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March 19, 2026

News Release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GREAT PARKS REOPENS SHARON LAKE

The Sharon Lake Improvement Project, one of the largest in the history of Great Parks, is now complete, and the lake has reopened to the public with new boardwalks, expanded wetlands, a new accessible kayak launch, trail improvements and new parking areas.

“Sharon Woods visitors will enjoy discovering all the transformational upgrades we’ve made to improve Sharon Lake as a regional attraction,” said Todd Palmetter, Great Parks CEO. “Whether it’s walking through the new wetlands, kayaking on the water or viewing the wildlife that will make the restored lake their home, there is much to see and explore for our guests.”

In perhaps the most notable change, Great Parks has doubled the lake’s wetland habitat area, which will host a variety of wildlife ranging from birds and fish to plants and microscopic organisms that will thrive in the new environment. New boardwalks extend well into the northern area of the lake to give guests a close-up look at the new wetlands and other habitats.

[Great Parks](#) added a new floating kayak launch, which provides safer and easier entry and exit at the water’s edge. The floating kayak launch will make kayaking on Sharon Lake more accessible for all ages and abilities.

Also added are new benches, parking and native planting areas by the lake that manage rainwater. The shared-use trail that surrounds the lake has reopened. While the lake was empty, Great Parks also took the opportunity to conduct routine maintenance on the 1930s-era Kreis Dam, repairing its masonry joints and rebuilding the viewing platform at its base.

Guests can bring their own kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and canoes to enjoy the water. Rentals of kayaks, paddleboats and canoes will become available this summer when Great Parks opens a new temporary boathouse at the Sharon Woods Lakeside Lodge on the east side of the lake. The temporary boathouse is necessary because Great Parks is already underway in preparing the next development at the lake, the Sharon Woods Harbor Revitalization, which will include all new amenities and facilities in the harbor and its surrounding area. More information on the harbor project is available at greatparks.org/projects.

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Great Parks will be adding fishing piers in the coming weeks, although fishing will be prohibited in the lake for at least the next three years to allow fish to repopulate the lake. New habitats for the fish are still being formed as plants grow and establish within the new wetlands. Great Parks will restock the lake multiple times with very small fish, known as fingerlings. These fish will grow as the lake's food sources become more plentiful, and Great Parks will monitor the population as it expands.

The Sharon Lake Improvement Project became necessary after years of sediment accumulation, excess nutrients entering the lake from the developed watershed, and aggressive aquatic vegetation reached the point of threatening recreational opportunities and some aquatic habitats. Construction at the lake started in the summer of 2024.

Great Parks invested more than \$17 million into the project, with funding from multiple sources including the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, an anonymous foundation, Duke Energy Foundation, Land & Water Conservation Fund and State of Ohio Capital Improvement Fund. These added to Great Parks capital project funding supported by voter approved levies that support master plan priorities.

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