

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
September 17, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners was held on this day at 950 Eden Park Drive. Commissioners present: President Molly North, Vice President Kick Lee, Commissioner Susan Castellini, Commissioner Phyllis McCallum, and Commissioner John Neyer. President North called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

Acknowledgement of Public Comments

President North acknowledged one in-person public comment regarding deer management and land management in Parks, as well as public comments received via email regarding Drake Park, the Burnet Woods lake, artificial turf, and bird-friendly lighting.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Approval of the August 20 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the August 20, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATE

Summer in Cincy: 2026 Results

Parks Director Jason Barron presented a summary of Parks' contributions to the 2026 edition of "Summer in Cincy," the City Manager's initiative to provide family friendly, teen specific activities during the summer months. The presentation covered the activation of the Sawyer Point skating rink with teen-specific programming, hundreds of community events and summer programs throughout Parks, efforts to employ teens through teen workforce initiatives, and the 2,300 volunteer hours contributed by teen Counselors-in-Training at Parks summer camps.

ACTION ITEMS

Eden Park Steps

Director Barron respectfully requested Board approval of the acceptance of a donation in the amount of \$717,164 from the Arn & Neil Bortz Families and the Ed & Pat Sheppard Trust, for the Eden Park – Playhouse in the Park Steps project. Commissioner Castellini motioned to accept the donation. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Ohio River Bike Trail

Director Barron outlined plans to reconstruct the multi-use trail that runs through Sawyer Point & Yeatman's Cove. The project includes removal of hazardous rail crossings, drainage improvement, and integration with regional riverfront trail plans. Director Barron requested approval to proceed with a professional services contract with Arcadis US, Inc. in the amount of \$339,103, with an additional 10% contingency, to provide construction documents. Commissioner Neyer motioned to approve award of the contract to Arcadis in the specified amount. Commissioner McCallum seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Ault Park Discovery Trail and Playscape

Director Barron shared an overview of work to design a nature-themed discovery trail connecting the new Ault Park playground to the existing trail system. The trail was developed by Parks, the Ault Park Advisory Council, Wimberg Landscaping, and other partners. Staff requested the Board approve the award of a contract to Wimberg Landscaping in the amount of \$129,096.75, with an additional 10% contingency, to provide and install hardscape and landscape material for the project. Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the award of the contract as outlined. Commissioner Neyer seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

INFORMATION / UPDATES

Monthly Finance / IT Division Highlights

Herta Fairbanks, Division Manager of Finance & IT, presented a new reporting format aligning spending with operational functions in an effort to improve transparency. The Commissioners and Staff discussed adding a column showing target spend for the year.

HR Update

Director Barron shared an overview of new hires and open positions with recruitment underway, and shared the date of the fall All Staff celebration, which will take place on November 5 at 11:30am. Commissioner Neyer requested a presentation on the basic steps of the civil service hiring process at a future meeting.

ACTION ITEM

Grants Application / Acceptance

Director Barron outlined two grant opportunities:

- From an anonymous donor: \$1,700,00, to be used for a comprehensive forest restoration effort in French Park over five years.
- From the Parks Foundation: \$4,500, to be used for transportation / busing assistance for schools and youth groups visiting nature centers.

Commissioner Castellini motioned to approve the acceptance of grant funds from the anonymous donor and from the Cincinnati Parks Foundation. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Barron presented the following updates, and shared a video highlighting the work of Greenspace Horticulturalist Ricci Sena:

- Krohn's Fall Show, *A Living Museum of Botanical Splendor*, runs now through September 27, and celebrates the beauty and diversity of plant life
- The ReLeaf tree giveaway program is back this year, thanks to a partnership with the Parks Foundation, MadTree Brewing, and Dynegy
- Paul Tonnis of Parks Planning & Design team officially became the longest tenured employee not only at Parks, but at the City of Cincinnati, celebrating 65 years with Parks
- Parks met with community members to gain feedback on McEvoy Park renovation plans
- Events throughout Parks in late September and early October.

OPEN COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION & COMMENTS

Commissioner Castellini requested an update on deer population management and population density in Parks. Commissioner McCallum acknowledged the public comment

received via email regarding Drake Park, and asked Parks Staff to look into and address the noted concerns.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President North stated that the Board would adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §121.22(G), to discuss the appointment, employment, and compensation of a public employee or official. Commissioner Neyer motioned to adjourn into Executive Session. Vice President Lee seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

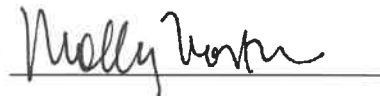
ADJOURNMENT

The Board returned from Executive Session at 10:33am. President North adjourned the meeting at 10:33am.

The next regular meeting date is Thursday, October 15, at 9:00am.

ATTEST:

PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Molly North", written over a horizontal line.

DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops, written over a horizontal line.

RE: [External Email] Public Comment, August 20, 2026 Lack of care for our forests in our city parks.
FW: Unhealthy trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. How to spot them - from The Enquirer

From mschafer1@zoomtown.com <mschafer1@zoomtown.com>

Date Mon 8/24/2026 2:26 PM

To Parks, Cincy <Cincy.Parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

 5 attachments (21 MB)

2026 Aug 23 dead tree by asphalt path IMG_4515.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 close up of rotten tree section after most fell across asphalt path IMG_4516.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 human walking path near asphalt path blocked IMG_4517.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 invasive vines cover excloser and large area IMG_4518.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 invasive vines extend to asphalt walking path (bottom) IMG_4519.JPG;

Rather than pass along a report, I set aside some time to see for myself – **the level of degradation of the woods in Drake Park is shocking!** As I worked to find a safe path, I met too hikers. They said all the human hiking paths are blocked. No wildlife either – only saw a couple of birds. They were correct. Eventually unhealthy and sick trees will come down. I took pictures. It is clearly NOT safe to hike in this area of the park – which for years was the most popular hiking area and close to the 1st parking lot.

Pictures # 4515 and 4516: the remains of dead tree No. 1 that had crashed across asphalt path – cleared earlier

Pictures #4517 human dirt path from asphalt path – blocked

Pictures #4518 and #4519: Extensive invasive vines covering a large area, including exclosure -no trees of any size in this whole area. All, including non-maintained exclosure should be cleared out, soil tested, new trees planted.

More pictures coming in additional e-mail – limit to size

Millie Schafer, PhD

From: Parks, Cincy

Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 11:48 AM

To: mschafer1@zoomtown.com

Subject: Re: [External Email] Public Comment, August 20, 2026 Lack of care for our forests in our city parks. FW: Unhealthy trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. How to spot them - from The Enquirer

Hi Millie,

Thank you for your email! Cincinnati Parks depends on community members like you to provide input and feedback.

Your feedback will be shared with the Board of Park Commissioners before the August 20 Park Board Meeting and entered into the public record.

Cincinnati Park Board

950 Eden Park Drive | Cincinnati, OH | 513.357.2604

www.cincinnatiiparks.com



From: mschafer1@zoomtown.com <mschafer1@zoomtown.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 10:24 PM

To: Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Subject: [External Email] Public Comment, August 20, 2026 Lack of care for our forests in our city parks. FW: Unhealthy trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. How to spot them - from The Enquirer

External Email Communication

I am appalled at the level of neglect occurring in a number of our city parks! **I urge this park board and director to step out of your offices and visit some of these situations.** For example, just pull in the 1st parking lot in Drake Park off Red Bank Rd and walk up the connecting paved path that runs along the edge of the woods there. It is shocking! There were 3 large (unhealthy) trees that had recently crashed onto this short walk. **You will see massive, invasives vines encasing large areas.** One area has been completely devoid of trees for many years - and these vines now also cover the worthless enclosure that was installed a few years ago – purpose unknown. A man advised that hiking in this area is not safe as a number of trees are partially down, large branches partially down, etc., etc., There are several natural paths branching off further into the woods (are human-created). But hiking is more of an obstacle course – and may well be too dangerous now.

As you already know, E.coli contamination has already been reported to you involving other parks. **Do you not have anyone in Natural Resources Division that has a graduate level degree in Ecology?** Your top priority should be addressing the unhealthy trees, etc., in our forests! Please see the Enquirer article below.

Lastly, as I said, I have training in **botany and zoology, at the college and graduate level.** I also have taken additional training elsewhere. The level of forest mismanagement of our city parks is shocking! The one bright spot appears to be the work undertaken by residents in Ault Park, and possibly a couple of others. **For God's sakes! Stop blaming forest degeneration on deer – the blame should be on the park employees who should be dealing with invasive species, thick canopies, unhealthy trees, etc., etc.**

Millie P. Schafer, PhD

Executive Director & Coordinator

Cincinnati Urban Deer Advocates (CUDA)

Cincinnati, Ohio

513-351-9957

P.S. I own a small woods and have worked, and still am working, to turn this into a viable habitat for wildlife while eliminating invasive species, sick trees, planting new trees and bushes after removing unhealthy trees- was a non-viable area years ago. Massive vines exist in this area too – and I've had to remove a lot of them. They also will grow back rather quickly. It's amazing what a viable forest area does – bird populations increase pretty quickly, especially when the right trees and bushes are planted. The few deer that move through here pose no ecology issue at all! (nor is my landscaped yard destroyed either because of the consideration given to planting deer-resistant bushes, trees, guards, etc) We can all co-exist but it requires education – including wildlife education.

From: mschafer1@zoomtown.com

Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 8:33 AM

To: millie p. schaffer <mschafer1@zoomtown.com>

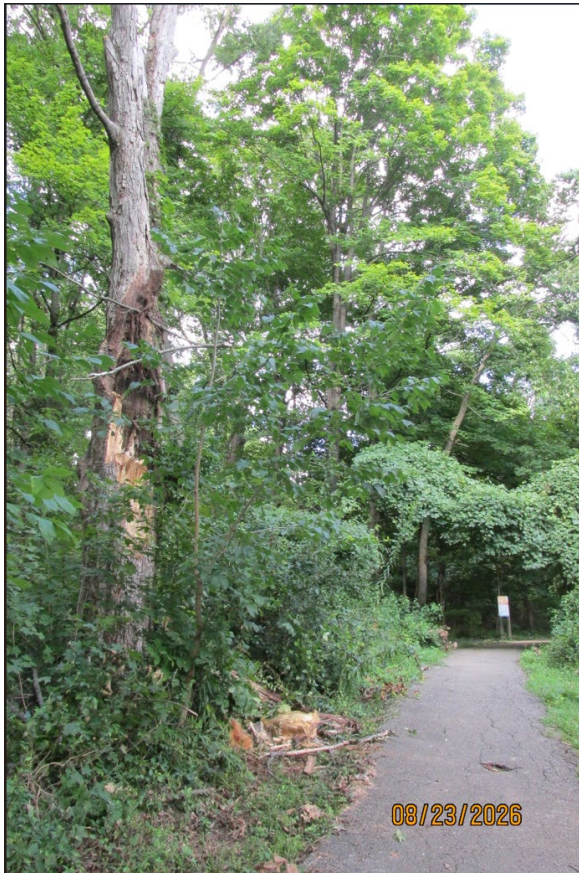
Subject: Unhealthy trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. How to spot them - from The Enquirer

Unhealthy trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. How to spot them

An intense "derecho" storm knocked down countless trees in Greater Cincinnati last week. Here's how to spot a vulnerable tree.

Check out this story on cincinnati.com:

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/entertainment/2026/08/18/how-to-spot-unhealthy-trees-vulnerable-storm-damage/91335969007/>





RE: [External Email] Public Comment, August 20, 2026 Lack of care for our forests in our city parks.
FW: Unhealthy trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. How to spot them - from The Enquirer
EMAIL NO. 2 WITH MORE PICTURES

From mschafer1@zoomtown.com <mschafer1@zoomtown.com>

Date Mon 8/24/2026 2:57 PM

To Parks, Cincy <Cincy.Parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

 7 attachments (15 MB)

2026 Aug 23 invasive vines spreading to trees IMG_4520.JPG; 2026 August 23 human hiking path blocked IMG_4521.jpg; 2026 Aug 23 another rotten tree, 4th one, has recently fallen across asphalt path IMG_4522.jpg; 2026 Aug 23 another block human hiking trail IMG_4525.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 another blocked human trail IMG_4526.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 partialliy fallen tree over human hiking path IMG_4527.JPG; 2026 Aug 23 3 partially fallen trees oveer human kiking path IMG_4529.JPG;

#4520 Since no maintenance was done to deal with this invasive vine, it has spread to numerous other trees, and elsewhere in the park

#4521 Human dirt hiking path from asphalt path is unsafe!

#4522 **Although a previous fallen tree, No.3, over this asphalt path was cut away, a new sick tree, No. 4, has recently fallen in this same area.**

#4525 and 4526 clearly show to different human dirt hiking paths blocked.

#4527 and 4529 clearly show to different human dirt hiking paths that are **UNSAFE!** The latter had 3 leaning trees over it!

All of these natural human hiking paths connect to the side of the asphalt hiking path – which is also blocked again. There were simply too many situations to post them all. Large fallen walnuts were just molding and rotting – no evidence of a single squirrel. Other invasive species permeate much of this area as well. The sound of I-71 traffic was the only sound the broke through all this “deadness”. Since the park is unsafe, I simply left. We need healthy, SAFE, viable forests. I have no idea about the condition of the rest of Drake Park. I wonder how many woods in other Cincinnati Parks are also just being permitted to degrade.

Millie P. Schafer

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Sent: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 11:48 AM

To: mschafer1@zoomtown.com

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[External Email] Public Comment: Thursday September 17, 2026

From Lisa Haglund <president@burnetwoods.org>

Date Wed 9/2/2026 7:43 PM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

Cc Merz, Rocky <rocky.merz@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Courtney, Crystal <crystal.courtney@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Harmon, Jon <jon.harmon@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Barron, Jason <jason.barron@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Rachel Wells <info@burnetwoods.org>

 1 attachment (56 KB)

Burnet Woods Update Lake Quality Testing 08_21_26.xlsx - FlatData.pdf;

You don't often get email from president@burnetwoods.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email Communication

Dear Cincinnati Park Board of Commissioners,

The Burnet Woods Parks Advisory Council (BPAC) wishes to express our appreciation for the ongoing updates Parks staff is providing as water quality testing of Burnet Woods Lake continues. We feel that seeking to understand the conditions in the lake is of utmost importance, given its popularity among community members for recreational activities, including fishing.

[Last summer \(2025\)](#), testing at four lake sample sites revealed that the water did not meet primary contact thresholds for E.coli as set by the state of Ohio. Armed with this knowledge, Parks took immediate action to protect the health and safety of park visitors by temporarily suspending canoeing activities as part of summer camps. This was a great example of data-informed decision-making. The ongoing sharing of testing results with the BPAC and on the city's website also is a step in the right direction toward transparency with the community. We hope these efforts can be continued and expanded.

This summer (2026), the sampling sites within the lake have been reduced to two sites (see attached table), excluding the location at the shallow, south end of the lake (Dock 2) that consistently showed high colony forming unit counts for E.coli. Also excluded this year is the spillway sampling site. The BPAC requests that Parks resume testing the same four sites as last summer so that we can better understand the conditions where issues appeared in 2025 and where human contact may be more likely to occur. We also would encourage Parks to continue testing the water quality in future years, as more data across several years will provide an even better understanding of the conditions in this well-loved park amenity.

We also would like to request that Parks share water quality test results where those who use the lake are most likely to see them. While there are no message boards immediately adjacent to the lake, we believe posting information in the windows of Trailside Nature Center may expand the reach of the current efforts to communicate the results. The BPAC will share the results with our outreach list, but please let us know if there are other ways we can support dissemination of the findings.

We look forward to the next update and continuing to learn alongside Parks about the water quality conditions of and best management practices for Burnet Woods Lake.

Thank you,

Lisa Haglund, on behalf of the Burnet Woods Park Advisory Council

CINCINNATI PARKS
DNR - CLM
BURNET WOODS LAKE
RECREATIONAL SEASON WATER SAMPLING RESULTS

METROPOLITAN SEWER DISTRICT
CSD - Lab Section
MSD Mill Creek Laboratory
Project: BURNETWOODS26

Final Data Report as of 08/21/2026

Data Code and Qualifiers:

> = Greater than

Sample ID	Location Co	Location Description	Station	Collection Date	Collect	Analysis	Analysis Descr	Dilu	Qu	Results
AE42517	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	5/5/2026	10:22	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		79
AE42518	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	5/5/2026	10:11	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		68
AE42940	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	12/5/2026	08:18	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		44
AE42941	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	12/5/2026	08:30	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		69
AE43332	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	19/5/2026	08:30	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		99
AE43333	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	19/5/2026	08:40	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		66
AE43658	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	26/5/2026	08:48	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		68
AE43659	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	26/5/2026	08:57	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		86
AE44093	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	2/6/2026	08:55	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		40
AE44094	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	2/6/2026	08:45	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		51
AE44607	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	9/6/2026	08:36	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		141
AE44608	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	9/6/2026	08:30	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		139
AE45030	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	16/6/2026	08:23	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		88
AE45031	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	16/6/2026	08:32	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		142
AE45415	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	23/6/2026	08:35	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		108
AE45416	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	23/6/2026	08:45	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		121
AE45809	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	30/6/2026	08:35	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		48
AE45810	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	30/6/2026	08:45	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		84
AE46184	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	7/7/2026	08:25	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		91
AE46185	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	7/7/2026	08:35	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		86
AE46701	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	14/7/2026	08:20	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1		210

AE46702	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	14/7/2026	08:30	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	179
AE47095	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	21/7/2026	09:16	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	43
AE47096	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	21/7/2026	09:25	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	55
AE47170	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	22/7/2026	08:20	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	238
AE47171	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	22/7/2026	08:25	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	411
AE47491	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	28/7/2026	09:27	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	60
AE47492	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	28/7/2026	09:16	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	41
AE47851	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	4/8/2026	10:00	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	18
AE47852	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	4/8/2026	10:05	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	20
AE48278	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	11/8/2026	09:00	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	61
AE48279	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	11/8/2026	09:05	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	125
AE48659	BWL-002	Burnet Woods Lake Dock 1	Dock 1	18/8/2026	08:23	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	79
AE48660	BWL-004	Burnet Woods Lake Line Holder	Finishing Line Holder	18/8/2026	08:34	E-COLI	E.coli (Colilert)	1	78

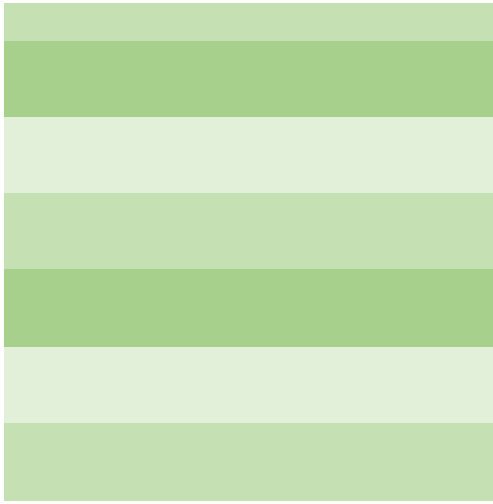
State Criteria for a Healthy Primary Contact Body of Water & Burnet Woods Results:

<u>90-day Geometric Mean</u>	State Criteria	≤126	CC/100ml
	Burnet Woods Lake	82	CC/100ml

<u>Statistical Value Thresho</u>	State Criteria	<10% of samples ≥ 410 CC/100ml
	Burnet Woods Lake	3.5% of samples ≥ 410 CC/100ml

[illegible]





[External Email] Public Comment Sept 2026

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>
Date Thu 9/3/2026 5:28 AM
To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>
Cc Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Park Commissioners and Director,

I am writing to ask that you reconsider the use of artificial turf in our Public Parks.

Artificial turf has a shelf life and will wear out, which means it will end up in the landfill.

Artificial turf is not sustainable or beneficial for our environment.

Please research its impact on the health and safety of our athletes.

Please remember that as we collectively feel the impacts of climate change, artificial turf heats up to unsafe levels for children and all living things.

Please consider focusing on being better stewards of our shared greenspace.

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

[External Email] Public Comment Sept 2026

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>

Date Thu 9/3/2026 8:33 AM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Aftab, Mayor <mayor.aftab@cincinnati-oh.gov>; #COUNCIL <CityCouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov>; CityManagerEmail <citymanager@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear City Leaders,

Please consider a moratorium on the use of plastic synthetic turf in our city. Protect the health and safety of humans and all living things.

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

Cincinnati Parks Volunteer

**SYNTHETIC TURF IS 40-70 DEGREES HOTTER THAN SURROUNDING AIR
TEMPERATURES ON WARM SUNNY DAYS**

On clear warm days, synthetic turf fields get superheated to temperatures from 120 to 180 degrees F. Playing on synthetic turf can melt shoes, blister hands and feet, and induce dehydration and heatstroke.

[External Email] Public Comment Sept 2026

From Stich Bear <stichbear@gmail.com>
Date Fri 9/11/2026 9:33 AM
To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

External Email Communication

Dear Park Board Commissioners and Parks Director,
Please keep at the front of your mind to look for opportunities to lessen hardscape in our Public Parks as much as possible. We need soil, vegetation and tree canopy more than we need concrete, asphalt and plastic turf.

As we collectively work to lessen the impacts of a warming climate we also need leaders who are spearheading the effort.

Set a good example as stewards appointed to help protect natural habitat.

Work with us, not against us.

Sincerely,

Shari Frost

Park Volunteer

Please include attachment in public comment

Ciutats
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saludables

FACTS
THEY
DON'T
TEACH
YOU.

Una
Barcelona
més verda



**IN BARCELONA, THE CITY IS
REMOVING ASPHALT TO MAKE
MORE ROOM FOR SOIL,
RAINWATER, AND VEGETATION.**

[External Email] Public Comment: 9/17/2026.

From Audubon Cincinnati <auduboncincinnati.1897@gmail.com>

Date Mon 9/14/2026 10:05 PM

To Parks, Cincy <cincy.parks@cincinnati-oh.gov>

You don't often get email from auduboncincinnati.1897@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

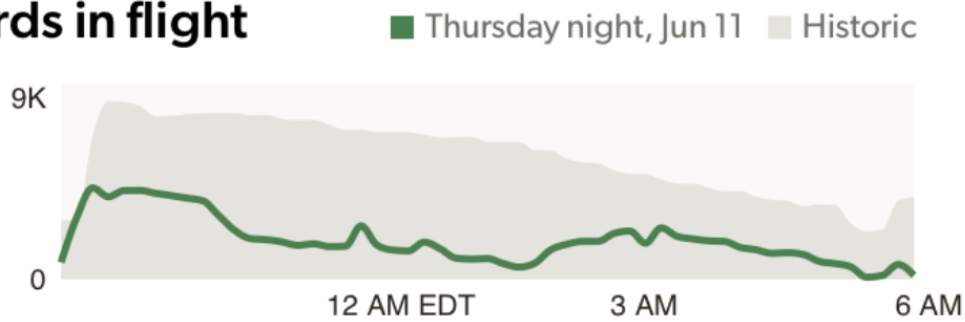
External Email Communication

To the Members of the Cincinnati Park Board:

During spring and fall millions of migratory birds traverse southwest Ohio under the cover of darkness to reach their breeding or wintering habitats. Light pollution from artificial lighting has been shown to disrupt the ability of nocturnally migrating birds to navigate, leaving them disoriented. The resulting disorientation may result in birds wasting critical energy needed for migration and increases their risk of collisions with buildings. Since Cincinnati Parks is planning to replace the streetlights within Burnet Woods, the Audubon Society of Ohio (ASO) requests that the Cincinnati Park board adopt "bird-friendly" lighting practices for the new streetlights to decrease the negative impacts of artificial lights on migrating birds. The National Audubon Society recommends the following to reduce the negative impact of streetlights on migrating birds:

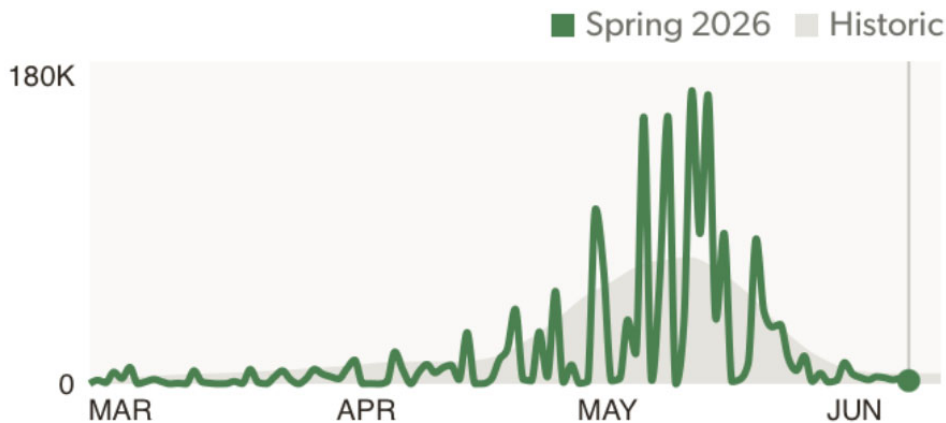
- 1). Use shielded lighting fixtures that block upwards and lateral light emissions, directing all illumination downward where it's needed.
- 2). Choose light bulbs that emit warmer colors (amber, orange, red) with lower color temperatures (CCT < 2700K) and longer wavelengths (>590 nm). These bulbs reduce the disruption of bird migration and are also beneficial for bats and many insects.
- 3). Use timers to limit light usage during peak bird migration. Peak daily migration of songbirds starts 30-45 minutes after sunset, with the greatest number of migrants in the following 3-4 hours. Data for Hamilton County, OH, June 11, 2026 (Birdcast, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

Birds in flight



During the spring migration, most songbirds pass through Hamilton County from mid-April to the end of May. In the fall migration is more drawn out (September 1 to mid-October).

Birds in flight (nightly avg.)



Data for Hamilton County, OH, Spring, 2026 (Birdcast, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

We believe the use of more bird-friendly lighting practices in Burnet Woods are particularly warranted because the park was designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the National Audubon Society in 2000 due to its importance as stopover habitat for many species of birds seeking food and shelter during their annual spring and fall migrations.

Based on data posted on eBird (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology), 184 species of birds have been documented in Burnet Woods since 1986, of which about two-thirds can be considered long distance migrants. During May 2026 (peak of songbird migration in Hamilton County, OH), 103 species of birds were reported in Burnet Woods on eBird. Nocturnal migrants observed included: 26 species of warblers, five species of vireo, wood thrush, black-billed cuckoo, yellow-billed cuckoo, summer tanager, scarlet tanager, Baltimore oriole and rose-breasted grosbeak. The data for spring and fall migration in recent years are similar.

University of Cincinnati (UC) ornithologist Ronald Canterbury (Biological Sciences) has been collecting data since 2023 on the number of birds killed due to collisions with some buildings on the UC's Clifton West Campus. Data collected during spring and fall migration in 2025 indicates that collisions with windows killed almost 1,000 birds, including one day where at least 50 birds were found dead. On days in 2025 when collection at these buildings occurred, slightly more than 4 birds/day were found. Nocturnal migrants collected during 2025 included: 17 species of warblers, red-eyed vireo, wood thrush, yellow-billed cuckoo, summer tanager, and rose-breasted grosbeak.

Collectively these data indicate that a substantial number of birds are moving through Burnet Woods and the surrounding area at night during spring and fall migration every year. While we realize that public safety and cost are the primary concerns for determining the streetlight policies for Burnet Woods, given Burnet Woods status as an IBA and the substantial use of this area by nocturnal migrants, the ASO strongly advocates that Cincinnati Parks adopt the most bird friendly lighting policies feasible to reduce the negative impact associated with light pollution on migrating birds.

The ASO was the first Audubon Society organized in Ohio (established 1897) and is currently the Cincinnati chapter of the National Audubon Society, which has been on the forefront of bird conservation since its founding. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue more with the Cincinnati Park Board.

Bill Stanley

President, Audubon Society of Ohio

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