

# 2025

GENESEE  
COUNTY  
PARKS 

# Annual Report



GENESEE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

1. Mission Statement
2. Message from the Director
3. Day Use Parks
5. For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum
7. The Mounds, Wolverine Campground & Tollbooths
9. Crossroads Village
11. Huckleberry Railroad
12. Park Police
13. Keep Genesee County Beautiful
14. Flint River Watershed Coalition
15. FYE 2024 Actuals

On the Cover:

Prescribed burn at For-Mar Nature Preserve & Arboretum , April 13, 2025

# 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 treat 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 DIRECTOR

2025 was a year defined by progress, collaboration, and a shared commitment to the people and places that make Genesee County Parks special. Throughout the year, our focus remained on ensuring our parks are welcoming, vibrant, and accessible spaces that strengthen quality of life across Genesee County.

A major emphasis in 2025 was deepening community partnerships and expanding how we work alongside the organizations and individuals who support our parks. Collaborations with schools, nonprofits, municipalities, and local businesses allowed us to broaden our reach, enhance programming, and better serve residents and visitors. These relationships continue to be essential to our success and will remain a priority moving forward.

Equally important was the dedication of our volunteers and Friends groups, whose time, energy, and advocacy support everything from events and cleanups to education programs, trail work, and park improvements. In 2025, this commitment was further strengthened through our first Friends Symposium, which brought volunteer groups together from across the park system to connect, share ideas, and build stronger partnerships. The gathering highlighted the incredible impact that collaboration and shared purpose can achieve.

I am also incredibly proud of our staff, whose professionalism, creativity, and dedication made these accomplishments possible. Throughout 2025, our team consistently went above and beyond—adapting to challenges, supporting one another, and finding new ways to serve our community. Their passion for the parks and commitment to servant leadership are evident in every program delivered, every partnership formed, and every visitor experience created.

Looking ahead, Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission remains focused on building relationships, empowering volunteers, and creating meaningful experiences that connect people to nature and to one another. The accomplishments of 2025 reflect the power of working together and set the foundation for continued growth and stewardship in the years ahead.

**Patrick Linihan, CPRE**

Parks Director

Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission

## 2025 COMMISSIONERS

Joe Krapohl  
(Citizen Representative)

James Washington, PhD  
(Citizen Representative)

Anne Figueroa  
(Citizen Representative)

Domonique Clemons  
(Citizen Representative)

Mike Keeler  
(Citizen Representative)

Gary Goetzinger  
(County Commissioner)

James Avery  
(County Commissioner)

Kevin Sylvester  
(Ex-Officio)  
Drain Commission

Cathy Lane  
(Ex-Officio)  
Road Commission

Bill Brandon  
(Ex-Officio)  
Planning Commission

# DAY USE PARKS



Preservation work on the Richfield Park Foot Bridge

Welcome to the Genesee County Parks 2025 Annual Report. This report highlights the ways we continued to care for our natural spaces, connect with the community, and promote responsible environmental stewardship throughout the year. In 2025, our parks remained special places to explore, learn, relax, and make memories—serving both local residents and visitors from all over.

In 2025, Genesee County Parks once again welcomed thousands of visitors through a variety of special events—bringing the community together and highlighting all the different ways people can enjoy our parks.

At **Bluebell Beach**, guests enjoyed events including the Mott Lake Regatta, Treasures in the Sand, and the Mott Lake Trail Run.

**E.A. Cummings Center** served as a busy event destination, hosting the Mudgirl Run, Midwest Invitational Rodeo, Genesee County Fair, and Genesee County 4-H Horse Leaders Association shows, while also continuing as a key location for High School Cross Country events.

2025 TOTAL EMPLOYEES		370	
TOTAL SEASONAL	330	TOTAL FULL TIME	40
KGCB	11	MAINTENANCE	75
CROSSROADS VILLAGE	104	HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD	14
FOR-MAR	34	MOUNDS	10
OPERATIONS	32	ADMINISTRATION	10
PARK POLICE OFFICERS	40		

**Goldenrod Disc Golf Course** attracted players from across the region by hosting multiple disc golf tournaments throughout the year.

And at **Linden County Park**, the popular First Try Triathlon returned—encouraging participants of all experience levels to get active outdoors.

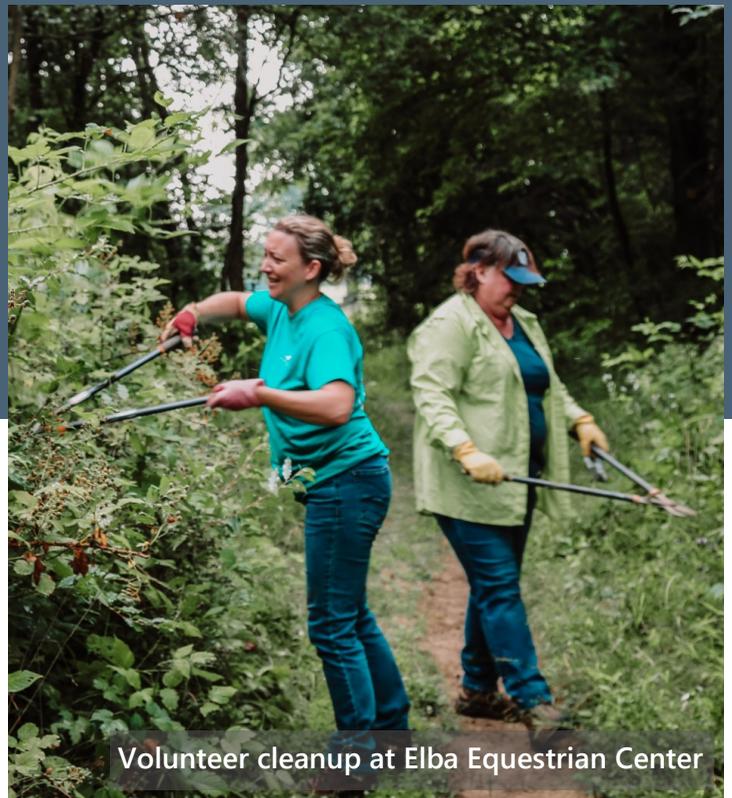
## GENESEE COUNTY PARKS ACRES

### 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



Volunteer cleanup at Elba Equestrian Center

### Elba Equestrian & The Hogbacks Improvements

A new Adopt-A-Park agreement with the Michigan Horse Trail Council brought renewed momentum to Elba Equestrian and The Hogbacks, including two volunteer trail-clearing events, updated mapping plans, and improvements such as trail stabilization.

### Winter Trail Plowing Program

Genesee County Parks launched a new winter trail plowing program, maintaining the Flint River/Iron Belle Trail from Bluebell Beach to Richfield Park and keeping more than nine

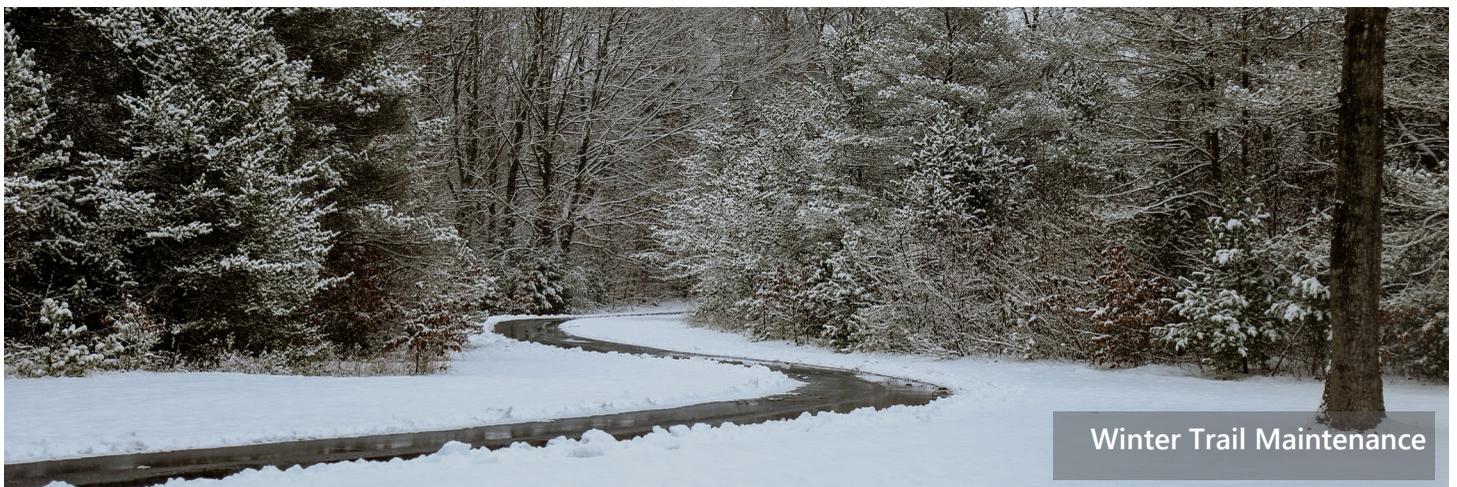
miles of pathways open for year-round walking, running, and biking.

### Richfield Park Historic Foot Bridge Preservation

Work began on the historic Richfield Park Foot Bridge to extend the life of the structure while preserving its historic character and keeping it safe and accessible for visitors.

### Stepping Stone Falls Cleanup Effort

In late summer and early fall 2025, park staff completed a major cleanup effort at Stepping Stone Falls, scraping and removing years of built-up debris from the falls to improve the appearance of this scenic destination and enhance the visitor experience.



Winter Trail Maintenance

# FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE & ARBORETUM

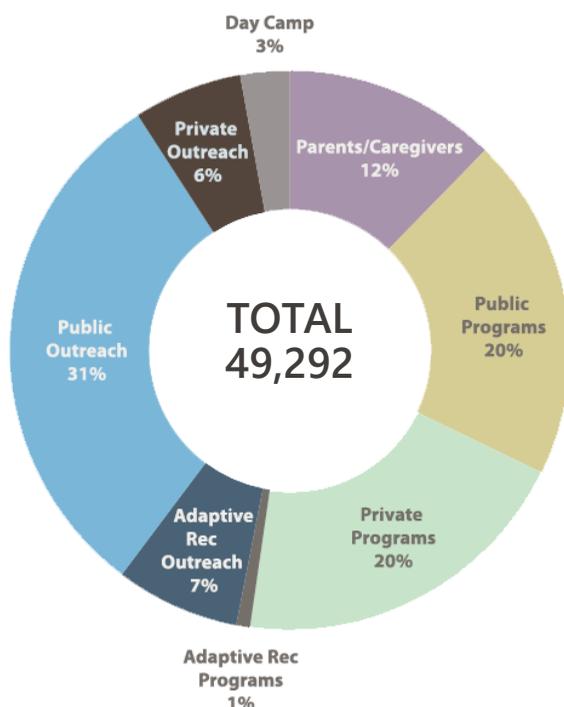


For-Mar Nature Day Camp



Native Plant Sale

## FOR-MAR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



### Outreach Education: Reaching More People, More Effectively

In 2025, in-person outreach programs engaged 18,190 students and community members in hands-on environmental education—272 more than 2024. Educators also expanded capacity with large-group programs (up to 80 participants) featuring interactive learning, group participation, and occasional live-animal experiences. Throughout the year, For-Mar partnered with every school district in Genesee County, expanding access to environmental education across the county.

### Rec Out! Recreation Outreach Debut

The Parks launched Rec Out! Recreation Outreach between June and August 2025, bringing recreation-based learning to parks, community centers, and community events across Genesee County. Featured activities included Hoverball Archery, Binocular Skills, Disc Golf, and Nature Art.

### Place-Based Education Leadership & Professional Development

Place-Based Education (PBE) remained a priority in 2025, with the Chief Park Naturalist and Park Naturalist presenting at the National Place-Based Education Conference to 60 attendees. The team also presented Empower Ability with the GISD Transition Center, highlighting Project SEARCH as a place-based job skills model, and supported regional professional development for informal educators with 24 participants.

### Fundraising & Program Highlights

For-Mar staff supported the Friends of For-Mar Foundation's first-ever fundraiser, For-Mar at Night: Wine Walk with Friends, which sold out and raised approximately \$4,000 toward a future dock improvement.

Additional program highlights included For-Mar Nature Day Camp (281 campers), expansion of the Bentley GSRP partnership from one classroom to three, and the largest BioBlitz yet (114 volunteers from 34 organizations and 1,022 school-group participants). Stuffed Animal Adoption Day drew 400+ participants with

nearly 800 adoptions and earned a 2025 MParks Innovative Programming Award, and Wilderness Inquiry Canoemobile provided water-based education to 800+ students at Bluegill Boat Launch with support from the C.S. Mott Foundation.

### Native Plant Growing Operation

In 2025, the Horticulture team launched native plant growing at For-Mar, collecting primarily Michigan-genotype seed from county park locations and cultivating seedlings on-site. A new 12x24 grow shed was purchased and wired to support propagation with LED lighting and heat, with plants matured in the hoop house prior to sales. Two native plant sales were held, selling more than 700 plants in spring and more than 500 in fall.

### Prescribed Burn

For-Mar completed a successful prescribed burn on Sunday, April 13, restoring two prairies totaling approximately 24 acres. Staff coordinated planning with the Burton Fire Department, conducted neighborhood outreach with Pheasants Forever, and hosted a public informational meeting prior to the burn. The burn ran from 2:00–6:00 p.m. and was led by a professional contractor with support from park staff and community partners, with signage posted before and after to inform visitors.

### Tree Work & Arboretum Maintenance

In 2025, the Horticulture team completed major tree removals, pruning, and storm cleanup across the park system, including processing black locust near Duckweed Pond into firewood for For-Mar’s Sugarbush program and Wolverine Campground. The team also continued tree planting and care at For-Mar and Crossroads Village, while completing additional trimming for safety and accessibility at multiple park sites.

### Native Plantings & Amphitheater Improvements

Native landscaping expanded at For-Mar with new raised-bed plantings near the flagpole and Genesee Road entrance using plants grown by Horticulture staff. Remaining plants were used to establish native populations and “No Mow” areas throughout the preserve. Amphitheater improvements included a new concrete walkway connecting to the Treehouse path, four accessible benches, and continued prairie restoration on the back slope.



Bioblitz



Concrete work around the amphitheater

#### FOR-MAR'S 2025 GRANTS & SPONSORSHIPS

GRANTORS & FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
CS MOTT	\$16,000
FRIENDS OF FOR-MAR FOUNDATION	\$10,795
STELLA AND FREDRICK LOEB CHARITABLE TRUST	\$10,000
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER FLINT	\$4,756
ELGA CREDIT UNION	\$2,000
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN FLINT	\$1,554
FINANCIAL PLUS CREDIT UNION	\$1,000
TEXAS ROADHOUSE	\$1,000
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY	\$500
GENERAL DONATIONS	\$3,529
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$51,134</b>

# THE MOUNDS, TOLLBOOTH



## The Mounds

The Mounds ORV Park continued to see high visitation in 2025, reinforcing its reputation as one of Michigan’s premier off-road destinations. The park’s signature event, Moundsgiving, once again delivered strong results, attracting more than 1,200 vehicles from across the state.

New programming also expanded the park’s summer offerings. A Salute to Service weekend was introduced over Memorial Day, providing free admission to all active and former military members. In July, Gears and Giveaways debuted as a new event, offering “gear head” style prizes and additional excitement for regular riders and first-time visitors alike. Looking ahead, The Mounds is positioned for continued improvement in 2026 with the award of a \$50,000 MDNR ORV grant to support trail enhancements and border fencing repairs.

## Wolverine Campground

2025 was a strong year of progress at Wolverine Campground, with major improvements focused on accessibility, visitor comfort, and expanded recreation opportunities. Park staff completed its first ADA-accessible campsite and constructed a new ADA parking pathway at Buttercup Beach—important steps in ensuring Wolverine remains a welcoming destination for all visitors.

Additional upgrades included the construction of a new pavilion by park staff, to support recreational programming and provide shade for guests, the installation of a long-awaited gaga ball pit, and the addition of a new dock with high-impact bumpers at the boat launch. New walking trails were also developed in the Walker Way section, improving pedestrian safety by encouraging foot traffic away from main roadways. Seasonal programming remained a major success, with both Halloween weekends exceeding expectations. Due to overwhelming demand, a third Halloween weekend will be added in 2026.

### 2025 MOUNDS, CAMPGROUND & TOLLBOOTH STATS

THE MOUNDS	8,082 PASSES SOLD
WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND	14,592 NIGHTS RESERVED
BOAT LAUNCHES	6,400 PASSES SOLD

# & WOLVERINE CAMPGROUND

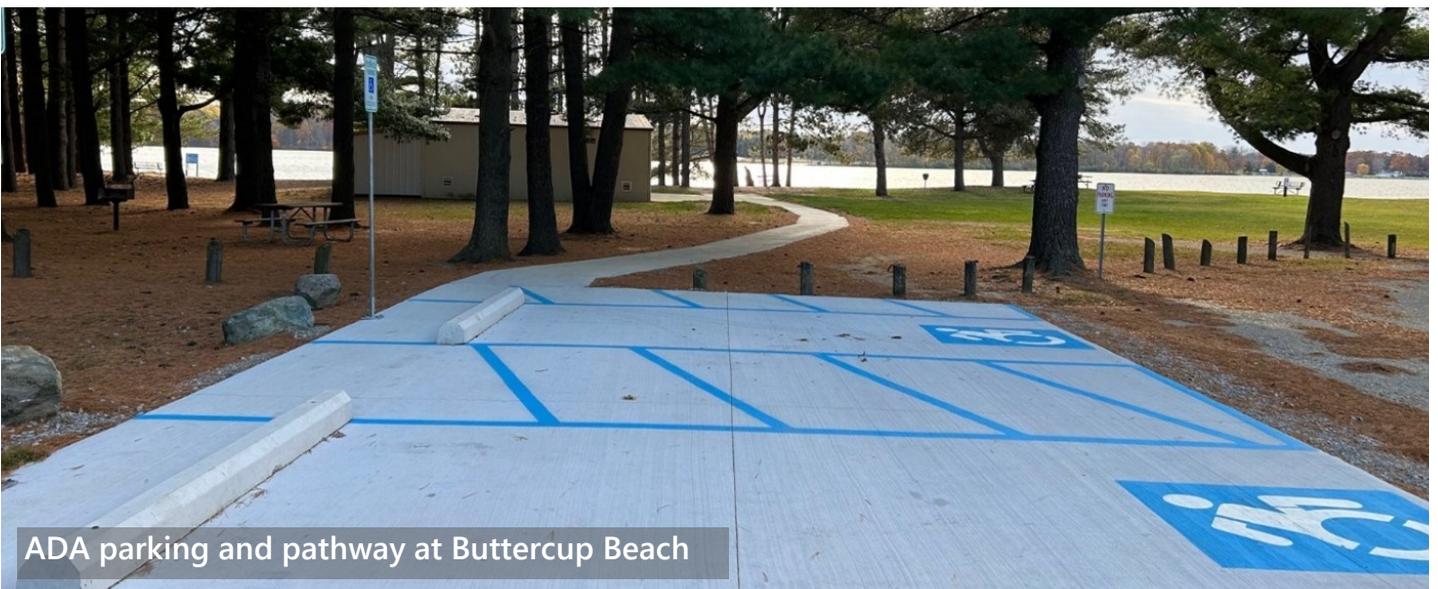


Ribbon Cutting of the Bluegill Pavilion

## Boat Launches

Operations also made important advances at Genesee County Parks boat launch facilities, highlighted by improvements at Bluegill Boat Launch. A new pavilion—generously donated by UAW Local 659 and The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance—greatly enhanced visitor amenities and strengthened opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Bluegill also hosted its third annual Get Youth Outdoors event, which was the busiest to date with more than 2,000 attendees and hundreds of fishing poles distributed to young anglers. The event served as the official ribbon-cutting celebration for the new pavilion. In addition, an invasive-species boat information and clean-out station was installed, supporting continued efforts in natural resource protection and public education.



ADA parking and pathway at Buttercup Beach

# CROSSROADS VILLAGE



Fantastical Fairytale Festival

2025 was a whirlwind year for Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad, but one defined by meaningful progress and forward momentum. While the pace of change was fast, it was also highly productive—resulting in improved operations, stronger team leadership, and continued growth in both attendance and community engagement.

## Leadership Transition & Clear Expectations

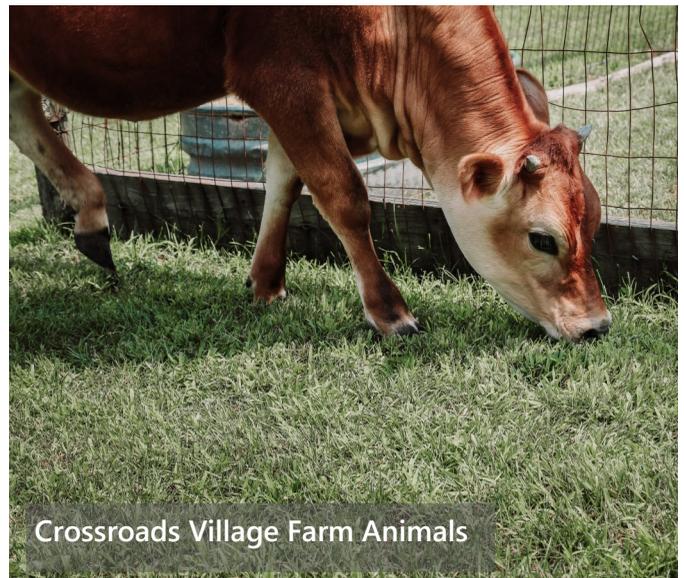
One of the most significant developments this year was a key leadership transition. This change brought renewed focus to clear expectations, consistency, and accountability across daily operations. By emphasizing leading by example, Crossroads strengthened organizational culture and created a more unified approach to guest service and internal standards.

## Strengthened Financial Oversight & Strategy

Crossroads strengthened financial oversight by improving budgeting, payroll, and profit-and-loss tracking. This more strategic review supported better decision-making, enhanced the guest experience, and contributed to increased sales.

## Investing in Staff & Internal Growth

2025 also highlighted the importance of investing in our people. Several long-standing team members were promoted into leadership roles, reinforcing a culture of growth and retention. These internal promotions gave experienced employees the opportunity to further develop their skills, take on new responsibilities, and play a greater role in the success of the Village.



Crossroads Village Farm Animals



Chili Nights & Village Lights

### Expanded Programming & Increased Attendance

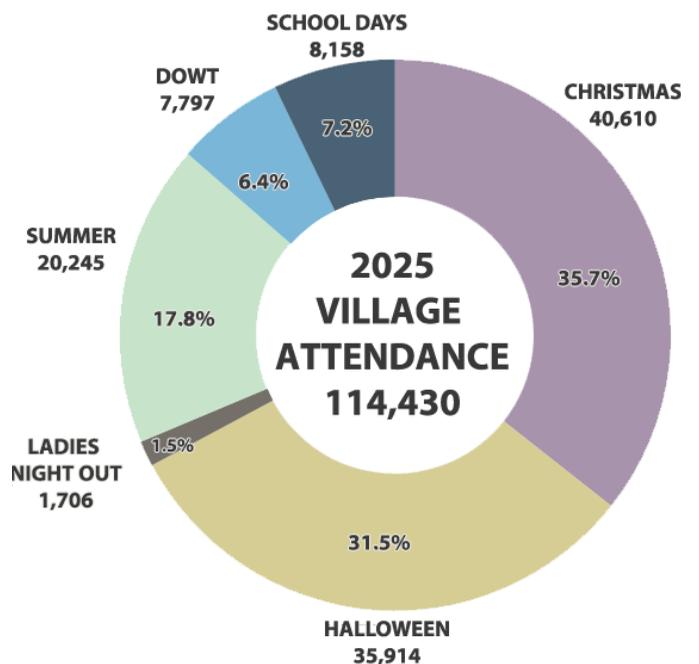
Alongside internal growth, Crossroads expanded its programming and special event offerings. New events brought fresh energy to the season and helped increase overall attendance. Just as importantly, expanded programming helped introduce Crossroads to visitors who may not have previously considered it a destination—leading to greater visibility, repeat visitation, and broader community connection.

### Recognition Across the Industry

The combined impact of these efforts was recognized beyond our organization as well. In 2025, Crossroads earned nominations for both Attraction of the Year and Event of the Year at the Art of Achievement Awards. These nominations were a meaningful reflection of the commitment and hard work of staff, as well as the continued growth of Crossroads as a leading destination experience in the region.



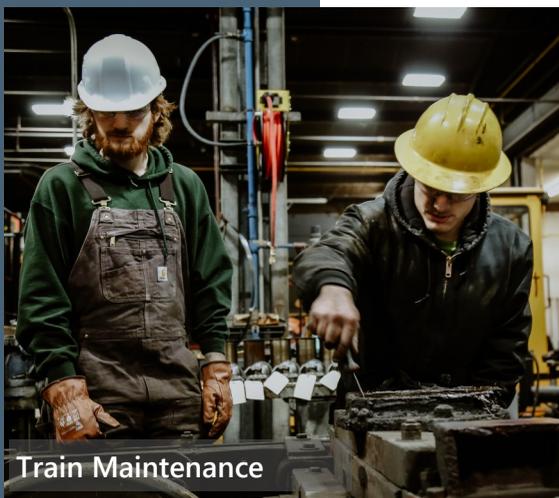
Opening Weekend



# HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD



Locomotive #152



Train Maintenance

## Major Infrastructure Improvements

To address long-standing operational concerns, a new 15,000-gallon tank was installed in the water tower. This upgrade resolved persistent leaking issues and supports more reliable water storage for ongoing railroad operations.

## Track Maintenance & Rail Upgrades

Significant progress was made toward improving track condition and ride quality. Crews began tamping and leveling approximately four miles of rail, helping to stabilize the track bed and create a smoother, safer experience for passengers. In addition, staff completed the in-house replacement of 150 railroad ties, extending the life of the track and strengthening high-use sections.

## Track Expansion Preparation

To support future growth and ongoing improvements, a new switch was installed on the main line in preparation for the Track 5 extension. This enhancement improves operational flexibility and allows for expanded capacity as the rail system continues to develop.

## Safety & Crossing Enhancements

Safety improvements were also completed at key access points. New LED crossing lights were installed at the Genesee Road crossing, increasing visibility for drivers and pedestrians and improving overall safety during railroad operations, especially in low-light conditions.



Water tower tank installation

# PARK POLICE

## High-Visibility Park Police Presence & Event Safety

In 2025, the Park Police Division maintained safety and order across the park system while supporting major events at the Cummings Center, Crossroads Village, The Mounds, Bluebell Beach, and Mott Lake. Officers also received strong public feedback for their professionalism and customer service.

## Marine Patrol Operations & Water Safety

During the 2025 boating season, civilian Marine Patrol Rangers logged more than 800 patrol hours on the Holloway Reservoir, completing one water rescue and providing numerous tows for disabled boaters. The Marine Division also assisted with reservoir tours related to invasive aquatic plant concerns.

## E-Bike Enforcement & Trail Safety

To keep pace with evolving recreation trends, Park Police Officers completed E-bike training in 2025 to support safe operations on trails and in high-use park areas. The division also purchased a radar gun to monitor E-bike speeds along bike paths, strengthening enforcement capabilities and helping protect trail users.



## Law Enforcement Support & Professional Standards

The Park Police Division provided law enforcement services throughout the Genesee County Parks system and assisted partner agencies in Genesee and Lapeer counties. Officers supported multiple apprehensions tied to serious criminal cases, including suspects accused of murder and sexual assault. Staff also completed required continuing education, including 24 hours of training to maintain licensing and professional readiness.

## Expanded Patrols at Flint State Park

In 2025, Park Police patrols increased at the new State Park in Flint to strengthen safety, support partners, and meet visitor expectations. Park Police included the site in daily patrols, with a dedicated Officer serving as the primary contact for KGCB and FRWC while coordinating with maintenance to address hazards.



# KEEP GENESEE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL



Park Beautification

## Park Reservations & Special Event Support

KGCB assumed responsibility for the City of Flint park reservation process in May 2025 and hired a Reservations and Administration Specialist to strengthen customer service and support special event permits and reservations in both City of Flint and State Park locations. Since taking over the process, KGCB managed 378 reservations across these parks.

## Meet Up & Eat Up

KGCB partnered with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan to host Meet Up and Eat Up sites as part of the Summer Food Service Program, running June through August. Parks served as convenient community distribution points at 9 City of Flint parks and 3 Genesee County Parks locations, providing a total of 5,718 meals to local families.



Park Adopters

## Improved Park Infrastructure in the City of Flint

New park infrastructure projects helped enhance accessibility and recreational opportunities in City of Flint parks. Improvements included a soccer mini-pitch at Clara Hilborn Park through the NRPA Youth Sports Access Grant, a new playground at Riverside West (River Park Greenspace) through a Community Foundation of Greater Flint grant, and 18 new accessible picnic tables funded through the mParks Foundation, Habitat for Humanity Brand grant, Greater Flint Health Coalition REACH funds, and community donations.

## Support for Park Adopters & Community Programming

KGCB provided funds, supplies, and technical assistance to more than 30 park adopters and volunteer groups while expanding programming through key partnerships. Highlights included the nine-week Cultural Park to Park series (one park in each ward with partners such as FIA, FIM, Sloan/Longway, and Gloria Coles Flint Public Library), invasive species information sessions with the Conservation District, and Unplugged in the Park with MSU Extension at Kearsley Park.

### 2025 KGCB STATS

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS	3,366
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER EVENTS	667
BAGS OF GARBAGE COLLECTED	3,318
BAGS OF YARD WASTE COLLECTED	2,731

# FLINT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION

## Transition to a County Parks Program

In 2025, the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) program worked closely with Friends of the Flint River Watershed, Inc. and Genesee County Parks to support the transition into becoming an official County Parks Program. This collaborative effort helped ensure continuity in programming, strengthen partnerships, and align operations with County Parks systems and resources. The transition also positioned FRWC to expand its impact—enhancing education, outreach, monitoring, and recreational opportunities throughout the Flint River Watershed in the years ahead.

## Community Reach

The FRWC program connected with 5,384+ community members throughout 2025 through education, volunteer opportunities, recreation, and outreach.

## Education & Youth Engagement

50 middle and high school classrooms participated in the GREEN Monitoring Program.

## Volunteer Monitoring & Stewardship

103 volunteers took part in the River Monitoring Program.

## Recreation on the Water

326 participants (young and young at heart!) enjoyed kayaking on rivers and lakes throughout the watershed.

## Outreach & Public Programs

4,955 people of all ages were introduced to the Flint River Watershed—its wonders, resources, and programs—through community outreach events and workshops.



Water Monitoring



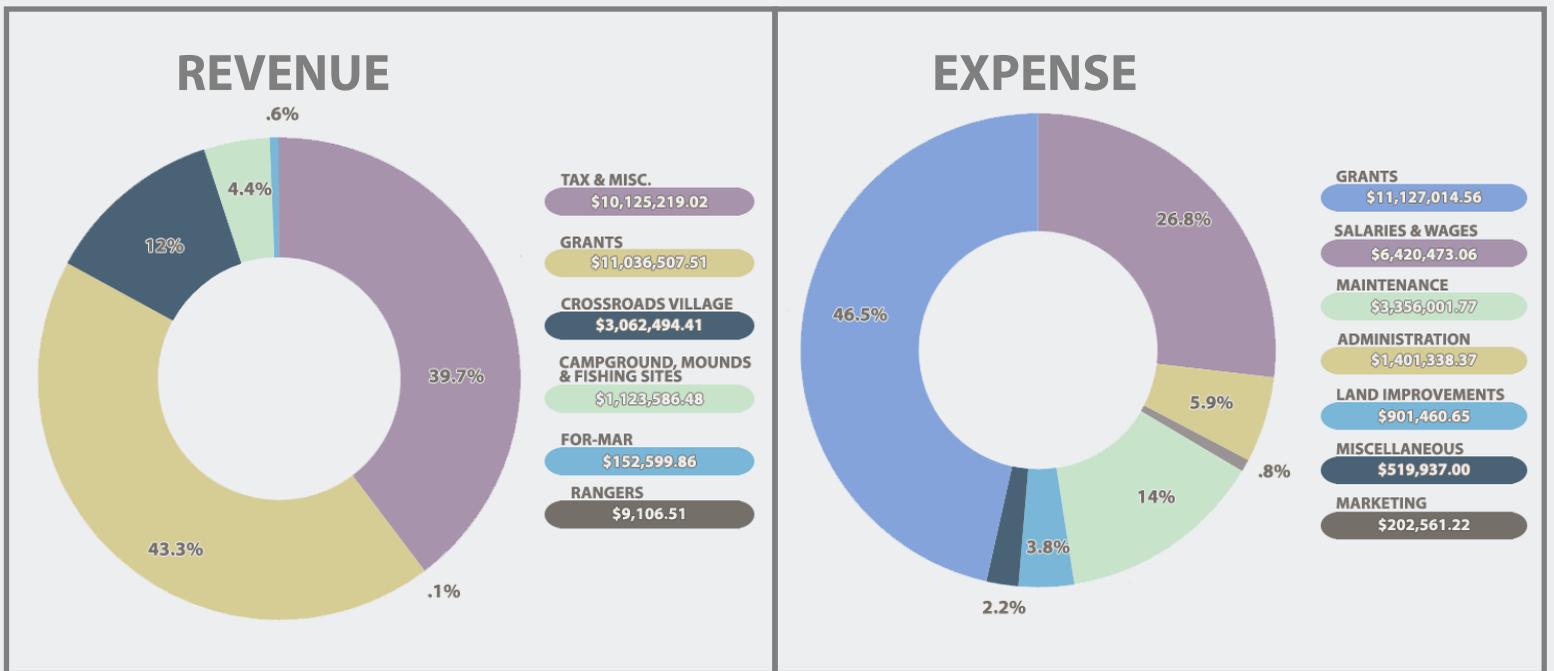
Paddling Program



River Monitoring Program



# FY 2024 ACTUALS



**GENESEE COUNTY PARKS**

Get away. Right away.



GENESEE COUNTY  
MICHIGAN