



METROPARKS
TOLEDO AREA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wildwood Playground Proposal Chosen To Compete For Pepsi Refresh Project Grant

A new playground at Wildwood Preserve will look and feel like a Metropark, where all children will be able to enjoy accessible play structures in a natural landscape of prairie grasses and trees.

The playground will be built within the next year if Metroparks of the Toledo Area is successful in its bid for a \$250,000 grant from the Pepsi Refresh Project. The park district learned today that it is one of 1,000 projects nationwide selected to compete for a grant.

Starting today, the public can vote for the project through September at www.refresheverything.com/wildwoodplayground. The top two projects in each category will win the grant. Metroparks will reach out to its nearly 10,000 fans on Facebook to encourage them to vote as often as the contest allows, but a Facebook account is not required to vote.

“We’re asking our community to vote once a day, every day in September to help us build this truly unique playground, which is much more than a traditional playground,” said Don Rettig, Metroparks director. “This will be the first of what will become a new concept for future playgrounds throughout the Metroparks as part of our efforts to get all kids outdoors.”

The playground was designed with the help of a committee that included representatives of the Ability Center of Greater Toledo, who will continue to advise Metroparks on ways to make the playground accessible to children of all abilities. Separate play structures for children in different age groups will be built on rubberized play surfaces for safety, while the natural landscaping will invite kids to explore.

“There is a national movement to get kids outdoors,” Rettig said. “There are so many options today for kids to spend their free time that they are not as likely as we were growing up to go outside to play. Our challenge is to provide them with compelling outdoor activities in safe settings that appeal to kids and their parents.”

Rettig said that in a recent survey of 1,000 Lucas County residents, 98 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “It is important for children to experience a Metropark.” In the same survey, respondents said the top priority for their Metroparks tax dollars was providing high quality picnic areas, playgrounds and restrooms.

Rettig said that the Pepsi Refresh Grant would allow the playground to become a reality faster and with fewer taxpayer dollars.

“The grant project is also a very open process where the public makes the decision,” he said. “If we receive the funding for the playground it will be because the public has said it is important to them by casting their votes.”

Metroparks of the Toledo Area is a regional system of nine Metroparks, Toledo Botanical Garden, greenway trails and additional lands that preserve open spaces, wildlife habitat and historical sites in Lucas County.

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