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WINTER 2015

GREEN ISLANDS

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM SUMMIT METRO PARKS



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programs in the
Metro Parks
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Not all animals
hibernate
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winter scenes



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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Green Islands can be downloaded online:
summitmetroparks.org

BOARD of PARK commissioners



The park district's governing body is appointed by the Summit County Probate Judge. Commissioners serve overlapping 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

Squirrels are one of the busiest animals during the winter season.



PARK news

- Summit Metro Parks now offers **ice fishing** at the **Tinkers Creek Area of Liberty Park** in Streetsboro. For years, visitors enjoyed ice fishing at the former Tinkers Creek State Park. Summit Metro Parks signed a 25-year management agreement for the park in summer 2014.
- Need help attaching your 2014 Fall Hiking Spree shield to your staff?



Volunteers will help you on **Saturday, February 14**, from 1 to 3 p.m. at F.A.

Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron). Remember: March 31 is the last day to claim 2014 Fall Hiking Spree rewards.

PARK news (continued)**Mother's
Day 5K**

- Registration is open for the **4th annual Mother's Day 5K**, Sunday, May 10, 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

NATURE REALM: 50 YEARS OF MEMORIES

This year, F.A. Seiberling

Nature Realm turns 50.

A special exhibit will be on display in the visitors center through April. Be sure to see the photos that offer then-and-now looks at the building and grounds.

**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**

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PROGRAM

Archery is one of the fastest growing outdoor activities in the country. All ages and genders — not just young female fans of Katniss and Merida — are taking aim at this age-old sport.

In September 2013, Summit Metro Parks opened two public archery ranges: one in Hampton Hills Metro Park, at 1940 Steels Corners Rd., Cuyahoga Falls, and another in Silver Creek Metro Park, at 89 Eastern Rd., Wadsworth Twp. The response was immediate, and hundreds use the ranges each month as weather permits. In September 2014 alone, more than 500 people signed in at the kiosk in Hampton Hills.

MS ON TARGET

*Nathan Eppink
Chief of Marketing & Communications*



Prehistoric people in Ohio hunted game with the bow and arrow, as depicted in this mural at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm.

"Archery has been a part of people's lives for thousands of years," said Christine Hockman, interpretive services manager for Summit Metro Parks. Hockman oversees the district's programs, including new archery events that will be offered in multiple seasons.

"It's one of the oldest arts in practice today," she added. "The styles and techniques of bows have varied around the world, depending on local resources and cultures, but the idea is the same."

Hockman said bows work by pulling back the string, which creates energy that is stored in the bow's limbs. When the arrow on the string is released, that tension and energy carries through the arrow, which flies through the air toward its target.

Several lucky classes of individuals — many with no previous experience — witnessed that first-hand during the park district's first round of archery programs, which began last September.

Advance registration filled up fast for the free programs.

Also last fall, the park district constructed new elevated platforms — paid for with a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) — in both Hampton Hills and Silver Creek and added a few more targets. Though it may simulate the act of hunting from a tree stand, hunters are not the only ones using the ranges and platforms to practice.

continued on page 6



The archery platforms provide an added challenge for both novice and veteran archers.

continued from page 5



The different colors of the adjustable bows can indicate the draw weight. Our draw weights range from 11 to 20 pounds.

The manager of a local hunting shop reported selling “at least 100 bows” in 2014 to people who learned about the range in Hampton Hills and simply wanted to give it a try.

Learn-to Programs

“We’re excited,” Hockman said of the new learn-to programs, which offer quality, hands-on experiences. Equipment for the programs was purchased through an ODNR grant.

“We’re always looking for new ways to help people enjoy the Metro Parks. The ranges and programs may attract

Archery programs are offered for children, teens, adults and seniors.



visitors who aren’t interested in other forms of recreation like hiking, biking or swimming.”


Programs are being offered for children, teens, adults and seniors, and Hockman said they provide opportunities to be active, enjoy nature, build new skills and gain confidence.

“It’s a great way to peel kids and teens away from TVs and iPads for a while, and parents won’t have to beg their



“Awesome!” was just one of the positive exclamations made by this first-time archer.

kids to be active and get outside,” Hockman added.

Summit Metro Parks will accommodate participants with special needs, including wheelchair accessibility. Upcoming programs are listed in the park district’s monthly program guide and online at summitmetroparks.org. For details, call 330-865-8065 or visit the website. 

Archery Rules

The following rules apply in both archery areas:

- All archers must sign in and sign out at the kiosk near the parking lot.
- Adults must accompany participants under 18. Pets are not allowed in archery areas.
- Broadheads and firearms are prohibited. Only practice tips may be used.
- All archers must shoot from a common shooting line. Walk-up shooting is not permitted. Never sky-draw or shoot arrows upward into the air.
- Prior to each session, carefully check bows and arrows to make sure they are in proper working condition.
- Do not load arrows until the shooting area is clear and shooters are on the common line.
- Only retrieve arrows after all bows have been made safe and all shooters agree to retrieve arrows.
- Shoot no more than six arrows between retrievals.
- Shoot only at the designated target in your lane. Hunting is prohibited.
- There should be no more than two people shooting at a single target.
- Alcohol is prohibited in the Metro Parks. Persons who have consumed alcohol or are under the influence of drugs are prohibited from using the range.
- Archery equipment must be handled properly and safely. Range users are expected to be responsible and safety-conscious at all times.

Failure to follow range rules will result in the loss of range privileges and possible criminal prosecution.

To report an unsafe act or conditions, contact a Summit Metro Parks ranger by calling 330-867-5511 (weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.) or 330-475-0029 (after hours, weekends and holidays). For emergencies, always call 911.

IN YOUR BACK YARD

CHRISTMAS FERN (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)



As you walk through the Metro Parks this winter, you may notice a cluster of ferns that have remained green. These evergreen “islands” on the ground are likely Christmas ferns.

There are several explanations for the plant’s name. First, since the Christmas fern is green during the holiday season, early settlers would decorate their homes with them each December. Second, when looking at a leaf or frond, you’ll notice it is divided into several leaflets called pinnae. Depending on the angle, each tiny pinnae can look like either a winter sleigh or a stocking. 🐦

– Naturalist Renell Roebuck



Season of the Christmas Fern

- Add year-round greenery to your back yard by planting Christmas ferns in your landscape. They require full to partial shade and moist, well-drained soil.

FEEDING THE CHICKADEES

Black-capped chickadees (named for their familiar call, *chickadee-dee-dee*) are brave little birds that are comfortable enough around people that, for years, visitors have been able to hand feed them at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm and Firestone Metro Park, both in Akron.

Not only are you allowed to hand feed the birds at these two parks, we encourage it! We do ask, however, that you do one thing in return for this awesome experience: When

You can purchase small bags of seed at the Nature Realm gift shop for 50 cents.

you are done feeding the birds, please deposit the unused seed in the seed cans (at the Nature Realm) or take it home for next time. If seed is left on the ground it can become moldy and cause the birds to get sick. It may also entice other animals to become too comfortable around people.

Here are some helpful hints to remember when feeding chickadees and other birds:

- They are wild animals. Sudden movements scare them, so stand still with your hand flat.
- Place a small amount of black-oil sunflower seed in your palm, and stand close to the woods or shrubs.

Chickadees will not eat in your hand. Rather, they will land in your hand, grab a seed, and then fly to a nearby tree or shrub to eat.

And if you’re really lucky, you may get one of these other birds to take seed from your hand:

- White-breasted Nuthatch
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Tufted Titmouse

– Naturalist Elizabeth Kresse



WHO HIBER

Naturalist Meghan Doran



Old Man Winter holds a firm grip on Northeast Ohio, and when temperatures drop and stay low, animals have to respond in some way to survive. A winter walk may lead you to think every creature hibernates here during winter, but that is not true.



NAPPERS

One of the busiest animals during the winter season is the squirrel. Gray squirrels, red squirrels, fox and flying squirrels are what naturalists refer to as “nappers.” They cache, or hide, food during the autumn months. When the snow falls, they may snooze for a week or two to conserve energy, but as soon as temperatures rise they wake up and start eating again. Their lives depend on their “fast food” reserves.



HIBERNATORS

Some other mammals truly hibernate, including jumping mice and groundhogs. Mice find shelter from extreme temperatures in dens, such as manmade nest boxes or old bird nests capped with leaves. Similar to their cousins the tree squirrels, mice work hard in summer and fall to eat as much as possible. Groundhogs snooze for months, and legend says if the groundhog does not see its shadow February 2, then we are sure to see spring-like weather soon.

NO SLEEP FOR MOM

Female black bears have more than just themselves to think about during winter hibernation: Moms may have two cubs nursing nonstop until spring! After breeding in late fall, females give birth in the midst of winter. That's one of the many reasons it is crucial for female black bears to fatten up on fruits, seeds,

NATES?




insects and plants — to have adequate fat reserves before falling asleep.

EARLY RISERS

Late winter will bring out a few of our favorite surprises. Mourning cloak butterflies can be seen flitting about on warm, sunny days. These graceful insects overwinter under loose tree bark. When the sun hits the tree trunk, mourning cloaks warm up just enough to emerge and search for food. After they emerge, they may feed on animal droppings or the sap from a tree. There's a good chance they will go back to shelter for a few more weeks until spring temperatures persist.



peeper, wake up after spending winter frozen like an icicle, literally. Wood frogs and gray treefrogs can also freeze nearly solid to protect themselves against extreme temperatures.

Even in winter, a trip to your favorite Metro Park can prove rewarding. You may get lucky and run into a whistle pig (groundhog) on the trail, a true sign that spring is on the way! 



WAKE-UP CALL

In late February, near seasonal wetlands, loud choruses fill the air, making us curious about spring's arrival. Amphibians, such as the tiny spring



The best places for **WINTER** **SCENES** in the **Metro Parks** **SPOTS**



Discover **unique**
views, pops of
bright color and
signs of **wildlife** in
the Metro Parks this
winter.

Park managers offer their favorite spots
for stunning **winter scenes**.



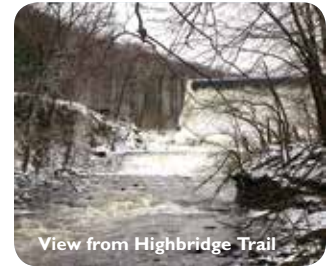
Winterberry hollies

Many park visitors enjoy the winterberry hollies, or *Ilex verticillata*, found along the split rail fence by the parking lot at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm when they are in their full glory.

"Winterberry holly is a deciduous holly with beautiful, bright red berries," explains Laura Esposito, park manager at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron).

Trails with a view

Once the leaves are gone, hikers can see down the steep banks to the river from the Highbridge Trail in Gorge Metro Park (1270 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls). Regional Manager Aaron Hockman likes this trail best when there is snow on the ground.



The Schumacher Trail (Cascade Valley Metro Park, 1690 Cuyahoga St., Akron) and Mingo Trail (Sand Run Metro Park, 1501 Sand Run Pkwy., Akron) are also both good trails to hike in winter to see the surrounding terrain that may be blocked when leaves are on trees.



Signs of wildlife

The recent restoration of the natural character of Pond Brook, located in the Pond Brook Conservation Area at Liberty Park (3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg), was necessary after nearly 100 years of negative human impact. Pond Brook was almost devoid of wildlife. Now, the running water brings in a lot of animals, and water quality has improved.

"Visitors may find animal tracks in the snow around Pond Brook and the Buttonbush Trail," says Jon Schoblocher, Liberty Park manager.



O'NEIL WOODS METRO PARK

2550 Martin Rd., Akron 44333

Counterman has worked for Summit Metro Parks since 2010.

my FAVORITE place

CHRISTY COUNTERMAN

MARKETING ASSISTANT

A 38-year veteran of the Fall Hiking Spree, Counterman fondly recalls time spent at O'Neil Woods Metro Park.

"As a child, I was impressed with the beautiful views from the top of Deer Run Trail. When you're young, the hill seems that much bigger."

Counterman reflects: "My brother and I loved O'Neil Woods so much that we made our own Deer Run Trail symbols and put them on stakes in our own backyard woods.



Counterman (middle) also enjoyed hikes in other Metro Parks, like this visit with friends to Gorge Metro Park in 1984.

We pretended to be rangers and patrolled the imaginary park trail." 🐦

O'Neil Woods Metro Park opened in 1972 when William O'Neil, founder of General Tire and Rubber Company, and his wife Grace donated their 242-acre family farm to the park district. The O'Neil family had cattle and horses, and one old barn still stands today.

THEN & NOW: O'NEIL WOODS METRO PARK



1969



2014

THEN: the O'Neil family farm that once straddled West Bath Road was owned by General Tire Chairman William O'Neil. NOW: The recently refurbished barn is part of O'Neil Woods Metro Park.

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 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	Hiking
BIKE & HIKE TRAIL					
FREEDOM TRAIL					
TOWPATH 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					

Lighted Unlighted