

# PARK CHAPTERS INTRODUCTION

*Trumbull County Demographics & Trends • Existing Recreational & Parkland Facilities • Needs & Deficiencies*

The following park chapters serve as a guide and resource for each property in the MetroParks inventory. With few exceptions, each park chapter features an introduction followed by a history of the park, a report of the current conditions and situations affecting the land, and future plans along with a prioritization schedule. Specifically, these chapters seek to provide an understanding of how and why the properties were acquired, options for development, and how they may be managed in the future.

The future park projects detailed in each chapter were planned through MetroParks' citizen committee meetings, regularly scheduled park board meetings, community surveys, and park commissioner work sessions. It must be stressed that no official engineering studies have been completed to verify the best location or placement of any of the improvements suggested in the following chapters. Any mention of specific sites for parking lots, park entrances, picnic tables, canoe launches, or any other improvement, should be considered tentative, as an official engineering study will be required in many cases to verify the best locations for such structures.



*Thomas A. Swift MetroPark in Late Autumn*

Signage is a precious investment for any park or preserve. The large lack of awareness about Trumbull County MetroParks and its mission is due in part to a deficit in uniform signage with visible park logos. Each park of significant size should host at least one large sign, particularly when located along major thoroughfares. Even in cases where land remains undeveloped or unopened, it would be best for MetroParks to provide prominent signage which designates the land as a conservation area, sanctuary, or preserve. Directional signage is also pertinent to the success of each park. Those parks with NatureWorks improvements must also provide

a prominent NatureWorks logo on the entrance sign, with the same holding true for any lands acquired or enhanced through Clean Ohio Funds or Land and Water Conservation Funds.

Widespread educational signage is another major component that would greatly enhance MetroParks individual preserves and parks. Whether describing macroinvertebrates located along a stream or providing a detailed explanation of a park project, such as a green bulkhead or wetland creation, educational signage not only enlightens park visitors to the many factors affecting the place they are visiting, but can also serve as an attraction themselves. Historical locations, butterfly gardens, animal habitats, bird sanctuaries, stream environments, arboretums, and meadowlands are just a few of the rich environments that lend themselves to educational signage. With help from the Trumbull County Educational Service Center, MetroParks could gain assistance from local science students who could research park features and create the draft text for educational signs. Such educational signage projects would fit well with class, group, or



individual assignments. Additionally, the projects would also promote the participating schools, classes, or students as each sign would credit its author.

Many of MetroParks' recently acquired lands were originally purchased through the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program, a statewide, voter-approved budget allocation for land preservation, which had the purpose of conserving natural areas, particularly those with critical environments such as flood-mitigating wetlands. All MetroParks lands originally acquired with assistance from the Clean Ohio program, which ran between 2002 and 2007, contain deed restrictions that limit the development of the land purchased to



*Canoe City in Summer*

ecologically-sensitive improvements. Facilities to make the land accessible to the public for purposes of education and passive recreation are permissible, including the installation of parking areas, construction of trails, and other visitor amenities. However, all parking areas and trails must feature pervious surfacing, such as gravel, limestone, or pervious concrete. Violation of the restrictions could result in a fine of 200 times the amount of the amount funded, payable to the State of Ohio. Clean Ohio program officials state that the fine is not intended as punishment, but rather damages. Although such restrictions significantly limit what features MetroParks can add to the land, it also provides the park district with hardy parks that could remain open for quite some time with little, if any, funding.

The following park chapters are listed in alphabetical order. Narratives of improvements to be made are in no particular order; however, the accompanying implementation schedule details the order in which developments should optimally be made.