

Annual Development Plan 2025

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Introduction:

The annual development plan for Mill Creek MetroParks will focus on three areas:

1. Capital Improvements
2. Endowments
3. Improving efficiency, clarity, and protection of donors to Mill Creek MetroParks

Capital Improvements

Purpose:

To acquire philanthropic support for capital improvement projects within Mill Creek MetroParks.

Action Plan:

To cultivate donors for support for the Children's Garden Campaign, and other capital improvement projects.

Endowments

Purpose:

To acquire philanthropic support for the ongoing support of long-term preservation of Mill Creek MetroParks through endowment funds.

Action Plan:

To cultivate and solicit donors for the naming right opportunities for specific endowments that benefit facilities and locations within Mill Creek MetroParks. Targeting Named Endowments is an objective.

Planned Giving:

An important part of the overall endowment plan of action is to continue to pursue planned giving opportunities for the MetroParks Foundation. A planned gift is any major gift, made in a lifetime or at death as part of a donor's overall financial and/or estate planning. These include gifts of equity, life insurance, real estate, personal property, or cash.

A donor uses cash, appreciated securities/stock, real estate, artwork, partnership interests, personal property, life insurance, a retirement plan, etc., the benefits of funding a planned gift can make this type of charitable giving very attractive to both donor and charity.

Improving Efficiency, Clarity, and Protection of Donors to Mill Creek MetroParks

Purpose:

Efficiency: Making the process of giving philanthropic support to Mill Creek MetroParks more simplistic and streamlined.

Action Plan: Through the restructuring of the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation donors will be provided with opportunities to make digital donations and structure planned gifts to benefit Mill Creek in a greater capacity.

The Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation website, lovemillcreek.org, provides donors with opportunities to now make online giving for capital projects, as well as for endowments.

Clarity: Providing donors with a more defined view of the giving portals at Mill Creek MetroParks and a greater understanding that the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Mill Creek MetroParks.

Action Plan: Through furthering community engagement activities and the use of digital marketing resources, the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation can take greater steps to define the proper channels and entities of support for Mill Creek MetroParks. Providing better branding and marketing to the public of the Foundation and its mission will increase clarity among donors.

Protection: Providing donors with the utmost protection and transparency in the philanthropic process. These protections are related to the security of their transactions; the processing of funds; the reporting to both donors and authorized regulatory organizations.

Action Plan: The Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation will continue to adhere to a stringent annual financial audit, which is also cross-audited by the State of Ohio. Additionally, the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation will continue to adhere to the Donor Bill of Rights, and the requirements put in place for authorization of fundraising activity within Mill Creek MetroParks.

The Donor Bill of Rights

Philanthropy is based on voluntary action for the common good. It is a tradition of giving and sharing that is primary to the quality of life. To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in the not-for-profit organizations and causes they are asked to support, we declare that all donors have these rights:

- To be informed of the organization's mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization's governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities. To have access to the organization's most recent financial statements.
- To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
- To receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition.
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.
- To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature.
- To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organization or hired solicitors.
- To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share.
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful, and forthright answers.

Lastly, the adoption of guidelines to regulate what entities practice fundraising on behalf of Mill Creek MetroParks and how that fundraising is monitored for transparency and ethical treatment of donors:

Authorization

Any non-profit organization that engages in fundraising activities, on the premise of benefitting, promoting, or supporting Mill Creek MetroParks or the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation philanthropically through the soliciting of donations or sponsorships for support, must have first obtained authorization from the Executive Director of Mill Creek MetroParks by issuing a formal letter of intent to raise funding or soliciting sponsorships. The letter of intent must contain the following information:

1. Name and Tax-ID of a non-profit organization that plans to engage in fundraising activity.
2. Mailing address of the organization with an email and phone number of a contact individual.
3. A detailed description of the fundraising activity (what is the sponsorship or donation supporting)*.
4. If an event, where will the fundraising activity be taking place?

5. A defined start and end date for the fundraising activity (event or otherwise).

6. Amount being requested or offered for sponsorship.

*The fundraising activity can be defined but not limited to solicitations for sponsorship, hosting benefit (fundraising) events, solicitation of donors via online or digital formats and platforms, direct mailings, phone solicitations, and direct requests for donations from individuals, businesses, and non-profit foundations.

Requests for solicitation must be received by the Executive Director at least six months prior to expected fundraising/sponsorship activity. Requests must be mailed to:

Aaron Young
Executive Director
Mill Creek MetroParks
7574 Columbiana-Canfield Rd.
Canfield, Ohio 44406

Approved requests must coordinate with the Director of Development of Mill Creek MetroParks to

1. Arrange a review of all prospective donor/solicitation lists at least three weeks prior to engaging in fundraising activity.
2. Arrange for submission of a fundraising financial report, provided by the Director of Development within one week of ending fundraising activity. The report will contain the names, addresses, amounts donated/ sponsored, and copies of IRS acknowledgments that indicate donor intent.
3. Arrange for the transfer of all donations/ sponsorships within one business week.

Organizations found in violation of the fundraising guidelines will forfeit the ability to fundraise within and or for Mill Creek MetroParks and the Mill Creek MetroParks Foundation.