Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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EDITORS
Claire Merrick  Marketing & Public Relations Manager
Victoria Putnam  Community Engagement Manager
Lindsay Smith  Brand Manager
Stephanie Walton  Chief of Marketing & Communications

DESIGN & ART DIRECTION
Jennie Levy  Graphic Designer
Karl Simonson  Graphic Designer

Summit Metro Parks
975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44333-5837
Administrative Offices: 330-867-5511
F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm: 330-865-8065
Liberty Park Nature Center: 330-487-0493
Summit Lake Nature Center: 330-864-8431
Seasonal Information: 330-865-8060
Volunteer Information: 330-865-8047

Photos contributed by:
Rob Blair • Jackie Boesinger-Meredyk • Jerry Cannon
• Christy Counterman • Tami Hill • JJ Prekop Jr. • Karl
Simonson • Levi Smith • Lindsay Smith • Robert Vaughn

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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

Mark A. Spisak  S. Theresa Carter  Herb Newman  Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr.  Joel D. Bailey

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.

Recycle Your CHRISTMAS TREE

Since the early 1970s, tens of thousands of Christmas trees have been dropped off by local residents and chipped into mulch, used by crews to beautify Summit Metro Parks. You, too, can enjoy your Christmas tree well beyond the holiday season.

Live Christmas trees cleaned of all decorations, garland and tinsel can be dropped off at the following locations through January 31:

**FIRESTONE METRO PARK**
Little Turtle Pond | 2400 Harrington Rd., Akron

**FURNACE RUN METRO PARK**
Brushwood Area | 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield

**GOODYEAR HEIGHTS METRO PARK**
Main Entrance (rear parking lot) | 2077 Newton St., Akron

**NIMISILA RESERVOIR METRO PARK**
South Main 2 Lot | 5531 S. Main St., Green

**SAND RUN METRO PARK**
Treaty Line Area | 995 Treaty Line Rd., Akron

**SILVER CREEK METRO PARK**
Big Oak Area | 5199 Medina Line Rd., Norton
As the crisp embrace of winter takes over, a seemingly mundane aspect of the changing seasons takes center stage, revealing its crucial role in supporting the hidden world of overwintering wildlife: the decision to leave the fall leaves undisturbed. Thanks to those who left leaves and saved stems in their Wild Back Yards, many of our pollinator and insect friends are fast asleep inside or below these natural structures. Residents of dead stems include wasps, spiders, several species of insect eggs and especially our native bees. Leaf cutter bees prefer larger stems from species like cup plants, while the tiny yellow-faced bee calls bee balm home. The Baltimore checkerspot uses white turtlehead flower stems to overwinter their caterpillars, while many other butterflies including swallowtails, viceroy and red admirals attach their chrysalises to the stems of plants.

Beneath the leaves, many moth species such as leopard moths, Isabella tiger moths (aka woolly bear) and luna moths hide their cocoons. Bumble bee queens burrow under leaf litter for protection from the cold and snow. Remember as you patiently endure the cold, so too do the insects, awaiting their moment to once again grace the world with their presence when the season’s chill yields to the warmth of spring.

Joe Malmisur, Interpretive Naturalist

[ Once spring has sprung, be patient with your garden cleanup and allow these creatures to sleep in until nighttime temperatures rise to 50 degrees. ]

Luna moth cocoons can be recognized as round “leaf balls” hiding in leaf litter.
The transformation of the Valley View Area in Cascade Valley Metro Park heralds an exciting chapter in our community’s connection to nature. The park district has initiated a project that promises to create new outdoor experiences with construction of river access, poising Valley View to become an unforgettable hub for adventure seekers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Valley View has undergone a remarkable transformation since being acquired by the park district in 2016. This scenic spot along the Cuyahoga River now boasts one mile of restored river and 200 acres of pristine parkland, replete with hiking trails, scenic vistas and Himelright Lodge. This river access project will rejuvenate the land and kindle the community’s desire to experience and enjoy the river that flows through it.
DAWNS AT VALLEY VIEW
The Cuyahoga River, once a symbol of environmental degradation, has experienced an incredible revival in recent decades and has earned state water trail designation. It is only fitting that the community be given the opportunity to revel in its renewed beauty. With this in mind, Summit Metro Parks has taken the lead in making this area of the Cuyahoga River more accessible to the public, promoting responsible recreation and fostering a deeper appreciation for the river's ecological significance.

The Valley View riverfront project promises to be a game-changer for outdoor enthusiasts. Upon its completion, expected in summer 2024, visitors will have access to a range of amenities designed to enhance their experience. A kayak and canoe put-in will set the stage for inspiring water adventures, while walking paths will invite exploration of the surrounding natural beauty. A restroom farmhouse and gathering barn with a fireplace will provide modern comforts and shelter from the elements, while honoring the land's agricultural past.

Funding has been secured through various sources, including a $450,000 grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and $98,000 from Ohio Capital Improvement Community Park, Recreation and Conservation Project funds and up to $100,000 from the Akron Garden Club. Additional fundraising efforts are ongoing.

With its commitment to conservation, Summit Metro Parks and its partners have carefully implemented a master plan that prioritizes the preservation of nature's delicate balance. The final result of this riverfront project will be a harmonious fusion of human enjoyment and environmental stewardship.

The park district does not anticipate any park closures during construction. While a portion of Celebration Trail may be temporarily rerouted and temporary closures could occur, the overall accessibility of the park will be maintained. Updates will be shared as necessary.

Valley View's transformation into a premier riverfront destination is a testament to the power of community vision and dedication. The project reflects a growing desire to connect with nature and celebrate the treasures that our region's natural landscapes have to offer. As Valley View evolves into a hub for unforgettable outdoor experiences and memories, let us celebrate the collaborative efforts that made this remarkable transformation possible.

Before ground is broken or a structure takes shape, Summit Metro Parks conducts extensive assessments and studies to ensure development that is required for recreational access does not impact sensitive ecological or cultural resources. [learn more about our process to protect]
Construction site progress | November 2023
Saturday, January 6, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
HIKE UP TO CALM DOWN
Join a naturalist as we hike the challenging 2-mile Deer Run Trail. We will take breaks to talk about how being in nature naturally reduces stress and how to bring more calmness into our daily lives. ONW/Trail Lot: 2550 Martin Rd., Bath

Saturday, January 6, 10 – 11 a.m.
COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS
Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we'll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a total “birdi-ful” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, January 6, 12 – 1 p.m.
BIRD FEEDERS 101
It's National Bird Day! Well, almost. Join a naturalist to learn about the types of bird food and feeders you can use in your Wild Back Yard, and the birds they might attract. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, January 7, 8:30 – 10 a.m.
BEGINNER BIRD WALK
Winter is the perfect time to get familiar with your native birds! Join a naturalist for a laid back, no judgment hike along Redwing Trail. Find familiar flying friends and learn skills that will help you grow in your personal birding journey. F/Tuscarawas Meadows: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron

Sunday, January 7, 2 – 3:30 p.m.
CAMPFIRE AND S'MORES
Stop by to enjoy a warm campfire and make s'mores with a naturalist, while supplies last. FASN/Campfire Area: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Tuesday, January 9, 1 – 3 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS
Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg (1/4)

Thursday, January 11, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS
Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron (1/4)

Thursday, January 11, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
WINTERTIME HIKE & FIRE
Families with young children: bundle up and enjoy a winter walk through the woods. We'll learn about how wildlife stay warm in winter and share a story around a warm campfire. Hot cocoa will be available, while supplies last. FASN/Campfire Area: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, January 12, 12 – 1:30 p.m.
SENIOR SAUNTER
Whether you're a senior by age or just want to enjoy nature in a leisurely way, join us for nature conversation with a warm beverage by the fire. Weather permitting, we will take a short walk to enjoy nature in winter. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg
Friday, January 12, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

**OWLS & HOWLS**

Join a naturalist and Dr. Lara Roketenetz from The University of Akron after dark to search for some of the park’s most elusive residents. After a presentation in the shelter, we will take a quiet hike to call these creatures with hopes they will respond with hoots and howls. Bring your patience, curiosity and a small flashlight if you wish. Enter the park off Ira Road and follow the parkway until it ends at the field station. Bath Nature Preserve: 4160 Ira Road, Akron

Saturday, January 13, 10 – 11 a.m.

**COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS**

Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a total “bird-fu” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch. Bath Nature Preserve: 4160 Ira Road, Twinsburg

Saturday, January 13, 10 – 11 a.m.

**BIRD NERDS: DIVERSITY**

Newbies and experts alike are welcome to join us in this lively series for a fun, approachable discussion on a new bird topic each month. This month, we’ll explore all the different types of birds a bird can be with a presentation on avian diversity! FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, January 13, 1 – 3 p.m.

**HIKING SPREE**

Is attaching the hiking spree shield more challenging than actually hiking the eight trails? Summit Metro Parks volunteers will gladly attach it for you at no charge. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, January 13, 1 – 3 p.m.

**HIKING SPREE SHIELD ASSISTANCE**

Join a naturalist to learn about the different shapes, sizes, colors and families of mushrooms to prepare you for the upcoming mushroom season. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, January 13, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

**MUSHROOMS 101**

What do dead man's fingers, stinky squid, weeping widow and tree ear all have in common? They are all mushrooms! Join a naturalist to learn about these common mushrooms. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, January 13, 6 – 7 p.m.

**KITCHEN COMPOSTING**

Want to get into composting but you're concerned about space or investing in a large compost? Don’t be! Bring an old plastic container with a lid to upcycle it into a mini composter that will make rich soil in any size space. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Sunday, January 14, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

**WINTER WALK**

Serenity isn’t just for summertime. Come enjoy nature’s beauty and discuss the winter season on this morning stroll. Remember to dress for the weather! CV/Valley View: 1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron

Sunday, January 14, 1 – 3 p.m.

**TRACKING: THE ART OF SEEING**

Join a naturalist to discover what is making tracks in the snow, nibbling the twigs and leaving other clues behind. Learn the tips and tricks of tracking to “see” what is really going on in the lives of animals in winter. LP/Pond Brook: 3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg

Sunday, January 14, 2 – 3 p.m.

**VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS**

Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing for kids ages 6 to 12. All you need is a pencil and paper. A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registration. (1/11)

Monday, January 15, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

**SCHOOL’S OUT: TRACKS & SCAT**

Calling all kids: Become #1 at identifying #2 and learn about tracks along the way! Discover our wild neighbors by the clues they leave behind. Dress for the weather. FASN/Seneca Deck: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Monday, January 15, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & EQUITY**

Join us for a discussion on environmental justice and how the movement impacts our people, green spaces and policies in Northeast Ohio and beyond. GYH/Lodge: 2077 Newton St., Akron

Tuesday, January 16, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

**TRAVELING IN ICELAND**

Journey to Iceland for the evening to see its beauty, learn about its history and culture and discover the surprising similarities it has with our state of Ohio! Enjoy Icelandic cod prepared using an Icelandic recipe, while supplies last. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, January 17, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS**

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron (1/4)
Wednesday, January 10
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, January 17, 1 – 2 p.m.
VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS
Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing. No experience is necessary; all you need are pencils, paper and a sense of humor. ▶ A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registering.

Thursday, January 18, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
NATURE COLLAGE
Let’s make a beautiful, nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist online for this easy, fun lesson. ▶ A list of materials and a Zoom invite will be emailed after registering.

Thursday, January 18, 1 – 2 p.m.
VIRTUAL: NATURE COLLAGE
Let’s make a beautiful, nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist online for this easy, fun lesson. ▶ A list of materials and a Zoom invite will be emailed after registering.

Thursday, January 18, 4:30 – 6 p.m. & 6:30 – 8 p.m.
INTRO TO ARCHERY
Participants will learn international-style target archery and test their marksmanship at our temporary indoor range. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Must be 9 years old and 50 inches or taller. Cost: $10/person.

Friday, January 19, 10:30 – 11 a.m.
WINTER NATURE TALES
Young children and their adult companions can enjoy an interactive, winter-themed story time. Make it a fun, family-friendly morning by exploring the park after the program.

Friday, January 19, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
CIRCUMPOLAR EXPRESS
The night sky is so vast that it can be hard to know where to begin, but it doesn’t have to be that way. We will navigate like the sailors of yesteryear, starting with the only star that never moves and use it to help us navigate on our hike to view our year-round constellations. SFB: 1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.

Saturday, January 20, 9 – 10 a.m.
NORTH COUNTRY WAKE UP HIKE
Begin your day with an invigorating walk along the 2.1-mile Black Bear Trail. Afterward we’ll warm up with some hot chocolate!

Saturday, January 20, 10 – 11 a.m.
COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS
Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a “birdi-ful” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch.

Sunday, January 21, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
WINTER BIRD WALK
Venture through the field and forest to catch glimpses of resident and migratory winter birds and learn how you can support our feathered friends this season. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather.

KINDEREALM: SNOWFLAKES
Winter can be “snow” much fun! Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions will learn all about snow through a story, a short lesson and a craft. Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers.

Wednesday, January 10
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, January 17, 9 – 10 a.m.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, January 31
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron
**Sunday, January 21, 12 – 1 p.m.**
**SNOWY STORY TIME**
Warm up by the campfire as we read a winter-themed story for little ones and enjoy hot cocoa. Dress for the weather. FASN/Campfire Area: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

**Sunday, January 21, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**
**BACK YARDS GONE WILD: BIRD FEEDER WORKSHOP**
Join a naturalist for this bimonthly series on welcoming nature into our outdoor spaces. This month, we will learn how to feed winter birds and thwart those sneaky squirrels! After a short presentation of tips and tricks, make a wooden hanging tray feeder to take home (one kit per family). All are welcome to attend the informational session. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg (1/18)

**Wednesday, January 24, 12 – 1 p.m.**
**SENIOR SAUNTER**
Whether you’re a senior by age or just want to enjoy nature at a leisurely pace, join us as we stroll the 0.5-mile Overlook Trail. This paved loop is perfect for either a short walk or multiple trips around. Reach the overlook for a breathtaking view of the Cuyahoga River. CV/Overlook: 354 Sackett Ave., Akron

**Wednesday, January 24, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**
**MEET ME IN THE GARDEN: THE SECRETS OF WILDFLOWERS**
Some wildflowers just keep things to themselves, while others are pretty darn secretive and may never share much. Join Jeanne Poremski, a Stark/Summit County Master Gardener, to grow your observation skills. FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

**Thursday, January 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m.**
**MINDFUL MOVEMENT YOGA**
Join a certified yoga instructor and naturalist for a mindful, nature infused yoga class. This class is suitable for all levels of yoga experience and will be slow to moderately paced. Please wear comfortable clothing, bring a yoga mat and/or towel and drinking water. The class will be held indoors. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron (1/11)

**Friday, January 26, 10 – 11:30 a.m.**
**HOT CHOCOLATE HIKE**
Bring your own favorite hot beverage or help yourself to some of our hot chocolate before we hike the 1.4-mile Seneca Trail together on a lovely winter morning. Dress for the weather: FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

**Saturday, January 27, 10 – 11 a.m.**
**COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS**
Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a “bird-ful” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

**Saturday, January 27, 1 – 3 p.m.**
**GEOLGY OF THE LEDGES**
Join a naturalist to learn how the ledges were formed 250 million years ago and later exposed by the last glacier. We will be hiking off-trail, so boots are recommended. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

**Sunday, January 28, 12 – 3 p.m.**
**SNOW MUCH FUN OPEN HOUSE**
Snow or not, there’s bound to be fun at Liberty Park! Toast a s’more over a fire, try your hand at feeding the chickadees and hit the trail for a self-guided winter hike. Afterward, stop inside the nature center to warm up at our hot cocoa bar and create a simple winter craft. Weather permitting, snowshoes will be available for loan. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

**Sunday, January 28, 2 – 3 p.m.**
**FANTASTIC FOXES**
Join a naturalist to learn all about foxes and the skills that make them keen hunters and hiders. Afterward, we will hike to search for signs of their activity. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

**Wednesday, January 31, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.**
**VIRTUAL: HISTORY OF THE GORGE**
From streetcars and hidden caves to dance halls and roller coasters, the Gorge has had a remarkable past. Take a virtual stroll through time as we discover over 200 years of history through stories and images. Zoom meeting ID: 817 8094 2169
Beginning Thursday, February 1
CRYSTAL PALACE HIKE

Check SMP’s social media in February to find out when the Crystal Palace returns to Gorge Metro Park! Each winter, huge, colorful icicles form along the Cuyahoga River, creating an amazing “Crystal Palace.” When it does return, we’ll update our social media accounts to let you know when you can join a naturalist on this rocky 2+-mile hike of to see nature’s icy sculptures! Call F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm at 330-865-8065 for more information. G/Main Entrance: 1160 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls

Thursday, February 1
4:30 – 6 p.m. & 6:30 – 8 p.m.
INTRO TO ARCHERY

Participants will learn international-style target archery and test their marksmanship at our temporary indoor range. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Must be 9 years old and 50 inches or taller. Cost: $10/person. F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron (2/1)

Friday, February 2, 10:30 – 11 a.m.
WINTER NATURE TALES

Young children and their adult companions can enjoy an interactive, winter-themed story time. Make it a fun, family-friendly morning by exploring the park after the program. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Friday, February 2, 1 – 2:30 p.m.
SENIOR SAUNTER

Whether you’re a senior by age or just want to enjoy nature at a leisurely pace, join us as we stroll Pheasant Run Trail. This loop is perfect for experiencing multiple habitats at a relaxed pace. SC/Pheasant Run: 5000 Hametown Rd., Norton

Saturday, February 3, 10 – 11 a.m.
COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS

Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a total “bird-ful” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, February 3, 12 – 1 p.m.
BIRD NERDS: FEEDING

Newbies and experts alike are welcome to join us in this lively series for a fun, approachable discussion on a new bird topic each month. This month, we’ll explore the wide world of a bird’s feeding strategies and who’s eating what, when. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, February 4, 12 – 3 p.m.
MAKE & TAKE NATURE VALENTINES

Drop by to make nature-themed valentines to take home! After crafting, enjoy sipping hot cocoa in front of the crackling fireplace and learn how some of our animal neighbors show their affection for one another. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Thursday, February 8, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron (2/1)

Thursday, February 8, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
VIRTUAL: ECLIPSE COUNTDOWN

On April 8, 2024, Northeast Ohio will witness the event of a century: a full solar eclipse! Join us online to discover the science of the eclipse, myths and legends, how to safely view the phenomenon and more. Zoom meeting ID: 828 9254 0535.

Friday, February 9, 12 – 1:30 p.m.
SENIOR SAUNTER

Whether you’re a senior by age or just want to enjoy nature in a leisurely way, join us for nature conversation with a warm beverage by the fire. Weather permitting, we will take a short walk to enjoy nature in winter. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg
Saturday, February 10, 10 – 11 a.m.
COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS
Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a total “birdi-ful” day; Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, February 10, 1 – 2:30 p.m.
STAR STORIES
The constellations have inspired countless tales throughout human time. Come relax and listen to some of those stories from around the globe and learn about the stars that inspired them. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, February 10, 1 – 2:30 p.m.
WINTER’S CANVAS
Snow and ice make the ultimate canvas for your child to express their creativity. Experiment with incredibly cool ways to make art from ice and snow. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron ☎️ (1/26)

Saturday, February 10, 8 – 9 p.m.
STAR TALK
Come on out for a quiet evening of stargazing and storytelling on the beach. We will point out winter constellations and associated lore. Tea and hot chocolate will be provided.
SC/Lake House: 5000 Hametown Rd., Norton

Sunday, February 11, 9:30 – 11 a.m.
WINTER TREE ID
No leaves? No problem! Learn the basics of tree identification using bark, buds and branches. Come prepared for icy trails on uneven terrain. CV/Schumacher Valley: 1690 Cuyahoga St., Akron

Sunday, February 11, 12 – 1:30 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS
Join our interpretive artist for this entertaining lesson in nature drawing for kids ages 6 to 12. All materials will be provided.
SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron ☎️ (1/26)

Sunday, February 11, 2 – 3:30 p.m.
ANIMAL AMBASSADOR VALENTINES
Spread the love this season to our very own animal ambassadors! Meet-and-greet several native species and help decorate their enclosures with valentines. All ages welcome.
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Tuesday, February 13, 1 – 3 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS
Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg ☎️ (2/1)

Wednesday, February 14
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS
Join our interpretive artist for an 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 14, 1 – 2 p.m.
VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS
Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing. No experience is necessary; all you need are pencils, paper and a sense of humor. ☑️ A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registering. ☎️ (2/1)

Exploration
EXPLORE
Programs & Events ~ FEB 2024

Explore

BALLOFLEX®
GET FIT WHILE YOU SIT!
Enjoy an online exercise session 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!

12:30 – 1 p.m.

VIRTUAL ☎️: 849 6465 8634

Thursday, February 1
Monday, February 5
Thursday, February 8
Monday, February 12
Thursday, February 15
Thursday, February 22
Monday, February 26
Thursday, February 29

Wednesday, February 14, 2 – 3 p.m.
VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS
Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing for kids ages 6 to 12. All you need is a pencil and paper.

☑️ A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registering. ☎️ (1/26)
Thursday, February 15, 1 – 2 p.m.
VIRTUAL: NATURE COLLAGE
Let’s make a beautiful, nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist online for this easy, fun lesson. A list of materials and a Zoom invite will be emailed after registering.

Friday, February 16
1:30 – 4 p.m. & 3:30 – 5 p.m.
INTRO TO ARCHERY
Participants will learn international-style target archery and test their marksmanship at our temporary indoor range. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Must be 9 years old and 50 inches or taller. Cost: $10/person. F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axlone Ave., Akron

Saturday, February 17, 7 – 8:30 a.m.
COFFEE CRAWL
Beat those dark winter day blues with warm coffee and conversation as we hike Alder Trail and watch the sun rise together. GYH/Main Entrance: 550 Frazier Ave., Akron

Saturday, February 17, 10 – 11 a.m.
COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS
Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a total “birdi-ful” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, February 17, 1 – 3 p.m.
CREATING 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!
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, February 18, 12 – 2 p.m.
GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
Drop by the Wildlife Window to participate in this fun, easy and accessible worldwide event that engages bird watchers of all ages and abilities. Learn about community science and why it is so essential for our local wildlife!
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Thursday, February 15, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
NATURE COLLAGE
Let’s make a beautiful, nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist for this easy, fun lesson. All materials will be provided. FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, February 21
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, February 28
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
SC/Pheasant Run: 5000 Hametown Rd., Norton

Thursday, February 15
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
HOMESCHOOLERS: ALL ABOUT ANTHROPOLOGY
Homeschoolers ages 7 to 12: Join us on World Anthropology Day to learn all about how we study the history of human societies and culture. Dig deep into archaeology, myths and more! F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axlone Ave., Akron

KINDEREALM: SALAMANDERS
Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions will learn all about our small, slimy friends: the salamander! Stop by to enjoy a craft, activities, and a self-guided hike. Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers.

Saturday, February 10
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, February 21
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, February 28
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
SC/Pheasant Run: 5000 Hametown Rd., Norton

Sunday, February 18, 1 – 3 p.m.
HIKING SPREE SHIELD ASSISTANCE
Is attaching the hiking spree shield more challenging than actually hiking the eight trails? Summit Metro Parks volunteers will gladly attach it for you at no charge.
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, February 10, 0 a.m. – 2 p.m.
NATURE COLLAGE
Let’s make a beautiful, nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist online for this easy, fun lesson. A list of materials and a Zoom invite will be emailed after registering.

Thursday, February 15
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
HOMESCHOOLERS: ALL ABOUT ANTHROPOLOGY
Homeschoolers ages 7 to 12: Join us on World Anthropology Day to learn all about how we study the history of human societies and culture. Dig deep into archaeology, myths and more! F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axlone Ave., Akron
Sunday, February 18, 1 – 3 p.m.

BIRDING BY EAR FOR BEGINNERS
Do you want to take your birding skills to another level? Join us to learn the basics of birding by ear. Learn what to listen for, as well as techniques to improve your skills. By the end of the program, you will be able to identify at least 10 species by ear. You probably already know more than you think!
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Thursday, February 22, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

MINDFUL MOVEMENT YOGA
Join a certified yoga instructor and naturalist for a mindful, nature infused yoga class. This class is suitable for all levels of yoga experience and will be slow to moderate paced. Please wear comfortable clothing, bring a yoga mat and/or towel and drinking water. The class will be held indoors. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron (2/15)

Friday, February 23, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

WINTER NATURE TALES
Young children and their adult companions can enjoy an interactive, winter-themed story time. Make it a fun, family-friendly morning by exploring the park after the program. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Friday, February 23, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

FULL MOON NIGHT HIKE
When the full moon’s aglow, we start the show! Come join a naturalist to hike at night and see Munroe Falls Metro Park in a whole new light. MF/Tallmadge Meadows: 1088 North Ave., Tallmadge

Saturday, February 24, 10 – 11 a.m.

COFFEE WITH THE BIRDS
Join a naturalist to see which birds visit our viewing area. Bring a mug and your bird questions — we’ll provide warm beverages and birding insights. Make it a total “birdi-ful” day: Hand feed the chickadees or stay to help count birds for Project Feeder Watch.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, February 24, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

FULL MOON HIKE AND FIRE
Join a naturalist as we hike the 1.2-mile Coyote Run Trail, learning fun facts about the moon. Telescopes will be available to look for the man in the moon as we enjoy the warmth of a fire and hot chocolate.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Sunday, February 25
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

WINTER HIKE FOR BIRDS
Come join a naturalist for a hike along Redwing Trail to learn about birds and their winter adaptations. We will also be stopping to hand feed birds, so remember to dress for the weather!
F/Tuscarawas Meadows: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron

Sunday, February 25, 1 – 3 p.m.

READING THE FORESTED LANDSCAPE
Ever wonder if the landscape around you always looked the way it does now? Chances are it hasn’t! Join a naturalist to learn some skills that can be used to read the forested landscape.
CV/Valley View: 1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron

Sunday, February 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

SUNSET SOUNDS HIKE & FIRE
Snow crunching beneath our feet, the crackle of a warm, cozy fire, maybe even the howl of a coyote in the distance — what other sounds will we discover? Join a naturalist for a walk to view the sunset and search for animals waking up for the night, then enjoy the warmth of a fire, s’mores and hot cocoa.
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, February 28, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

MEET ME IN THE GARDEN:
TERRIFIC TOMATOES AND BEYOND
Gleaned from his decades of professional horticultural experience, Mario Cammarata shares his best gardening practices with a focus on one of his favorites: tomatoes. Mario is a retired horticulturist from Cleveland Clinic and an avid gardener. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Thursday, February 29, 4:30 – 6 p.m.

COLORS OF WINTER HIKE
People mistakenly think of winter as gray and colorless. On Leap Day, hike with us along Seven Ponds Trail to search for the beautiful hues nature provides in winter for those who look closely.
LP/Tinkers Creek SNP: 1230 Old Mill Rd., Aurora
In 1851, abolitionist and activist Sojourner Truth delivered her most-recognized speech during the Ohio Women’s Rights Convention in Akron. Commonly referred to as “Ain’t I a Woman?,” the speech addressed the exclusion of women of color from the women’s rights movement. Now, more than 150 years since this iconic message was shared, local and national organizations have partnered to preserve Truth’s legacy through the Sojourner Truth Memorial Plaza in downtown Akron.

According to Lisa King, executive director of Summit Metro Parks and core team member of the Summit Suffrage Centennial Committee, the project is “a community effort through and through.” The committee worked in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation through their African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, Knight Foundation, Akron Community Foundation, United Way of Summit & Medina and several other local organizations to bring the plaza to life.

The plaza, which will open in May 2024, was thoughtfully designed by Dion Harris, landscape architect at Summit Metro Parks. Harris worked with artists, architects, historic preservationists and other leaders across the country to identify elements of Truth’s life to be represented in the space.

Four stone pillars on the plaza represent the four pillars of life, as well as the four pillars in front of the Universalist Old Stone Church where Truth gave her speech. The impala lily at the center of the plaza is the national flower of Ghana, Truth’s ancestral home. And at the center of the lily will sit a sculpture of Truth designed by Woodrow Nash, a Black Akron-native artist internationally known for his sculpture work.
Dion was introduced to the project by Lisa, who has volunteered on the committee since 2019. Dion’s background as a Black landscape architect, together with the committee’s input, brought authenticity to the project design, which honors not just the life of Sojourner Truth, but also Black history and the intersectionality of the civil rights and women’s rights movements.

Visitors are welcome at the plaza, located outside of United Way of Summit & Medina’s office building at 37 North High Street in Akron, and should stay tuned for an official opening this spring, when the sculpture will be installed.

Learn more about Truth’s legacy and ongoing efforts to preserve her history at summitsuffragecentennial.com.
On October 25, 2023, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) announced a project agreement to begin the removal of the 420-foot-wide, 60-foot-tall dam within Gorge Metro Park. The agreement means the plan to remove the dam has officially moved into reality. The dam is one of the largest unresolved impediments to restoring the water quality of the Cuyahoga River and its removal will improve river ecology, create recreational opportunities and drive economic benefits in our community.

Before the dam itself can be deconstructed, we must first remove nearly one million cubic yards of sediment that has accumulated behind it over the past century. The sediment contains contaminants consistent with our area’s industrial past, and it will be safely transported and placed at a permanent storage area within the Chuckery Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park. Tree clearing for that site is already complete, and sediment removal is expected to begin in 2024.

Project partners are coordinating closely to minimize disruptions to the public during sediment remediation and dam deconstruction, but park and trail closures will be unavoidable. Gorge Metro Park, Highbridge Trail and the Chuckery Area will be closed for public safety over the next several years.

The project agreement is signed by U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA, City of Akron, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and FirstEnergy. Now in its seventh year, the dam removal project is managed by a group of partners that also includes the City of Cuyahoga Falls, County of Summit, Summit County Council, Summit Metro Parks, The University of Akron and Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

To learn more about the project and sign up for email updates, visit bit.ly/freethefalls. ©

Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan speaks to a crowd of partners gathered to celebrate the new project agreement.

Stephanie Walton, Chief of Marketing & Communications
Happy New Year! Our accomplishments in 2023 are a testament to the spirit and mission of our organization and the unwavering dedication of our board, staff, partners, volunteers and the community. Against the backdrop of ongoing global challenges, we have continued to move Summit County toward a more sustainable and harmonious future.

Conservation work is a profoundly personal undertaking. It is an endeavor that weaves the aspirations of groups and individuals with the broader goals of community and ecological renewal. When the Valley View Area was featured internationally on CNN’s Call to Earth, it allowed millions of people to learn about our efforts to restore a former golf course to a park rich in history, natural resources and recreational opportunity. We celebrated this along with many other accomplishments, including the completed restoration of Sand Run stream, implementing the Wild Back Yards program and installing two new trails.

With the new year comes more potential to make a difference as we continue to enhance our parks, protect our natural treasures and provide enriching experiences and connections to nature for all. I am grateful for the unyielding support and commitment of our community, which has been pivotal in shaping Summit Metro Parks into a place where nature flourishes and memories are made.

Here’s to a new year filled with boundless possibilities and the promise of a thriving park system for all to enjoy.

Lisa M. King
Executive Director
WINTER SPORTS

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

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

BORROW SNOWSHOES
You can borrow snowshoes — for free — at Liberty Park Nature Center. Snowshoes may not leave the park, may only be used on Bluebird Trail, and must be returned by 4:45 p.m. on the date of the loan. A signed waiver is required.

Call the nature center for availability and inventory of sizes: 330-487-0493.