



Your Back Yard for 100 Years

NEWS RELEASE

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SUMMIT LAKE NATURE CENTER OPENS JULY 1

F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Visitors Center, Liberty Park Nature Center reopen July 3

Summit Metro Parks announces that its newest nature center will open its doors to the public at 11 a.m. on July 1. Summit Lake Nature Center is a product of Reimagining the Civic Commons and is made possible through local partnerships and support from several grants and private contributions.

“We are excited to welcome the public to Summit Lake Nature Center, which was created with input from the local community to connect people to nature in new ways and celebrate a healthy urban lake ecosystem,” said Executive Director Lisa King. “We are grateful to the many partners and project funders who helped make this new amenity a reality.”

Following a ribbon cutting ceremony with partners and local elected officials, members of the public are invited to explore new interpretive exhibits and a second-floor program area with panoramic lakefront views. Outdoors, visitors will find a community gardening space, a covered education area and easy access to the Towpath Trail and Summit Lake. Naturalist-led programs will emphasize water-based recreation, urban gardening and wildlife education.

From 2017 to 2020, an award-winning pilot nature center in the nearby Reach Opportunity Center demonstrated support for a permanent Summit Metro Parks presence in the community. The new nature center building is the former "pump house" that provided cooling water for local rubber companies, with the second floor once serving as the pump operator's personal residence. It was donated to Summit Metro Parks by the City of Akron in December 2018.

Reimagining the Civic Commons is a nationwide grant program working to create transformative public spaces that connect people of all backgrounds, cultivate trust and create resilient communities. Akron was selected in 2017 as one of five cities to receive this highly competitive funding.

Summit Lake Nature Center project partners include City of Akron, Let's Grow Akron, Knight Foundation, Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Summit Lake Build Corps. Financial support for the nature center was provided by Knight Foundation, Summit County Land Bank Community Development Matching Grant, Bridgestone Americas Akron Trust Fund, Sisler McFawn Foundation, Dupont Clear into the Future, Akron Community Foundation - Civic Affairs (Betty R. Axline Fund, Board of Directors Annual Giving Fund), Jacqueline Ross Foundation and Summit Metro Parks Foundation. City of Akron, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority and the Summit County Land Bank donated the building and surrounding property, and Great Lakes Construction provided deconstruction services at no cost.

Summit Lake Nature Center is located at 411 Ira Ave., Akron. Center hours are Wednesday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Following COVID-related closures, the park district's other centers at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron) and Liberty Park Nature Center (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg) will reopen to the public on Saturday, July 3. All three centers share the same operating hours.

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Established in 1921, Summit Metro Parks is celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2021. The park district manages more than 14,000 acres throughout 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance in 2020 was 6 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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