**On June 11, 2020 the Board of Commissioners of the Huron-Clinton Metroparks took action to endorse the following open letter statement.**

**(Brighton, Mich.) –** There is no question we are living in a time of profound challenge, hurt, anger and frustration. From the coronavirus health pandemic that hit Michigan, our region and communities of color hard, to the horrific incidents and images that show us the underlying racial injustice far too prevalent in our society. It’s been heartbreaking to see the pain and trauma over these injustices unfold across our communities here in Michigan and nationwide.

We are all struggling for the right words, but we can’t let that hold us back from talking – and acting. It’s as important as ever that we step up, speak out and stand together for what’s right. That includes us – your Huron-Clinton Metroparks.

The core of our Metroparks mission is to provide exceptional outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for all who call Southeast Michigan home. All means **all** – regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, income level, ethnicity, or ability. Everyone should always feel safe, welcome and respected in the Metroparks.

But for too many, that feeling can be a challenge as our fellow citizens are unjustly attacked simply because of the color of their skin. They cannot go for a run or visit the park to birdwatch without fear or anxiety. While many of us will never know what that feeling is like, we are horrified by it. It’s on all of us to condemn it and to stop it.

Our Metroparks message to every Michigander of color is simple: you belong here and you are welcome here. They’re YOUR Metroparks.

Access to nature, parks, playgrounds, public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities are part of what defines us as a people and a state. They connect us and make us better, stronger and healthier – whether you are black, brown or white, whether you live in an urban city, suburb or rural area and no matter your age, background, creed, ethnicity, or socio-economic status.

That’s why the Metroparks is deeply committed to actively listening, learning and being part of the solution.

Simply saying it is not enough. We must live that ethic every day. One way we’re doing that at the Metroparks is with ongoing and meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and training. We must ensure we’re not only the best stewards of our parks system but of the public trust. While we strive hard to be representative of the incredibly diverse region we’re honored to serve, we know we can and must do better.

Learn more about what we’re doing at metroparks.com/DEIdepartment. We hope you will help us in the important work ahead and welcome your thoughts on how we can best move forward, together. Because together, we can be a powerful force for good and the change we all need.

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**About Huron-Clinton Metroparks**One of America’s premier metropolitan park systems, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks have served the people of Southeast Michigan since 1940. Managed by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, the Metroparks are made up of 13 properties in Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties. Available activities include fishing, swimming, boating, hiking, nature study, biking, golf, winter sports and more. The Metroparks also provide educational resources on science, nature, history and the environment. Learn more at Metroparks.com.