



We're Your Back Yard

975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron OH 44313

NEWS RELEASE

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SUMMIT METRO PARKS UPDATES COVID-19 RESPONSE
Building closures & in-person program cancellations extended, swimming closed for the season, some outdoor facilities to re-open

The safety of our visitors and employees remains our top priority. At this time, [parks and trails](#) remain open as an essential activity. At the direction of Governor Mike DeWine and Health Director Dr. Amy Acton, the park district has extended the cancellation of in-person public programs and closure of public buildings and other facilities through at least May 31. Additionally, the park district has closed its swim lakes for the 2020 season due to the inability to train and certify lifeguards and other safety concerns. With new safety procedures in place, Summit Metro Parks has re-opened archery ranges and community gardening.

"We are grateful to be available to our community during this challenging and uncertain time," said Executive Director Lisa King. "We want to thank the public for their assistance in keeping our parks and trails open over the past several weeks and ask them to continue to follow advice for safe park usage."

Following Summit County Public Health guidance on large-scale gatherings, the park district has eliminated all internal and external in-person events for more than 250 people through September 7. The Mother's Day 5K will be a virtual run/walk this year and the Spree for All hiking event is likely to include a virtual option for those who prefer to remain at home. The Touch-A-Truck event scheduled for August 8 also will be modified.

Summit Metro Parks remains fully operational, with rangers and maintenance crews continuing to keep parks clean and safe, and the majority of administrative staff continuing to telework to serve the public while complying with social distancing requirements.

Facilities currently closed for public safety include:

- [F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Visitors Center](#) (1828 Smith Rd., Akron)
- [Liberty Park Nature Center](#) (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg)
- [Summit Lake Nature Center](#) (390 W. Crosier St., Akron)
- Administrative Offices Lobby (975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron)
- Volunteer Center (located at the Service Center on Sand Run Pkwy.)
- All rentable [lodges](#) and [shelters](#)
- Playgrounds and [nature play areas](#), exercise equipment, [camping](#), boat rentals, picnic tables, benches, fishing docks and observation decks
- [Swim lakes](#)
- [Some restrooms](#)
- Drinking fountains
- Sand Run Parkway: closed to vehicles between Sand Run Rd. and the ford to allow additional safe distancing for pedestrians on the Jogging Trail
- Rolling parking limitations at busy locations to promote safe distancing

Summit Metro Parks urges everyone to stay home if sick or exhibiting symptoms, wash their hands before coming to the parks and maintain at least six feet from other visitors. The park district also reminds visitors to avoid congregating in parking lots or at points of interest and to bypass busy areas. Visitors are asked to carry their own water and hand sanitizer and if possible, to bring a trash bag to carry out their own trash. Summit Metro Parks also asks the general public to reserve use of the parks to [seniors and high-risk populations](#) from 6 to 8 a.m. to help minimize their exposure.

The park district will continue to monitor guidance from health authorities in order to determine when and how it can safely reopen facilities and resume in-person programs. At this time, Summit Metro Parks is no longer accepting new lodge, shelter or camping reservations and special use permit application approvals have been placed on hold through December 31. Those with existing reservations through December 31 may contact the park district to reschedule or receive a refund.

All further decisions will be communicated to the public on an ongoing basis as the situation evolves. Please continue to [follow Summit Metro Parks online](#) for the latest information and [on Facebook for our “At Home in Nature” series](#) of videos and activities to remain connected to the outdoors during this public health emergency.

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Summit Metro Parks manages more than 14,000 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, with 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail.

Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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