

GREEN ISLANDS

SUMMIT METRO PARKS



BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE



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ENJOY
Bass in the Stream:
the new canary in
the coal mine

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
Lisa M. King Executive Director

EDITORS

- Stephanie Walton Chief of Marketing & Communications
Mike Greene Education & Recreation Manager
Lindsay Smith Marketing & Public Relations Manager

DESIGN & ART DIRECTION

- Jennie Levy Graphic Designer
Karl Simonson Graphic Designer

Summit Metro Parks
975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44313-5837
Administrative Offices: 330-867-5511
F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm: 330-865-8065
Liberty Park Nature Center: 330-487-0493
Seasonal Information: 330-865-8060
Volunteer Information: 330-865-8047

Photos contributed by:

- Rob Blair Rich Landers
Jerry Cannon Kevin Lanterman
Alan & Deb Casanova Jennie Levy
Christy Counterman JJ Prekop Jr.
Debbie DiCarlo Robert Roach
Mary Holland Karl Simonson

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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.



BOARD of PARK commissioners



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

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.

first in a series of six

SMP GREEN TIPS

Start the year off right and make a New Year's Resolution to be green — we can help!

REDUCE WASTE



Recycle your Christmas Tree. The park district "recycles" residential Christmas trees by chipping them into mulch. Drop off your tree, cleaned of all decorations and tinsel, through January 31, 2020. Check our website for park locations.



Cut back on single-use bags. Consider keeping reusable tote bags in a place that's easy to remember, like your car.



National "Skip the Straw Day" is celebrated in late February. You can avoid this single-use plastic product by picking up a metal straw at Maple Leaf Gifts inside the visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm!

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DISCOVER

YOUR BACK YARD

RED-TAILED HAWK



Sharp Vision, Sharper Talons

By Dave Daly,
Interpretive Naturalist



The rusty-red tail feathers are the signature feature of the red-tailed hawk.

Soaring high above or perched in a tree, red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) are a common sight in Summit Metro Parks. In fact, these large, broad-winged predators are one of the most commonly spotted birds of prey in Summit County. They have adapted to live in urban environments, so it is not unusual to see one gazing down from a telephone pole or high-rise apartment building as well.

Although size and plumage can vary, these beautiful buteos are easy enough to spot with their cinnamon-red upper tails, distinct flight patterns and unmistakable

long, raspy calls. The red-tailed hawk's cry is so recognizable that it has become synonymous with other raptors. Often, when you see a bald eagle on television or in movies, it is accompanied by the hawk's call rather than its own less impressive one.

Red-tailed hawks primarily prey on small mammals and they play an important role in keeping populations of mice and other small critters in check. Liberty Park in Twinsburg, designated an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society, is a great place to observe them in action. 



PARKS

With an average of 5 million visits and 30,000 program participants every year, Summit Metro Parks is on a never-ending mission to help people connect with nature through clean and safe parks.

Liberty Park's Tinkers Creek Pond is the perfect location to enjoy some fishing ... or just to relax.

FOR ALL

By Stephanie Walton,
Chief of Marketing & Communications

“One of our top priorities is ensuring that all Summit County residents are able to access and enjoy the parks,” says Summit Metro Parks Executive Director Lisa King. “This **Parks for All** philosophy is the driving force behind a number of exciting new initiatives for the park district.”

The community engagement department at Summit Metro Parks works to foster an appreciation for natural resources, encourage healthy outdoor activities and help make meaningful connections with nature. Through educational programs, recreational opportunities and outreach to organizations throughout the county, community engagement staff are regularly finding innovative ways to fulfill this mission.



Water safety lessons at Munroe Falls Metro Park

“We’re building new relationships while continuing to maintain the programmatic foundation that has served us so well over the past several decades,” explains Chief of Community Engagement Demetrius Lambert-Falconer. “By broadening our reach, we’re hoping to make nature a way of life for everyone in Summit County.”

Welcoming Families of All Abilities

With Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ranking as the fastest-growing developmental disability in the nation, Summit County organizations are taking steps to ensure that individuals and families living with ASD are welcomed and included in the community. In 2018,

continued on page 6



continued from page 5

the Autism Society of Greater Akron certified the F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm Visitors Center as the county's first Autism Friendly Facility, meaning staff there are specially trained to accommodate visitors of all abilities. In 2019, the park district introduced an Autism Friendly Hour to our popular Touch-a-Truck event, allowing children and families to experience the trucks and other activities without bright lights and sirens.



Connecting with Seniors

At 17 percent and growing, Summit County's senior population is looking for ways to stay active and remain engaged in the community. Summit Metro Parks is reaching those 65 and older through targeted nature-based programming and initiatives that encourage first-time park visitation. With external grant funding,

the park district piloted a new program to remove transportation barriers for minority seniors, while also promoting the multiple health benefits of spending time outdoors. On two separate days, 44 Outdoor Rx participants traveled to several Summit Metro Parks locations to experience a naturalist-led hike in the herb garden, a nature center facility tour with bird viewing, a volunteer-led physical activity and finally, a cooking demonstration and heart-healthy lunch.

Taking the Show on the Road

Summit Metro Parks staff are even bringing nature directly into local senior centers, schools and preschools — reaching about 4,000 people each year! These specialized outreach visits are tailored to the individual audience and can include topics such as wildlife in your back yard and seasonal happenings in nature. As a special treat, sometimes our education animals even join us to serve as living ambassadors to the parks.

Encouraging Safety Around Water

In another 2019 pilot program, Summit Metro Parks partnered with Akron

Area YMCA to familiarize kids with water safety, especially around “dark water,” like lakes and other natural water bodies. Over the course of four weeks, 25 kids honed their water safety skills at local pools and at Munroe Falls Metro Park in Munroe Falls.

Primrose School of Hudson



Helping Kids Grow with Nature Club

Serving as a community connector and after-school program for children who otherwise may not be introduced to the parks, Summit Lake Nature Club operated its first full school year in 2018-2019. Serving children from surrounding neighborhoods, the 20 participants included homeschool, public and private school students ages 5 to 11. This program provides environmental, recreational, health and literacy-based



Summit Lake Nature Club kids having fun on the Towpath Trail

education and wrap-around services while building familiarity with the outdoors and Summit Metro Parks.

Partnering with Local Schools

Also during the most recent school year, park staff fostered an ongoing relationship with children in grades kindergarten through sixth grade at Robinson Elementary School,

first visiting their classrooms in the fall, then welcoming the kids to the Summit Lake Nature Center in the spring. In partnership with Akron Public Schools and Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, Summit Metro Parks also welcomed 80 incoming freshmen from four Akron high schools to learn fishing and canoeing last summer.

Through these programs and more, we're on a mission to bring the parks

to every person in Summit County! Please contact us at 330-865-8065 for more information about facilitated group visits to our centers or to schedule an outreach visit from our staff. We look forward to seeing you soon. 🌿



SMP Community SPOTLIGHT:

DON DRUMM

Award-winning sculptor, designer, craftsman and Akron icon for more than 50 years, Don Drumm is also a loyal fan of Summit Metro Parks.

By Karl Simonson, Graphic Designer

Because of his love of nature, Mr. Drumm started out as a biology major at Hiram College to become a veterinarian, but took an elective figure study drawing class that changed his life forever. Mr. Drumm then transferred to Kent State University and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and eventually a Master of Arts.

In 1960, Mr. Drumm opened his own studio and married his wife, Lisa. As their young family grew, so did their love for the parks. The Drumms soon found that Hampton Hills Metro

Park was their favorite place to see wildflowers, hike the trails and foot bridges with their dog and let their children have fun.

“We started going to the parks with our kids in the early '60s and ended up going many Sundays with picnic lunches through the '60s and '70s,” recalled Mr. Drumm. “It was inexpensive for a young family and a great way to get out and get involved with the kids.”

Being close to nature and seeing wildlife was important to Mr. Drumm

and his family, and he treasures memories of the time they spent together in the Metro Parks. He especially enjoyed watching his children giggle as they rolled down grassy hills.

“The Metro Parks are a great value for the cost — they’re one of the joys of living in this area,” stated Mr. Drumm. “We are blessed to live here being surrounded by the parks.” 

Mr. Drumm and SMP collaborated in 2018 and 2019 on two pieces of custom pewter art. These ornaments are for sale at Maple Leaf Gifts in the visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm.



EXPLORE

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 1, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

2ND ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY SNOWSHOE HIKE

Join a naturalist for the annual New Year's Day snowshoe hike at Liberty Park. A few snowshoes will be available to use free of charge, or you may bring your own. Hot chocolate and a warm fire will be waiting for us afterward. There still will be a hike if snow conditions are not adequate. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg ☎ (12/21)**



Thursday, January 2, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

WINTER WONDERS DAY CAMP

Kids ages 5 and 6 who have started Kindergarten are invited to create, discover and explore all things winter! Pack a lunch and dress to be outside for long periods of time. Cost: \$10/person. **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron 📍 (12/5) \$**

Thursday, January 2, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

HOT COCOA HIKE

Come hike the trail to learn about how critters make it through the winter, then warm up with a cup of hot cocoa. **MF/Tallmadge Meadows: 1088 North Ave., Tallmadge**

Friday, January 3, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SCHOOL'S OUT COOKOUT

Celebrate winter! Bring your own hot dogs and buns to cook over an open fire, and we'll provide drinks and condiments. Then, hike with a naturalist to investigate how animals survive the winter. **FASN/Campfire Area: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, January 3, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

TRACKS AND TRACES FOR KIDS

Participants will hike with a naturalist to look for tracks and scat, and learn about some of the animals that left the mysterious evidence behind. **MF/Tallmadge Meadows: 1088 North Ave., Tallmadge**

Friday, January 3, 2:30 – 4 p.m.

HIKE FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

Hike about five miles at a vigorous pace on a flat paved surface. Beginners are welcome, but talk to your doctor before beginning a new exercise routine. Drinking water is recommended. **BHT/SR 303: 64 W. Streetsboro Rd., Boston Heights**

*Saturday, January 4
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.*

DAY HIKING 101: EXPLORING SMP ONE STEP AT A TIME



With more than 150 miles of trails, Summit Metro Parks has a hike for you. Join a naturalist to discuss the ins and outs of day hiking, learn what gear is best for a woodland trek and where you can take some longer walks in the parks. The program will conclude with a winter stroll. **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Saturday, January 4, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

COCOA WITH THE BIRDS FOR KIDS



Ever wonder about the birds that live in your yard? Families are invited to come enjoy a cup of cocoa and learn about birds from the warmth of the nature center. All levels of birders are welcome! **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

BALLOFLEX FOR BEGINNERS

Enjoy exercise with a certified BalloFlex instructor. BalloFlex is a seated workout that incorporates the elements of dance and fitness together in a safe, low impact and fun system. It is designed for all ages and abilities!

*Saturday, January 4
1 – 1:30 p.m.*

F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron

*Saturday, January 18
11 – 11:30 a.m.*

F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron



REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Programs with these icons require advance registration, beginning at 10 a.m. on the date in parentheses, by the method indicated.

☎ Call: 330-865-8065

📍 Web: 330tix.com
(additional fees may apply)

(date) Registration start date
\$ Fee

BHT Bike & Hike Trail
C Confluence
CV Cascade Valley
DLQ Deep Lock Quarry

FASN FA. Seiberling Nature Realm
F Firestone
FR Furnace Run
FT Freedom Trail
GYH Goodyear Heights

G Gorge
HH Hampton Hills
LP Liberty Park
MF Munroe Falls
NR Nimsisila Reservoir

ONW O'Neil Woods
SC Silver Creek
SFB Springfield Bog
SLNC Summit Lake Nature Center

SR Sand Run
TT Towpath Trail
WH Wood Hollow

For more information: Call 330-867-5511, visit summitmetroparks.org or email marketing@summitmetroparks.org



Sunday, January 5, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

WINTER BIRD WALK

Join a naturalist to learn which birds stick around in winter. We'll search the pines for red-breasted nuthatches, golden-crowned kinglets and maybe even an owl! Afterward, participants are invited to try hand-feeding some curious chickadees. **FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Sunday, January 5, 1 – 3 p.m.

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT RECEPTION

Join Summit Metro Parks for the opening reception of the 2020 Amateur Photography Exhibit. Meet the photographers, enjoy light refreshments and see the natural beauty of the Metro Parks through the eyes and cameras of folks like you. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Monday, January 6, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

WINTER DAY CAMP: ALL ABOUT BIRDS

Kids ages 7 to 10 can enjoy this winter camp with fun, hands-on experiences to learn about birds. We will explore the park, make a craft and learn bird basics. Please pack a lunch and dress to be outside for long periods of time. Cost: \$10/person. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg 📞 (12/5) \$**

Tuesday, January 7, 10 – 11 a.m.

PRESCHOOL EXPLORERS

Get outside and enjoy nature through this monthly series for children ages 3 to 5. Each month we will explore a seasonal topic to engage the senses and encourage the natural curiosity to explore. The program will be outside, so please dress for the weather. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Tuesday, January 7, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

NATURE JOURNALING: WINTER BIRDS

Learn basic journaling techniques to record your nature observations. This month we'll learn about winter birds. We will be outside for part of the program. Taking photos is optional. A one-time registration fee for the monthly series includes a journal, pen and pencil. Cost: \$20/person. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg 📞 (12/27) \$**

Tuesday, January 7, 4 – 5:30 p.m.

SUNSET STROLL

Take a peaceful evening walk with a naturalist to enjoy a beautiful sunset over the meadow. Along the way, search for tracks and signs of animals. **MF/Tallmadge Meadows: 1088 North Ave., Tallmadge**

Wednesday, January 8

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1 – 3 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for this entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron 📞 (12/31)**

Wednesday, January 8, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

HOT COCOA HIKE

Hike with a naturalist to discover what some of our feathered friends are up to, then warm up with a cup of hot cocoa. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, January 10, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

FULL MOON HIKE & FIRE

Join us for an easy hike by moonlight. Afterward, we'll gather around a fire to enjoy stories and roast marshmallows, while supplies last. **LP/Twinsburg Ledges: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

ARCHERY

All equipment and hands-on instruction provided.

Saturday, January 11

INTRO TO ARCHERY

Participants can learn international-style target archery and test their marksmanship at our temporary indoor range. Program good for beginning and practiced archers. Must be 50 inches or taller. Cost: \$10/person. 📞 (12/26) \$

FOR KIDS (ages 9-15)

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

FOR ADULTS (ages 16+)

1 – 2:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 12

ARCHERY GAMES

Play different games to build your archery skills in a fun and exciting way. Participants must have already taken one of our **Intro to Archery** programs. Must be 50 inches or taller. 📞 (12/26) **FREE**

FOR KIDS (ages 9-15)

1 – 2:30 p.m.

FOR ADULTS (ages 16+)

3 – 4:30 p.m.

Friday, January 31

5:30 – 7 p.m. & 7:30 – 9 p.m.

INTRO TO ARCHERY FOR COUPLES

Join us for this special introductory program! Couples can learn international-style target archery and test their marksmanship together at our temporary indoor range. Program is good for beginning and practiced archers. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Participants must be at least 18. Cost: \$15/couple. 📞 (1/18) \$

All programs at **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**



KINDEREALM: BIRDS IN WINTER

Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions can learn about birds in winter. Each program includes a craft and short hike. Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers. ☎ (1/7)

Wednesday, January 15
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
FASN/Visitors Center
1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, January 15
1 – 2 p.m.
FASN/Visitors Center
1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Monday, January 20
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
F/Coventry Oaks
40 Axline Ave., Akron

Monday, January 27
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
LP/Nature Center
9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Monday, January 27
1 – 2 p.m.
LP/Nature Center
9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, January 11, 10 – 11 a.m.

PINECONE BIRD FEEDERS

Join a naturalist to make pinecone bird feeders to use this winter, then head outside to feed the birds from your hand. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Saturday, January 11, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

SIGNS OF LIFE HIKE

Join a naturalist on a hike to discover what critters are still out and about during winter. Look for fur, scat, paw prints and more. Stay after for a fire and cocoa, while supplies last. **F/Tuscarawas Meadows: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron**

Saturday, January 11, 3 – 4 p.m.

HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC PEOPLES OF OHIO

Take a journey through time and learn about the cultural history of people who lived in Ohio from the last Ice Age until the 1800s in this indoor, lecture-style presentation. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Saturday, January 11, 8 – 10 p.m.

FULL MOON SNOWSHOE HIKE & FIRE

Snowshoeing is a great way to get out and enjoy the winter season, especially under a bright full moon. Join a naturalist for a brief lesson followed by a snowshoe hike. As we hike the trail, we will learn about the moon. Afterwards, warm up by a fire with hot chocolate. A limited number of snowshoes are available to use free of charge, or you may bring your own. There will still be a hike if snow conditions are not adequate.

LP/Nature Center: 9999

Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

☎ (12/28)



Sunday, January 12, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS

Fill your mug with a warm beverage and sit fireside for a peaceful morning discussion at the wildlife viewing area. We will find out why this area is a favorite of our winter residents. Coffee and tea are provided, but please bring a mug. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Sunday, January 12

12 – 1:30 p.m. & 2 – 3:30 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS

Join our interpretive artist for this hands-on lesson in nature drawing for ages 6 to 12. Paper and pencils will be provided. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (1/4)**



Thursday, January 16, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

UNDERSTANDING THE ANTHROPOCENE

Anthro-what? Learn about this new geologic epoch and discover the challenges and opportunities ahead of us in the Age of Man. **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Friday, January 17

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1 – 2:30 p.m.

HOMESCHOOLERS: ICE AGE OHIO

Homeschoolers, ages 7 to 10: Discover the wonders of Ohio during the Ice Age! We'll investigate the lives of mammoths, mastodons and much more! **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (1/11)**



Friday, January 17, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

MLK DAY OF SERVICE: MAKING SEED BALLS

Martin Luther King Jr. continues to inspire communities with the work he did half a century ago. In his honor, we will make seed balls with native, pollinator-friendly plant species that can be planted during spring in areas lacking vegetation. Dress for a mess. Please bring an empty egg carton to transport finished seed balls. **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Friday, January 17, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

OWLS & HOWLS

Prowl for some of Ohio's loudest nighttime noise-makers: owls and coyotes. Please leave dogs at home. Bring your patience, curiosity and a small flashlight to guide you. Meet at the Parcours Trailhead. **GYH/Main Entrance: 2077 Newton St., Akron**

Saturday, January 18, 8 – 10 a.m.

CRAFT & BREAKFAST

Create a nature-inspired craft with our interpretive artist, then enjoy a delicious breakfast prepared by our volunteers. Participants are asked to contribute to the feast. **SR/Mingo: 1501 Sand Run Pkwy., Akron ☎ (1/3)**

Saturday, January 18, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

NATURE ART FOR TEENS

Do you have a creative spirit? Teens ages 13 to 17 are invited to join our interpretive artist for lessons in nature-inspired art. This is a drop-off program. Please dress for a mess.

FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (1/3)

Saturday, January 18, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

FOLLOW THE TRACKS

Join a naturalist to hone your tracking skills. Who knows what we might see as we look for signs and tracks of animals in the mud or snow. Discover which animals are out during the winter looking for food to survive the cold and snow. F/Tuscarawas Meadows: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron



Sunday, January 19, 2 – 3 p.m.

WHERE DO BUTTERFLIES GO IN WINTER?

Butterflies, dragonflies, bees and more! Where do these beautiful, beneficial “bugs” go when Ohio gets cold, and how do they make their way back in spring? Find out and learn how to make your yard insect-friendly during this indoor presentation. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, January 19, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

BEGINNER CONSTELLATIONS

Fantastic heroes and beasts can be found in the night sky, if you know where to look! Cozy up indoors to hear some constellation tales and make a star wheel. Afterward, take a short walk to search for these figures in the night sky, weather permitting. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Monday, January 20, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

CREATIVE CANVAS

Everything is a canvas! Join our interpretive artist to create some amazing works of art using nature as our inspiration and re-purposed materials as our medium. Only requirements are a sense of humor and a great attitude. Bring snacks or your lunch. Cost: \$10/person. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg 🖐 (1/9) \$

*Monday, January 20
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.*

SCHOOL'S OUT COOKOUT

Bring your own hot dogs and buns to cook over an open fire, and we'll provide drinks and condiments. Pie irons will also be available. Enjoy nature trivia while cooking and eating your lunch. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Monday, January 20, 3 – 4 p.m.

SCHOOL'S OUT S'MORES

No school! Enjoy a winter campfire complete with warm, gooey s'mores! We'll provide the classic ingredients, while supplies last. Bring your own specialty items to dress up your creations! F/Tuscarawas Meadows: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron

Wednesday, January 22, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

MEET ME IN THE GARDEN

Join the Master Gardeners of Summit County to learn about insects you might encounter in your back yard or local park. Presented by Ashley Kulhaneck, Extension Educator. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, January 24, 1 – 3 p.m.

**HOMESCHOOLERS:
ICE AGE OHIO**

Homeschoolers, ages 11 to 14: Discover the wonders of Ohio during the Ice Age! We'll investigate the lives of mammoths, mastodons and much more! FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (1/11)

Saturday, January 25, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

SNOWSHOE HIKE

Snowshoeing is a great way to get out and enjoy the winter season. Join a naturalist for a brief how-to lesson, followed by a snowshoe hike. A limited number of snowshoes are available to use free of charge, or you may bring your own. SC/Cross Country: 4579 Medina Line Rd., Norton ☎ (1/14)

Saturday, January 25, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

FOREST BATHING

Come engage all of your senses as you lower your stress and anxiety, and receive many other health benefits from nature! We will begin by learning what forest bathing is and how it is part of a healthy lifestyle. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, January 25, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

**WHAT'S THAT BIRD
AT YOUR FEEDER?**

Join a naturalist to learn the basics of feeding birds and their identification. We'll discuss the best seed and feeders, and provide tips for identifying common winter birds. Learn about Project Feederwatch and how to try to keep the squirrels away! FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, January 26, 1 – 3 p.m.

WINTER BIRDS

Search for Ohio's winter resident and migrant birds and learn amazing facts about these stone-cold survivors. Binoculars are recommended. SFB: 1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.

Thursday, January 30, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

EVERGREEN STROLL

Learn about evergreen trees and shrubs with a naturalist as you observe the collection at the Nature Realm. Sip on some pine needle tea after, while supplies last. FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



Friday, January 31, 3:30 – 5 p.m.

**CHICKADEE FEEDING
AND CAMPFIRE**

Drop in and join a naturalist to experience the wonder of hand-feeding black-capped chickadees! Discover the fascinating features of this tiny, feathered friend while attempting to get one to feed from your hand. Seed will be provided. Enjoy a toasty campfire and marshmallows as well, while supplies last. FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 1, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

GROUNDHOGS AND WEATHER PREDICTIONS

Can groundhogs actually predict the weather? Join a naturalist to learn about groundhogs and the folklore associated with them. Program includes a craft and a short hike. **FR/Brushwood: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield**

Saturday, February 1, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

COCOA WITH THE BIRDS FOR KIDS

Ever wonder about the birds that live in your yard? Families are invited to come enjoy a cup of cocoa and learn about birds from the warmth of the nature center. All levels of birders are welcome! **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Sunday, February 2, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS

Fill your mug with a warm beverage and sit fireside for a peaceful morning discussion at the wildlife viewing area. We will find out why this area is a favorite of our winter residents. Coffee and tea are provided, but please bring a mug. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

*Sunday, February 2
12 – 1:30 p.m. & 2 – 3:30 p.m.*

INTRO TO ARCHERY FOR FAMILIES

Archery is one of the oldest arts still practiced today, and it's more accessible than ever. Families with children 9 and older: Learn international-style target archery together at our temporary indoor range. Program is good for beginning and practiced archers. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Must be 50 inches or taller. Cost: \$15/family. **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron ☎ (1/23) \$**

Sunday, February 2, 1 – 3 p.m.

SUPERB OWL SUNDAY

Need to kill time before the big game? Or maybe you're not into sports. Either way, stop by to learn about the amazing predatory birds that call our parks home! Who is interested? **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**



Sunday, February 2, 2 – 4 p.m.

LEARN TO SNOWSHOE

Join a naturalist to learn the history of snowshoeing. Then, try on a pair, learn the basics of walking, turning and how to get up if you fall. With your new-found confidence, maybe even walk the trail! Hot chocolate and a fire will keep us warm inside Brushwood Lodge. A limited number of snowshoes are available for participants to use free of charge. **FR/Brushwood: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield**

Monday, February 3, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

EXPLORE THE GORGE

Take a hike in search of winter scenery and wildlife. If we are lucky, we will venture through the "Crystal Palace" where massive icicles drip from the sandstone walls along Glens Trail. **G/Main Entrance: 1160 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls**

Thursday, February 6, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

DROP IN FOR SNOW MUCH FUN

Children of all ages can drop in to create and explore snow dough, then warm up with a cup of hot cocoa. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**



BALLOFLEX FOR BEGINNERS

Enjoy exercise with a certified BalloFlex instructor. BalloFlex is a seated workout that incorporates the elements of dance and fitness together in a safe, low impact and fun system. It is designed for all ages and abilities!

*Wednesday, February 5
6 – 6:30 p.m.*

**FASN/Visitors Center:
1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

*Thursday, February 20
6 – 6:30 p.m.*

F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron

KINDEREALM: GROUNDHOGS

Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions will learn about groundhogs. Program includes a short hike and craft. Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers. ☎ (1/25)

Friday, February 7
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

FASN/Visitors Center
1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, February 7
1 – 2 p.m.

FASN/Visitors Center
1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Monday, February 17
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

F/Coventry Oaks
40 Axline Ave., Akron

Monday, February 24
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

LP/Nature Center
9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Monday, February 24
1 – 2 p.m.

LP/Nature Center
9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Friday, February 7

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1 – 2:30 p.m.

HOMESCHOOLERS: FOR THE BIRDS

Homeschoolers, ages 7 to 10: Colorful, found on every continent and oh-so-iconic, birds are worth saving. Learn about why birds matter and how you can help our avian neighbors.

F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron ☎ (1/24)

Saturday, February 8, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

NATURE ART FOR TEENS

Do you have a creative spirit? Teens ages 13 to 17 are invited to join our interpretive artist for lessons in nature-inspired art. This is a drop-off program. Please dress for a mess.

FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (1/31)

Saturday, February 8, 8 – 10 p.m.

FULL MOON SNOWSHOE HIKE & FIRE

Snowshoeing is a great way to get out and enjoy the winter season, especially under a bright full moon. Join a naturalist for a brief lesson followed by a snowshoe hike. As we hike the trail, we will learn about the moon. Afterwards, warm up by a fire with hot chocolate. A limited number of snowshoes are available to use free of charge, or you may bring your own. If there is not enough snow, we will still hike the trail.

LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg ☎ (1/28)

Sunday, February 9

12 – 1:30 p.m. & 2 – 3:30 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS

Join our interpretive artist for this hands-on lesson in nature drawing for ages 6 to 12.

Paper and pencils will be provided. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (2/4)**

Sunday, February 9, 12:30 – 2 p.m.

WINTER WALK

Enjoy a winter's walk along the beautiful Quarry Trail. We'll look for evidence of the animals that stay active all winter long.

DLQ: 5779 Riverview Rd., Peninsula



Sunday, February 9, 2 – 3 p.m.

TRACKS AND SCAT FOR KIDS

Calling all kids! Do you want to be a nature detective? Learn about winter animals by observing the marks they leave behind and answer the question "Who's been walking in the meadow?". **MF/Tallmadge Meadows: 1088 North Ave., Tallmadge**

Tuesday, February 11, 10 – 11 a.m.

PRESCHOOL EXPLORERS

Get outside and enjoy nature through this monthly series for children ages 3 to 5. Each month we will explore a seasonal topic to engage the senses and encourage the natural curiosity to explore. The program will be outside, so please dress for the weather.

LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Tuesday, February 11, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

NATURE JOURNALING: SNOW

Learn basic journaling techniques to record your nature observations. This month we'll learn about snow. We will be outside for part of the program. Taking photos is optional.

A one-time registration fee for the monthly series includes a journal, pen and pencil. Cost: \$20/person. **FR/Brushwood: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield ☎ (1/30) \$**

Wednesday, February 12

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1 – 3 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for this entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron ☎ (2/1)**

Wednesday, February 12, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

SNOWFLAKE HIKE

Hike Glens Trail to learn about unique snowflakes and other seasonal nature features. **G/Main Entrance: 1160 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls**

Thursday, February 13, 4 – 5 p.m.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Join a naturalist on an early Valentine's Day stroll to learn how some of our animal neighbors show their affection for one another. Binoculars will be provided to enjoy the stunning view from the overlook. **CV/Overlook: 354 Sackett Ave., Akron**



Friday, February 14, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
SEEDS OF LOVE

Children and their adult companions can share their love with the ones that matter most: the pollinators! We'll design and decorate a packet that will be filled with native flower seeds. It can be given to a loved one or held on to until it's warm enough to plant. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**



Friday, February 14, 1 – 2:30 p.m.
HUMOR HIKE

Hike the arduous Spring Hollow Trail while listening to nature jokes and riddles along the way. **HH/Main Entrance: 2925 Akron-Peninsula Rd., Akron**

Friday, February 14, 1 – 3 p.m.
DROP-IN NATURE CRAFTS FOR KIDS

Families are invited to come out of winter hibernation and visit the nature center to make a craft, enjoy a fire and have a treat, while supplies last. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Friday, February 14, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
SNOW ADVENTURE



Enjoy all things snow: flakes, balls, angels and forts. Bundle up and bring your creativity! Meet at the Nature Play area near Pioneer Shelter. **GYH/Pioneer: 550 Frazier Ave., Akron**

Saturday, February 15, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
WINTER AT THE LEDGES

See firsthand how forces in nature created and continue to shape the ledges in Liberty Park. Join a naturalist to discover the beauty, intricacy and mystery of nature in winter. Part of the 1.1-mile trail may be rocky, uneven and slippery, so bring a hiking staff and wear rugged boots. **LP/Twinsburg Ledges: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Saturday, February 15, 12 – 1:30 p.m.
GHOSTS FROM THE NORTH

Join a naturalist to learn about the majestic bird of winter: the snowy owl. Discover how it survives its Arctic home, yet sometimes visits Ohio, and how Project Snowstorm sheds light on their behavior. We are trying to make arrangements for one of these ghosts to fly in for the program, but like nature, nothing is guaranteed. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Saturday, February 15, 2 – 3:30 p.m.
ICE IS NICE

Dive deep into winter pond and marsh ecology with a naturalist on a hike to discover what's going on under the ice and why that frozen layer is so important. Please dress appropriately for an outdoor winter excursion. **GYH/Pioneer: 550 Frazier Ave., Akron**

Saturday, February 15, 7 – 8 p.m.
THE STARS OF HOGWARTS



Did you know J.K. Rowling took inspiration from the stars for the Harry Potter series? During an indoor presentation, reacquaint yourself

with the celestial counterparts of some of your favorite characters from Hogwarts. Afterwards, walk outside to see if any "wizards" are visible in the sky. **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Sunday, February 16, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
PAJAMA HIKE

Calling all families! Dress in your PJs for a short nighttime hike along a paved trail to look for animals getting ready for bed. Afterward, enjoy some nighttime tales and marshmallows by the glow of a campfire. **FASN/Campfire Area: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Monday, February 17, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
BASKET WEAVING FOR KIDS

Kids 9 to 12 will learn basic weaving techniques to create a basket. Please bring a small flathead screwdriver, needle-nose pliers, towel and 2-gallon bucket, if you can. Cost: \$15/person. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg 🖐️ (2/6) \$**

Monday, February 17, 1:30 – 4 p.m.
BASKET WEAVING FOR TEENS

Teens 13 to 17 will learn basic weaving techniques to create a small basket. Please bring a small flathead screwdriver, needle-nose pliers, towel and 2-gallon bucket, if you can. Materials fee: \$15/person. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg 🖐️ (2/6) \$**

Monday, February 17, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
CCC HISTORY: BUILDING THE METRO PARKS

During the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provided job opportunities around the country. We'll learn about the legacy this program left in Summit Metro Parks and recognize the CCC's craftsmanship inside Mingo Lodge. **SR/Mingo: 1501 Sand Run Pkwy., Akron**





Wednesday, February 19, 6 – 8 p.m.

SEED SWAP & STARTING WORKSHOP

Bring seeds to share, donate or trade with fellow gardeners. A short workshop and demonstration will cover best practices for starting seeds indoors, as well as sowing directly outside. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, February 21, 1 – 3 p.m.

HOMESCHOOLERS: FOR THE BIRDS

Homeschoolers, ages 11 to 14: Colorful, found on every continent and oh-so-iconic, birds are worth saving. Learn about why birds matter and how you can help our avian neighbors. F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron ☎ (1/24)

Friday, February 21, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

DAYTIME HIKE & FIRE

Join a naturalist on a winter hike to learn which critters are out and about and which ones are hunkered down. Afterward, warm up with marshmallows around a campfire. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Friday, February 21, 2:30 – 4 p.m.

HIKE FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

Hike about five miles at a vigorous pace on a flat paved surface. Beginners are welcome, but talk to your doctor before beginning a new exercise routine. Drinking water is recommended. BHT/Brandywine Falls: 8176 Brandywine Rd., Sagamore Hills

Friday, February 21, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

WINTER WILDLIFE CAMPFIRE

Enjoy the bliss of a crisp winter night around a campfire with a naturalist to learn about the intriguing creatures that live around you. FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, February 22, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

WINTER BIRD HIKE

Join a naturalist to search for birds that reside in Ohio year-round, along with winter's winged visitors. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. F/Tuscarawas Meadows: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron

Saturday, February 22, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

AMPHIBIANS FOR KIDS

Kids and their adult companions can learn about the fascinating amphibians that live in the area. The program includes a craft, while supplies last. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, February 23, 2 – 3 p.m.

SOJOURNER TRUTH, AKA ISABELLA BAUMFREE



Known for her efforts as an abolitionist and universal suffrage activist, Sojourner Truth will walk us through the time surrounding the 1851 Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron.

Come to enjoy this first-person interpretation by a representative from Women In History. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, February 26, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

MEET ME IN THE GARDEN

Join the Master Gardeners of Summit County to learn about factors to consider when planning and installing features in your outdoor living area. Presented by Dave Thomas of R.G. Thomas Landscape & Design. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, February 28, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

HEART HEALTHY HIKE

Join a naturalist for healthy outdoor exercise by hiking at a vigorous pace with few, if any, rest stops. Beginners are welcome, but talk to your doctor before beginning a new exercise routine. Drinking water is recommended. MF/Tallmadge Meadows: 1088 North Ave., Tallmadge

Friday, February 28, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

PINECONE BIRD FEEDERS

Drop in to create beautiful pinecone bird feeders! All ages are welcome. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



Saturday, February 29, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

CREATE A MONARCH WAYSTATION

Join a naturalist as we discover how to create a backyard monarch waystation. Learn which plants are needed, where to plant them in your yard and how to maintain it year-round. Learn how to register your waystation online, then sit back and watch the magic happen! FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, February 29, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

LEAPING FOR LUNCH: COYOTES

Join a naturalist for a hike as we look for coyotes and evidence of their presence in the park. Please dress appropriately for an outdoor winter excursion. GYH/Main Entrance: 2077 Newton St., Akron

Bass in the stream: the new canary in the coal mine

By Mike Johnson, Chief of Conservation



The year was 1996 and I was working for an environmental consulting firm as an aquatic ecologist. My company sent me to New Orleans for an international conference on water quality. I was there to drum up business, but decided I had time to go to a workshop on biocriteria. I was just becoming familiar with Ohio's procedures for using fish and aquatic insects to quantify water quality in our streams and rivers and thought I might learn something new. However, I was surprised I already knew more than many people in the room! This was because our Ohio EPA was a leading developer of new biocriteria techniques that were just beginning to spread to other states.

So, what is biocriteria? Basically, it is an expansion of the definition of water

quality to include fish and aquatic wildlife. There was a time when water quality was only measured in a lab — evaluated by what was in the water itself without considering the health of the living things in it. If water was safe to drink, it was considered good. Although we still use laboratory testing for drinking water, the concept of good water quality has been expanded to include “drinkable, fishable and swimmable.” The wildlife that lives in rivers and streams helps us determine what is good. Fish are like canaries in a coal mine: if the fish are healthy, then the water is probably of good quality. Ohio EPA developed the techniques we use today to measure water quality, even changing state law and legal definitions to include fish, aquatic insects and habitat. Fish are sampled using a mild

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electric shock, which is considered safer than using nets. Temporarily stunned fish are collected, sorted, recorded and then released. The data is run through an index called the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI). The index considers factors such as the diversity of species, number of species that are tolerant of pollution, number of insectivores versus omnivores, trophic (or nutrition) levels and percent of fish with DELT (deformities, eroded fins, lesions and tumors) anomalies. The index calculates a single numerical score that is compared to regional ecological standards.

At Summit Metro Parks, we use these same tools to help us restore habitats that have been physically degraded. As part of our river restoration project at the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park in Akron, we sampled the

fish to determine the pre-construction condition of the water. This data will be compared to new data taken from the river when restoration work is complete. The goal is to improve IBI scores by creating better instream habitat. We take the time to do this work because what is good for fish is ultimately good for the thousands of people that eventually drink the water from our Cuyahoga River.



Over the years, we have been fortunate to receive many grants to protect and restore our water resources. Water Resource Restoration Program (WRRSP), Clean Ohio Conservation Fund, Ohio EPA Section 319 and private mitigation dollars have been utilized to protect and restore thousands of acres of wetlands and miles of stream corridors. 🌱

HAMPTON & FRIENDS

Activities for Adventurers of All Ages



Finding Winter Tracks

By Janean Kazimir, Interpretive Naturalist

Many animals are secretive and try their best not to be noticed. In winter, snow makes it easy to see what's been roaming around. Look for these tracks in Summit Metro Parks and in your own back yard!



RACCOON:

Look like small handprints with five "fingers" pointed forward.



SQUIRREL:

Five toes on hind feet, four toes on front feet. Like rabbits, their tracks are often found in groups of four.



VIRGINIA OPOSSUM:

Very distinct with five toes spread wide like a star.



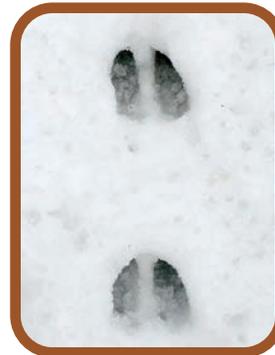
COYOTE:

Narrow with four toes, showing two, sometimes four, claw marks. Coyote tracks can be distinguished from domestic dogs because they tend to travel in long, straight lines.



EASTERN COTTONTAIL:

Sets of four very round tracks found together with no distinguishable toes. Because of the way they hop, their larger hind feet land outside and in front of their smaller front feet.



WHITE-TAILED DEER:

Their hooves create an inverted heart-shape with their two toes.



Bonus track: WING PRINTS

Birds of all shapes and sizes leave behind marks when they land and take off, resembling scratches or paintbrush strokes on the snow.

Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

WINTER SPORTS

As conditions permit, several winter sports can be enjoyed in the Metro Parks, and some locations are lighted for after-sunset fun. Please bring your own equipment.

To learn if winter sports areas are open, call 330-865-8060 or follow @metro_parks on Twitter.

SLEDDING The best conditions for sledding include frozen ground with at least two inches of snow cover. Walk up the side of sled hills, not in the center where you may be in the path of moving sleds. Sledding is prohibited on trails and wooded hills.

ICE SKATING Never skate on a pond or lake unless signs indicate it is open for skating. Ice must be four inches thick and free of snow, and temperatures must remain several degrees below freezing for long periods of time. Wear properly fitted skates with sharpened blades for enhanced control and safety.

ICE FISHING Ice fishing is possible in Liberty Park's Tinkers Creek Area, Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park and the lake in Silver Creek Metro Park, dawn to dusk as conditions allow. Users may not light fires, take motorized vehicles onto the ice, or build/leave structures and shelters on park property. Temporary shanties may be moved only by hand from the parking lot to the lake, and must be removed daily.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING Some areas are too steep to negotiate safely on skis. To help keep your skis from being damaged by sharp, uncovered stones, ski only when the trails have at least two inches of snow cover.

BUNDLE UP FOR WINTER FUN IN THE METRO PARKS



WINTER SPORTS

	Sledding	Ice Skating	Ice Fishing	X/C Skiing
BIKE & HIKE TRAIL				■
FREEDOM TRAIL				■
TOWPATH TRAIL				■
CASCADE VALLEY	■			
FIRESTONE	■			■
FURNACE RUN	■	■		■
GOODYEAR HEIGHTS	■			■
LIBERTY PARK			■	■
MUNROE FALLS	■			■
NIMISILA RESERVOIR			■	
SAND RUN	■	■		
SILVER CREEK			■	■
SPRINGFIELD BOG				■

Lighted
 Unlighted