

WINTER 2017

GREEN ISLANDS

SUMMIT METRO PARKS



QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

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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 The logo for Summit Metro Parks, featuring a green maple leaf icon to the right of the text.

Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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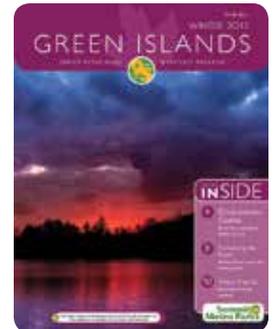
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BOARD of PARK commissioners



Joel D. Bailey Mark A. Spisak Herbert Newman
Tonya Block Jane Bond

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 Lake Area at Munroe Falls Metro Park offers year-round views like this cold but beautiful winter sunrise.

PARK news

- Need help attaching your 2016 Fall Hiking Spree shield to your staff? **Volunteers will help you** at **F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm** (1828 Smith Rd., Akron) on the following dates:

- Sunday, February 12, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Saturday, March 11, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Friday, March 31, 1 – 3 p.m.



Remember: March 31, 2017 is the last day to claim 2016 Fall Hiking Spree rewards.

PARK news (continued)

Mother's Day 5K

• Registration is open for the **6th annual Mother's Day 5K**, Sunday, May 14, at the Lake Area in **Munroe Falls Metro Park** (521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls). For details and to register, visit summitmetroparks.org.

For more news, visit our website:
summitmetroparks.org

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE



The park district "recycles" Christmas trees by chipping them into mulch. Drop off your tree, cleaned of all decorations and tinsel, through January 31 at the following locations:

- FIRESTONE METRO PARK**
Little Turtle Pond | 2400 Harrington Rd., Akron
- FURNACE RUN METRO PARK**
Brushwood Area | 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield
- GOODYEAR HEIGHTS METRO PARK**
Main Entrance/rear lot | 2077 Newton St., Akron
- NIMISILA RESERVOIR METRO PARK**
Lot SM2 | 5531 S. Main St., Green
- SAND RUN METRO PARK**
Treaty Line Area | 995 Treaty Line Rd., Akron
- SILVER CREEK METRO PARK**
Big Oak Area | 5199 Medina Line Rd., Norton

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



We're Your Back Yard

Go out and DISCOVER!



Sledding Skiing Skating

#summitmetroparks

Summit Metro Parks

330-865-8065 | summitmetroparks.org

CROSS-C OPENS AT



A new Summit Metro Park area is open in southwest Summit County. Local groups can now race to the finish at the Cross-country Course in Silver Creek Metro Park.

The course (4579 Medina Line Rd., Norton) opened in August 2016 and has already played host to several meets and team practices.



A large viewing area is provided for spectators.

COUNTRY COURSE

SILVER CREEK METRO PARK

Lindsay Smith, Marketing Coordinator

Built to college specifications, the course sits on about 140 acres. It has a 1-mile inner loop and 1.25-mile outer loop. The trails measure 10 meters (33 feet) wide. The course can accommodate several thousand runners and spectators. For larger events, vehicles will have to park in other parts of Silver Creek Metro Park, and people will need to be shuttled over.

Summit Metro Parks purchased the former farmland, located north of other Silver Creek trails and facilities, and north of the intersection of Medina Line and Johnson roads in Norton, in 2011 and 2012. The park district worked closely with coaches from The University of Akron as it developed initial plans for the course. The new course at Silver Creek Metro Park will help take



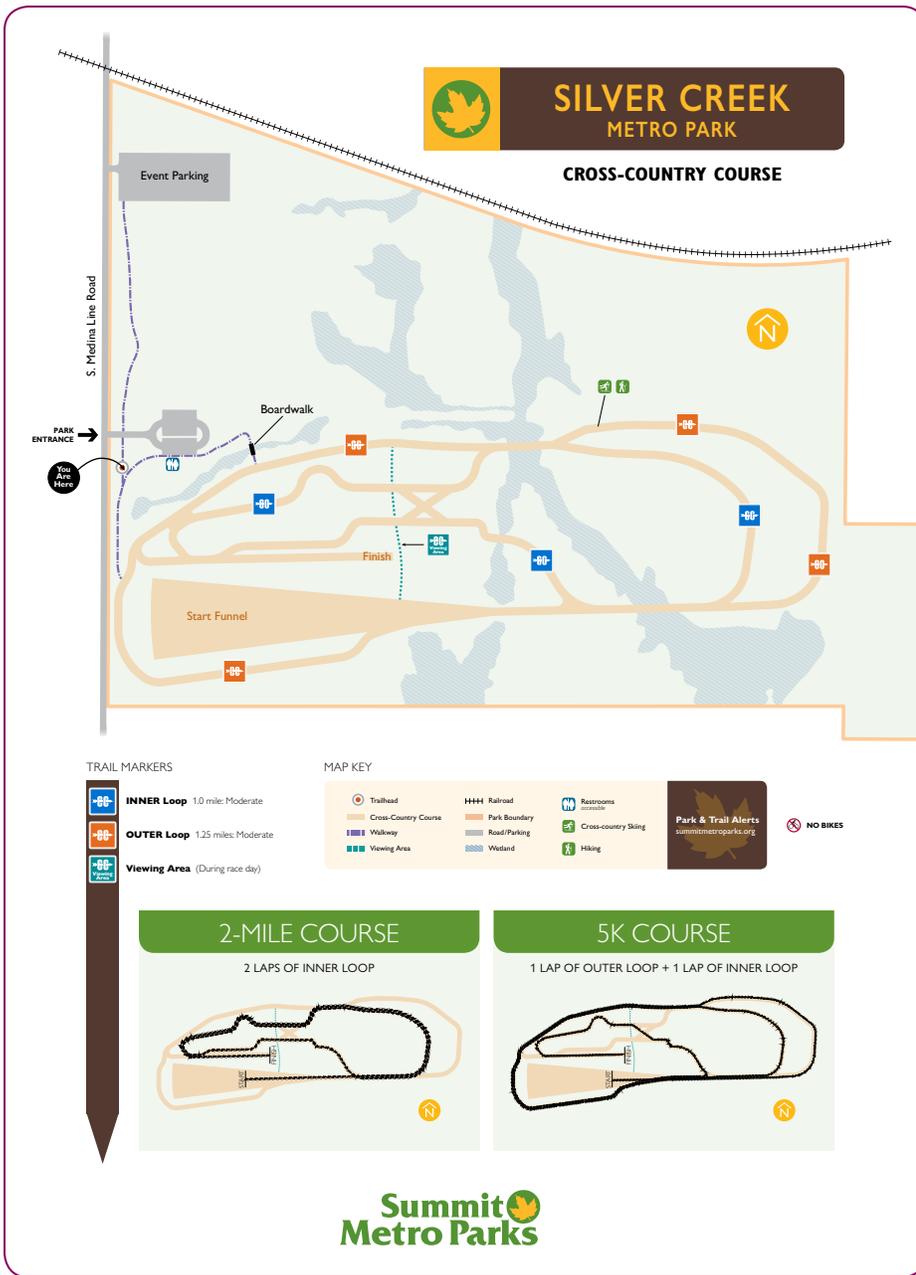
Transformation of the Cross-country Course, 2014 to 2016

the pressure off of two Metro Parks in Akron — Firestone Metro Park and Goodyear Heights Metro Park — which both host a lot of cross-country events.

continued on page 6

“Summit Metro Parks has definitely come through with something special. This is going to be a treasure for the Northeast Ohio area.”

~ UA Head Track & Field Coach Dennis Mitchell



continued from page 5

During meets, the Cross-country Course will be closed to the public. Closures will be posted at summitmetroparks.org, under the yellow “Park & Trail Alerts” tab, as they are scheduled.

On most days, however, visitors to the Cross-country Course may enjoy a quiet walk or run in the area, which features a gently rolling landscape, from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Pets (on leashes 8-feet long or less) are permitted, and restrooms are available. 🐾



WANT TO ORGANIZE AN EVENT?

Schools and groups interested in reserving the area must do so by submitting a special-use permit (SUP) at least four weeks in advance. Permits can be downloaded under “Things to Do” on the district’s website: summitmetroparks.org.



YOUR BACK YARD

CHRYSALIS or COCOON?

WHAT HAPPENS IN WINTER

Butterflies and moths go through a complete metamorphosis during their lives, experiencing four very different stages. During the first stage, the egg is so tiny we usually miss it. The most visible stages to us are the creatures' caterpillar and adult stages.

In between the two most visible stages, moths and butterflies enter the pupa stage for the third part of their lives. In winter, careful watchers can observe this protective time when the hidden creatures are magically transforming into winged beauties.

BUTTERFLY PUPAS

The **BUTTERFLY PUPA** is called a **CHRYSALIS**. When a caterpillar is ready, it spins a small circle of silk to attach itself to a safe place. It sheds its skin one more time, and that outer skin hardens into a protective shell.

MOTH PUPAS

The **MOTH PUPA** is called a **COCOON**. When a caterpillar is ready, it spins a sleep-ing bag-like covering around its body, then molts one more time inside. The outer silk hardens. Depending on the type of moth, it may use leaves or bark as part of its cocoon. Some even bury themselves in dirt.



BAGWORM Moth Cocoon



CECROPIA Moth Cocoon



LUNA Moth Cocoon

In winter, look for chrysalises and cocoons in leaves that are stuck together with silk, bark pieces that look glued together, or on the outside of buildings, fences or plants.

Remember: Don't bring them in the house. That will force the creature to emerge as an adult in an environment where there is no mate to keep the life cycle going. 🐛

Pat Rydquist, Interpretive Naturalist | Illustrations by Danette Rushboldt, Interpretive Artist



The Valley View Area connects Sand Run, Cascade Valley and the Gorge.

*Nathan Eppink,
Chief of Community Engagement*



Manicured fairways, non-native and invasive plants may be replaced with restored wetlands and native plants.

What was once Akron’s last remaining dairy farm is finally part of Cascade Valley Metro Park.

Summit Metro Parks completed the purchase of Valley View Golf Club — located on Cuyahoga Street between Sackett and Uhler avenues — last September, in a deal that was several years in the making. Park district officials are referring to it as “the missing piece of the puzzle.”

The 194-acre property lies between Sand Run Metro Park and the already contiguous Cascade Valley and

Gorge parks. It offers the park district new ways to access the Cuyahoga River and the multipurpose Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, both of which are near the former golf course’s western boundary.

The purchase helps form the second largest natural area managed by Summit Metro Parks, at just under 1,700 acres. Only Liberty Park’s 3,000 acres in northeast Summit and northwestern Portage counties is larger.

“This was a strategic acquisition, and we couldn’t be more excited,” executive

COMPLETING THE PUZZLE

Purchase of Akron's Valley View Golf Club creates park district's second largest natural area

director Lisa King said of Valley View. "It's within the City of Akron, and we have a lot of ideas about making this a destination for outdoor enthusiasts."

Biologists and planners are studying how to best restore the property to a more native and natural state, and develop a master plan that includes a number of recreational and educational opportunities. The Cascade Valley Metro Park / Valley View Area will be closed during the planning process, but may be accessible periodically during special guided hikes by Summit Metro Parks staff.

The 27-hole Valley View Golf Club began when Carl Springer purchased an 87-acre farm on Cuyahoga Street — the last dairy farm in Akron — from Ray and Fern Himelright in 1956. The property had been in the Himelright name since the late 1800s. 🌿

QUITE A 'VIEW'

More than 2,000 feet of the Cuyahoga River and 65 acres of floodplain have restoration potential at Valley View. More than 20,000 feet of a drainage network — including 10 ponds — could be restored to wetland and stream habitats. Although most of the property has been maintained as manicured grasses, Mike Johnson, chief of natural resources, said there remain small pockets that provide refuge and habitat for rare species including the state listed butternut and gray birch trees, plains frostweed, and wild lupine.



wild lupine



American bald eagle

"The presence of these species will help biologists plan the natural restoration of the area," Johnson said. "Several unique habitats are being considered on the site including savannas and sand barrens."

Johnson said bald eagles are "almost common" at Valley View, and nests have been reported in the nearby landscape. Last year, researchers confirmed the presence of nesting mergansers. While this type of duck is regularly seen during the migratory season, it is very unusual for it to successfully nest and fledge young in Greater Akron. 🦆



hooded merganser

WINTER TREE

Where to begin with winter tree identification?
How about the twigs.

Danette Rushboldt, Interpretive Artist

When looking to identify our native, deciduous trees in winter, first check out the branches. Understanding branch patterns is a quick and easy way to narrow down tree types.

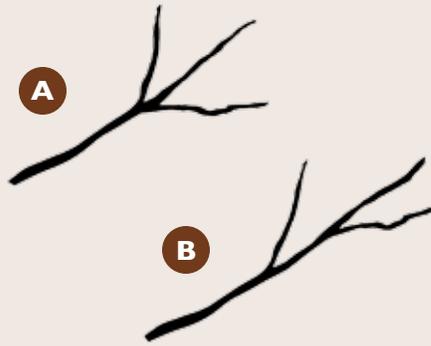
Maple, ash, flowering dogwood and buckeye trees have opposite branching patterns, meaning the twigs grow opposite each other off the main branch.

All other native trees have an alternating twig pattern, which means they stagger or alternate as they grow from the main branch.

Scratching and sniffing twigs can provide additional clues. If it's stinky when scratched or broken it may be a buckeye; if sweet or spicy, think sassafras.

Twig color can also be helpful. Sassafras twigs are green, and box elders are red.

For more identification tips, hike with a Summit Metro Parks naturalist or stop in to the F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Visitors Center (1828 Smith Rd., Akron) or the Liberty Park Nature Center (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg) and ask for help.



Comparing Branches

- A** **Opposite** or symmetrical branches
- B** **Alternating** branches



American Beech

- Alternate branches
- Thin twigs
- Slender, scaled, pointy buds



AMERICAN SYCAMORE *Platanus occidentalis*

- These are often referred to as the “camouflage tree” due to their white bark with tan, brown and green flaky patches.
- Beavers often eat the wood.
- Great blue herons prefer to nest in the canopies.



AMERICAN BEECH *Fagus grandifolia*

- Beech trees have gray smooth, soft bark resembling elephant skin.
- Beech trees can live 300+ years.
- When branches fall from beech trees, large cavities form. These cavities provide nesting spots for a variety of wildlife.

IDENTIFICATION



Flowering Dogwood

- Opposite branches
- Twigs point upward, like curled fingers
- Twigs are grayish-pink
- Flower buds resemble miniature garlic bulbs



Red Maple

- Opposite branches
- Red twig color



Tuliptree

- Alternate branches
- Terminal buds look like a duckbill
- Reddish-brown twigs



White Ash

- Has opposite leaf scars shaped like a C
- Twigs are thick gray-green
- Terminal buds are flanked by two lateral buds



EASTERN COTTONWOOD *Populus deltoids*

- Trees have thick, grayish-brown bark that is deeply furrowed with scaly ridges.
- Cottonwood trees prefer moist soil and will often be found near rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.
- The straight trunks were used by American Indians to create dugout canoes.



SHAGBARK HICKORY *Carya ovate*

- The bark is flaky with long, curled strips.
- The curled bark makes the perfect roosting spot for the endangered Indiana bat.
- Trees can be found scattered among a mixed forest of oaks and maples.



WILD BLACK CHERRY *Prunus serotina*

- The bark resembles burnt cornflakes.
- The inner bark has been used to create cough syrup.
- The trees can tolerate very poor soil conditions, which allows them to grow in a wide variety of habitats.

Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

WINTER SPORTS

As conditions permit, several winter sports can be enjoyed in the Metro Parks, and some locations are lighted for after-sunset fun. Visitors must bring their own equipment.

To learn if winter sports areas are open, call 330-865-8060 or follow @metro_parks on Twitter.

SLEDDING The best conditions for sledding include frozen ground with at least two inches of snow cover. Walk up the side of sled hills, not in the center where you may be in the path of moving sleds. Sledding is prohibited on trails and wooded hills.

ICE SKATING Never skate on a pond or lake unless signs indicate it is open for skating. Ice must be four inches thick and free of snow, and temperatures must remain several degrees below freezing for long periods of time. Wear properly fitted skates with sharpened blades for enhanced control and safety.

ICE FISHING Ice fishing is possible in Liberty Park's Tinkers Creek Area, Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park and the lake in Silver Creek Metro Park, dawn to dusk as conditions allow. Users may not light fires, take motorized vehicles onto the ice, or build/leave structures and shelters on park property. Temporary shanties may be moved only by hand from the parking lot to the lake, and must be removed daily.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING Some areas are too steep to negotiate safely on skis. To help keep your skis from being damaged by sharp, uncovered stones, ski only when the trails have at least two inches of snow cover.

BUNDLE UP FOR WINTER FUN IN THE METRO PARKS



WINTER SPORTS

	Sledding	Ice Skating	Ice Fishing	X/C Skiing
BIKE & HIKE TRAIL				
FREEDOM TRAIL				
TOWPATH TRAIL				
CASCADE VALLEY	Lighted			
FIRESTONE	Lighted			
FURNACE RUN	Lighted	Lighted		
GOODYEAR HEIGHTS	Lighted			
GORGE		Lighted		
LIBERTY PARK			Lighted	
MUNROE FALLS	Lighted			
NIMISILA RESERVOIR			Lighted	
SAND RUN	Lighted	Lighted		
SILVER CREEK			Lighted	
SPRINGFIELD BOG				Lighted

Lighted Unlighted