MISSION

21st Century Parks serves as stewards entrusted to preserve and sustain unexcelled parklands that reflect the needs and values of our whole community. The goal of The Parklands is to be a world-class, systemic addition to Louisville’s park system that will shape the city and local economy for years to come.

INSPIRATION

In the early 1890s, Frederick Law Olmsted came to Kentucky to design one of his masterpieces— the Louisville park system. Using lands located well beyond the edge of the city, Olmsted created a ring of parks and parkways that contain one of Louisville’s most remarkable assets. As the city grew around these parks in the early twentieth century, they fulfilled Olmsted’s vision of “bringing nature into neighborhoods” as a way of shaping a city’s geography, its social interactions, and its economies, creating some of the most livable neighborhoods in the nation.

LEGACY

The mission of 21st Century Parks reflects a respect for both people and nature. The Parklands of Floyds Fork cuts right through the heart of the last major undeveloped section of Metro Louisville, preserving a vanishing landscape and connecting people to it through world-class park design. The Parklands includes four major parks linked by scenic park drive, a first-rate trail system, and a remarkable water trail, all tracing Floyds Fork. Like the work of Olmsted, these parks will provide livable communities for generations to come.

21st Century Parks, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, with the support of the community, orchestrates the long-term funding to ensure proper maintenance of facilities, trails, and natural areas, as well as programming that educates and promotes outdoor exploration. The Parklands is free to all visitors 365 days a year, dawn to dusk, but does not receive tax dollar support for annual operations.

MISSION

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NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN & CEO

Throughout this report, you will witness the ways our parks are already positively impacting our community. Through FREE access to new recreational opportunities, our parks are encouraging healthy habits, educational discovery, environmental preservation and enhancement, and building a sense of community. Our parks are continuing Louisville’s legacy as a city of great parks.

3,051,755: The total number of visits to The Parklands during 2017, our first year as a fully-open park. It ranks us among the region’s top attractions, and within the top 40 most visited US city parks according to the Trust for Public Land.

Each of these visits represents a touchpoint, a level of impact that, with your help, we have worked hard to make possible. They represent a student on a field trip, a family gathering for a picnic, or a group of runners training for their next big race.

While 3,051,755 surpassed our projections, to say it exceeded our expectations is not entirely true. As a city that treasures great parks, we knew that, once built, it was only a matter of time before area residents came to know, love, and invest in The Parklands and its ability to cultivate community.

Your pride and ownership of The Parklands helped us make positive impacts in 2017, and your continued support will help carry us through the next 100 years and beyond. Thank you for your generosity! We hope you are as proud as we are of what we have accomplished together.

Sincerely,

Chairman & CEO
21st Century Parks, Inc.

Charles P. Denny, Regional President
Kennedy, PNC Bank
Sandra Frasier, Managing Member
Tandem Public Relations
Seve Ghose, Director, Louisville Metro Parks
Michael J. Heitz, Retired Director, Louisville Metro Parks
Stephen L. Henry, M.D., The Future Fund
Ellen Heson, Deputy Mayor / Chief of Staff, Louisville Metro Government
Henry V. Houser, Jr., Chairman, Unistar Purchasing Solutions
Dr. Daniel H. Jones, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, 21st Century Parks, Inc.
David A. Jones, Sr., Treasurer, 21st Century Parks, Inc.
William F. Juckett, Chair Emeritus, Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy
Bruce A. Mana, Senior Fellow, CE&S Foundation
Kenneth L. Payne, President & Chief Executive Officer, Main Street Realty, Inc.
David Y. Wood, Vice President, Brokerage, JLL

Beautifu parks and trails enhance the quality of life in our community, making it more healthy, sustainable, and enjoyable. Reflecting Louisville’s reputation as a great place to live, The Parklands is a powerful vehicle for attracting and retaining individuals, families, and employers, and contributes to a vibrant future for our community and our children.
The 3,051,755 visits to The Parklands in 2017 encompassed a wide range of activities. The amenities, maintained thanks to you, range from introductory and fully accessible, to opportunities with intermediate and advanced features to satisfy those looking for a challenge. Our parks and programs offer options for the entire family to get outdoors to learn, exercise, and reconnect with nature.

On September 17, 2017, we opened the Silo Center Bike Park, our latest amenity and one that was much anticipated by the region’s active mountain biking community. The bike park was constructed in partnership with the International Mountain Bicycling Association and consists of 2.5 miles of progressive mountain bike trails, pump tracks and a skills loop to help make the bike park accessible and enjoyable for both beginners and advanced riders. It is unique to the city and an amenity that will help advance the sport of mountain biking in the years to come, while providing Louisville residents another fun option to get outdoors and be active.

“A lot of communities don’t have this yet. It fills a void for all of the beginner riders and gives all the intermediate and expert riders somewhere to go, all in one location.”

- Chris Orr, IMBA Trail Specialist

“My husband and I are on a Get Fit Journey. So far we have lost a combined 135 lbs! The Parklands are an integral part of our journey. We have graduated from strolling the Louisville Loop to hiking, bike riding and running up the silo together. Thank you Parklands for giving us such a beautiful place to get fit!”

- Laura Morris, park visitor
Clean, safe parks promote healthy living—encouraging people to get outdoors and be active. Physical activity yields health benefits, resulting in a higher quality of life and lower health care costs. Cities that prioritize access to parks and green space where residents can walk, run, bike and participate in other forms of exercise, are reducing the cost of health care. By helping us build and maintain The Parklands, your support provides access to world-class open space designed to serve people of all ages and abilities. Our parks and programs, made possible thanks in your gifts, are having a positive impact on both the physical and mental health of our community members.

“Walks are something I can control to improve my health which makes me feel empowered. Soon my step count will hit 28,000,000 and counting (since 11/30/11). Nothing is more uplifting than a walk date with my husband. And each walk ends with my heart bursting with joy that we have such a beautiful place to share.”

-La Verne C., Member since 2013, Volunteer Ambassador (pictured left)
Thanks to your support, The Parklands Outdoor Classroom hosts tens of thousands of learners each year, from pre-k children to adults. In 2017, our Education Team launched new programs to introduce students of all ages to the natural wonders lying within The Parklands. Junior Explorers studied science and natural history each month, while adults and children alike joined in the monthly Parklands Explorer program with a goal to conquer all 47 miles of hiking trails.

The hands-on, outdoor learning experiences offered by The Parklands Education Team, from week-long summer camps to weekly pre-k Wednesday Wonders programs, led to a deeper understanding of our Kentucky landscape and the creatures that live within it, while also fostering a curiosity of environmental stewardship. And generous grants, thanks to you, made field trip programming accessible to Title I schools and nonprofit programs.

“This was one of the best field trips any of my children have ever been on because of its experiential value. They got to watch one of the rangers catch a snake, which gave a few young girls the courage to touch the snake and face their fear of the day. And because the ranger was a young woman, it gave all the children the opportunity to see a young woman in a position of strength, courage and confidence.”

- Westport Middle School parent

**19,500** outdoor education participants

**10,000+** field trip participants from 48 zip codes

**4,200** underserved youth participated for free

**1,500** early childhood education participants

At The Parklands, we believe that everyone can be a life-long learner. From retirees participating in a guided Interpretive Hike, to the pre-k children attending our weekly Wednesday Wonder program, we hope that our visitors and program participants depart from each visit with a bit of extra knowledge about the world around them. Families attending Wednesday Wonders, for children 7 and under, are asked to investigate a number of scientific questions, such as “Why do birds have different beaks?” Combining curiosity with hikes, crafts and activities, our Education Team teaches these youngsters about the science behind the earth’s natural wonders.

“Ranger Olivia has been a wealth of knowledge and has a passion for connecting people with nature. Wednesdays have quickly become our favorite day of the week because of her.”

-Janelle LeFevre Vaesa, park visitor

"This was one of the best field trips any of my children have ever been on because of its experiential value. They got to watch one of the rangers catch a snake, which gave a few young girls the courage to touch the snake and face their fear of the day. And because the ranger was a young woman, it gave all the children the opportunity to see a young woman in a position of strength, courage and confidence."

- Westport Middle School parent
The Parklands preserves and enhances each and every corner of our nearly 4,000-acre park, and we’re able to do so thanks to your support. Through restored meadows and reforested areas, we have provided a fully-connected forest corridor to protect a variety of native wildlife and plant species so that they may thrive. We have seen the positive effects of these efforts through the return of the American Bald Eagle, Bobwhite Quail, the Virginia Rail and the Sora, among others.

Winter was an exciting time to be in The Parklands as sightings of not one, but three American Bald Eagles were confirmed on several occasions. As news of the sightings spread, visitors flocked to The Parklands in hopes of seeing these majestic creatures firsthand. Attracting these noble birds was celebrated among the community as well as our staff. The work of our Natural Areas Team, installing meadows and strengthening riparian corridors (both popular hunting grounds for birds of prey), are two factors that have helped attract the Bald Eagle to our corner of Louisville. Cold weather trout stockings by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife are why your best chance for Eagle spotting is on a winter day.

Completion of the Urban Conservation Initiative

A three-year Urban Conservation Initiative, thanks to a $3 million grant from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, was completed in 2017. The grant resulted in thousands of trees being planted and management of invasive species across our nearly 4,000 acres of parkland. It also encompassed conservation of special areas, including the protection of the endangered Kentucky Glade Cress plant native only to Jefferson County.

The Helmsley Charitable Trust grant also helped kick-start construction of the 15-acre Woodland Garden in Broad Run Park. Continued support from the community will see this magical space through future phases to completion. This world-class garden, with its hand-crafted stone pathways, and various garden “rooms,” will be a remarkable and accessible experience for all to enjoy.

**HABITAT RESTORATION**

"It’s pure Kentucky...the meadows in bloom, rolling hills and beautiful wooded areas." - Valerie Wilson, park visitor

ENIRONMENT

The Parklands calls to me, as if the soil and trees were part of my very being. And if we can pass that deep connection to nature along to the next generation, what better legacy..." - Vickie Campbell, volunteer

75,000+ trees planted to date

4,000 trees and shrubs planted in 2017

200 acres treated for invasives in 2017 so native species can thrive

Woodland Garden Taking Shape

75,000+ trees planted to date

4,000 trees and shrubs planted in 2017

200 acres treated for invasives in 2017 so native species can thrive

Completion of the Urban Conservation Initiative
Part of what makes The Parklands a special place is the sense of community it creates. Frequent visitors are inspired to give their time and treasure to help preserve, not only the parks, but also the welcoming environment exuded by the staff who maintain them. In addition, funds raised from individual and corporate facility rentals go directly back into supporting our annual operations. From individuals who donate gifts by becoming a Parklands Member, to our volunteers who invest hours each week to keep our parks clean and beautiful, these generous people, companies and foundations believe in our mission and play a critical role in preserving The Parklands for current and future generations.

2017 marked our inaugural Membership Drives in June and October. Members spread awareness and stories of why they support The Parklands, our donor-supported public park. Thanks to all Parklands Members—from our Founding Members to those who joined in 2017—that this park continues to thrive!

“I am passionate about being part of the Parklands Ambassador Program. My interactions with visitors tell me what a valuable and lasting legacy has been created by the preservation and improvement of these 4,000 acres of trails, playgrounds, wildlife habitat, and fresh air. Whether you seek peace and serenity for your mind and spirit, or exercise for your body, you can find it at The Parklands!” - Paula Blankenship, pictured right

“Love this park and loved the venue! It was so special getting married in the park where my husband proposed. So many memories from runs in the park to now a wedding. Thanks for making our day great!” - Allison Riedling, park visitor

Volunteer of the Year: Paula Blankenship

Celebrate at The Parklands

From wedding celebrations at the Hockensmith Barn, to family reunions at the PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP Pavilion, our staff works with event hosts to help them find the perfect Parklands venue and prepare for their special day. Just like your gifts, funds raised from all facility rentals and race permits go directly back into supporting annual operations of The Parklands—thank you!

“I think the preservation of green space is one of the most important things we can do. When I saw an opportunity to give, I did not hesitate. It is a cause close to my heart that I gladly support.” - Ben King, Parklands Member

MEMBERSHIP

2,703 Memberships in 2017 from:

• 24 states
• 237 zip codes

“I think the preservation of green space is one of the most important things we can do. When I saw an opportunity to give, I did not hesitate. It is a cause close to my heart that I gladly support.” - Ben King, Parklands Member

11,600 volunteer hours donated in 2017

• 431 Volunteers
• 38 Ambassadors

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• 63 weddings & receptions hosted in 2017
• 10 large-scale walks & races in 2017

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Construction of The Parklands was made possible through community contributions that totaled nearly $130 million. Now that construction is complete, your support helps protect and maintain that investment on an annual basis. We thank you for committing to supporting and maintaining this beautiful community asset, and hope you are as proud as we are of what we have accomplished together. Because we receive no public support for annual operations, our funding model relies on three main sources: your donations, earned income from facility rentals and programming fees, and support from the 21st Century Parks Endowment. Together, these sources ensure a sustainable future for The Parklands.

2017 INVESTMENT REPORT

You are truly an investment in our community. Not only does it make free admission to the park possible for all, but provides significant benefits for our environment, economy, health, and education. With an annual operating budget of more than $4 million, we rely on you to support this community asset.

$5,159,013 in Total Park Support
$4,977,409 of Operating Expenses

63% Fundraising
19% Endowment Support
18% Earned Revenue from Facilities & Education

9% Fundraising
7% Management

19% Endowment Support
84% Programming

63% Fundraising

*Includes $729,729 of in-kind revenue
* Does not include $3,057,088 of depreciation expenses

“The Parklands is such a beautiful and unique gift that Louisville has to offer its residents and visitors. I take my clients to see The Parklands and share my love for The Parklands as a value-added benefit of living in Louisville. My focus is in relocation. My corporate clients need for me to “sell” Louisville when they are working to attract top talent. The Parklands makes that so much easier! People are truly blown away when they see the beauty, quality and natural habitats created by The Parklands.”  — Julie Beam, Realtor

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The Parklands Foundation.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Thanks to everyone who attended or supported the event in some way, and to our volunteer Field & Fork Star Event Coordinators.

Lake and Sharon Schmidt (Co-Chair), Robert and Jule Bell (Chair), Stacie Johnson, Bob Bybee, and Stacie Johnson.

Morgan & Pottinger

Merrill Lynch

Ernst & Young

Recreonics, Inc.

Jessica and Samuel Reader

Purity Chapter #116, O.E.S.

Sue and Ned Pfau

Stites & Harbison PLLC

Sternberg Automotive

Vertner Smith and Barbara West

Melanie G. Simpson

Shirley Simons

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2017 BY THE NUMBERS

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1,000,000,000+ calories burned by park visitors
19,500 Outdoor Classroom participants
4,000 trees/shrubs planted
11,600 volunteer hours donated
2,703 Memberships
$2,414,357 raised

THANK YOU.

21st Century Parks, Inc.
471 West Main Street, Suite 202
Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 584-0350
www.TheParklands.org

Your continued support will positively shape the future of Louisville and truly benefit current and future generations through access to world-class parks.

Donate today at TheParklands.org/Donate.