

GREEN ISLANDS

Vol. 65 No. 2 / MAR-APR '24

Summit Metro Parks Bi-Monthly Magazine

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Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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summitmetroparks.org

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summitmetroparks.org

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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.

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PLANET vs. PLASTIC

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22

Plastics are a danger to human, animal and ecosystem health, disrupting the delicate balance of life on earth. You can help! Phase out single-use plastics and take action toward building a plastic-free future for generations to come. Join Summit Metro Parks for Earth Day programming on page 15, or pave the way for a healthier Earth by looking for involvement opportunities at summitmetroparks.org.

take them home to eat the tasty treat attached and discard the rest, thus planting more flowers!

When admiring spring wildflowers, remember that they have just a few short weeks to complete their life cycle before falling dormant beneath the shade of the trees. For this reason, it can take some flowers, such as trout lily, up to seven years to produce their first blooms! So take only photos, and enjoy the beauty of spring.

[To see a wide array of woodland ephemerals, consider a trip to Liberty Park, Furnace Run Metro Park or Hampton Hills Metro Park in April.]

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DISCOVER YOUR BACK YARD Section

WOODLAND WILDFLOWERS AND THE CREATURES THEY DEPEND ON

By Janean Curfman, Interpretive Naturalist

Tiny ephemeral wildflowers carpet the forest floor in spring, providing important early food sources for pollinators. These delicate blooms often depend on specialized partnerships for survival.

Spring beauties use bright lines called nectar guides to direct pollinators where to land. Maroon-colored (and slightly smelly) red trilliums and wild ginger imitate the favorite meals of flies, enticing them to aid in pollination.

Once pollinated, some flowers rely on animals to disperse their seeds. The mayapple's fruits are eaten by box turtles. As they travel, turtles deposit seeds, which are more likely to sprout thanks to their digestion! Other flowers such as trillium, trout lily and bloodroot entice ants to pick up their seeds by producing a fatty appendage called an elaiosome. Ants pick up seeds,

pages 4 through 7

A SPECTACULAR SHOW: 2024 SOLAR ECLIPSE

By Katelyn Freil, Marketing Specialist

On April 8, a momentous event will grace the skies above Ohio as the sun, moon and Earth align, providing a few moments of midday darkness during a breathtaking spectacle: a total solar eclipse.

During the solar eclipse, the moon will pass between the sun and Earth, completely blocking the face of the sun from view and casting a shadow on a strip of land more than 100 miles wide from Mexico to Canada.

There are two parts to the moon's shadow. The penumbra is the outer, lighter portion where the sun is only partially covered. The umbra, also known as the path of totality, is the central, darker part where the sun is completely blocked. Summit County will be in the path of totality and experience complete darkness for about three minutes during this event.

While total solar eclipses around the globe are not exactly rare (occurring about once every one and a half years), to be in the path of one is. The last time Ohio

experienced a total solar eclipse was in 1806, and the next will not be until 2099, making this a special experience for the 7,275,000 Ohioans living in this year's path.

In addition to residents, this total solar eclipse is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of people to the state, bringing new visitors — and traffic — to public spaces like the Metro Parks. To avoid the crowds, consider viewing the eclipse from home or walking to a local public space. Remember: The view will be the same regardless of where you are, so long as you're in the path of totality.

This means that planning where to view the eclipse is not nearly as important as how. Viewing the sun's rays is never safe, even when partially obscured in the moments before and after the total solar eclipse, so special viewers are required. Look for safe solar viewing glasses (also known as eclipse glasses) and handheld viewers from reputable sellers, or try making a viewer at home by following the park district's online activity guide. Remember that cameras, telescopes and binoculars also require solar filters to be directed at the sun. Don't ruin your device trying to get the perfect picture and instead, enjoy the moment!

As we turn our collective gaze to the sky, let's appreciate the opportunity to experience this celestial event as a community.

Did You Know?

There are four types of solar eclipses:

1. Total (the sun is completely blocked from view)
2. Annular (the moon is far enough away from Earth that it does not fully block the sun)
3. Partial (the sun is partially blocked from view)
4. Hybrid (an eclipse shifts between annular and total)

- Solar eclipses have distinct cultural and spiritual significance for communities across the globe. Some cultures recognize eclipses as signs or omens, while others may see them as a moment of harmony and balance.
- During this eclipse, a NASA citizen science project called the Eclipse Soundscapes Project will revisit a study from almost 100 years ago which showed that animals and insects are affected by solar eclipses.

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WATER HAS A PERFECT MEMORY

By Jen M. Harvey, Chief of Philanthropy

There is a different way of telling the story of the Cuyahoga River now. Change has been slow, like the view from a kayak with the shore slipping by as you cover more miles than you might think. The river has been freed of dams in Brecksville, Kent, Munroe Falls and Cuyahoga Falls. Floodplains, riffles and bends are being actively restored. For those who live here, the changes are incremental. But now, we can pull that kayak into an eddy, look around and see how far we've come.

As water quality improves, biologists are reintroducing fish species that have been missing for years. In October 2023, the USEPA announced pivotal funding to remove the massive Gorge Dam — the largest remaining impact on the river's water quality. The Cuyahoga will flow freely again.

Summit Metro Parks is bringing river access to the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park so that people can enjoy more of the renewed river. Spanning eight acres, the project includes a canoe and kayak put-

in, accessible pathways, observation areas and gathering spaces. It's designed to welcome you to this actively restored and recovering ecosystem.

Parks protect critical areas of the river as it flows through Northeast Ohio from the headwaters to Lake Erie. Your support of these parks has made all the difference. Preserved areas foster native vegetation along the banks that filter runoff, keeping the water shaded for cool-water aquatic habitat. The river and these areas along it provide a crucial migration corridor for birds and other wildlife.

Our river does indeed have a perfect memory, and it's getting back to the way it was — a free-flowing, clean resource for wildlife and people. The Summit Metro Parks Foundation creates a lasting local impact in many ways, including protecting our river and helping provide outstanding places like the new river access area for you to enjoy.

To donate to the Summit Metro Parks Foundation, visit foundation.summitmetroparks.org, or send a check to the Summit Metro Parks Foundation at 975 Treaty Line Road, Akron, Ohio, 44313.

Support the Summit Metro Parks Foundation
975 Treaty Line Road
Akron, OH, 44313
foundation.summitmetroparks.org

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SUMMIT METRO PARKS FOUNDATION

The Summit Metro Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established in 1991 to further the goals and mission of Summit Metro Parks. We are grateful to the many people, organizations, businesses and agencies who made gifts, grants and

sponsorships January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. These donations and other forms of support create thriving parks that are a cornerstone of Summit County's quality of life and benefit the park district's charitable, educational and scientific initiatives.

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We're grateful to those who have made a planned gift to Summit Metro Parks or the Summit Metro Parks Foundation. Those who have done so are recognized here as part of the Green Islands Legacy Society. Planned gifts (such as bequests) are a wonderful way to make a lasting difference for your parks.

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13th Annual
MOTHER'S DAY 5K

May 12, 2024
Start Time 8 a.m.

RUN, JOG OR WALK IN CELEBRATION OF MOM!

Munroe Falls Metro Park
Lake Area: 521 South River Road, Munroe Falls

Jogging strollers are welcome at this family-friendly
course.

Register online: summitmetroparks.org

Proceeds benefit Summit Metro Parks Foundation