

AKRON FALLS PARK

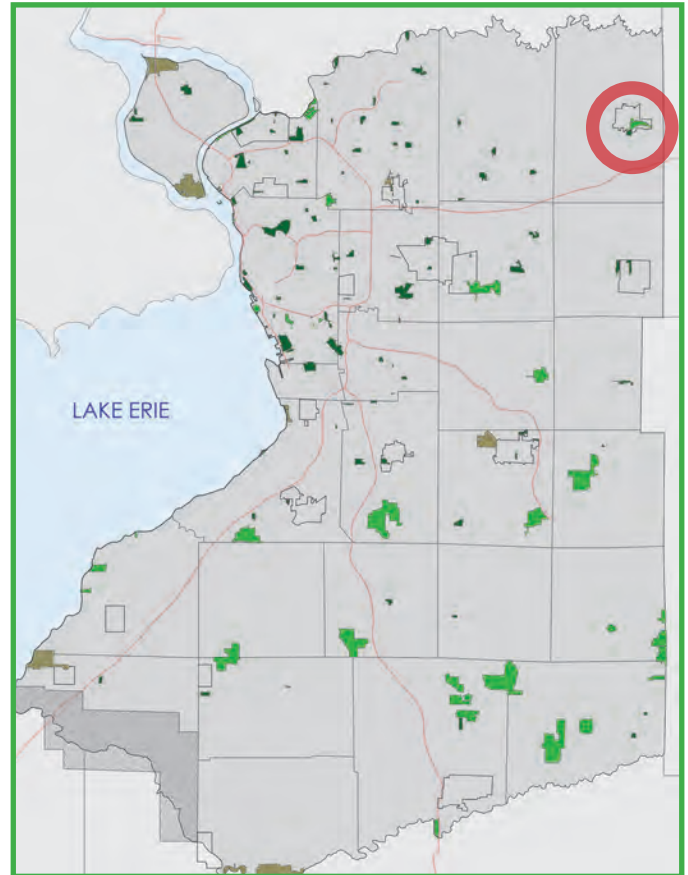
DESCRIPTION

Akron Falls Park, in the Village of Akron and Town of Newstead, is one of the older parks in the County's overall system. It was initially built as a Village Park in the early 1930s, but was later acquired by Erie County in 1947. This 154-acre, multi-purpose park features many iconic old stone structures and sloping terrain that straddles the scenic Murder Creek.

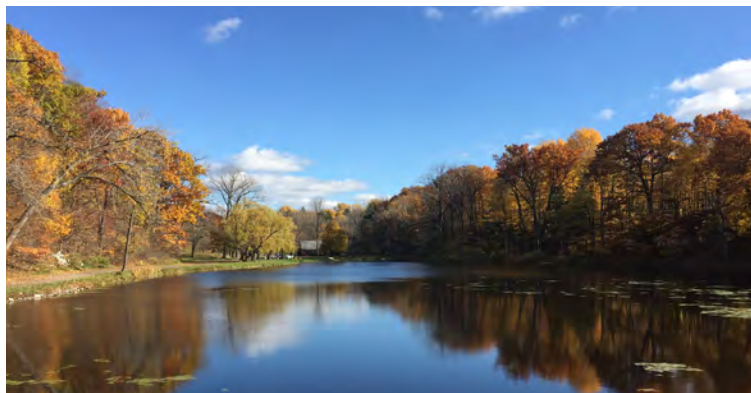
The dominant natural feature of the park is the 80'-high Akron Falls along the Onondaga Escarpment, which includes two separate cataracts on Murder Creek. The Creek then flows through a scenic glen within the park that includes an old manmade lake with dam, several islands, pathways and picnic areas. Numerous old, unique stone park structures dot the landscape, making this a unique 'Heritage Park' in the Parks System.

PARK AND AREA HISTORY

The first settlement in the area began in 1829, and following a rapid development of commerce and industry, the Village of Akron was incorporated in 1849. Cement and gypsum industries sustained the Akron economy for over a century. In fact, once nicknamed the "Cement City," an old news article from 1884 states that "there is hardly a piece of masonry of any importance from the Hudson River to the Rocky Mountains into which it [Akron Cement] has not entered as one of its component parts." In fact, there is a strong connection between the cement industry with the Akron Falls Park, including a series of mines underneath the falls and park. Remnants of one of the tunnel entrances can still be seen under the upper falls within the park. Also in 1884, the West Shore Railroad came to Akron, adding to the service provided by the New York Central Railroad, dubbed the "Peanut Line," running from Niagara Falls to Canandaigua beginning in 1854. As for park specific history, in 1933, the Civil Works Administration, which was funded by the Public Works Administration (WPA), initiated the development of Akron Falls Park, with approximately 90 men working for a minimum of \$15.00 per week. Later that same year the dam and artificial lake was constructed from bond funds (The Akron News 1933 - Wnyrin). Following the County acquisition in 1947, additional acreage was purchased to provide for skating and picnic space.



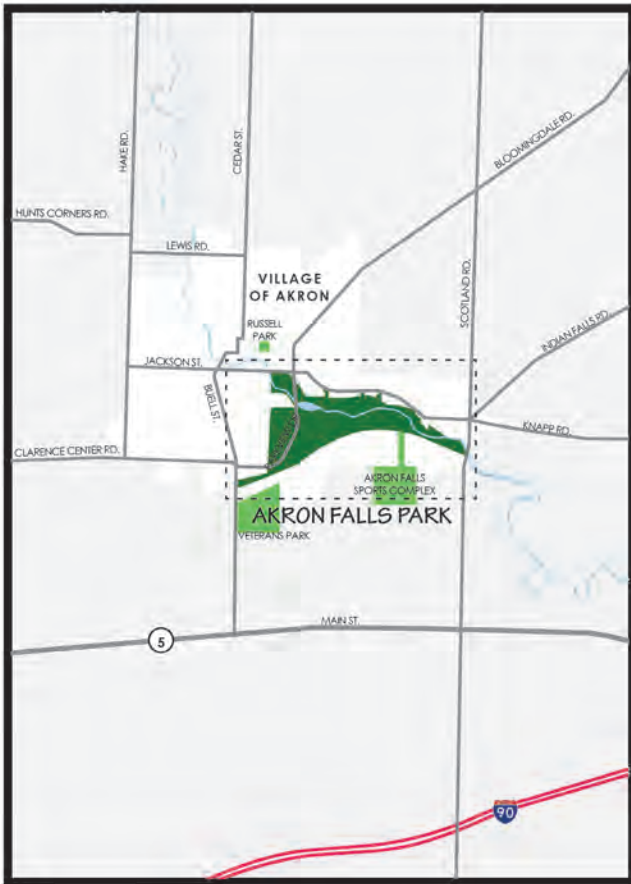
Park Location Map: Akron Falls Park in the Town of Newstead and the Village of Akron



Manmade lake and Murder Creek within Akron Falls Park.

PARK SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

- **Preserve and repair historic stone structures;** comfort stations, shelters, old stone grills, and unique features like the Rock Garden and stone railings at the Lower Falls.
- **Reduce lawn mowing to provide natural areas of wild flowers and meadows, especially along Parkview Drive.**
- **Enhance falls viewing opportunities at the Lower and Upper Falls.** Fortify and provide safety measures, possible barrier wall or guard rails at Lower Falls overlook, or by providing safe areas to view the falls at closer points along the creek.



Local context map

RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the earliest days of the Akron Falls Park development, the area around Akron and Newstead has seen and continues to see growth. In its earlier days, Akron Falls Park served the recreational needs of nearly all area residents. Now, with more recent developments of other local park and recreation facilities, there is less demand on Akron Falls Park for certain types of active recreation, while more and more people have rediscovered the park for its natural beauty, unique assets, and heritage features. One significant recreational feature in the northern Erie County area is the recreational trail that links the Village of Akron to the Town of Clarence. This Rails to Trail development on the old “Peanut Line” has the potential to eventually link Akron all the way to Ellicott Creek Park and the Riverwalk, through the Towns of Clarence, Amherst and Tonawanda.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Akron Falls Park lies directly adjacent to Akron Village, and yet there does not appear to be any direct or significant relationship between the two. Parkview Drive cuts through the park and provides a direct connection for passing vehicles into the east end of the business district (near the historic Octagon House). The Village of Akron has been revitalized over the past few years, and has become a destination for many looking for that small, quaint historic village setting. Other area industries and businesses have flourished, including the Perry’s Ice Cream Plant on the north side of the Village. Given its location, Akron Falls Park likely draws most of its users from the immediate area of Akron Village and Town of Newstead, as well as the surrounding communities of Clarence to the west, Alden to the south, Pembroke to the east, Royalton to the north and the Town of Alabama to the northeast. The Tonawanda Indian Reservation also is within close proximity to the Park.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Natural scenic beauty is the greatest asset of Akron Falls Park. The falls themselves changes throughout the seasons as stream flow varies, making each visit a slightly different experience. Below the falls, steep wooded slopes provide a feeling of wilderness, despite the park’s proximity to the village. These slopes are home to spring wildflowers, which should be protected as well as possible from visitors short-cutting the historic foot path by climbing straight downslope from the parking area.

Murder Creek provides a natural division of the park into north and south portions, which are also different in character. The northern part of the park consists mainly of wooded glen and creek floodplain, as well as the man-made lake. The southern portion is at higher elevation, and includes large areas of manicured lawn that present opportunities for enlarging natural habitat and re-introducing native plant species.



Park road featuring old stone culvert walls on either side





Lower Falls



Stone and timber railing along path to Lower Falls

The character of the lake also varies with seasonal changes in stream flow. In spring, high flows top the dam easily, allowing flow and mixture within the lake, but in late summer and fall, low flows mean the lake level drops, and the water can become stagnant. While it is not a practical possibility at this time, in the long term, modification or even removal of the dam could be considered as a way of improving the connectivity of stream habitat within the park. Flow variability also effects the stream itself-- portions of Murder Creek above the lake show bank erosion from fast flowing spring high-waters.

While invasive species are not a severe problem at Akron Falls Park, there are scattered populations of non-native plants such as Vinca minor, which have the potential to become problems in the future.

RECENT PARKS DEPARTMENT PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS

The 2012-2016 Capital Improvements within Akron Falls Parks totaled \$1,820,029 and included the following projects:

- Sealed and striped tennis courts, and striping for pickleball
- Sealed and striped basketball courts
- Parkview Dr. – Replacement of bridge over Murder Creek
- Brooklyn St – Replacement of bridge over Murder Creek
- Roadway improvements – Drain inlets replaced, road to shelter #3 reconstructed
- Parking improvements – Cummings Lodge and Parkview Comfort Station lots reconstructed
- Cummings Lodge – General repairs and painting
- Parkview Comfort Station – Replaced roof
- Valley Comfort Station – Replaced roof
- Brooklyn St. Comfort Station – Replaced roof
- Gas Shed – Replaced roof
- Shelter #1 – Replaced roof including decking
- Shelter #5 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #10 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Shelter #11 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Shelter #12 – Replaced roof
- Shelter #14 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Shelter #15 – Replaced roof and concrete pad
- Waterfall access – Fencing added and repaired, walkway resurfaced
- Dam sedimentation study completed



Warning sign and temporary barrier at the Lower Falls overlook



Lower Falls - Many people trespass and jump into and off of the falls, creating significant safety issues and increased duties for the Park Rangers



Old stone grill near Parkview Drive - All grills are displaying signs of deterioration like this throughout the park



Old ball diamond on Brooklyn Street; diamond is not maintained and hardly used

CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- The park is showing deterioration in its older, historic stone structures.
- Chain link fencing prevents access and views to the upper falls.
- Over the years, safety has become a big concern with deteriorating walkways, railings and former viewing areas.
- More connections to the Village are needed.
- Park lacks distinct gateway signage needed at key locations entering the park.
- As resources and funding dwindle, a new strategy for lawn mowing needs to emerge. Currently, most of the open space in the park is mowed, including areas that are beyond the recreational use areas.
- There is an apparent underutilization of some of the park facilities, for example the Concession Stand and Ice Skating Lodge.
- Numerous reports and accounts of unruly park users entering the falls beyond the 'safe viewing areas'. Park Rangers have had difficulty maintaining safety around the falls and keeping individuals from high risk areas. This has precluded the Rangers from being able to function and perform their regular park duties.
- Many old stone grilling stations still exist throughout the park, many are in disrepair and falling apart.
- Older pieces of playground equipment, not compliant with current guidelines, are scattered throughout the park.
- The Park has two baseball diamonds, but infields are not maintained. The diamond near Brooklyn Street has stadium lighting that is in disrepair.
- Poor safety along Parkview Drive for pedestrians. A sidewalk or crosswalk is not provided in the main park area, this creates an unsafe condition with park users walking along the road to access different areas/amenities of the park.



NATURALIZATION PLAN AKRON FALLS PARK

ERIE COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

MOWING REDUCTION:

Natural Regeneration: 3.5 acres
 Low-Mow Meadow: 13.5 acres
 Wet Meadow: 1 acre
 Wildflower Meadow: 8.5 acres
 Total: 1-27 acres

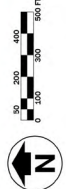
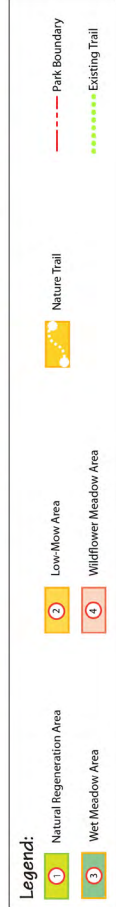
TREATMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

1 Natural Regeneration
 In these areas, which are currently mowed lawn, natural forests will be allowed to develop. In most cases, suggested natural regeneration areas are adjacent to existing forest, and serve to expand continuous forest habitat within the parks. Mowing will cease altogether, and woody plant removal will be limited to non-native species. Young native trees of species found in neighboring forest can be planted to speed natural reforestation, and native meadow grass and wildflower seeds can be planted to replace lawn until the tree canopy matures.

2 Low-Mow
 These are areas that may potentially see different use in the future, and are not intended to be reforested. They would be mowed infrequently to prevent woody plants from establishing. Within the 'low-mow' management category, there exists flexibility for tailoring management to a particular park or zone.

3 Wet Meadow
 A sub-type of Low-Mow Area, Wet Meadow simply refers to areas that currently tend to remain wet, and therefore may support different plant species than typical Low-Mow Meadow. Wet Meadow is not intended to retain standing water as a pond would.

4 Wildflower Meadow
 In locations with low use but high visibility, such as near park entrances, the Low-Mow Meadow treatment can be modified by the addition of significant native wildflower planting efforts. This will create a higher level of biodiversity and visual interest than simple mowing reduction.



NATURALIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Lawn Reduction

A large percentage of Akron Falls Park is currently mowed despite seeing little use for active recreation. Much of this area can be converted to use as wildlife habitat and passive recreation area.

At Akron Falls Park, the majority of lawn reduction will be conversion to Low-Mow and Wildflower Meadow. Certain areas near the western edge of the park tend to be wet, making them opportunities to create Wet Meadow.

The natural forest area between the waterfalls and the lake is one of the main attractions of Akron Falls Park. Natural Regeneration areas can begin a process of expanding this valuable forest habitat.

Natural Regeneration areas are recommended surrounding the park maintenance and service area. These will provide visual screening over time, and function much like an addition to the existing woodland north of the main park drive.

In the northern part of the park, the unmowed margin areas surrounding the higher activity zones can be increased over time without compromising flexibility for the future.

Water Quality Protection

Akron Falls Park offers an opportunity to enhance the water quality of Murder Creek, which has at times been a concern for the community. Increasing natural vegetation buffers and stabilizing streambanks are known to help maintain water quality. In the long term, however, adjustments to the dam may be the only way to prevent the lake from becoming stagnant in late summer when stream flows are low.

Invasive Species Management

Aggressive non-native plants are currently having a relatively low impact at Akron Falls, compared with many public parks. It is important to keep monitoring for changes so that the current level of quality can be protected.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Key - (Project Type: Project Number)

A - Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks Staff
 P - Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group
 C - Capital project

Historic Structures/WPA/Other Structures:

- **(P: 1.0-9.3) Preserve/enhance and restore Heritage Areas within the park, including; shelters, comfort stations, WPA era grills, other structures.** Consider the heritage “value” of these old park features for future tourism and visitor appreciation
 - The Rock Garden
 - Enhance and promote Old Rock Garden as unique destination to the Erie County Park System. Include interpretive signage about the history of the site. Picnic Groves including grill structures
 - Preserve and/or repair, depending on condition and location, WPA grilling structures to be used again as part of the original picnic groves
 - Hillside trails with unique stone steps, posts, railings and stone bench built into the hillside.
 - Lower Falls viewing area
 - Stone structures such as culvert headwalls and small foot bridges
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: PBN/In-House

- **(A: 1.0) Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House

- **(A: 13.0) Picnic Shelter #13 should be preserved and/or considered for possible reuse.** The shelter, which is at the west end of lake does not have vehicular access and it is not available for rentals at this time.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House

- **(A: 14.0) Enhance the usage and purpose for the Cummings Lodge, located off of Skyline Drive.** This facility could be retrofitted to serve as a multi-purpose recreation center, “nature education center,” or other park use.
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



WPA era comfort station off of Parkview Drive



Stone bench at the rock garden



Shelter #2





Large areas of open lawn on the west side of the park

Maintenance/Safety:

- **(A: 2.0-3.3) Reduce lawn mowing to provide more natural setting in non-recreational use areas, and help to shift park maintenance towards restoring older park structures. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- **(C: 4.0) Enhance falls viewing opportunities at the Upper and Lower Falls; Provide new ADA accessible overlook platforms with newer methods of pedestrian safety.**
 - Consider a new trail access route and viewing area to the upper falls from the north side of Murder Creek off East Avenue.
 - Provide safe areas to view the lower falls at closer points along the creek utilizing elevated platforms/boardwalk.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Contractor
- **(A: 5.0) Improve pedestrian safety along Parkview Drive.** Several strategies can be pursued:
 - Lower the speed limit on Parkview Drive to 15mph to coincide with the park speed limit.
 - Provide high visibility crosswalks and signage to provide a safer crossing scenario for park patrons using features on both sides of the road.
 - Construct a sidewalk or walking trail from the bridge to the park boundary. Coordinate with the Village to continue the walk to Buell Street.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Highway
- **Improve ADA access throughout the park wherever reasonable and feasible. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - New renovations can present opportunities to address standards in ADA accessibility. These can include for example, designing sports fields/courts for greater accessibility and seating, improved accessibility/updated surfaces to children play areas, and potential paving of new trails for people of different abilities.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House



Parkview Drive, heading north

- **(A: 10.0) Partner with Town of Newstead/Village of Akron to ensure that current and proposed area trails may expand to connect with Akron Falls Park.**
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: Town of Newstead/Village of Akron
- **(A: 7.0-7.5) Establish more dominant “gateway” features for the park, including upgraded entrance signs, enhanced landscaping with seasonal interest, etc. (2003 Master Plan)**
 - The park contains several entry points, and Parkview Drive splits the park into three distinct areas.
 - Two primary entrances into the park are from Skyline Drive and Parkview Drive. It is recommended that Major gateway features be implemented at these locations. These features would include upgraded entrance signs, informational kiosks nearby, and landscape treatments to impact a sense of arrival.
 - At several other entry points to the park a ‘minor’ gateway, or welcome type sign and treatment is recommended. At these locations the park rules should be posted. The locations identified for these ‘minor’ gateways include;
 - The park boundaries along Parkview Drive.
 - The Brooklyn Street entrance.
 - East Avenue at the roller hockey rink.
 - Skyline Drive at the parking lot to Cummings Lodge
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House
- **Continue working with the Town to develop an overall plan for Akron Falls Park.** An access to the park should be promoted from Main Street in the Village, to increase the profile of the park in the Village. A walkway should be developed along Buell Street to link the Park with East Avenue. *(Recommendation from Newstead/Akron Joint Comprehensive Plan)*
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Newstead Town Board/Akron Village Board
- **(A: 9.0-9.4) Establish legible and recognizable directional signage to the park.**
 - There are small signs at the intersections of Crittenden Road and Skyline Drive, and at Buell Road and Parkview Drive that are difficult to spot, the County outline shape blends in with the background, and the text is hard to read. In addition to replacing the wayfinding signage at these two locations it is suggested that additional wayfinding signage be provided at:
 - Intersection of Crittenden Road and Skyline Drive.
 - Intersection of Buell Street and Parkview Drive.
 - Intersection of John Street and Parkview Drive.
 - Intersection of Main Street and Parkview Drive.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: In-House/Highway
- **(C: 2.0-2.4) Provide new interpretive signage system and informational kiosks that tie the park better into the mix with other local cultural and historical attractions.**
 - Provide an interpretive “story-line” for the Park’s geological and local history, i.e. How and when the falls were formed?; How did Murder Creek get its name?; When was the Village and Town first Settled?; What’s the history behind the Octagon House?; What were some significant historic happenings in the area, or in the park?; When were the old stone structures built?; How did the discovery of Gypsum Deposits change the Village of Akron?; What is the background of “Cement City?” etc.
 - Provide interpretive signs or markers at key history and natural sites, such as at the site of any old mills on Murder Creek, at the falls, etc.
 - Enhance existing nature trail system along Murder Creek with new interpretive signage (2003 Master Plan)
 - Priority: Low
 - Partner: In-House



Existing park sign off of Parkview Drive from the south



Murder Creek



Entrance to the Rock Garden

Recreation:

- **(A: 6.1) Improve and maintain playground structures throughout park.**
 - Provide or replenish fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.
 - Replace swings/play equipment as needed due to wear and tear.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: In-House
- **(P: 11.0) Consider the removal or repurposing of sports fields and courts based on recreation trends and interests of the area.** Coordinate with Visit Buffalo Niagara (VBN) to identify possible opportunities.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: VBN/In-House
- **(C: 6.0) Improve tennis courts by including striped lines for Pickleball use.** Allow for dual-use courts.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Contractor
- **(C: 7.0) Install new updated basketball hoops (rim/backboard and nets).**
 - Potentially restrripe basketball court as a 'multi-purpose court' responding to the recreation trends of the area. Court could accommodate several sports, i.e basketball, volleyball, 4 square, floor hockey, and more.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Contractor



Playground off of Parkview Drive

- **(A: 6.2) Remove the numerous old non-compliant metal playground structures and equipment that dot the landscape throughout the park.** These pieces of equipment are outdated, most are unsightly, and many do not meet any current playground safety requirements.
 - Consideration should be given to several “legacy” playground pieces, such as the pumpkin coach. This equipment appeared to be in good condition and could be maintained in the park as a feature or considered artwork, without a fall surface which would encourage its use as play equipment. Refer to Volume One for additional information regarding “legacy” playground pieces.
 - Consider earthtone colors for playground equipment in the Heritage park setting rather than bright, primary colors.
 - Potentially reuse this old playground equipment by reaching out to local artists and craftsman. The metal parts could be used as installation pieces located throughout the park. (2003 Master Plan)
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**
- **(C: 9.0) Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of the park lake (2003 Master Plan)**
 - Provide a small deck similar to the one featured near the Commissioners Cabin at Chestnut Ridge for fishing access and as an overlook destination.
 - **Priority: Low**
 - **Partner: In-House**

Environment:

- **(A: 4.1-4.2) Improve the tree health of the park, in particular within maintained areas.**
 - Remove dead, dying or diseased trees.
 - Prune deadwood from trees.
 - Routinely monitor the tree population for indications of pest infestations.
 - Provide new native tree plantings throughout the park, particularly along Parkview Drive to enhance the arrival experience into the Park. (Consult County Forester and local experts to determine appropriate species to benefit wildlife).
 - Develop a multi-pronged approach to tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings.
 - Develop annual tree planting program to restore tree canopy and improve natural image of the park.
 - Apply for funding from NYSDEC for example for purchase of trees and materials and for the tree inventory.
 - **Priority: High**
 - **Partner: In-House/NYSDEC/ECSWD/Forestry**



Old swingset and slide adjacent to Murder Creek



Pumpkin coach - One of the many unique attractions providing character and charm to the park setting



Existing tree canopy on the west side of the park

- **(P: 12.0) Coordinate with partners to identify opportunities to naturalize the lake edge with riparian native plantings and other natural features.** Projects can take the shape of the “Living Shoreline” project at Ellicott Creek Park.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper/ECSWD/NYSDEC

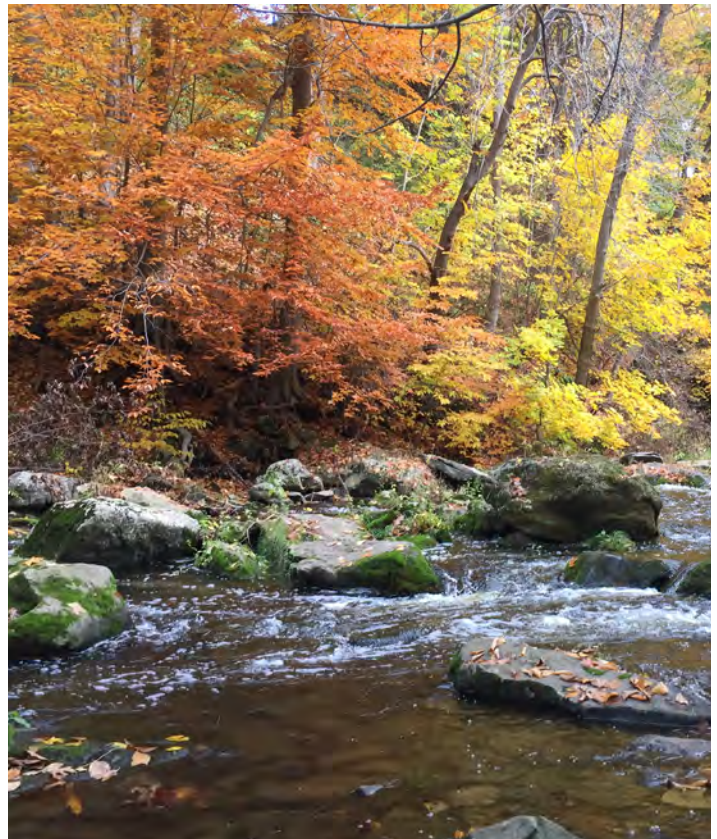
- **(P: 13.0) Encourage and emphasize natural features and opportunities to connect with park ecology.**
 - Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas;
 - Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;
 - Prioritize native pollinator friendly plantings for bird and butterfly habitats;
 - Designate potential native plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats;
 - The County should encourage the development of outdoor classrooms through partnerships with local schools. Outdoor classrooms can be living laboratories for local children to immerse themselves in nature and our local ecosystem.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: NYSDEC/Cornell Cooperative Extension/ECSWD/In-House

- **(P: 14.0) Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park.**
 - Address and remove threatening invasive species.
 - Priority: High
 - Partner: WNY Prism/ECSWD

- **(P: 10.0) Murder Creek focus projects should include stream bank stabilization and erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration, stormwater management, and contaminant reduction.** Work with NYSDEC, Buffalo Waterkeeper, Soil and Water District and other local stakeholder groups to continue to improve the health of the Creek.
 - Continued improvements to the ecological status of the creek and naturalization of the surrounding wooded areas can contribute to educational nature programs and trail/water recreation.
 - Priority: Medium
 - Partner: Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper/ECSWD/NYSDEC



Creek edge conditions as it flows into the lake



Murder Creek flows towards the lake, surrounded by beautiful fall color

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	2.0	Establish "Natural Regeneration Areas" to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish "Natural Regeneration Zones" identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	P.O.B.
A	3.1	Establish "Natural Regeneration Areas" to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Establish "Low Mow Zones" identified on the Master Plan	High	1-2 Years	P.O.B.
A	3.3	Establish "Low Mow Zones" to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Provide necessary signage along the "Low Mow Zones" to inform the public the reasons behind the practice and also to identify the areas to park personnel.	High	1-2 Years	In-House, Highway
A	4.1	Increase tree health and tree canopy throughout the park. The overall age of the tree population at the Park is considered to be mature, with limited young trees to renew the resource over time. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Prune and/or remove trees if determined to present an increased risk to park patrons and employees.	High	Ongoing	In-House, Forestry
A	6.1	Improve playground safety	Continue to provide or replenish engineered fiber fall surfaces at playgrounds annually.	High	Ongoing	P.O.B.
A	11.0	Promote alternative transportation to the park.	Coordinate with the Village of Akron and Town of Newstead to ensure proposed trail projects connect to Akron Falls Park.	High	Ongoing	NA
C	4.0	Enhance safety at Lower Falls viewing point.	Reconstruction deteriorating stone wall(s) and construct period appropriate (in appearance) guard rails.	High	1-2 Years	\$60,000
P	13.0	Prioritize protection and enhancement of sensitive ecological areas; Propose appropriate additional native plantings throughout the park;	Designate potential native pollinator plant gardens to promote educational and interpretive elements while increasing habitats for insect/bird habitats.	High	Ongoing	Partner
P	14.0	Management and monitoring of invasive species is imperative to the health of the park. Address and remove threatening invasive species.	Coordinate with WNY Prism, ECSWD, and others.	High	Ongoing	Partner

KEY:

A: Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks staff

P: Assistance or completion of project by potential partner/user group

C: Capital Project

POB: Parks Operating Budget



AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	4.2	Increase tree health and tree canopy throughout the park. The overall age of the tree population at the Park is considered to be mature, with limited young trees to renew the resource over time. Develop a multi-pronged tree planting strategy including contracted work, in-house staff and volunteer group plantings	Develop an annual tree planting program.	Medium	Ongoing	In-House
A	5.0	Improve pedestrian safety along Parkview Dr.	Coordinate with the Village to reduce the speed limit of Parkview Dr. to 15 MPH within the park boundary.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.0	Establish Minor Gateways, welcome sign and rules, for the park at the following locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.1	Parkview Dr. (north end)	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.2	Parkview Dr. (south end)	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.3	Brooklyn St.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.4	East Ave.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	7.5	Cummings Lodge	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels	Medium	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	8.0	Provide consistent wayfinding and directional signage within the park:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	X
A	8.1	The Falls	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	8.2	The Rock Garden	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	8.3	Trail heads, maps and trail markers	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the directional sign panels, trail maps and trail markers.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
A	12.0	Ensure that shelters, comfort stations and buildings are identifiable	Coordination between Parks and Highways to develop and produce the sign panels.	Medium	3-5 Years	In-House
C	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of warming lodge next to pond. Replace roof.	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$99,000
C	5.0	Improve safety along Parkview Drive:	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	X
C	5.1	Construct high visibility cross-walks, advance warning and crosswalk signage.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Medium	3-5 Years	\$2,500
C	7.0	Install new updated basketball hoops (rim/backboard and nets).	Engage contractor to perform repairs	Medium	3-5 Years	\$1,600
P	12.0	Coordinate with partners to identify opportunities to naturalize the lake edge with riparian native plantings and other natural features. Projects can take the shape of the "Living Shoreline" project at Ellicott Creek Park.	Coordinate and partner with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper and NYSDEC	Medium	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
A	1.0	Consider park for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places	Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer assigned to Erie County to complete the required nomination forms and submit to a State review board.	Low	Ongoing	In-House

KEY:

A: Action Item: Completed at low to no cost by Parks staff

C: Capital Project

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AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	3.2	Establish “Low Mow Zones” to reduce overall maintenance and provide wildlife habitat	Begin an educational program, through the use of the County’s website, to the general public which provides information regarding the “Low Mow Zone” program	Low	3-5 Years	In-House
A	6.2	Improve playground safety	Remove playground equipment that is not compliant with current regulations, with the exception of the pumpkin coach or other “legacy” pieces of equipment	Low	Ongoing	In-House
A	9.0	Provide directional signage to the park at strategic locations:	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.1	Intersection of Crittenden Rd. and Skyline Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.2	Intersection of Buell St. and Parkview Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.3	Intersection of John St. and Parkview Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	9.4	Intersection of Main St. and Parkview Dr.	Coordination between Parks & Highways to develop and produce the sign panels, and coordinate with the road jurisdiction regarding placement of the signs.	Low	6-10 Years	In-House, Highway
A	10.0	Remove dysfunctional lighting from Brooklyn St baseball diamond	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Low	6-10 Years	In-House

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
A	13.0	Picnic Shelter #13 should be preserved and/or considered for possible reuse. The shelter, which is at the west end of lake does not have vehicular access and it is not available for rentals at this time.	Utilize parks staff to perform improvements	Low	3-5 Years	P.O.B.
A	14.0	Enhance the usage and purpose for the Cummings Lodge, located off of Skyline Drive. This facility could be retrofitted to serve as a multi-purpose recreation center, "nature education center," or other park use.	Planning and improvements implemented by parks staff	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
C	1.0	Establish Enhanced Gateways for the park at the following locations:	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	x
C	1.1	Parkview Drive at main park road	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	1.2	Skyline Drive	Engage a consultant to develop sign types including copy, structure and landscape typology for each location.	Low	6-10 Years	\$17,800
C	2.0	Provide interpretive signage in the park:	Coordinate with historical society to develop copy and obtain images for the interpretive content.	Low	Ongoing	In-House
C	2.1	The Rock Garden	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.2	Geological history	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500

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Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
C	2.3	The Legend of Murder Creek	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	2.4	History of WPA structures	Engage a consultant to develop high resolution graphics and produce sign panels, installation In-House	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
C	5.2	Construct sidewalk from Parkview Dr. bridge to west park boundary.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the sidewalk	Low	6-10 Years	\$13,200
C	8.0	Improve fishing access and opportunities to the edge of the park lake (2003 Master Plan) Provide a small deck similar to the one featured near the Commissioners Cabin at Chestnut Ridge for fishing access and as an overlook destination.	Engage a consultant to develop plans and a contractor to construct the improvements	Low	6-10 Years	\$15,000
P	1.0	Prevent further deterioration of the following WPA Era picnic shelters:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	X
P	1.1	Shelter #3 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$35,000
P	1.2	Shelter #8 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
P	1.3	Shelter #10 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$35,000
P	1.4	Shelter #11 – Repoint stonework	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$25,000
P	2.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at Brooklyn Street Comfort Station; Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$6,000
P	3.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at Falls Comfort Station; Repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$120,000

AKRON FALLS: ACTION ITEMS

Project Type	Project #	Recommendation	Implementation Strategies	Priority	Term	Estimated Cost
P	4.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at warming lodge next to pond; Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$85,000
P	5.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone work at small seat/shelter near rock garden; Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$21,000
P	6.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone bench near falls. Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,500
P	7.0	Prevent further deterioration of stone bench at rock garden. Repair loose and missing stones, repoint stonework.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,500
P	8.0	Repair Franklin J. Nice memorial; Reset capstone, replace broken "mantle", clean and repoint joints.	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$7,000
P	9.0	Rehabilitate the following WPA Era grills to prevent further deterioration:	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	X
P	9.1	Grill #8; Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	9.2	Grill #9; Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	9.3	Grill #17; Replace missing stones, reset loose stones, clean and repoint mortar	Refer to partnership opportunity with PBN	Low	6-10 Years	\$3,500
P	10.0	Improve the ecological status of Murder Creek through stream bank stabilization, erosion control, habitat conservation and restoration and storm water management	Coordinate and partner with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper and NYSDEC to develop projects similar to the Living Shoreline project in Ellicott Creek Park	Low	Ongoing	\$150,000

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