

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Marshbank Park

MISSION STATEMENT

Sparking passion for nature while providing opportunities for community well-being.

VISION

Continuously imagine the future of recreation, wellness and green spaces, that will encourage our diverse community to develop connections with nature and one another, ultimately contributing to the vibrancy of life in West Bloomfield.

THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY.

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OUR COMMISSIONERS

West Bloomfield Parks is overseen by seven, publicly elected commissioners, and managed by a commission appointed Director. Commissioners serve 4 year terms and hold at least one public meeting a month. Meetings are held at 6 pm in the Town Hall Board Room (4550 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48323).



Robert V. Brooks
Chairperson
rbrooks@wbparks.org
248.539.0203



John A. Erich
Secretary
jerich@wbparks.org
248.514.3368



Terrance T. Adams
Treasurer
tadams@wbparks.org
313.437.1528



Merv Aronoff
maronoff@wbparks.org
248.894.8112



David Barash
dbarash@wbparks.org
248.538.5518



Vincent C. Kirkwood
vkirkwood@wbparks.org
248.703.9361



Sally Wenczel
swenczel@wbparks.org
231.620.9999



IMPACT

2023 was an exciting year for WB Parks. We re-opened our Connect Senior Center in a new space in August, took over operations of a new park through a partnership with Bloomfield Hills School District and offered more new nature programs and hikes than we have in the past decade. This annual report is just a snapshot of some of the highlights of 2023. We hope you'll enjoy reading and learning a bit more about WB Parks and our commitment to serving the West Bloomfield community.



573

Acres of parkland



13

Miles of trails



1,134

Hours of volunteer work donated



17,025

Total number of registrations



596

Number of times athletic fields were prepped for games



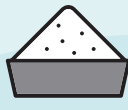
998

Number of games played on our fields
(baseball, softball, cricket, soccer)



19,318

Visits to Lily Pad Springs Splash Pad



12 TONS

Amount of salt saved by using liquid deicer as opposed to dry salt

FINANCIALS



2022 REVENUE	
Property taxes	\$4,588,176
SMART transporation grants	\$157,883
Recreation program fees	\$582,976
Facility, shelter & field rentals	\$107,324
Interest	\$46,123
Leases	\$181,817
Sponsorships	\$66,145
Other Income	\$21,346

TOTAL REVENUE: \$5,751,790



2022 EXPENSES	
Commission	\$76,761
Administration	\$814,572
Recreation	\$1,341,503
Park Operations	\$1,473,261
Transportation	\$178,124
Debt Service	\$62,677
Capital Projects	\$1,475,908

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$5,422,806

*Expenses for each division include salaries, supplies and contracted services

NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE: \$328,984

END OF YEAR FUND BALANCE: \$3,546,282

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

The figures above are taken from the WB Parks’ audited financial report for fiscal year 2022. 2023 audited financial statements were not available at the time this report was created. They will be available on our website at wbparks.org/commission in May of 2024.

The budget for the upcoming fiscal year is approved at the November Commission meeting. The 2024 budget is also posted on our website at wbparks.org/commission.

RECREATION



PICKLEBALL In 2023, we partnered with Bloomfield Hills Schools District to offer indoor pickleball for the first time at West Hills Middle School (now Lone Pine Elementary). This allowed us to complement our spring, summer and fall outdoor offerings and keep our pickleballers active year round. We have pickleball courts at Drake Sports Park as well as tennis courts with pickleball lines painted at both Drake and Keith Sports Parks. Overall, we had **962 registrations** for our pickleball clinics, ladders and leagues.

SUMMER CAMP Our sell-out, traditional day camp, called Camp WB, expanded participation numbers back to what we offered before the Covid-19 pandemic began. This popular camp offers new field trips each week, visits to the Lily Pad Springs splash pad, nature days at Marshbank Park and more. In 2023, we had **160 Camp WB participants**. We also provided an additional **524 camp experiences** through our contracted camp providers which include sports, STEM and art programs.

WALK WB Our free, twice-weekly walking club visits various parks and trails throughout the Township. In 2023, we had **179 registered participants** that walked more than **4,000 miles in total**. This program promotes health and wellness while encouraging social interaction. It is sponsored by Henry Ford Health and select events include talks by doctors and other health experts.

LILY PAD SPRINGS SPLASH PAD In 2023, we had **19,318 visits** to the splash pad. This park, opened in 2021, continues to be a draw for West Bloomfield residents and the Metro Detroit region as a whole. It is the largest splash pad in Michigan and features over 50 play features.

Sensory Friendly Mondays & Twilight Sessions - For the second year, we offered Sensory Friendly Mondays for children who may find the splash pad overwhelming on a regular day. These special sessions had limited attendance capacities and some of the overhead spray features turned off. This program reflects WB Parks' commitment to inclusion. We also offered Twilight Sessions on select Tuesday evenings so working parents could enjoy the splash pad with their families after the workday.

Summer Camps - Ten summer camps around Metro Detroit chose Lily Pad Springs as a field trip destination with more than **500 visits from campers**. These special sessions were offered in addition to our regular daily schedule.

Private party rentals - In 2023, we offered a limited amount of private party rentals to West Bloomfield residents only. The package included an hour on the splash pad and an hour under the tent just outside of the pad for gathering. These rental opportunities all **sold out** within a matter of days.

OUR LARGEST EVENTS

3,979 Kids Komotion and
Marshbank Music Concerts
(5 events total)
ATTENDEES

717 Trick or Treat Trail
REGISTERED KIDS

846 Spring Fling
Egg Scramble
REGISTERED KIDS

NATURE



“I enjoyed the hike far more than I anticipated. I did not know the hike would include so much animal and plant life knowledge. It made for a fun and educational morning.”

- WB Resident

GUIDED HIKES Guided nature hikes are one of our most popular program offerings with residents often requesting more. In 2023, we expanded our offerings and **hosted 31 different hikes** which include Hike with a Hero, Senior Hikes, Little Hikers (family hikes) and other seasonal themed hikes.

NEW PROGRAMS Thanks to our creative team of naturalist professionals, we offered more new programs in 2023 than ever before. On top of our usual offerings, we had a total of **19 new programs or series** including Senior Kayaking, Fish with a Hero and Spooky Animal Storytime.

NATURE APPOINTMENTS Nature appointments are special programs led by our naturalists either on-site in the Nature Room or offsite at a school, community partner's facility, etc. They are not open to the public and are customized to a specific group's needs. In 2023, we led **24 appointments servicing a total of 556 people**. We also host outreach stations at other community events to reach and educate new audiences. This year, we reached an **additional 455 people** through these partnerships.

NATURE-THEMED COMMUNITY EVENTS

Each year, our nature team offers large, family events that serve a dual purpose. They provide fun, seasonal activities while educating and immersing families in nature. These events support our mission of instilling a love of nature in our residents with the ultimate goal of helping create future stewards of our natural resources. In 2023, we offered three of these events - Bees, Butterflies & Blooms, Earth Day Celebration and Camp Out, each of which had **more than 250 people in attendance**.

NATURAL FEATURES INVENTORY A Natural Features Inventory is a survey of park lands to help define what type of natural community it is (aka what type of habitat it is) and ranks each area from **1-5 in ecological biodiversity**, 5 being the best. This data helps to guide land managers to prioritize and direct their land management decisions with the best ecological choices. In 2023, surveys were completed for 9 park sites by a contractor specializing in this work. In total, WB Parks has 108 tree stands (33 forested, 75 non-forested). The average age of the dominant tree species within forested stands was 67 years and the oldest tree found was a **181 year old oak**. The overall eco-score average of all park properties surveyed combined is a 2.1. The areas with a higher score will have more extensive surveys conducted in 2024 to look for rare plant and animal species. Several park parcels received a 4/5 eco score including areas in Drake Sports Park, Pine Lake Park and the WB Woods Nature Preserve.

GREEN TEAM WB Parks' Green Team is an organization-wide collaboration. The Green Team sets goals, implements new staff procedures and deploys public relations campaigns to help reduce our collective impact on the earth. In 2023, we hosted green team stations at certain events, launched "Caught being Green" pins to encourage positive behaviors and made **9 product swaps to greener choices** for programs. Additionally, our parks team purchased **6 pieces of electric equipment** to continue our efforts to phase out gas-powered models as well as installed refillable water bottle stations at **3 additional parks**.

SENIORS



A NEW SPACE

In August 2023, WB Parks re-opened its senior center, called Connect, in a new leased space located at 14 Mile and Farmington Roads. The 9,000 sq foot space features a large room for events, fitness classes and drop-in programs as well as a lounge area for seniors to gather and socialize. The leased space supports WB Parks long-term goal of offering a community center for seniors to utilize. Connect is located at 33230 W 14 Mile Rd., West Bloomfield, MI 48322 and is open Monday-Friday from 8:30 am-4:00 pm.

The new space now supports more than **600 members** with a variety of free or low cost programs. There have been **more than 5,000 visits** from members since the facility opened. This data does not include seniors who visit that are not Connect members.

HOLIDAY LUNCHES

Some of our most anticipated senior programs are our annual holiday lunches we offer each season. We mix up what holidays we celebrate but in 2023, we hosted events for the Chinese New Year, St. Patrick's Day, Tiger's Opening Day, Harvest Day and more. These events typically sell out and we look forward to expanding our maximum capacity in 2024 now that we are in a larger space. In 2023, we **served 357 meals across 7 events**.

DROP IN PROGRAMS

Several of our drop in programs have grown in popularity with the opening of our new facility. The first is our free, twice weekly exercise program called Stretch & Tone. This program helps keep seniors active and healthy. We had **more than 100 seniors** registered for the program this year. The second is our Ping Pong program that also takes place twice a week. This program has really allowed us to expand our customer base to a new user group.

GRANTS FOR SENIOR SERVICES

West Bloomfield was one of 11 communities awarded the full Oakland Together Senior Center Grant (\$250,000) and one of ten to receive the Administration for Community Living funding for seniors (\$85,000).



COMMUNITY TRANSIT



WB Parks Community Transit program is funded through SMART and provides West Bloomfield senior residents or those with disabilities low cost transportation to medical appointments, social activities, shopping trips and more. In 2023, the Community Transit team has continued in its mission to provide

independence to our seniors by **providing 5,450 rides for more than 400 residents.** For many, this service allows them to age in place while still being able to get out and about in the community.

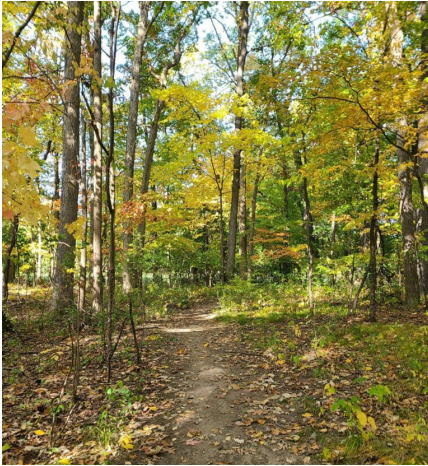
The Community Transit program also allows us to take seniors on exciting day trips throughout the metro Detroit area. In 2023, we transported seniors to **75 destinations** such as the Manogian Museum, Meadow Brook Hall, Selfridge Air Base, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and more.



1,120

registrations in 2023
combined for our trips
program.

PARK PROJECTS



PINE LAKE PARK

WB Parks took over operations of the former Pine Lake Elementary property located at 3333 W. Long Lake Road, beginning on October 1, 2023. The West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission and the Bloomfield Hills School Board of Education entered into a 20-year lease agreement where the **21 acre plot** will be maintained and improved by WB Parks while the School District will still hold ownership over the property. WB Parks is currently undergoing a master planning process for the site that will result in a phased plan of park improvements over the next 5 years. Planned upgrades include new playground structures, pickleball courts, an upgraded baseball field and more.



\$1.45M invested into capital projects



MEMORIAL BENCHES

In 2023, WB Parks revamped its memorial bench program. This process included creating an inventory of all park benches in the system as well as determining which benches were ready for replacement. Each park location was mapped out with available benches listed for sale. **We generated \$20,000 in revenue** through the program and have several benches already under contract for 2024. This revenue covers all costs including installation and maintenance. In total, we have nearly **140 benches** in our park system that are managed through the memorial program. To learn more about our memorial bench program, visit wbparks.org/memorials.



SKATE PARK

WB Parks redesigned and replaced all of the ramps and equipment at the skate park in Drake Sports Park. The original structures were installed in the early 2000s and were in need of replacement. We surveyed community members and park users to help select a design. The new structures were installed in late fall and the park will officially reopen in the spring of 2024.

“

We had a wonderful time! The park and shelter were clean. The restroom was clean. The staff were helpful. My out of town family were impressed! I am glad that the standards are high in West Bloomfield!

- a WB resident who rented a shelter

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



WB TOWNSHIP LIBRARY WB Parks partnered with the West Bloomfield Township Public Library to create a storybook walk along the trails on the Civic Center Campus. WB Parks maintains the trails and the Library updates the story each season. This partnership aligns with both of our missions by promoting literacy and exploring nature. We also partner with the Library on events such as the Kids Komotion Concert and programming such as performers in the park for summer camps.



West Bloomfield
DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

The West Bloomfield Diversity Task Force is a partnership between WB Parks, the WB Public Library, WB Township and community volunteers. The

goal of the Task Force is to recognize the cultural, ethnic, and religious differences represented in West Bloomfield. The group formed in 2020 and hosted several events in 2023 to support its mission including a Black Expo, a community celebration called “Meet Your Neighbors” and educational series covering topics like LGBTQ+ 101 and cultural awareness of the Chaldean community.

SENIOR SAFETY TEAM Launched in 2023, the Senior Safety Team brings together senior service providers to collaborate on ways to preventing falls and minimize risk among our senior community. The group is made up of representatives from Jewish Senior Life, the West Bloomfield Fire Department, WB Parks and Henry Ford Health.

SENIOR RESOURCE GROUP (SRG) The SRG is a network of professionals that look to connect seniors with resources and is organized through the West Bloomfield Chamber. WB Parks partners with the group to offer a monthly lecture series as well as trips to exciting destinations. This partnership allows us to connect seniors with subject matter experts while also offering affordable programming through the group’s sponsorships. In 2023, we offered 10 trips and had a total attendance of more than 300 during the monthly Talk Time series.

CONSERVATION PARTNERS

In 2023, WB Parks really focused on expanding its relationships with conservation partners.

We worked with 25 different groups including Bees in the D, Friends of the Rouge, North Oakland Wild Ones and Monarch Watch. If you’re interested in partnering with us, contact info@wbparks.org.



STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WB Parks strives to offer relevant professional development opportunities to all of its staff members. This year, staff attended trainings such as Managing Time Effectively, Verbal Diffusion/De-Escalation Training, Michigan Parks & Recreation Association's Annual Conference, Michigan Association of Senior Centers Annual Conference and more. Two team members became Certified Dementia Practitioners, a new certification for our organization.

PARK OPERATIONS Safety training and continuing education is a top priority for our park operations team. In 2023, they spent 373 hours in professional development trainings and collectively hold 74 certifications. Examples of these certifications include Certified Playground Inspectors, Invasive Species Certification and Man Lift Safety Certification.

NEW PERSONNEL We hired our first Human Resources Manager in WB Parks history to focus on staff development, appreciation and recruitment.

EMPLOYEE MILESTONES



Justine Pawloski, Custodian, 5 years

Meagan Tehako, Marketing & Communications Manager, 10 years

Lauren Azoury, Park Naturalist Supervisor, 10 years

Garry McCallum, Park Facilities Manager, 15 years

LEADERSHIP TEAM



Kelly Hyer
Executive Director
khyer@wbparks.org
248.451.1910



Chris Frey
Parks Superintendent
cfrey@wbparks.org
248.451.1921



Ashley Stokes
Recreation Supervisor
astokes@wbparks.org
248.451.1916



Meagan Tehako
Marketing &
Communications Manager
mtehako@wbparks.org
248.451.1914



Stephanie Smith
Finance Manager
ssmith@wbparks.org
248.451.1925



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THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY.



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:
Recreation Activities Center
4640 Walnut Lake Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

RECREATION ACTIVITIES CENTER HOURS:
Mondays - Fridays, 8 am to 4:30 pm

CONNECT HOURS:
Mondays - Fridays, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

PARK HOURS:
All parks are open 8 am to sunset, year round.

Phone: 248.451.1900
Community Transit: 248.706.2411
Email: info@wbparks.org

