

Vol. 55 No. 4

FALL 2014

GREEN ISLANDS

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM SUMMIT METRO PARKS

ON THE INSIDE

4 Liberty Park
Branches Out
ODNR agreement
adds Tinkers Creek

8 Vibrant Colors
What causes
leaves to change?

10 Top Spots
Wild turkeys in
the Metro Parks

Summit
Metro Parks



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

Our parks are like green islands
in an urban landscape.

IN THIS ISSUE

Liberty Park Branches Out.	4
In Your Back Yard.	7
The Vibrant Colors of Fall.	8
Top Spots: Wild Turkeys	10
Fall Hiking Spree form	12

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Mark A. Spisak, Chair
Roland H. Bauer
Jane E. Bond
Morgan C. Greene, Ph.D.
Herb Newman
Keith D. Shy, Director-Secretary

EDITOR

Nathan Eppink
Chief of Marketing & Communications

ART DIRECTOR

Karl Simonson
Graphic Designer/Production Coordinator

Summit Metro Parks
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:

Rob Blair	Jeff Hill	Marlo Perdicas
Kate Bundy	Tim Hite	J.J. Prekop Jr.
Jerry Cannon	Jennie Levy	Karl Simonson

This magazine is mailed free of charge to Summit County residents. To join the mailing list, send your name and mailing address to marketing@summitmetroparks.org or call 330-867-5511.

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 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

Though its beauty is fleeting, many volunteer photographers have captured fall in all of its glory. This image is from Munroe Falls Metro Park, from regular contributor Rob Blair.



PARK news

- Deer Run Trail in **O'Neil Woods Metro Park** (2550 Martin Rd., Bath) was closed for two months following a May 12 storm that brought damage to multiple areas. The rerouted, rebuilt trail now includes a series of switchbacks, yet it remains a challenging 1.8-mile hike. In **Hampton Hills Metro Park** (2925 Akron-Peninsula Rd., Akron), the longer Adam Run Trail, closed since May, will also look different to regular visitors when it reopens this season.
- Construction is under way on several projects, including a new visitors center at Liberty Park (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg); a 2-mile extension of the multipurpose Freedom Trail, between Tallmadge and Akron; the new Wood Hollow Metro Park in Hudson, near the intersection of Barlow and Stow roads; and a new roof on the visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron).



Printed on FSC-certified Chorus Art Silk;
a 30% post-consumer, processed chlorine-free
recycled paper.

PARK news (continued)

- A new animated YouTube video introduces viewers to Belle, a bike bell who shares ways to be safe on trails for bikes and pedestrians, including our Bike & Hike, Freedom and Towpath trails. View the video at youtube.com/summitmetroparks.
- Forms for this year's Fall Hiking Spree may be used by individuals and families/groups who hike together. In an effort to save paper and make it easier to track your progress, each form can accommodate up to six people.

For more news, visit our website: summitmetroparks.org

SHIELD ASSISTANCE DATES



The 51st annual Fall Hiking Spree is the largest and longest-running event of its kind in the nation. A first-year hiker who completes eight trails before November 30 earns a hiking staff and shield. A veteran hiker earns this year's hiking shield.

Volunteers will help attach your new shield to your staff on the following dates at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron):

- Saturday, October 25, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Saturday, November 1, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Saturday, November 8, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Saturday, November 15, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Saturday, November 22, 1 – 3 p.m.
- Saturday, November 29, 1 – 3 p.m.



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 EXPLORE!



**“The spree
surrounds us with
vibrant beauty.”**

~ LIZ, with husband Jim and their children

Sep. 1 to Nov. 30



**Explore the autumn beauty of your
Metro Parks on a variety of hiking trails,
from easy to challenging.**

Hiking forms are available online and at all Acme Fresh Market stores. Spree rewards are FREE for Summit County residents.

First-time participants who complete eight trails receive a hiking staff and shield. Veteran hikers earn a shield.

**Summit
Metro Parks**

330-865-8065 | summitmetroparks.org

LIBERTY PARK

In August, Summit Metro Parks entered into a deal with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to acquire 1,000 acres from Ohio State Parks.

Summit officials signed a 25-year management agreement for Tinkers Creek State Park in Streetsboro and Tinkers Creek State Nature Preserve in Aurora. Both areas make up a combined 1,141 acres and are contiguous with the district's 2,000-acre Liberty Park in Twinsburg, Twinsburg Township and Reminderville. The deal also transferred management of the 6-acre Portage Lakes Wetland State Nature Preserve, a sphagnum bog surrounded by Portage Lakes State Park in Akron, and the 18-acre Karlo Fen, a wetland about 12 miles southeast of Akron.



Eagle Point Trail has an observation deck for viewing an active eagle's nest from a safe distance.



BRANCHES OUT

The largest natural area managed by Summit Metro Parks is now more than 3,000 acres



Beautiful, untouched wetlands in Tinkers Creek State Nature Preserve are now part of Liberty Park.

"The two Tinkers Creek properties see mostly local visitors for day-use activities, which is consistent with other areas we manage," said Keith Shy, director-secretary for Summit Metro Parks. "They are great additions to our park district."

To put the size of the now 3,100-acre Liberty Park in perspective, Sand Run Metro Park in Akron — the park district's most popular natural area, based on the number of annual visits — is 995 acres.

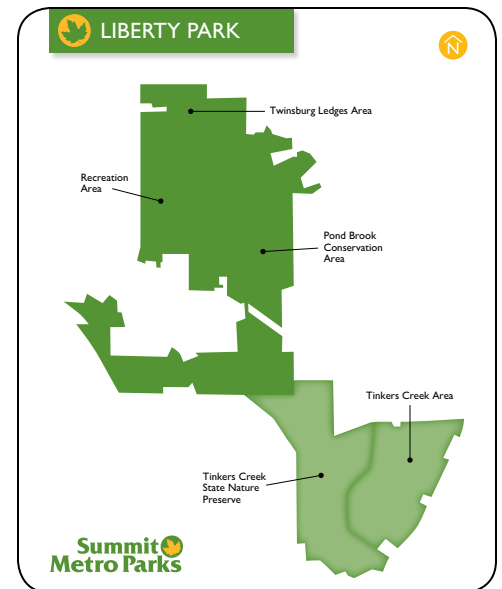
According to the agreement, Summit Metro Parks rangers will patrol all of the added areas, and the district may make

facility and trail improvements over time in Tinkers Creek. The Portage Lakes Wetland and Karlo Fen areas have no public access and will remain conservation areas.

"We appreciate having the opportunity to partner with Summit Metro Parks," said ODNR Director James Zehringer. "With their close proximity to these state properties, (Summit Metro Parks) will ensure these important areas are managed with a daily presence while allowing us to allocate resources to other areas that need closer attention."



The Tinkers Creek Area in Liberty Park offers scenic views and hiking trails.



The Tinkers Creek areas are just minutes from the Liberty Park field office, where the park's daily maintenance is coordinated. Summit Metro Parks intends to add one part-time year-round employee to assist with the maintenance of the Tinkers Creek areas and its new Liberty Park Nature Center, which is currently under construction with a planned opening next spring.

Plans for the approximately \$3 million nature center project, funded entirely by the park district, include a 3,900-square-foot building with exhibits and

continued from page 5

programming space, a picnic shelter, small outdoor amphitheater and two new hiking trails.

Liberty Park began more than 10 years ago when the City of Twinsburg purchased the park's Twinsburg Ledges Area for Summit Metro Parks to manage. Additional purchases and leases by the park district expanded the park, which harbors countless rare and endangered species, such as Indiana bats, marsh wrens, bald eagles and more. It earned Important Bird Area designation by Audubon Ohio in 2006.

With the ODNR agreement, Summit Metro Parks now manages 12,900 total acres. 🌿

More Metro Parks ... A Great Value

Since 1998, the park district has doubled in size. Other than Liberty, some additions include Springfield Bog Metro Park (1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.), the Tallmadge Meadows Area in Munroe Falls Metro Park (1088 North Ave., Tallmadge), the Overlook in Cascade Valley Metro Park (354 Sackett Ave., Akron), the yet-to-open Wood Hollow Metro Park in Hudson, near the intersection with Barlow and Stow roads, and several conservation areas.



Springfield Bog prairie and bog restoration

During that span, Summit Metro Parks and its partners have completed the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Summit County, a total of 41 miles from county line to county line. The park district manages a little more than half of that distance, from the southern boundary of Cuyahoga Valley National Park to Stark County, except about 3 miles in Downtown Akron.

Floating Towpath Trail



continued on page 11



MUNROE FALLS METRO PARK

The Lake Area in Munroe Falls Metro Park is located at 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls.

my FAVORITE place

SUSAN CARPENTER
CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

Munroe Falls Metro Park is one of two Summit Metro Parks featuring lake swimming each summer. Winter in Munroe Falls is just as fun on the lighted sled hill.

With so much to offer, many park users consider this park a favorite, and Susan Carpenter is among them.

"I love the park mostly for the beautiful lake. It is relaxing," said Carpenter, a resident of Stow who began working for Summit Metro Parks in 2012.

Even before she began working for the park district, Carpenter and her family spent quality time together here. Carpenter reflects: "I remember hiking the Indian Spring Trail on the first Fall Hiking Spree I completed in 2009. I have special memories of hiking there with my husband Shannon and daughter Millie just days before my son Elijah was born last year, and of running my first-ever race, the Mother's Day 5K, earlier this year."

The Mother's Day 5K is an annual fundraiser for the Metro Parks Foundation. 🌿

IN YOUR BACK YARD

RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*)



Pheasants look like they belong in the classic image of a farm field with haystacks and pumpkins, but the birds are not native species. Ring-necked pheasants were introduced in Ohio from Asia in 1896.

Over time, farming practices changed and habitats were eliminated, and although public and private lands have been stocked for hunting, the farm-

raised birds have a limited ability to survive long, harsh winters. By 1978, 96 percent of the state's pheasant population was gone.



Summit Metro Parks has considered re-establishing ring-necked pheasants in areas that once hosted farms, but our biologists are first focusing on establishing the native bobwhite quail in Silver Creek Metro Park in Norton and Springfield Bog Metro Park in Springfield Township. 🍁

— Naturalist Pat Rydquist

Nature Notes

- Pheasants often run rather than fly to avoid danger.
- Frequently seen along gravel roads, pheasants eat small pebbles or “grit,” which help the birds digest food.
- Pheasants eat corn, oats, wheat and other crops, weed seeds, berries, and even insects.
- Predators include foxes, coyotes, owls and hawks. Raccoons and skunks eat pheasant eggs.
- Hens lay an average of 12 eggs, which hatch in 23 to 25 days.

“What is it?”

This animal is found in Liberty Park in Twinsburg — maybe even in your yard if the time is right. Some people find it a little scary, but it is very helpful at removing bugs. What is it?

Find the answer on page 11.



THE VIBRANT CO

Lindsay Smith, Marketing/Communications Specialist



Fall is one of the most celebrated seasons because beautiful colors surround us, albeit temporarily.

The air becomes crisper and thousands of visitors make a point to spend time outside to enjoy reds, oranges, yellows and browns.

WHY DO LEAVES CHANGE IN FALL?

What causes leaves on deciduous trees, or trees that lose their leaves seasonally, to go through such a dramatic transformation? To understand more about the vibrancy around us this season, Naturalist Pat Rydquist offers an explanation:

“Simplistically, the leaves are the kitchen of the deciduous tree,” she said. “They gather the food — in the

form of minerals and water — from the roots, and the sunlight cooks the food to make chlorophyll, which is what makes the sugars to produce and grow.

Rydquist said in the fall it's time for the “kitchen” to slow down and eventually close for the winter. As temperatures shift from warm to cool and days grow shorter, the limited sunlight slows down chlorophyll production. What remains in the leaves are the sugars: carotene provides a yellow color, and anthocyanins give us reds and purples.

“The deciduous tree will let its leaves go because it goes dormant. The terminal leaf buds are like the kitchen door. When the door finally closes the leaf will fall off.”

LORS OF FALL

LEAF ME ALONE

Before you start raking up and removing fallen leaves, Rydquist suggests the following:

“People could keep some leaves in areas where they can decompose on their own. Many moths and butterflies make their cocoons and chrysalises in those leaves. Raking them up and tossing them away is ridding nature of great beauty and an important part of the food chain.

“Those leaves could then be used as garden mulch in early summer after the butterflies and moths have emerged,” she added. 🍁



The best places to **SEE WILD** **TURKEYS** in the **Metro Parks** **SPOTS**

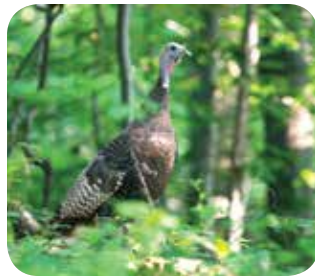


The **wild turkey** is the largest game bird in North America, ranging from 3 to 4 feet tall and weighing up to 24 pounds.

Wild turkeys inhabit each of Ohio's 88 counties, and they are commonly seen because the big birds do not migrate. Females, or hens, usually nest on the ground. Breeding starts in early spring and the young, called poults, will stay with their mother until fall or the following spring.



Liberty Park
3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg 44087



"In my experience, Liberty Park is the best spot for turkeys. They prefer mature forests, but also take advantage of the diverse habitats found there," says Ryan Trim bath, a natural resources intern with Summit Metro Parks.

O'Neil Woods Metro Park
2550 Martin Rd., Bath 44333

"Last winter I saw over 100 turkeys crossing Columbia Road near the Buckeye Trail, which travels through the 295-acre O'Neil Woods. This was by far the most I have ever seen at once," said Trim bath.



District-wide



Trim bath said visitors can see and hear turkeys almost anywhere nowadays. This is in stark contrast to conditions 100 years ago, when the species was said to be extirpated from the state. The combination of management and loss of natural predators have resulted in high survival rates for adult birds, which explains why they are common today.

"Wild turkeys are a successful example of conservation and reintroduction efforts," Trim bath noted.

... A Great Value (continued from page 6)

Last fall, voters showed their support of the park district's efforts, approving a renewal of a property tax that will fund Summit Metro Parks through 2021. The owner of a \$100,000 property pays less than \$45 per year for 14 parks, 125 miles of trails, dozens of free monthly programs, and more.

District-wide, annual visitation averages 5.2 million, making Summit Metro Parks one of the most-visited attractions in Northeast Ohio. ■

"What is it?" answer:

It's a bat!

The ledges in Liberty Park, 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg, provide habitat for bats.



2014 Fall Hiking Event

FALL HIKING SPREE

TO PARTICIPATE:

Hike at least eight of the designated trails. After completing each hike, date your form. Hikes must be completed September 1 through November 30. Parks are open daily, 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

First-year hikers earn a hiking staff and shield. Veteran hikers earn the hiking shield. Since the program is funded by Summit County tax dollars, out-of-county residents pay to receive their hiking rewards (\$10 for first-year hikers, \$5 for veteran hikers).

TO RECEIVE YOUR REWARD IN PERSON:

Bring completed forms to the administrative offices, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, through March 31, 2015.

You may also visit F. A. Seiberling Nature Realm, noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, through March 31, 2015.

TO RECEIVE YOUR REWARD BY MAIL:

Veteran hikers may mail their completed forms to the administrative offices, 975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron 44313. **Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.** Hiking shields are mailed flat. **Rewards are not available after March 31, 2015.**

CASCADE VALLEY Metro Park

Chuckery Trail / Chuckery Area
837 Cuyahoga St., Akron 44313

DEEP LOCK QUARRY Metro Park

Quarry Trail
5779 Riverview Rd., Peninsula 44264

FIRESTONE Metro Park

Redwing Trail / Tuscarawas Area
2620 Harrington Rd., Akron 44319

FURNACE RUN Metro Park

Rock Creek Trail / Brushwood Area
4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield 44286

GOODYEAR HEIGHTS Metro Park

Piney Woods Trail / Pioneer Area
550 Frazier Ave., Akron 44305

GORGE Metro Park

Highbridge Trail
1270 Front St., Akron 44310

HAMPTON HILLS Metro Park

Spring Hollow Trail / Main Entrance
2925 Akron-Peninsula Rd., Akron 44313

LIBERTY PARK

Ledges Trail / Twinsburg Ledges Area
9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg 44087

MUNROE FALLS Metro Park

Indian Spring Trail
521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls 44262

2014 Commemorative
Hiking Shield



F.A. Seiberling

NATURE REALM

Cherry Lane / Fernwood trails
1828 Smith Rd., Akron 44313

O'NEIL WOODS Metro Park

Deer Run Trail
2550 Martin Rd., Bath 44333

SAND RUN Metro Park

Dogwood Trail / Wadsworth Area
1400 Sand Run Pkwy., Akron 44313

SILVER CREEK Metro Park

Pheasant Run Trail / Pheasant Run Area
5000 Hametown Rd., Norton 44203

SPRINGFIELD BOG Metro Park

Prairie Trail
1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp. 44312

Hiker's Choice

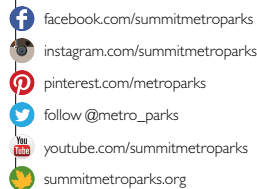
☐ Hike any **one** of your favorite **Metro Parks** trails.



Summit Metro Parks GREEN ISLANDS

Vol. 55 No. 4
FALL 2014

975 Treaty Line Rd.
Akron, OH 44313-58



PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AKRON, OH
PERMIT NO. 149

Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

51st ANNUAL FALL HIKING SPREE

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY/GROUP HIKING FORM

PRIMARY PARTICIPANT

FIRST-YEAR Hiker VETERAN SUMMIT CO. RESIDENT

Primary Participant's Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Address			City	State		Zip
Email			Phone			

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

FIRST-YEAR Hiker VETERAN SUMMIT CO. RESIDENT

Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

METRO PARK	TRAIL	SYMBOL	MILEAGE	CLASS	RATING	SIGNATURE (Only if staff or volunteers are available)	DATE
CASCADE VALLEY	Chuckery		2.4	C	3		
DEEP LOCK QUARRY	Quarry		1.2	C	2		
FIRESTONE	Redwing		1.1	C	1		
FURNACE RUN	Rock Creek		1.2	C	1		
GOODYEAR HEIGHTS	Piney Woods		2.0	C	2		
GORGE	Highbridge		3.2	C	2		
HAMPTON HILLS	Spring Hollow		1.6	C	3		
LIBERTY PARK	Ledges		1.1	C	2		
MUNROE FALLS	Indian Spring		2.2	C	2		
NATURE REALM (no pets)	Cherry Lane / Fernwood Loop		1.1	C	1		
O'NEIL WOODS	Deer Run		1.8	C	3		
SAND RUN	Dogwood		1.8	C	3		
SILVER CREEK	Pheasant Run		1.2	C	1		
SPRINGFIELD BOG	Prairie		1.6	C	1		
Hiker's Choice (Metro Park ONLY)		<input type="checkbox"/>					

All trail mileage reflects round-trip hikes

Rating: 1=Easy 2=Moderate 3=Strenuous
Class: A=Multipurpose B=Accessible C=Basic D=Primitive
Visit our website for rating and class definitions

Summit Metro Parks
330-867-5511 • summitmetroparks.org

Signature of Hiker
THIS FORM MAY BE REPRODUCED.