

Vol. 53 No. 1

WINTER 2012

# GREEN ISLANDS

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM METRO PARKS, SERVING SUMMIT COUNTY



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ment parks in  
the Gorge
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baby animals
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Best places to  
cross-country ski



**MetroParks**  
SERVING SUMMIT COUNTY

Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

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 Roland H. Bauer  
 Frances S. Buchholzer  
 Keith D. Shy, Director-Secretary

EDITORS

Nathan Eppink  
 Chief of Marketing & Communications  
 Timothy Hite  
 Marketing/Communications Specialist

ART DIRECTOR

Karl Simonson  
 Graphic Designer/Production Coordinator

Metro Parks, Serving Summit County  
 975 Treaty Line Rd.  
 Akron, OH 44313-5837  
 330-867-5511

F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm: 330-865-8065  
 Seasonal Information: 330-865-8060  
 Volunteer Information: 330-865-8047

Photos contributed by:

Jerry Cannon	J.J. Prekop Jr.	Karl Simonson
John Phillips	Dennis Roliff	Mark Szeremet

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Green Islands can be downloaded online: [summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org)

# BOARD of PARK commissioners

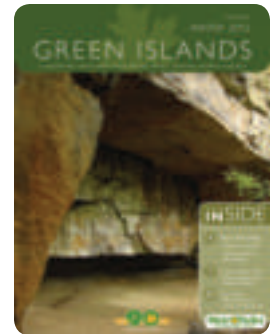


Carol M. Curtis Roland H. Bauer Frances S. Buchholzer

The park district's governing body is appointed by the Summit County Probate Judge. They serve overlapping three-year terms and are assisted by the director-secretary, 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

Mary Campbell Cave in Gorge Metro Park has been visited for centuries, long before amusement parks ("Very Amusing," page 4) popped up in the Gorge. In 1759, 12-year-old Mary Campbell was captured in Pennsylvania by Delaware Indians and reportedly brought to the cave, becoming the first white child in the wild frontier of the Western Reserve.



## PARK news

- Our **90-year history book**, published by the University of Akron Press, is now available. "Steps in Time: Ninety Years of Metro Parks, Serving Summit County" can be purchased at the gift shop at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm. 1828 Smith Rd., Akron
- The **Twinsburg Ledges Area**, part of Liberty Park, opened October 25. The Ledges Trail passes by an incredible system of ledges and a wetland. 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg
- Metro Parks will break ground on the new multi-purpose **Freedom Trail** in spring. It will follow the former Freedom Secondary railroad corridor and connect Akron to Kent.

For more news, visit our website:

[summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org)



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**PARK news** (continued)

# 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 | 2077 Newton St., Akron
- 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

### Friends Hires Coordinator



Friends of Metro Parks hired **Bridget Garvin Ambrisco** in October as its new part-time **organizational development and advancement coordinator**. She will facilitate the group’s board activities, fund-raising efforts and community outreach initiatives. Ambrisco has a master’s degree in environmental studies from the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University and

most recently served as the director of volunteer programs for the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

For information about joining Friends of Metro Parks, including a list of benefits, visit [friendsofmetroparks.org](http://friendsofmetroparks.org).



*Friends of Metro Parks is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports the park district in many ways, including contacting legislators and educating visitors about important issues. Paid memberships are available for individuals and families, and membership dues allow Friends to support the mission and programs of the park district. Membership is tax deductible and good for one year.*

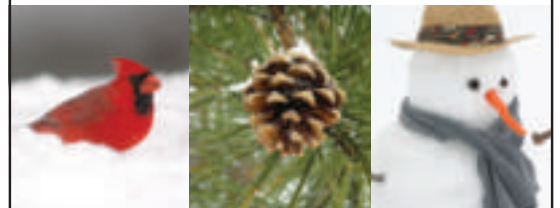


**corner**



We're Your Back Yard

# Go out and DISCOVER!



**Sledding CC Skiing Skating**



**MetroParks**  
SERVING SUMMIT COUNTY

330-865-8065 | [summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org)



# VERY



Courtesy, Akron-Summit County Public Library

**S**heer sandstone cliffs, enormous boulders perched at incredible angles and roar-

ing whitewater have long lured visitors to the banks of the Cuyahoga River where it divides Akron from Cuyahoga Falls.

Today, visitors know the area as Gorge Metro Park (1160 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls), hugging the banks of the river as it begins its meandering



*Old Maid's Kitchen, known today as Mary Campbell Cave, circa 1890s*



# AMUSING

## Amusement parks draw crowds to the Gorge in 1800s, early 1900s

*Sarah Vradenburg*

turn toward Cleveland and helps to earn its signature Crooked River moniker. That part of the river, flowing south from downtown Cuyahoga Falls and around the big bend, has seen more than its share of adventure and sightseers. In fact, two private amusement parks, including examples of early rollercoasters, once were major draws to the area.

Although area residents had long known about the Gorge, its appeal widened in 1879, when Cuyahoga Falls hardware store owner L.W. Loomis and business partner Harvey Parks

opened High Bridge Glens. Taking its name from a high bridge that spanned the Cuyahoga at Prospect and Front streets, site of today's High Bridge Glens city park, Loomis and Parks built a family attraction. Its ornate two-story pavilion offered dining, dancing and performances by entertainers from singers to acrobats. Picnic tables and benches strewed the grounds. What some claim to have been the nation's first rollercoaster

sat near the pavilion. However, modern visitors shouldn't imagine a huge wooden frame carrying linked cars over dizzying heights and speeds, but instead a circular inclined track carrying an old coal



*Trolley and Interurban Bridge, late-1890s*

car pushed by young men eager to earn a few cents per trip. A merry-go-round and Florida museum sporting alligators rounded out the street-level attractions.

In the park's heyday, more than 8,000 people came to High Bridge Glens daily aboard up to 60 trains that pulled up to the tracks opposite the park entrance. The rail lines were eager to attract business and promoted the work of photographers selling stereographic images of the river and its magnificent natural features.

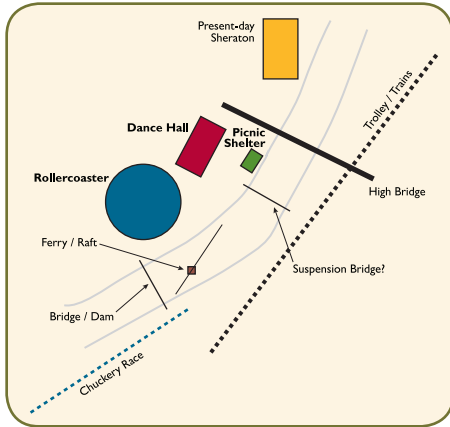


*High Bridge Glens picnic shelter and dancing pavilion, 1885*

Courtesy, Cuyahoga Falls Historical Society

*continued on page 6*

continued from page 5



High Bridge Glens footprint sketched out by former naturalist Mark Ludwig

Understanding the attraction of the river, Loomis and Parks built a series of stairs and walks from Front Street south along the west bank of the river and traveling down toward the water. At one point the trail opened on a plateau offering croquet courts and benches with colorful beach umbrellas. A nearby ledge earned the name of Lover's Retreat. The more adventurous continued downward and south. Children were met at one point by manmade Mirror Lake, with its



Courtesy, Akron-Summit County Public Library

miniature houses and pint-sized three-masted ships.

Although the rough-and-tumble river is wild as it leaves the Falls, it grew quiet enough downriver to accommodate a hand-pulled ferry. Hikers who found themselves too tired at the end of their walk could pay a dime for a leisurely ride upriver. Those who kept going could cross a wire suspension bridge near where the river bends north. Greeting these brave ones were the Weeping Cliffs, so named because many natural springs met their end in the towering sandstone wall, causing the rocks to seep continuously. Hikers venturing farther could get a glimpse of Mary Campbell Cave, then known as Old Maid's Kitchen, across the Big Falls.

High Bridge Glens was wildly popular for about a decade, although as a summer resort its appeal was limited. Soon, rail companies had more than enough business hauling freight, and excursion trips to High Bridge Glens



In 1911, construction of the Northern Ohio Traction & Light Power Plant on the Cuyahoga River, north of the dam, contributed to the end of High Bridge Glens.

waned. Loomis and Parks sold their interest and the new owners began to sell alcohol. High Bridge Glens gained a rowdy reputation and families stopped attending.

Finally, the region's need for electricity dealt the Glens a final blow. Ohio Edison began construction of a dam on top of the Big Falls. Even before the concrete went up, the thick forest on either side of the river was felled. Eventually, the waters behind the dam flooded many of the caves and ledges that had put High Bridge Glens on the map.

continued on page 8



In this 1910 photo, Estella Chamberlin and John Dana Phillips pose on a date in High Bridge Glens. The couple later married.

# IN YOUR BACK YARD




## GROUNDHOG (*Marmota monax*)

Hibernation helps animals survive winter when food sources are scarce, and when it comes to local hibernators, the one animal that usually comes to mind is the groundhog, also called a whistle pig or woodchuck.

Before the groundhog retreats to its restful slumber it eats as much as it can to maximize its body weight, fattening up on grasses, berries and other vegetation.

During hibernation, the groundhog's body temperature drops and breathing slows, and it will not wake up until the first warm days of spring.

Learn more about this creature — and others — during naturalist-led hikes in the Metro Parks.  [Sarah Putnam, Naturalist](#)

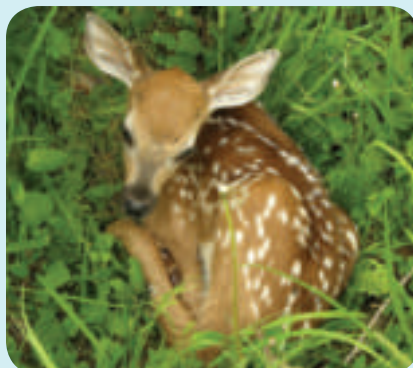
### Nature Notes

- The groundhog is one of only a few true Ohio hibernators. Others include frogs, turtles, snakes, black bears and some bats.
- Insects are included in the groundhog's diet during warmer seasons.

## BACKYARD WILDLIFE


**WHERE'S MOM?** Every year, hundreds of people try to help what they think are abandoned or orphaned wildlife. But before you touch, watch to see if a young animal is truly in need of help.

A female **deer** will often leave her young to forage alone. (Mom needs to eat, too.) Her babies can be left alone for several hours at a time. **Cottontail rabbits** only feed their young at night. The babies are left alone during the day so mom doesn't attract predators to the nest.



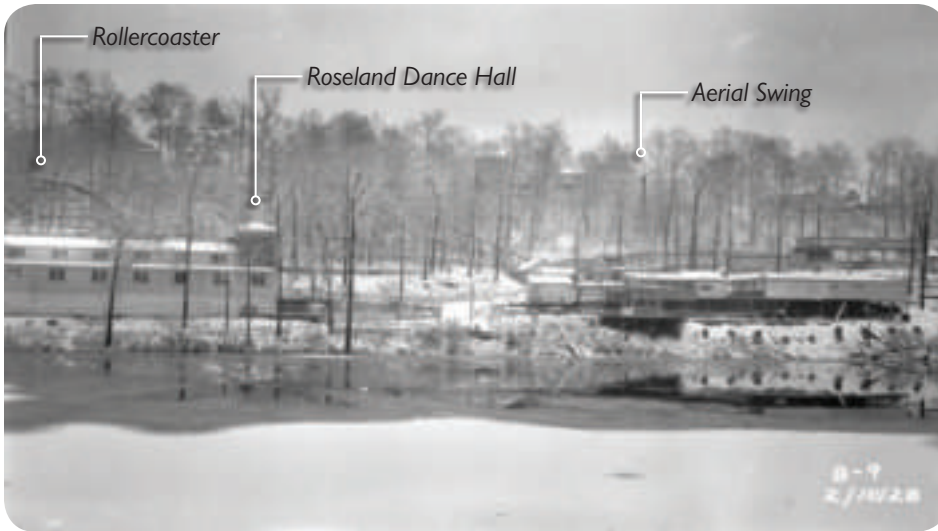
Baby birds without feathers can be carefully placed back into a nest. **Birds** have a limited sense of smell, so you can handle them without leaving behind a human scent. Young

birds that have feathers are called fledglings, and they are generally too big for the nest but are still taken care of by a nearby adult.

So remember, before you touch, look to make sure an animal is truly in need. 

[Danette Rushboldt, Naturalist](#)

# VERY AMUSING *continued from page 6*



*Riverview Park (upper left) along the Cuyahoga River, February 1928*

*Roseland Ballroom (lower left) with rollercoaster in the background, September 1930*



gallery and a small menagerie that sported monkeys and alligators. Liz Cross, curator of the Cuyahoga Falls Historical Society, recalled a city resident telling her about the day the monkeys escaped from Riverview and climbed onto her back porch, which overlooked the amusement park.

People flocked to ride the Sky Rocket wooden rollercoaster that hugged the tree line, and to an aerial swing carrying joy seekers out over the river. But by far, the most enduring attraction was the Roseland Ballroom, its twin sandstone towers and clock face becoming a familiar landmark for dancers. Ads marketed the massive building as a “temple of syncopation,” its programs often broadcast on local radio.

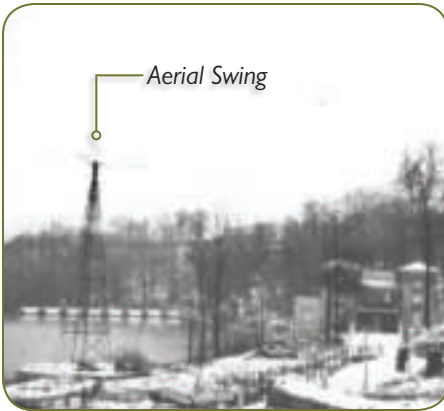
A 2009 story by Mark Price of the *Akron Beacon Journal* described Riverview’s manager, John “Jack” Giffin, as eager to draw “people of refinement,” recognition of the unsavory reputation

That did not spell the end of amusements by the river, however.

When Silver Lake Park closed, much of its equipment migrated to a spot overlooking the Ohio Edison dam in the Gorge. By 1919, the newly opened Riverview Park (also known as Riverside to some) sported a carousel, roller rink, rowboat livery and concessions, including a shooting



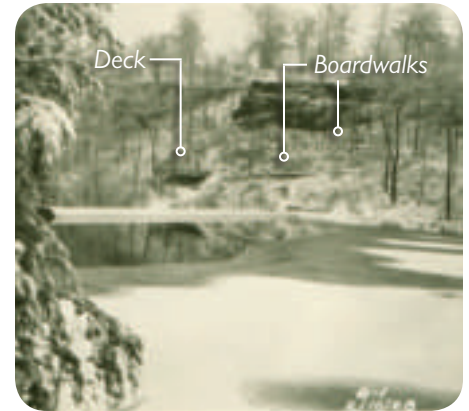
*Courtesy, Akron-Summit County Public Library*



*Aerial swing and dance hall, January 1931*



*Old Maid's Kitchen, February 1928*



*Deck and Boardwalks, February 1928*

High Bridge Glens had earned in its waning days. For a time he succeeded. Interurban streetcars took the place of railroads in transporting families to the park, where they could now hike to Old Maid's Kitchen and stand within its massive stone cavern, eat a picnic among the trees or inside the small shelter or take the family out on a boat ride near the dam.

This, however, was also a time of strict blue laws. Cuyahoga Falls had outlawed dancing on Sundays. Roseland stayed open despite the prohibition, although city officials continued to beat the no-dancing drum.

Giffin found the controversy too much to handle and in 1925 turned over its management to a group of Akron investors who found nothing wrong with opening the ballroom on Sunday and paying a \$100 fine on Monday. Dancing was popular; as many as 500 people a night would crowd the Roseland's dance floor, making the fine

an insignificant cost of doing business.

No one knows exactly why the Roseland burned in 1927, or what caused the Old Mill ride to go up in flames a few weeks later. Riverview's owners hastily rebuilt the dance hall on the site of the old roller rink and reopened with a new manager, bandleader James "Jimmy" Richards. Falls officials upheld the Sunday ban, setting the stage for the park's final days.

Richards was arrested in August 1928, complaining that he couldn't compete with Summit Beach Park or Lake Brady, both of which offered Sunday dancing. Riverview closed for the remainder of 1928 and reopened in 1929 as the Fairyland Amusement Co., with the same group of Akron investors in charge. By this time, however, Ohio Edison, which owned the land, was tired of late rent and controversy. Edmond Eckroad, both an official for Ohio Edison and a commissioner for

the Akron Metropolitan Park District (now Metro Parks, Serving Summit County), made sure the 144-acre tract went to the park district in December 1929.

There was still life left in the Roseland. Park district officials allowed Fairyland to continue offering dances, which proved quite lucrative, bringing in as much as \$5,000 in a season, although Fairyland's rent was never more than \$500 a season. The park district flirted with the notion of using its quasi-governmental status to override the Falls' dancing ban, although it did not. The other features at the park, including the concessions, the swing and the rollercoaster, were demolished to get them off the tax duplicate.

However, Fairyland's operators were no more conscientious about paying rent to the park district than they had been with Ohio Edison. After several years of lawsuits and threatened shutdowns, Fairyland got out of the

*continued on page 12*

# ON THE TRAIL

## What do visitors like about the Meadow Trail in Munroe Falls Metro Park?



**Jolene Yost**, 48, Cuyahoga Falls, and **Michelle Gebler**, 40, Akron

"This park is bigger than it looks," commented Gebler as she surveyed the 287-acre Tallmadge Meadows Area. "The view of the open sky from the meadow is fantastic."

These friends have hiked the trail three times since it opened in May. They plan to return again in winter to see the seasonal changes and snap some photos.

**Jeff Stull**, 50, Tallmadge

A hike along the Meadow Trail has become part of Stull's daily routine. "I am here every day," he said. "I just love it."

Although he often brings family along on the weekends, Stull calls his solitary weekday hikes "a time for me."



**Dan Feathers**, 26, Munroe Falls, with his dog, **Troy**

The Tallmadge Meadows Area is a frequent destination for Feathers and his energetic young dog, Troy. "We walk this trail together all the

time," said Feathers. "It's nice to have a park close to home where we can enjoy a picnic or go for a quick hike."

The **Meadow Trail** passes by the former County Home cemetery and travels through woods, a shrub thicket, wetland woods and its namesake meadow.

1088 North Ave., Tallmadge



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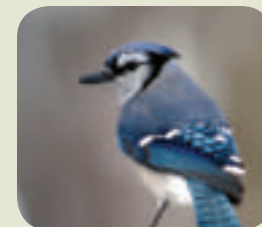
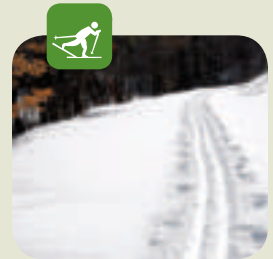
# The best places to CROSS-COUNTRY SKI in the Metro Parks SPOTS

There are multiple areas for cross-country skiing in the park district, but two stand out among Metro Parks employees who enjoy this winter activity.

**Bike & Hike Trail**  
Boston Heights  
Trailhead

298 Boston Mills Rd.  
West, Boston Heights

Ski south of Boston Mills Road to pass through the snow-covered Sharon Conglomerate sandstone walls of the Boston Ledges along this scenic stretch of the multi-purpose trail.



**Ohio & Erie Canal**  
Towpath Trail  
Clinton Trailhead  
2749 North St., Clinton

Ski north from the Clinton Trailhead for a quiet, flat and peaceful stretch of the Towpath Trail. Busy birds may be the only distractions for several miles in this winter wonderland.

*Note: This is the first winter season for the new Prairie Trail at Springfield Bog Metro Park (1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.) and Meadow Trail at Munroe Falls Metro Park (1088 North Ave., Tallmadge). Both may prove popular with cross-country skiers.*

Where do YOU enjoy cross-country skiing? Share your favorites — even photos — with us on Facebook, or send them to: [marketing@summitmetroparks.org](mailto:marketing@summitmetroparks.org)

For more information about these locations, visit our website: [summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org)

# my FAVORITE place

**CAROL M. CURTIS**  
CHAIR, BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS



## MUNROE FALLS METRO PARK

### LAKE AREA

521 S. River Rd.  
Munroe Falls 44262

*Curtis has been a Metro Parks commissioner since 2003.*

Commissioner Carol Curtis has fond memories of both Munroe Falls Metro Park and the Gorge in Cuyahoga Falls, where she and other Girl Scouts often went for day camps. Still, when choosing a favorite place, Munroe Falls will always have a special place in her heart.

Curtis recently walked there with her dogs, black and white Teddy Jr. (affectionately named after her husband) and Nicky.

"I used to swim here as a teenager with my brother and friends when it was Renner's," she said, referring to the family that sold the private swim park to Metro Parks in 1978. "I came here with Ted many years ago, before we were married."

The couple celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2007. Her late brother, Jerry Hupp, retired as mayor of Munroe Falls in 1999.

# KID CRAFT

## Make a NATURAL SUNCATCHER in four easy steps!

Here's what you'll need:

- 1 round cake pan
- 1 drinking glass or cup
- string or rope
- a freezer



### STEP 1:

Place a plastic cup filled with water off-center in a round cake pan and fill the pan halfway with water. Put the pan on a flat surface in your freezer.



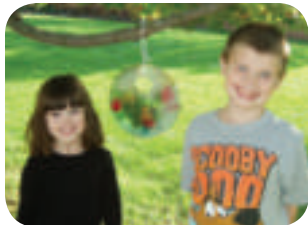
### STEP 2:

After it freezes, add small leaves, sticks, bird seed or other items to the cake pan, and then fill it completely with water and let it freeze.



### STEP 3:

Remove the pan from the freezer and run a string through the hole left behind by the drinking glass.




### STEP 4:

Tie your creation outside, where it's visible from a window, and enjoy!

 Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

## VERY AMUSING continued from page 9



A trek on today's hiking trails in Gorge Metro Park can give hikers a glimpse of what earlier visitors might have seen of the river, but the only dancing at the Gorge now is done by chipmunks to the tune of birdsong in the hemlocks. 

*Vradenburg is a freelance writer who also volunteers for the park district. She is the author of "Steps in Time: Ninety Years of Metro Parks, Serving Summit County," published by the University of Akron Press.*

dancing business, and although other band leaders came and went, the Roseland's days as a dance hall were numbered.

In 1936, park commissioners gave the Roseland building to the city of Akron as a recreation hall. It was dismantled and then rebuilt in the new development at Elizabeth Park, where it served for another 30 years. In 1966, the old Roseland was condemned and razed.



## BUNDLE UP FOR WINTER FUN IN THE METRO PARKS



### WINTER SPORTS

	X/C Skiing	Ice Skating	Sledding	Hiking
BIKE & HIKE TRAIL	■			■
CASCADE VALLEY	■	■		■
DEEP LOCK QUARRY				■
FIRESTONE	■		■	■
FURNACE RUN	■	■	■	■
GOODYEAR HEIGHTS	■		■	■
GORGE		■		■
HAMPTON HILLS				■
LIBERTY PARK				■
MUNROE FALLS	■		■	■
NATURE REALM				■
O'NEIL WOODS				■
SAND RUN		■	■	■
SILVER CREEK	■			■
SPRINGFIELD BOG	■			■
TOWPATH TRAIL	■			■

■ Lighted ■ Unlighted