

GREEN ISLANDS

SUMMIT METRO PARKS



QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



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Learn about a unique pollinator



Your Metro Parks are funded by a small Summit County real-estate tax. This magazine is an example of your public dollars at work.

Summit 
Metro Parks

Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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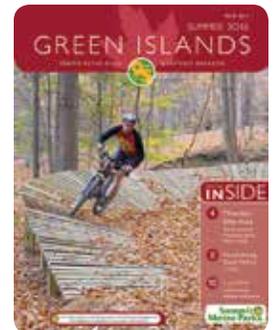
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BOARD of PARK commissioners



The park district's governing body is appointed by the Summit County Probate Judge. Commissioners serve overlapping three-year terms and are assisted by the executive director, who oversees the work of full-time and part-time employees, seasonal workers and volunteers. For more information, please call the administrative offices at 330-867-5511.



ABOUT the COVER

The park district's first mountain bike trails are now open in Hampton Hills Metro Park.

PARK news



- The **Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad** has added the **Big Bend Area** of **Sand Run Metro Park** (1337 Merriman Rd., Akron) as a stop on its **"Bike Aboard!"** route, through October. For details, visit cvsr.com.

- Summit Metro Parks has partnered with the Akron-Summit County Public Library to present **"Pathways to Poetry."** As part of the library's

Mind, Body & Sole program, local students wrote nature-inspired poetry. Fifteen poems are placed along select trails in the Metro

PARK NEWS (continued)

Parks through August. Find poems in: **Cascade Valley Metro Park** (354 Sackett Ave., Akron), **F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm** (1828 Smith Rd., Akron), and **Goodyear Heights Metro Park** (550 Frazier Ave., Akron).



- Join us at our **Touch-A-Truck event** on **Saturday, August 6** from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at **Munroe Falls Metro Park** (521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls). All ages can touch and sit in more than 12 different Summit Metro Parks vehicles. Includes a special appearance by Air Bear helicopter from Akron Children's Hospital!



- A fence has been added to the **Lake Area at Munroe Falls Metro Park** (521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls). Admission fees during swim season will only apply to individuals entering the fenced-in beach area and will not apply to others visiting the park.

For more news, visit our all-new, mobile-friendly website:
summitmetroparks.org

FRIENDS OF METRO PARKS



Friends of Metro Parks is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that supports the park district in many ways, including educating visitors about important issues and connecting residents of Summit County with the rich resources of our Metro Parks. Membership dues allow Friends to support the mission and programs of the park district.

For information about joining Friends:

friendsofmetroparks.org

Go out and RIDE!

July 1 to August 31

SUMMER
BIKING
SPREE

Complete five rides to receive a bicycle license plate and reflective sticker. (Veteran riders earn a sticker.)

Forms are available online and at Acme Fresh Market stores.

Summit Metro Parks

330-865-8065
bikingspree.summitmetroparks.org

MOUNTAIN DEBUT

Summit Metro Parks recently opened its first mountain bike trails

in Hampton Hills Metro Park. The newly developed Mountain Bike Area (2092 Theiss Rd., Akron) features about 3.15 miles of beginner, moderate and intermediate trails, with an additional 4 miles coming later this year. Plans to extend the course over the next several years could result in up to 16 total miles of trails to ride.



Trails offer different skill challenges for riders. Less experienced riders can bypass them until they're ready.

BIKE TRAILS AT HAMPTON HILLS

Lindsay Smith, Marketing Coordinator



Signs and trail markers help riders navigate the new trails.

THE TRAILS

“At Hampton Hills, mountain bikers of all experience levels can test their skills,” noted Project Manager Mark Avery, who oversaw the development of the area for the park district. “Start with the short beginner loop, and gain confidence to ride the moderate loops. Difficult sections are coming later. If you are really adventurous, try riding over the four optional skill sets. The ‘snake ladder’ is quite challenging.”

If you are a more seasoned rider, head north to the intermediate trails, which

will take you into a steep ravine leading down to Woodward Creek. This section of trail is fast and challenging with big berms and wooden features. “The ‘skinny challenge’ and the big drop are not for the timid,” said Avery.

Higher levels of skill and stamina are recommended for these aggressive trails. It is from here that the trail will expand over the next year to cross Woodward Creek and connect with trails off Akron-Peninsula Road. Eventually, when trail connections are complete, Summit Metro Parks will add a small parking area on Akron-Peninsula Road.



An open-air shelter, Fixit station and bike rack are located by the parking lot.



The intermediate course offers fun and thrilling challenges.

Volunteers from the Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association (or CAMBA) will help monitor trail riding conditions to report to other users. Trail status updates will be posted on Twitter: @SMPmountainbike.

“The trail system, when completed, will accommodate a wide range of riding skills – from earliest beginners to experts. CAMBA is proud to have a part in this project,” said Mike Ryba, Summit County resident and CAMBA board member.

continued on page 6



This is the park district's first area designed only for mountain biking. For the safety of both riders and pedestrians, hiking, running and pets are not allowed on these trails.

continued from page 5

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the trails, visitors can enjoy a picnic shelter with a gorgeous view to the northwest. The plaza has a bike repair station, restroom, and information kiosk with maps, rules and other information.

Aside from riding the trails, visitors will find this area is an awesome natural resource that is home to many species.

"We have seen deer, coyotes, amphibians, reptiles and birds," Avery added.

"Riding the mountain bike trails is a

unique way to experience the beauty of this incredible place, with ponds, streams, wonderful vistas, meadows and forests."

Since the natural trail surface is susceptible to damage in inclement conditions, the area may be closed intermittently. When trail conditions are dry and suitable, the area will be open daily, and may even be open during the winter months if appropriate conditions exist. 🍁



IN YOUR BACK YARD



Otter scat can be filled with shells from crayfish and mussels, like the dropping (pictured above) found along Pond Brook in Liberty Park.

River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*)

A true comeback kid, the river otter is one of Northeast Ohio's largest mammals. Weighing around 25 pounds, river otters can eat a wide variety of fish and other aquatic creatures. This agile mammal can travel up to 15 miles on land if need be, but loves to chase, dive and tumble through streams.

Years ago, during the settlement of Ohio, otters were hunted for their silky, thick fur. Evidence of otters being used for tools and fur has dated back to times of the Hopewell Indians. American Indians and early settlers in the Connecticut Western Reserve traded these water-resistant pelts in order to survive the cold temperatures they endured. The wetland systems in this region were home to plentiful wildlife, including the river otter, until the mid-1800s. Extirpation was a direct result of over-hunting and habitat loss.

Today, after many years of struggling to find suitable habitat, river otters are playing happily in several Summit Metro Parks areas. You may find them at the Pond Brook Area of Liberty Park or the Tinkers Creek Area that connects to Pond Brook. These and other areas provide the high-quality watershed habitat otters need to hunt and breed.

Keep your eyes open for otter scat, webbed tracks and the animals themselves at Liberty Park (3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg) and along the Cuyahoga River valley. You can also learn more about these awesome critters at naturalist-led programs throughout the year. 🐾

Meghan Doran,
Assistant Education & Recreation Manager

2012



REMEMBER SHADY HOLLOW

The tragic fire that destroyed Sand Run Metro Park's Shady Hollow Pavilion the night of February 4 prompted many to reminisce about happy times spent there, even prior to the building's construction in 1988.

Generations ago, the Gammeter family owned a hunting cabin sited next to Shady Hollow's footprint. Akron inventor John R. Gammeter, whose former home still stands on North Portage Path, wrote a letter to the park board describing the abundance of wildlife on his land. Retired Chief Naturalist Bert Szabo recalled hearing of the numerous pheasant and quail the Gammeters released there. In 1929, the Akron Metropolitan Park District acquired the lodge and adjoining land.

According to longtime park volunteer Bill Barnes who grew up near Sand Run, the site was criss-crossed with bridle trails. The long driveway that leads to today's Shady Hollow area was part of a narrow bridle trail, and no vehicles were allowed. Akron Topics, a once-popular magazine, featured an entire spread on

RING SHADY HOLLOW PAVILION

Christy Counterman, Marketing Assistant

Sand Run in its December 1929 issue, and included the first mention of the Coon Hollow name.

Paul Wilkerson, retired chief of planning for the park district, remembers Coon Hollow as a “cool little building, interesting but small. It had a fireplace and no electricity.” Project Manager Mark Avery, who has worked for Summit Metro Parks for more than 40 years, remembers it as a concrete structure with kerosene lamps. The rustic construction proved to be a detriment, however. After decades of use, the staff and board agreed that shifting sands had made the shallow foundation unsafe, and Coon Hollow was razed in 1986.

Planning immediately began on a replacement structure. Construction of Shady Hollow was finished in December

1988, but the driveway, parking lot and landscaping had to wait until the next spring. The new facility had a small kitchen, indoor restrooms and fireplace, and it retained the lodge atmosphere.



The area where Coon Hollow stood was only accessible by walking to the cabin on narrow bridle trails.

Plans are being developed now for a new lodge where visitors can carry on old traditions. The park district hopes to rebuild Shady Hollow within the next few years. 🌳



Issues of “Green Islands” from the 1960s and '70s advertised that Coon Hollow could be reserved for \$10.



Over the last 28 years, Shady Hollow hosted thousands of gatherings. The addition of the deck, a new roof and some cosmetic changes — as well as regular maintenance by park crews — kept the building looking great.

Species Spotlight

LUNA MOTHS

They belong to the Giant Silk Worm family – *Saturniidae*.

Luna moths are nocturnal.



When they first emerge their wings are small and soft.

They have to pump bodily fluids to their wings and wait about 2 hours before they are able to fly.

Wingspan is approximately five inches long and three to four inches wide

Male
luna antennae are large

Female
luna antennae are small and narrow

They're very beneficial as pollinators, and are food for other animals.

Mating takes place after midnight.

Females lay 150 to 250 eggs on the undersides of leaves.

Adult luna moths live for about a week.

REPRODUCTION & LIFE CYCLE

Their only adult activity is to find a mate and reproduce.

Pupae can remain in the metamorphic state for as long as 8 months.

CATERPILLAR STAGE

At the end of its phase, the caterpillar spins a silken cocoon in leaves to become a pupa.

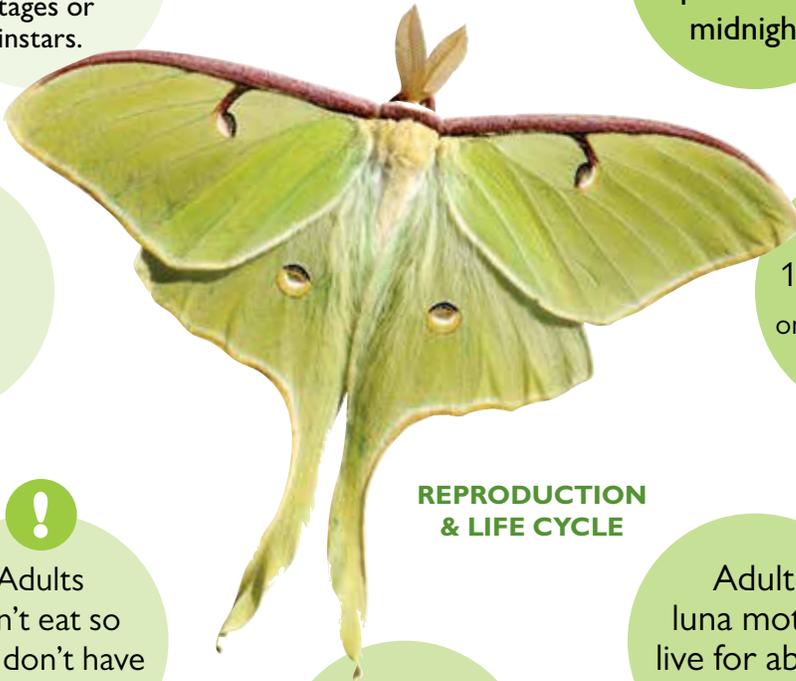
Preferred food sources for luna moth caterpillars are hickory, walnut and sweet gum trees as well as persimmon, beech, willows and oaks.

After hatching, larvae eat voraciously, growing in five stages or instars.

The male moth usually stays in one place and does not fly until after mating.

Larvae hatch after about 2 weeks

Adults don't eat so they don't have mouths.



Luna moth caterpillars are lime green with small orange spots along the sides.





MUNROE FALLS METRO PARK

LAKE AREA

521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls

A SUMMER LEGACY

Lindsay Smith, Marketing Coordinator

Before Summit Metro Parks purchased 222 acres from the Renner family in 1978 to create what is now Munroe Falls Metro Park, John Renner owned and operated a swimming park there. In the 1930s, the family built a two-room summer cabin and dug a small fishing lake near the present park entrance. By 1935 they had constructed a house and lived here year-round, and they soon realized their lake was popular with swimmers. To discourage visitors, they started charging 10 cents per visit, but this only attracted more people. To accommodate the new business, they created the current 13-acre lake in 1937 and named the place Renner Park.

Add to the park's changes over the years the new addition of a fence around the beach area, similar to the one at Silver Creek Metro Park (5000 Hametown Rd., Norton). Now, only people entering the beach at Munroe Falls will be charged an admission fee. There is no longer a charge to hike, run, fish and play.

DURING SWIM SEASON

- Swim season hours for both Munroe Falls Metro Park and Silver Creek Metro Park are weekdays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and weekends/holidays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Swim areas may be closed due to inclement weather conditions, including persistent rain, thunderstorms or cold temperatures.
- Visitors should call 330-865-8060 or check Twitter (@metro_parks) to learn if swim areas are closed for the day. 🐦

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2007, Summit Metro Parks acquired the adjacent 287-acre former County Home property, bringing Munroe Falls Metro Park to its current 509 acres.



Mr. & Mrs. Renner, 1969



Pond below the Renner House, 1937



Swimmers at Renner Park, 1937



Crowded beach, 1960s

Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

2nd Annual Metro Parks RUNNING SPREE

Join us this summer for
Group Runs led by staff
from the Akron Marathon.
Each is from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 5
Towpath Trail / Memorial Parkway

Tuesday, July 19
Firestone Metro Park / Tuscarawas Meadows

Tuesday, August 2
Goodyear Heights Metro Park / Main Entrance

Tuesday, August 16
Towpath Trail / Big Bend Trailhead

The park district, with support from Akron Marathon staff, launched this spree in 2015. The three-month Metro Parks Running Spree is back, and it includes a number of natural-surface and paved trails for beginning, intermediate and advanced runners that can be completed for credit.

Each spree participant who finishes at least six designated Summit Metro Parks trail runs — on the same trail or any combination of trails — by August 31 will earn a wooden race medal on a commemorative ribbon.

Forms are available online, at several Metro Parks locations and all Acme Fresh Market stores in

Summit County. Rewards for the spree are FREE to Summit County residents. Out-of-county residents will pay \$10 for their rewards.

For more information, including trails and a participant form, visit runningspree.summitmetroparks.org or call 330-865-8065.

