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# A Legacy of Hospitality with an Unwavering Commitment to a Stronger Future



**Bob Peckenpaugh**  
Wheeling Park Commission

Bob Peckenpaugh is the President & CEO of the Wheeling Park Commission, which is comprised of Oglebay Park and Wheeling Park, a historic park system in Wheeling, West Virginia that encompasses 2,200+ acres of recreational and educational opportunities for local residents and visitors alike. Previously, Peckenpaugh served as General Manager of the Edgewater Hotel, a luxury, water-front resort overlooking Elliott Bay in Seattle, Washington. He also served as the Managing Director of Omni Barton Creek Resort and Spa in Austin, Texas, where he analyzed and reimaged the resort's operations. Peckenpaugh has led resort and hotel teams in Hawaii, California, South Carolina, and Florida.

For nearly a century, the enduring appeal of Oglebay Park and Resort – majestic trees, colorful gardens, lush lawns and fairways, winding paths and trails – has offered a year-round kaleidoscope of nature's beauty. And for families from near and far, the park and resort have become the ideal place for multi-generational recreation, traditions, and celebrations, with exceptional accommodations and restaurants.

The park we all know and love today began as a gift of 750 acres of farmland and some historic structures from the estate of Earl W. Oglebay in 1926. His will stipulated that his farm be transformed “for use as a park and for recreation and playground purposes for the people of Wheeling and its vicinity, to be known as Oglebay Park.”

It took two years for the city of Wheeling to accept the gift and was editorialized as a “Magnificent Gift for the People” and the city’s “Great Opportunity” in July 1928.



chickens, dairy, and agricultural products has been transformed into a premiere tourist destination, generating an impressive annual economic impact of \$210 million.

Amenities too numerous to list in this article include Wilson Lodge; the Good Zoo, the only Association of Zoos and Aquariums-accredited zoo in West Virginia; the West Spa, ranked by America's 100 top spas; two championship golf courses, including the 2023 Golfer's Choice course of the year, our Arnold Palmer Signature Course; and an ARBNet Level 1 Accredited Arboretum within more than 2,000 acres.

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Over the span of 95 years, the Wheeling Park Commission, the entity that manages the park, has made strategic, consistent investments focused on improving the lives of our community, state, and region. In this window of time, Oglebay's model farm of

At the heart of Oglebay Park and Resort's identity is a commitment to hospitality and tourism. Current investments embrace our rich history with the contemporary expectations of guests and busy families. Lodge rooms and cottages are being thoughtfully tailored to

meet these evolving needs, complemented by new flexible dining options and revitalized entertainment offerings. As live music, annual festivals, and programming undergo careful review and refinement, the objective remains clear: to ensure that each guest is drawn back season after season.



Embracing our leadership role in environmental stewardship and sustainability, Oglebay Park and Resort is on the forefront of best practices. Collaborating with EQT, innovative carbon offset initiatives harness the power of our wooded areas, measuring and evaluating soil health while removing invasive species. These measures are just some of the ways we're improving and preserving our land. Maximizing our architecture without compromising our view shed, we're expanding our use of renewable energy through partnerships with IMC Solar. Even our retail offerings are being curated with a selection of environmentally conscious products.

Our journey towards sustainability is comprehensive. We're removing single-use plastics, investing in biochar technology to repurpose trees into fertilizers, and recycling shipping containers into animal bedding and compost material. Our team is looking at the totality of our business to determine ways to continuously improve. Every newly installed light is LED. The list of ways we're working to maintain the service levels our customers expect, while being sensitive to the needs of our environment, are making the case that it is possible to do good while doing well.

With all these milestones and accomplishments, our business model is unique. Fees from lodge operations cover about 80% of our costs, while Oglebay Park and Resort receives less than 1% of its operating budget from city and state taxes. To fill this gap, the Oglebay Foundation was formed in 1996. Grant income for 2022 exceeded \$10 million – all of which was reinvested into park improvements. Annual contributions to support the park exceed \$5 million.

These impressive numbers play a critical role to support Oglebay Park and Resort's 580 employees with training programs; maintain more than six miles of paved roads; the refurbishment of 249 guest rooms, 10 meeting rooms, and 55 cottages; 8 historic buildings; pools; a zoo with 68 species and 370 animals, as well as their habitats; 4 golf courses, and the list goes on.

These investments ensure Oglebay Park and Resort's enduring relevance. The attraction of new and returning guests perpetuates a cycle of expansion and progress that propels our business forward. It's an incredibly exciting time for Oglebay Park and the leadership team is using this momentum toward making that stronger second century a reality. **V**