

## OBSERVATORY PARK

# FROM THE GROUND TO THE GALAXIES

### *An Educational Adventure*

## Fact Sheet: Observatory Park

*Observatory Park is first and foremost a public, community resource like no other in the country.*

### Education: Natural, Scientific and Cultural

- Observatory Park focuses on the physical sciences of **astronomy** (telescopes), **geology** (seismograph station) and **meteorology** (weather station).
- Students from grade school to university, extending to well beyond Geauga County, will be offered educational opportunities from **basic sciences to advanced research**.
- A **planetarium** is a key component of the Robert McCullough Science Center.
- **Outdoor educational features** will help teach the cultural history of human interaction with the earth, the planets and the stars.
- A **Teacher Advisory Committee**, comprised of Geauga County science teachers, has developed an educational curriculum for Observatory Park in collaboration with the Park's Naturalist Department.
- The **Robert McCullough Science Center** has a 200-person seating capacity for media augmentations to outdoor earth and sky experience, viewing special exhibits and holding educator gatherings.
- The **Great Lakes Science Center, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Lake Erie Science and Nature Center** and Geauga Park District look forward to enhancing their educational programs through collaboration.
- The **Armagh Observatory in Ireland** is working with Geauga Park District in the development of a **human orrery** (an interactive planetary model designed for educational purposes) for Observatory Park.
- **Nassau Observing Station** is a primary educational feature of Observatory Park. It was acquired as part of Geauga Park District's purchase of 281 acres from CWRU in October 2008.
  - The station's **Warner-Swasey deep-sky 36-inch mirror research telescope** will be refurbished for educational and research use by the public.
- A **seismograph station** will not only be an educational resource, but also an important scientific resource for the State of Ohio, as notable ground faults exist in Northeast Ohio. It will be networked into the Ohio Seismic Network and USGS National Earthquake Information Center.
- A one-mile **Planetary Trail** offers the adventure of an imaginary stroll across the solar system with planets spaced to convey relative distances from the Sun and each other. ***Eight planetary stations*** provide facts and depict relative size of the planets.
- An **astronomy-space science museum** will be created in Nassau Observing Station to interpret the impressive heritage of astronomical advancements in Northeast Ohio.

## International Dark-Sky Park

- The International Dark-Sky Association has granted status as a **Silver-Tier International Dark Sky Park** for Geauga Park District's efforts to preserve a dark sky over Observatory Park and all GPD's surrounding park lands.
- Observatory Park is **one of only five parks in the country and eight in the world** to receive a Dark Sky Park designation.

## Collaboration

- The **OP Technical Advisory Group**, chaired by William Ginn, meets regularly and includes senior staff from the *Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Great Lakes Science Center, Case Western Reserve University, Kent State University, Hiram College and the Lake Erie Science and Nature Center.*
- Collaboration is ongoing with the **Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society**, which has been instrumental in the development of the park and the restoration of the Oberle Telescope.

## Natural Features

- Observatory Park helps protect the **headwaters of the Cuyahoga River.**
- Observatory Park holds a **diversity of habitats.** Some important endangered plant and animal species have been found on the property.
- Observatory Park is Geauga Park District's **largest single land-holding** at 1,117 acres.
- Observatory Park sits atop the **Defiance Moraine**, a gathering of granite boulders – glacial erratics – and will provide a focal point for programs relating the strong influence of Ice Age glaciation on the local landscape.

## Facilities

- The **Oberle Observatory** will accompany the Public Events Building on the plaza. It will house the Oberle 25.5-inch mirror Newtonian Reflector telescope bequeathed to GPD.
- Park construction focuses on **“green” building principles.** Wind, solar energy and sustainability are a priority to demonstrate the harnessing of natural forces to help meet growing energy needs.
- **Other site features** include a Weather Trail, Human Sundial, Day and Night Gardens, Lunar Sculpture, Lunar Phases Display, Constellation Sculpture and a sloped grass amphitheater.

## Construction and Capital Campaign

- Observatory Park is being **privately funded** by philanthropic dollars.
- **Observatory Park: From the Ground to the Galaxies** capital campaign goal is \$2.5 million, including \$450,000 for a Stewardship Endowment Fund.
- Construction and development of Observatory Park is being **implemented in phases** as fund development achievement progresses.
- The campaign has achieved **\$1.45 million as of August, 2011.**
- **Donor naming opportunities** are available for leadership gifts, including individual named endowments for a minimum of \$10,000 to be part of the Observatory Park stewardship endowment fund.

***“There is nothing in the world which can compare to Observatory Park.”***

***--- Terry K. McGowan at the Phase II groundbreaking ceremony when officially presenting the International Dark-Sky Association's Provisional Silver-Tier Dark Sky Park certificate to Geauga Park District. Terry chairs the IDA Technical Task Force and serves on the IDA Education Task Force.***

Learn more and support the Observatory Park campaign at  
[www.geaugaparkdistrict.org/observatorypark.shtml](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org/observatorypark.shtml)