

Vol. 56 No. 3

SUMMER 2015

GREEN ISLANDS

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM SUMMIT METRO PARKS

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at Liberty Park

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Opens in Hudson

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The acrobatic
birds that delight
local residents

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.

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summitmetroparks.org



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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 trailside nature center at Liberty Park offers
new interpretive experiences for visitors.



PARK news

- This season, the park district opened its 15th park, **Wood Hollow Metro Park** (2121 Barlow Rd., Hudson), and the nature center at **Liberty Park** (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg).
- The lakes at **Silver Creek Metro Park** (5171 S. Medina Line Rd., Norton) and the **Tinkers Creek Area of Liberty Park** (10303 Aurora Hudson Rd., Streetsboro) are open this summer for personal/private watercraft. Boats may be placed in the water by hand year-round as conditions permit. The addition of a sign-in kiosk is planned for Tinkers Creek, where complete rules will be posted. At the lake in **Munroe Falls Metro Park**, (521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls), personal/private watercraft may be used as conditions permit, September through December.

PARK news (continued)

NIMISILA RESERVOIR METRO PARK

Summit Metro Parks has entered into a 25-year management agreement with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to manage Nimisila Reservoir. The 1,000-acre property, which is mostly open water, is now the metropolitan park district's 16th park.

Summit Metro Parks rangers, who are commissioned peace officers, have begun patrolling the area, which will be managed as a "satellite park" by a crew from Firestone Metro Park in Akron. New signs for Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park will come later this year.

ODNR will continue to manage the campground through Labor Day weekend. Additional camping may be possible on a limited basis with a Summit Metro Parks special-use permit. Opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, fishing and duck hunting will continue with proper registration/licensing. 🌿



For more news, visit our 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!

"The spree is
an adventure
we share."

~ MARIA, with husband Jerry

July 1 to August 31



Biking forms are available online and at all Acme Fresh Market stores. Spree rewards are **FREE** for Summit County residents. One lucky participant — drawn at random from submitted forms — will win a new Raleigh bike from Century Cycles.

First-time participants who complete the ride receive a bicycle license plate and reflective sticker. Multiple participants receive a sticker.

**Summit
Metro Parks**

330-865-8065 | summitmetroparks.org

NEW NATURE

Outdoor classroom. Exhibit area. Public space. Destination. The Liberty Park Nature Center, at 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg, is all of the above — with a black bear photo-opp.

Summit Metro Parks officials and representatives from the City of Twinsburg dedicated the building and opened its doors following a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 21.



Take a selfie with the outdoor bear exhibit, and share it! #summitmetroparks

CENTER IN YOUR BACK YARD

Lindsay Smith, Marketing Coordinator



Officials opened the nature center on May 21.

Twinsburg Mayor Katherine Procop expressed her excitement:

"It is another way that Summit Metro Parks is providing educational experiences for our region, in a close-up environment that we have not experienced here (in Twinsburg). I congratulate the park district for following their mission to acquire and conserve land that will enhance the lives of our residents for generations to come."

Outside the new center in Twinsburg, near a shelter for programs and picnics,

stands a 6-foot-tall black bear replica. Park employees believe it will be a hit with visitors carrying smartphones. "Where else can you take a selfie with a black bear?" remarked Nathan Eppink, chief of marketing and communications.

Eppink said biologists have found evidence of at least one black bear hibernating in Liberty Park. At 3,000 acres, the park has the features and habitats to support the large mammals.

Lisa King, the park district's chief of planning and development, is proud of



Outdoor exhibits explain past uses of the land.

the project's many details, both large and small, inside and out.

"We incorporated a lot of interpretive elements and features that speak to the site's former uses," she said. "Wildlife tracks and human footprints in the concrete, the barn stone amphitheater and campfire area — visitors will have a lot of things to look at and enjoy."

Not only do the displays honor the site's natural and cultural history, they were designed to be accessible by visitors with disabilities. All indoor and



A lighted path welcomes visitors to the new nature center at Liberty Park.

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outdoor displays, including a “cave” in the fabricated ledges, are wheelchair accessible, according to Interpretive Services Manager Christine Hockman.

“Exhibits with tactile and interactive features have a dual purpose — to engage all visitors and to enhance the experience for visitors with disabilities. Plus, the touchable exhibits can provide helpful sensory experiences for visitors with cognitive disabilities,” said Hockman.

Summit Metro Parks worked with Cleveland Sight Center staff, who shared ways to provide accommodations for visitors with low vision and blindness, Hockman explained.

The 3,900-square-foot nature center is sure to become a popular place for programs, school groups and special events.

The nature center is an extension of what is done at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm, the district-run park at 1828 Smith Rd., Akron, which has a 10,000-square-foot visitors center.



Young visitors explore the nature center on opening day.

Liberty Park is the result of a unique partnership between Summit Metro Parks and the City of Twinsburg.

More than 10 years ago, the city purchased the Twinsburg Ledges

Area for the park district to manage. Additional purchases and leases by Summit Metro Parks followed, bringing Liberty Park to its current size.

Summit Metro Parks funded the approximately \$3 million Liberty Park construction project. In 2011, the district opened the parking lot and 1.1-mile Ledges Trail, a moderately challenging path that leads visitors past fern- and moss-covered sandstone ledges and through a wetland. New trails opening this season in the park’s Twinsburg Ledges Area include the flat, easy and paved .25-mile Maple Loop and the under-construction 0.6-mile natural-surface Bluebird Trail, which travels through a meadow.

Liberty Park is the largest natural area managed by the park district. 🐦

IN YOUR BACK YARD

INSECT CONDO

"Hey, there are bugs in there!"

Usually the response to such a remark is a shriek or an "Ewwwww, yuck!" However, when you combine bugs with art the result can be *ahhhhh-mazing*.

An insect condo, like the one at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron), is beautiful and useful. Old materials like discarded pallets and broken clay pots can become "Home, Sweet Home" for some of the most beneficial creatures on Earth: bugs.

Native insects pollinate our food, eat harmful insects and create rich, organic soil. Some bugs are more beneficial than others, so who you invite to live in the condo is important. Insects have certain criteria when building or searching out a home. By providing materials suited to particular insects you can be sure to attract the ones you want.

WHO TO INVITE:

The bumblebee, which pollinates plants like tomatoes and strawberries, requires a nesting site low to the ground with lightly compacted materials including grass and mulch. Toads and frogs, which devour slugs and other garden pests, like cool temperatures and shade, so an overturned clay pot

will do nicely. Aphids and other small garden pests are no match for a hungry ladybug. Invite ladybugs to stay in your insect condo by providing a warm spot to overwinter with a thick layer of dry sticks, leaves and straw.

BUILD YOUR OWN AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS

Stop in to the visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm for more tips and plans for creating your own insect condo. You can see ours in person on Seneca Trail, near the pop-bottle greenhouse. 🐞

— Danette Rushboldt, Naturalist



Dry Sticks

1

Discarded Pallets

3

Straw, Grass & Mulch

2

WOOD HOLLOW

First Metro Park in Hudson opened May 19

Nathan Eppink, Chief of Marketing & Communications



Six years ago, a Metro Park in Hudson was not on anyone's radar — that is, until a resident called Summit Metro Parks to donate 150 acres.

That gift of land in 2009 — by a man whose family loves the parks and the Fall Hiking Spree, but wants to remain anonymous — was the catalyst behind the district's 15th park and its first in Hudson: the 300-acre Wood Hollow Metro Park, at 2121 Barlow Rd.

Purchases of several adjacent properties brought the park to its current size. It includes a 55-car parking lot, fishing pond and a 1.2-mile natural-surface walking trail, the Downy Loop, with several bridges and boardwalks. The trail's name is a nod to the small woodpeckers that are among the species inhabiting "wood hollows" in the area's beech-maple woods and wetlands.

Officials from Summit Metro Parks and the City of Hudson dedicated the new

park Tuesday, May 19. Hudson Mayor William A. Currin said he appreciates the park district's investment in the community.

"As we continue to pursue a culture of health, spending time outside communing with nature is a key ingredient to that pursuit. Wood Hollow Metro Park will most certainly add to our quality of life."

Lisa King, chief of planning and development for Summit Metro Parks, said a playfield will be prepped this summer, and restrooms and a picnic shelter are coming. "Visitors will be able to watch the site take shape over the next few seasons," she added.

In the coming months, Summit Metro Parks naturalists will offer guided hikes in the new park, and the 2015 Fall Hiking Spree will include its Downy Loop Trail.

The annual three-month Fall Hiking Spree begins September 1, and



FILLS VOID



individuals who hike at least eight designated trails will earn rewards, which are free to Summit County residents. A first-timer receives a

wooden hiking staff and commemorative metal shield. A veteran hiker receives a shield. 🐦

Among the park's beech-maple woods, wetlands and open areas, visitors may see and hear a variety of native species in Wood Hollow Metro Park, including:

- **Amphibians** (American toads, spring peepers and wood frogs)
- **Birds** (blue jays, cardinals, and several hawks and woodpeckers)
- **Insects** (numerous dragonflies and damselflies)
- **Mammals** (eastern chipmunks; gray, red and fox squirrels; white-tailed deer)
- **Reptiles** (midland painted turtles)

Species Spotlight

PURPLE MARTINS



Broad-chested, **large swallow** with slightly hooked bill, forked tail and long, tapered wings



Smaller than a robin, but **larger** than a sparrow



Females, first-year males and immature birds have variable amounts of gray on their chests and whitish lower bellies



Adult **males** are iridescent dark blue and purple



Fly rapidly with a mix of **flapping** and **gliding**



Martins begin to **arrive** in **Summit County** in **late March**



Martins eat only **insects** that they catch in the air.

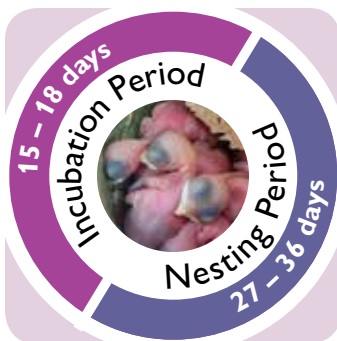


They prefer at least 150 feet of **open area**, especially near water



Artificial
NESTING
GOURDS

have helped bring the numbers back from "threatened."



Colony Nesters



As soon as chicks leave the nest, purple martins start forming large flocks.

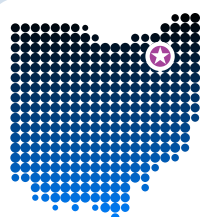
Purple martins leave Summit County in early September and spend winter in **BOLIVIA** and **BRAZIL**



Adult male



PORTAGE LAKES is the **PURPLE MARTIN CAPITAL** of OHIO



Tens of thousands of purple martins gather and roost at night on Nimisila Reservoir in August to get ready for their migration.





Go out and RUN!

We're Your Back Yard

June 1 to August 31

Runners participating in the three-part Akron Marathon Rubber City Race Series have a new training partner: Summit Metro Parks.


The park district, with support from race series staff, launched its inaugural Metro Parks Running Spree on June 1. The three-month spree 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 by August 31 will earn a wooden race medal on a commemorative ribbon.

Forms are available at runningspree.summitmetroparks.org, 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.

"We're thrilled about the Running Spree and the continued partnership with Summit Metro Parks," said Anne Bitong, president/executive director of the Akron Marathon Rubber City Race Series. "The spree helps us support our runners throughout their training."

The Running Spree is similar in format to the district's three other on-your-own spree events, including the May-June Spree For All hiking series on flat, easy trails, the July-August Summer Biking Spree on multipurpose trails, and the September-November Fall Hiking Spree on a variety of trails. 



OFFICIAL TRAINING PARTNER of the Akron Marathon Rubber City Race Series



LACE UP FOR NEW RUNNING SPREE

Park district and
marathon team up
for inaugural event




For more information, including trails and a participant form, visit:

runningspree.summitmetroparks.org

330-865-8065



#SMPspree

 Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

2015 Summer Biking Event



SUMMER BIKING SPREE

Go out and RIDE! Participants of this at-your-own-pace cycling event who complete five different sections of the multipurpose trails managed by Summit Metro Parks (the 34-mile Bike & Hike Trail, the 6.2-mile Freedom Trail in Tallmadge, and 22.4 miles of the Towpath Trail in Summit County) between July 1 and August 31 can earn spree rewards: a bicycle license plate and reflective sticker for first-year riders, and a reflective sticker for veteran riders.

One lucky spree participant — drawn at random from submitted forms — will win a new Raleigh bike from Century Cycles. The drawing will be held October 16. The number of completed forms will determine the odds of winning.



Find spree forms at all Acme Fresh Market locations and at Century Cycles in Peninsula. Learn more and find trail maps at summitmetroparks.org. Call 330-865-8065 for details. 