropark. Instead, the gates to Cannonball Prairie quietly opened in the spring, when we were all eager for more room to roam.

The new park on Monclova Road between Eber and Weckerly roads is the third new park in the Oak Openings Corridor (Wiregrass Lake and Westwinds are the other two) between Secor and Oak Openings Preserve. One day, the Moseley Trail will connect all five Metroparks, plus three State Nature Preserves.

Cannonball Prairie straddles the Wabash Cannonball Trail, and has a boat launch, campsites and a scenic loop trail. In a couple years, it will also have a well-stocked fishing lake.





# METROPARKS PROMISES KEPT





## *Secor Expansion*

Some people scratched their heads when they heard Metroparks had acquired a pair of golf courses on Central Avenue. Then soybeans sprouted where fairways once were, raising more questions.

When the owner of the former Spuyten Duyval and Cottonwood Creek golf courses approached the park system about buying the property, the Western Reserve Land Conservancy stepped in to acquire it, giving Metroparks time to apply for state and federal grants used to fund the purchase and restoration as an extension of adjacent Secor Metropark.

About those soybeans: They were planted as a cover crop to break up the soil in preparation for planting a prairie full of native species.

# METROPARKS PROMISES KEPT



*Doneghy Inclusive Garden at Toledo Botanical Garden*



## *Metroparks Offers Experiences for Everyone*

Toledo Botanical Garden is a beautiful oasis in the city, with a collection of 10,000 plants made up of 2,300 varieties, and a Secret Forest for young visitors. The new Doneghy Inclusive Garden, opened in the spring, has elevated plant beds and sensory elements, such as textures, tastes, sounds and aromas, providing experiences everyone can enjoy.

Working with the Ability Center of Greater Toledo, Metroparks created the garden, named for the late Judge Charles Doneghy and his wife, Lera, a member of the Board of Park Commissioners who has advocated for people with disabilities.

Ramps to treehouses and a barrier-free playground at Secor are other recent additions to the Metroparks that make the outdoors more welcoming for all visitors.



# MEMBERS

More than 2,400 Metroparks Members made a difference in our parks and our community during this difficult year. Members funded grants that helped Metroparks provide Nature Explorer Bags to children, present Virtual Jazz in the Garden, renovate the Fallen Timbers Visitors Center, construct the Swanton Reservoir Trail at the Cannaley Treehouse Village, install seating at the new Glass City Metropark Pavilion, and plant trees across the park district.





Over 200 donors this year supported projects and programs benefitting Metroparks visitors. They included the new Manhattan Marsh Preserve Metropark, the Cannaley Treehouse Village and the Doneghy Inclusive Garden at Toledo Botanical Garden. Their generosity also supported trail maintenance, conservation and natural resources projects, among many other initiatives in almost every one of our 19 Metroparks.

# DONORS

# VOLUNTEERS



Metroparks volunteers do it all: they help establish new parks by planting trees and native plants, maintain garden beds, patrol trails at every park, help bring treehouses to life, decorate a Manor House for the holidays and so much more. Even during a year punctuated by a global pandemic, our volunteers lent their time and talents to ensure parks remained open as an essential part of the community. Metroparks Toledo accomplished great things this year and we could not have done it without the support and enthusiasm of our amazing volunteers.



“This incredible team kept the Metroparks open every day despite 2020’s unprecedented adversity. They completed three new parks, a treehouse village and a 6-mile regional trail extension. With the voters’ support, they launched by far the largest project in this agency’s history, Riverwalk. And if that wasn’t enough, they were recognized with the highest honor in our industry. Any one of these accomplishments would have made this an historic year. I could not be prouder, and I hope the entire community feels the same way.”

*Dave Zenk, Executive Director (left)*



*2019 photo*



# STAFF



**METROPARKS  
TOLEDO**