

# 2024 Summit Metro Parks SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



*The mission* of Summit Metro Parks is to conserve, sustainably manage and value natural resources for the health and enjoyment of our community, and inspire people to connect with nature through clean and safe parks. At Summit Metro Parks, *we're your back yard*, and in 2024, we took several steps toward a greener future for our community and our native ecosystem.

## PROMOTE NATIVE BIODIVERSITY

### NATIVE PLANTS AND TREES

- **873** native trees and shrubs planted across 3.17 acres
- Planted **5,300** native plants at the new Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park
- Restored **1.05** acres of wetland at the North Hawkins Area of Sand Run Metro Park

### WILD BACK YARDS

- **3,900** native seed packets handed out
- More than **1,900** attendees at **89** naturalist-led Wild Back Yards programs
- **3,223** visitors to the Native Plant Festival

### WILD BACK YARDS PARTNER PROGRAM

- **Three** partners engaged in growing Wild Back Yards: HiHO Brewing Co., Meadow City Native Plant Nursery and Powell's Native Wildflowers

### BIG BEND BIO BLITZ

- **225** plant and wildlife species recorded as part of the Big Bend Bio Blitz in Sand Run Metro Park

## RESPONSIBLE RESOURCE USE

### ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT

- Purchased three commercial lawn mowers, which will lessen noise pollution and reduce total CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) emitted by approx **3.2** metric tons per year (calculated using EPA Green House Gas Equivalencies calculator)
- Continual replacement of gas-powered equipment with electric alternatives, including generators, hedge trimmers, leaf blowers, vehicles and chainsaws

### UPGRADES AND ENERGY USAGE

- Installed a new roof and HVAC system at the park district's Administrative Offices, resulting in a **24.53%** decrease in electricity usage and **25.39%** decrease in natural gas usage

## LAND & WATER CONSERVATION

### STORED CARBON AND ANNUAL SEQUESTERED CARBON

- Approximately **626,421** metric tons of carbon stored by SMP-managed forests (calculated using USFS reports)
  - The estimated stored carbon value of SMP-managed forests is over **144** million dollars. (calculated using iTree Canopy, Urban Ohio Forest)
- Approximately **20,436** metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered annually by SMP-managed forests (calculated using the USDA Forest Inventory Analysis Database)
  - This is the equivalent of taking **4,864** gasoline-powered cars off the road for one year. (calculated using EPA Green House Gas Equivalencies calculator)

### LAND ACQUISITIONS

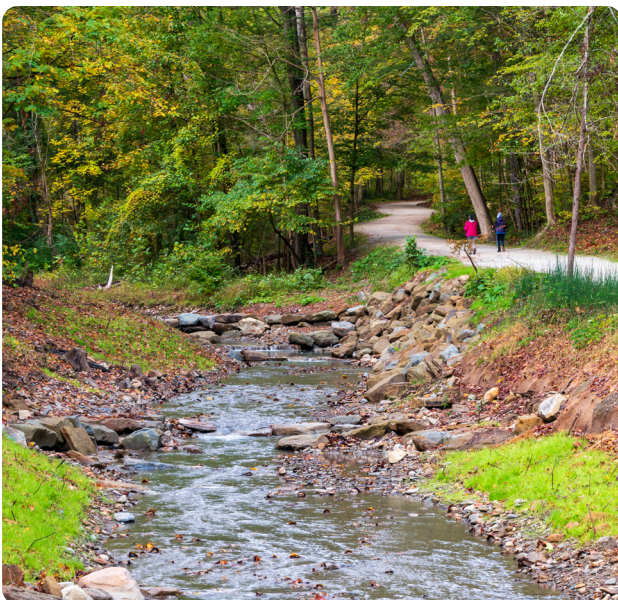
- **281** acres purchased in 2024 for conservation, resource management and/or park use

### EAST END EXTENSION OF JOGGING TRAIL AND VALLEY VIEW AREA

- Opened to the public new trail connections from Sand Run's popular Jogging Trail and accomplished significant conservation impact through daylighting a headwater stream and the creation of enhanced wetland habitats for amphibians. Opened new river access site at the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park with several amenities and restoration of natural resources.

### SAND RUN STREAM RESTORATION

- In 2024, **946** fish of **12** species recorded during Sand Run Stream Surveys — a significant improvement from past results.



## WASTE REDUCTION & DISPOSAL

### LIMITED WASTE EVENTS

- Held **18** limited-waste public, volunteer and staff events, resulting in **320** lbs. of organic waste composted locally and **57** lbs. of waste recycled
- Created new Waste Wise volunteer role and trained **17** volunteers to assist with limiting waste at SMP events

### VOLUNTEER CLEANUPS

- Hosted **12** cleanups along the Freedom Trail and at Nimisila Reservoir and Munroe Falls Metro Parks, totaling over **370** volunteer hours and resulting in the removal of approximately **1,300** lbs. of trash
- Hosted **six** river cleanups along the Cuyahoga River and Ohio & Erie Canal, totaling **217** volunteer hours and resulting in the removal of approximately **2,400** lbs. of trash and over **90** tires

### RECYCLING & COMPOSTING

- Produced over **6,700** lbs. of organic matter in 5½ months via public composting bins at Goodyear Heights and Firestone Metro Parks, preventing **220** metric tons of CH<sub>4</sub> (methane) and **6,155** metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from release in landfills (calculated using the EPA Food Waste Methane Emissions Calculator)
- **414** lbs. of organic matter composted via collection at the park district's Administrative Offices
- **Three** glass recycling bins offered through City of Akron throughout Summit Metro Parks
- Recycled **24,350** lbs. of e-waste at four public recycling bins located in SMP
- **683** Christmas trees collected and chipped into mulch for use around the park district