

**December 12, 2023**

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**SIX DECADES OF TRAILS AND TRADITION: SUMMIT METRO PARKS  
HONORS ORIGINAL HIKERS**

***Four local women complete their 60<sup>th</sup> Fall Hiking Spree***

As Summit Metro Parks celebrates the conclusion of its 60th Fall Hiking Spree, the park district proudly recognizes the remarkable achievements of four extraordinary individuals known as the "Original Hikers." Ranging from age 73 to 103, Original Hikers Joan Haby, Jennifer Hoffman, Jennie Pier and Neva Ucker have hiked the Fall Hiking Spree since its inaugural year in 1964.

Each fall, these passionate trailblazers have exemplified unwavering commitment by completing every spree without fail – a testament to their enduring love for nature and an unbreakable bond with the park district's cherished tradition. The Original Hikers have shared their spree traditions with family and friends, and many of their loved ones join them in completing the Fall Hiking Spree each year.

First-year spree hikers earn a hiking staff and shield, while returning hikers earn the shield to add to their staffs. The Original Hikers' staffs are so covered in shields, they are frequently stopped on their hikes by other visitors who admire them and wonder how long they've been hiking the spree.

"As Summit Metro Parks commemorates this historic milestone and the achievement of the four Original Hikers, we invite the community to join in the spree tradition each fall," said Marketing and Public Relations Manager Claire Merrick. "Their stories serve as an inspiration for all, showcasing the transformative power of nature and the profound impact of consistent dedication."

To learn more about the Original Hikers, visit <https://metro-parks.medium.com/original-hikers-lead-the-way-5d56548b5c74>. Additional photos are available upon request.



*Original Hikers: (left to right) Joan Haby, Neva Ucker, Jennie Pier and Jennifer Hoffman*

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In 2023, Summit Metro Parks is celebrating the benefits of native plants through Wild Back Yards. The park district manages more than 15,000 acres throughout 16 parks, three nature centers and over 150 miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance is approximately 5.5 million visits. Find us online at [summitmetroparks.org](https://summitmetroparks.org).



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