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## **PARKS & TRAILS DESIGNATED ESSENTIAL ACTIVITY, WILL REMAIN OPEN DURING STAY-AT-HOME ORDER**

***Play areas & public buildings closed, programs canceled, public asked to observe "senior hours" in parks***

At Summit Metro Parks, our top priority continues to be the safety of visitors and employees. At this time, [parks and trails](#) remain open as an "essential activity" designated by Governor Mike DeWine and Health Director Dr. Amy Acton. The park district has canceled public programs and closed public buildings, playgrounds and nature play areas at the direction of public health authorities. 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.

"State officials have determined that outdoor exercise and public parks are important during this time, and our community is showing us that parks are more vital than ever to their physical and mental health," said Executive Director Lisa King. "We will remain open for as long as it is practical and permissible by our governor and public health authorities, and we urge visitors to follow advice for safe park usage."

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, practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette, carry their own water and hand sanitizer and if possible, to bring a trash bag to carry out their own trash.

Summit Metro Parks remains fully operational, with rangers and maintenance crews continuing to keep parks clean and safe, and the majority of administrative staff

teleworking to continue to serve the public while complying with social distancing requirements.

At this time, trailside restrooms accessible from the outdoors remain open for emergency use only and are cleaned once daily to preserve personal protective equipment. Facilities closed to the public 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

The park district's current plan is to reopen all facilities and resume programming on May 11, although that could change at the direction of public health authorities. Program registration fees will be proactively refunded for programs scheduled through May 10. Lodge and shelter rentals and special use permits for gatherings scheduled between now and May 10 will be offered an opportunity to reschedule or receive a refund.

Summit Metro Parks will continue to follow guidance provided by all federal, state and local health authorities. 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 (<https://www.summitmetroparks.org/COVID-19.aspx>) for the latest information and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/summitmetroparks>) 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](https://www.summitmetroparks.org).



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