

GREEN ISLANDS

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Summit Metro Parks Bi-Monthly Magazine

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Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Mark A. Spisak Chair
Joel D. Bailey
Tonya Block
Herb Newman
Tina Ughrin

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.

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Green Islands can be downloaded online:
summitmetroparks.org

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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.

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SUMMER CONCERTS '19

Join us for a FREE, live concert series this summer in the great outdoors! All performances begin at 7 p.m., and Music by the Lake concerts feature free swimming from 3 to 6:45 p.m.

MUSIC by the LAKE	MF/Lake Area	6/4
MUSIC by the LAKE	SC/Bathhouse	6/11
RANDOM ACT of MUSIC	CVS/Chuckery	6/18
MUSIC by the LAKE	MF/Lake Area	7/2
MUSIC by the LAKE	SC/Bathhouse	7/9
RANDOM ACT of MUSIC	NR/Lot C4	7/16
MUSIC by the LAKE	MF/Lake Area	8/6

RANDOM ACT of MUSIC	SC/Bathhouse	8/13
RANDOM ACT of MUSIC	LP/Twinsburg Ledges	8/20

Concerts are subject to cancelation due to inclement weather. Call 330-865-8060 if wet weather is in the forecast.

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DISCOVER YOUR BACK YARD Section

GREAT BLUE HERONS

by Sarah Graham, Interpretive Naturalist

Great Blue Herons can be viewed in many areas managed by Summit Metro Parks. They are seen most frequently from February to July at the Bath Road Heronry in the Merriman Valley, where onlookers have enjoyed them since the early 1990s. In February, males return to the area to await the females for the courtship display. The pair stays until the eventual fledging of their young in July.

Males and females take turns incubating and feeding their young. The adults leave to find food like fish, small rodents, amphibians and insects. They can be seen hunting throughout the year at a variety of locations, such as the Wilbeth Road Trailhead on the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, the lake at Silver Creek Metro Park and the pond in the Tinkers Creek Area of Liberty Park. Standing motionless, they await their prey, then strike with their long “S” shaped neck and sharp beak. Water quality is important to their long-term survival; without a healthy water system, these birds would lack much-needed aquatic foods vital to their existence. Fortunately, the Cuyahoga River has come a long way since the 1969 fire — in fact, it celebrates 50 years of renewed water quality this year.

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OUR BRILLIANT BURNING CUYAHOGA

by Elaine Marsh, Watershed Specialist

The June 23, 1969 burning of the Cuyahoga River is a familiar story to nearly everyone in the free world. But 1969 was not the first river burn. The Cuyahoga burned

as early as 1868 and many times between. Some of the fires took lives, many took property. The photo usually associated with the 1969 fire is actually from a 1952 fire which caused over \$1.5 million in damages.

So, why did the '69 fire lead to marches across the country, Earth Day and the Clean Water Act?

For the first time since the industrial revolution, clean water had become a public value. People refused to accept pollution, confronted powerful vested interests and demanded regulations with consequences.

The result was a system of state and federal laws and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency enforcement procedures that have transformed water bodies nationwide. Locally, Ohio EPA's research on biocriteria and stream structure has launched revolutionary clean water infrastructure programs. Partnerships among local governments, the regulatory community, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations advanced the fishable, swimmable goals of the Clean Water Act. Scientific research led to new technologies and a better understanding of how watersheds and green infrastructure worked with reclaiming municipal and industrial waste water.

Additionally, a whole system of funding sources for clean water infrastructure has evolved. Summit Metro Parks has acquired sensitive wetlands and watersheds using these funds, expanding our conservation ability and allowing for additional recreational opportunities for the public. The funding is also aiding our work with community stakeholders to remove the Gorge Dam, the Cuyahoga's largest remaining unresolved problem.

In contrast to the polluted river of 1969, the Cuyahoga now meets or nearly meets the standards for aquatic communities along most of its 100-mile crooked journey to Lake Erie. It has been a long voyage, but the benefits of clean water are priceless and new businesses are taking advantage of the recreational potential of this renewed river. Waterways that support healthy ecosystems also support healthy people and improve our quality of life.

The river that burned is now celebrated as a clean recreational resource. However, good water quality is not assured by past accomplishments. Our natural resources will likely always be at risk to human impacts, so it's up to us to keep clean water a public priority to ensure a healthy environment for our children and future generations.

SMP Employee Spotlight:

Janean Kazimir & Becca Zak
Interpretive Naturalists

Janean and Becca have been with SMP for three and five years, respectively. Get to know them and the important work they do.

What is your role at Summit Metro Parks?

BZ: We're interpretive naturalists. We lead public programs and are tasked with making plants, animals, history and stewardship relevant and important. We're encouraged to stay curious and be life-long learners. It's a rewarding and intentional career and we highly recommend it; the world needs more people in the scientific community!

What's your favorite project?

JK: I've enjoyed teaching visitors about misunderstood wildlife, such as bats, reptiles and coyotes. I love creating "aha!" moments around critters that are not traditionally seen as "cute and cuddly."

BZ: Focusing on the human side of sustainability is most rewarding for me. Human impacts are often overlooked, yet are prevalent worldwide. Encouraging meaningful human action is necessary and contagious!

You're featured in this year's ad campaign. Can you tell us about those photos?

JK: Becca and I are stand-up paddleboarding at Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park. This park is perfect for camping, fishing, paddle sports and to see eagles, osprey and purple martins. Learn more about kayaking or paddleboarding — join us on a program this summer!

What's your best tip to enjoy the Metro Parks?

BZ: We're biased, but suggest attending an SMP program! In every season, there is so much to learn and discover. Search for salamanders, call for coyotes or touch a turtle. The more you learn, the more you understand and the more you care.

ENJOY Section

River Transformations at Valley View

by Mike Johnson, Chief of Conservation

Call out:

"Some people look for a beautiful place. Others make a place beautiful." - Hazrat Inayat Khan

The recent acquisition of the former Valley View Golf Club completed part of a grand strategy that was put into motion in 1924 when Summit Metro Parks hired the internationally famous Olmsted Brothers to assemble the district's first park master plan. Back then, the area was still a dairy farm, but we already knew it was special. In finally gaining this property, Summit Metro Parks was able to connect 1,700 acres of Gorge, Sand Run and Cascade Valley Metro Parks along several miles of the beautiful Cuyahoga River.

Through the help of generous public and private grant funding, we are hard at work restoring the golf course to a more natural state. Phase 1 of the restoration was funded by a grant of more than \$1 million from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund and involved restoring natural meadows and forests, 20 acres of wetlands and over 3,000 feet of small headwater streams. The project also redirected surface water from Cuyahoga Street to hydrate wetlands and fill the stream channels, allowing it to be naturally cleansed before entering the Cuyahoga River. We're encouraged to see wildlife already establishing itself where putting greens once stood.

In Phase 2, we're working with our partners at the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to plan the restoration of an additional 5,000 feet of the mainstem of the Cuyahoga River utilizing funds from a NOAA Regional Habitat Restoration Partnership award, a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative-supported program. We hope to double the floodplain capacity of the river, install habitat features for fish and aquatic wildlife and replant trees along the river. But Valley View is more than an ecological restoration — park planners are also designing features that will make this area popular for eco-tourism and outdoor recreation. Amenities could include pedestrian hiking trails and wildlife viewing areas, fishing, river access points for kayaking and water-based activities, a connector bike trail to the Towpath and a boathouse for kayak and canoe rentals. The historic dairy barn, which many may recognize as

the former golf course clubhouse, will be renovated to host festivals, meetings and park programming.

Valley View is a model for how Summit Metro Parks restores, develops and manages land, and this work would not be possible without financial assistance from state and federal funding sources, as well as the generous support of foundation and individual donors. With this funding and with the input of the public, park staff are proud to bring this exciting new recreational, ecological and cultural resource to the community.

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The 2019 Spree For All hiking form is available online at <https://www.summitmetroparks.org/summit-metro-parks-sprees.aspx>

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HAMPTON & FRIENDS

Activities for Adventurers of All Ages

REPURPOSED GREETING CARDS

1. Gather your materials:
 - a piece of styrofoam* such as the egg carton pictured
 - paper and cardboard scraps (old cereal boxes work great)
 - colored pencils
 - ink pad
 - glue stick
 - scissors
2. Carefully cut a rectangle from the piece of styrofoam.
3. Using a pencil, carve any simple shape of your choosing into the styrofoam.
4. Place your drawing face down onto the ink pad, pressing firmly.
5. Press styrofoam directly onto the paper or cardboard cutout and embellish with colored pencils.
6. Attach cardboard cutout, fold paper into greeting cards and send to your family and friends!

* Did you know? Many products sold in styrofoam also come in recycled or recyclable containers as well!