

Stephanie Walton
Chief of Marketing & Communications
330-865-8040 x215
swalton@summitmetroparks.org

Lindsay Smith
Marketing & Public Relations Manager
330-865-8040 x207
lsmith@summitmetroparks.org

HIKE THE CUYAHOGA DURING THE 56th ANNUAL FALL HIKING SPREE

The largest and longest-running event of its kind in the nation – the annual Fall Hiking Spree – begins September 1 in Summit Metro Parks.

As an homage to the rejuvenation of the Cuyahoga River on the 50th anniversary since the infamous fire which sparked the modern environmental movement, spree hikers this year can elect to “Hike the Cuyahoga.” Nine of this year's 13 designated spree trails feature the river or its tributaries, allowing hikers to complete Fall Hiking Spree hikes while honoring, exploring and discovering this exceptional river. "Hiking the Cuyahoga" is optional—as always, any eight hikes from the designated trail list can be completed to earn rewards.

What began in the mid-1960s as a way to encourage people to visit a variety of trails, instead of always hiking the one closest to home, has continued to be a family friendly tradition through the years. A first-time participant who completes eight hikes through November 30 will earn a hiking staff and metal shield. A veteran spree hiker will earn a shield. Hikes can be completed on a person's own schedule and at their own pace, or during a number of naturalist-led hikes offered by the park district.

Every year, an estimated 50,000 people participate in the spree, and between 11,000 and 12,000 hikers earn rewards. Last year, 11,060 people completed eight or more trails, and 1,878 were identified as first-year hikers.

Fall Hiking Spree rewards are free to Summit County residents. Out-of-county residents pay to receive rewards (\$10 for first-year hikers, \$5 for veteran hikers). Hiking forms are available online at hikingspree.summitmetroparks.org, at the visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron), the nature center at Liberty Park (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg), and all Acme Fresh Market stores.

For information about the spree and naturalist-led programs that are good for spree credit, call 330-865-8065.

* * * * *

Summit Metro Parks manages more than 14,000 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, with 22.4 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.



#summitmetroparks