

GREEN ISLANDS

Summit Metro Parks



Bi-monthly Magazine



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Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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BOARD of PARK commissioners



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

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.

Dear reader,

This issue of *Green Islands magazine* was finalized in late March, during the initial public response to contain the effects of COVID-19, or coronavirus. We sincerely hope that when you receive this publication, it finds you and your family safe and healthy.

Please know that while the articles and information included in the magazine were written prior to this public health emergency, we hope they continue to provide our community with a connection to nature during this challenging situation.

At the time of this writing, our parks and trails remain **open** for your enjoyment, as well as for your physical and mental health. We encourage you to visit summitmetroparks.org for the latest information on our operating status, and to follow us on social media for **"At Home in Nature,"** a series of online, nature-themed videos, activities and information.

Be well,
 Lisa M. King, Executive Director

DISCOVER

YOUR BACK YARD



Scarlet Cup



Stalked Scarlet Cup



Shaggy Scarlet Cup

MORE THAN MORELS

By Dave Brumfield,
Interpretive Naturalist

When people hear “spring mushrooms,” most will immediately think of morels. Yes, they may be the most well-known fungus this time of the year, but many other varieties begin to pop up alongside them after warm spring rains. Some of my favorites are scarlet cups.

As the name indicates, scarlet cups are bright red, making them one of the first splashes of color to be seen in spring on the forest floor. They are nature’s recyclers, decomposing wood and adding nutrients back into the soil. They play an important role in the growth of spring

wildflowers. With a careful eye, a walk in the woods can reveal one of these beautiful mushrooms. Please remember not to take mushrooms you find in the Metro Parks — don’t make assumptions about their identification and do not consume them.

If you would like to learn more about scarlet cups and other spring mushrooms, visit summitmetroparks.org to check out our downloadable *spring mushrooms field guide*.



Completed heralds

Twenty years ago, Summit Metro Parks teamed up with the City of Twinsburg and Village of Reminderville to create what is now *Liberty Park*. From the pristine sandstone ledges to the vast swamp forests, we knew we had found a biodiversity preserve worth protecting. With this wonderful property, we also inherited historical problems that needed some attention. The biggest concern was the predominant aquatic feature of the site: *Pond Brook*.



The dramatic improvement of Pond Brook can be seen in this aerial photo of the dredged ditch and the restored meandering natural stream.

Pond Brook restoration return of nature

By Mike Johnson, Chief of Conservation

Despite its idyllic name, the feature was anything but a picturesque brook. Over the past century, Pond Brook had been ditched, drained and de-vegetated, and was nearly devoid of aquatic life. This was done in the name of agriculture, and back in those days, it was common to ditch and drain wetlands for what was called “land conservation.” Today, we know better. The value of healthy wetlands and free-flowing streams is being realized around the world. Our wetlands, streams and forests clean our air and provide the water we drink. They offer valuable habitat for plants and wildlife that also provide ecosystem services (like medicines). And certainly, they deliver immeasurable moments of enjoyment for hikers and park patrons.

To restore the stream, we used grant funding to reshape it into a natural

meandering pattern, installed rock riffle structures (which provide oxygen to aquatic wildlife) and installed underwater habitat structures made of wood. We also added in natural woody vegetation, sandy layers and deep pools. It takes a lot of work to undo historical damage, and over the course of many years we had to move vast acres of earth to literally sculpt a natural stream back onto the landscape.

To manage the project, we broke it into three phases. With the completion of Phase 3 in 2019, we can now take a moment and reflect on what we have accomplished over 15 years. The project has restored more than five miles of stream and hundreds of acres of riparian wetlands and forested habitats. Fish and wildlife have returned and otters now swim along the entire corridor.

Although the return of otters is the most iconic measure of success, there are additional less visible parameters we monitor. We utilize a series of tools

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We are *thankful* to the funders and partners who have made this project possible, including:

- City of Twinsburg
- Clean Ohio Conservation Fund
- Cleveland Clinic
- Cuyahoga Area of Concern (AOC)
- Davey Resource Group
- EMH&T
- Friends of Metro Parks
- Friends of the Crooked River
- Marks Construction
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Ohio EPA Section 319 Program
- Ohio EPA WRRSP Program
- Oxbow River and Stream Restoration
- Stantec
- TGC Engineering
- Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners
- Twinsburg Township
- Village of Reminderville
- Wetlands Resource Center



SMP Community SPOTLIGHT:

GRACE WAKULCHIK

Akron Children's Hospital President & CEO

By Lindsay Smith, Marketing & Public Relations Manager

This profile was written prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and today more than ever, we are immensely grateful to the first-class medical providers who serve Northeast Ohio.

Grace Wakulchik is just the third person to hold the title of president and CEO at Akron Children's Hospital. What began as a nursing career transformed into teaching and administrative roles that brought her to Akron Children's Hospital in 1992. From there, she held leadership development and administrative positions including chief nursing officer and chief operating officer before the board appointed her as CEO when long-time leader Bill Considine retired.

When it comes to spending time outdoors, Wakulchik said it's an incredible

tool for improving the wellbeing of kids and families. "Spending time outdoors as a family is so important for children's mental and physical health. Especially as more families juggle how much is enough screen time, getting kids connected to the great outdoors is more important than ever," she shared. "Research indicates that time spent enjoying nature can reduce stress levels, elevate moods, improve alertness and energy and even improve sleep. I especially love that Summit Metro Parks has programs like the Fall Hiking Spree and Spree for All, encouraging families to get out often and take advantage of our beautiful parks."

When asked if she has a favorite Metro Park, Wakulchik said, "Picking a favorite Metro Park is like trying to select your

favorite child! There are so many unique and fun attributes about each and every park." She added that as a past Master Gardener, "I enjoy hiking and trying to identify all the wildflowers, trees, shrubs, butterflies and birds. I used to volunteer at the phenology garden at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm."

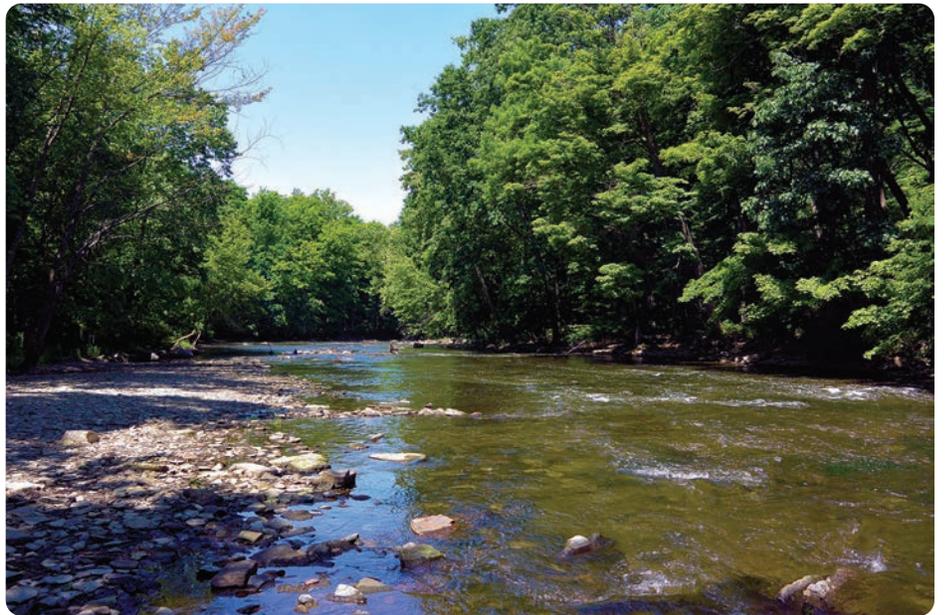
Wakulchik feels the park district benefits the people of Summit County in many important ways. "From the pristine preservation and management of 14,000 acres to the sledding, ice skating, swimming, hiking and biking opportunities, Summit Metro Parks protects and promotes our most treasured outdoor spaces for generations to come. And, it's so easily accessible, all right here in our own back yard." 

EXPLORE

PROGRAMS & EVENTS



Due to the quickly evolving nature of the community's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, events and programs have been canceled until at least May 10. Please note that Spree for All will begin when programs and events resume, and the spree will be extended to make up for the delayed start. The latest information on all programs and events, including Spree for All, is available on our website at summitmetroparks.org.



Citizen Scientists bring up to speed

Marlo Perdicas, Park Biologist

If you visit any Summit Metro Parks location in the warm months, you'll likely encounter a dragonfly.

An insect with six legs, fairy-like wings and compound eyes, dragonflies will dazzle you with their acrobatic flight and colorfully patterned bodies.

Dragonflies rely on streams or ponds for their life cycle and are important indicators of healthy water systems. They are ferocious predators of smaller insects, and whose ecosystem services we take for granted. For these reasons, it is important to understand what types of dragonflies we have in our area and where they are found.

The Ohio Division of Natural Resources and Ohio State University initiated a state-wide dragonfly survey in 2018

through iNaturalist, a global, web-based platform for collecting biodiversity data using photographs. Volunteers collecting images of dragonflies throughout the state have contributed more than 49,000 records to the project in 2018 and 2019. The Ohio Dragonfly Survey aims to combine new observations with historical dragonfly records so state wildlife officials can conduct species assessments.

In Summit County alone, 90 species were recorded, including four state-endangered species and one state-threatened species. Summit Metro Parks volunteers were among those contributing a significant number of observations to this project. Based on survey results, some dragonflies may



dragonfly data using global database

come off the endangered species list, like the lilypad forktail, which has been found in great numbers recently. Others will remain a concern, like the elfin skimmer — currently only found at two locations in Ohio.

The Ohio Dragonfly Survey on iNaturalist remains open for observations. Grab your camera and visit a Metro Park to document the wonder and beauty of these fantastical beasts. Your participation as a citizen scientist on iNaturalist is a great way to contribute to conservation and make a difference for wildlife and wild places like Summit Metro Parks!

For more information about iNaturalist, visit www.inaturalist.org. 



Lilypad forktail – male



Lilypad forktail – female



Elfin skimmer



Meadowhawk



HAMPTON & FRIENDS

Activities for Adventurers of All Ages

Create a Dragonfly



Maple trees produce thousands of seeds, or “samaras,” each year. Once they have helicoptered down to the ground, you can repurpose them to be the wings of a dragonfly in this simple craft.

Look for fallen seeds that are already dried out. Be creative and decorate your dragonfly to look as magical as they are in nature. You can even add a small magnet to the back of the dragonfly for display!

Materials needed:

- Glue
- 4 maple tree seeds (“samaras”)
- 1 small twig (3 to 4 inches long)
- Acrylic paint & paint brushes
- Googly eyes
- Glitter glue (optional)
- Magnet (optional)

Directions for assembly:

- 1** Paint the twig and maple tree seeds
- 2** Glue on googly eyes and maple tree seeds for wings
- 3** Add more accents with glitter glue (optional)
- 4** Attach a magnet if desired

Enjoy your beautiful dragonfly!



Restored Pond Brook next to the Buttonbush Trail in Liberty Park

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to measure the quality of habitats, vegetation, fish and wildlife. Termed “biocriteria,” these tools all point to an improved habitat. One of the most significant measures is a large decrease in DELT (Deformities, Eroded fins, Lesions and Tumors) anomalies on the fish of Pond Brook. Prior to our restoration,

many of the fish in Pond Brook were covered in these anomalies, attesting to the stressed environment they were living in. Today, most of the DELT issues have subsided and we have a healthier aquatic community with cleaner water. Healthy fish means healthy water — not just for them, but for humans, too. 

2020 Spring Hiking Event

SPREE FOR ALL

TO PARTICIPATE

Complete **FIVE** hikes between the designated dates (check summitmetroparks.org) — on five different trails, the same trail or any combination of trails — to receive a reward. Starting point at each trailhead is the information kiosk, which has a legend with the following symbols:

- Blue Circle = 1/4 mile round trip
- Yellow Square = 1/2 mile round trip
- ▲ Green Triangle = 1 mile round trip

Mileage markers are provided as an aid. **You do not need to hike any prescribed length to receive credit.** Some trails listed offer a limited section of accessible terrain. To hike the accessible portion, follow the Spree For All markers along the path.

First-year hikers earn a neck lanyard and commemorative pin. Veteran hikers earn the commemorative pin. Hikes are **FREE** for all participants. Since the program is funded by Summit County tax dollars, out-of-county residents pay to receive their hiking rewards (\$10 for first-year hikers, \$5 for veteran hikers).

WHERE TO GET YOUR REWARD

Administrative offices, 975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm, 1828 Smith Rd., Akron, Please see website for hours of operation.

Liberty Park Nature Center, 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg, Please see website for hours of operation.

Rewards cannot be mailed. Forms can be redeemed up to 45 days after the end of the spree.

MULTIPURPOSE TRAILS

BIKE & HIKE TRAIL

Barlow Road
331 Barlow Rd.
Hudson 44236

FREEDOM TRAIL

Middlebury
1765 Northeast Ave.
Tallmadge 44278

PARKS

CASCADE VALLEY

Overlook Trail
354 Sackett Ave.
Akron 44313

F.A. SEIBERLING NATURE REALM

1828 Smith Rd.
Akron 44313

FURNACE RUN

Brushwood Area
4955 Townsend Rd.
Richfield 44286

OHIO & ERIE CANAL TOWPATH TRAIL

Big Bend
1337 Merriman Rd.
Akron 44313

Franklin
2328 Center Rd.
New Franklin 44216

Clinton
2749 North St.
Clinton 44216



GOODYEAR HEIGHTS

Pioneer Area
550 Frazier Ave.
Akron 44305

LIBERTY

Twinsburg Ledges Area
9999 Liberty Rd.
Twinsburg 44087

MUNROE FALLS

Tallmadge Meadows
1088 North Ave.
Tallmadge 44278

SAND RUN

Old Portage Area
1300 Sand Run Pkwy.
Akron 44313

Summit Metro Parks

#SMPspree

For park maps, directions and descriptions of the trails: spreeforall.summitmetroparks.org, 330-865-8065. Additional forms are available online and at *Acme Fresh Market* locations in Summit County.

Please share this publication and recycle it when finished.

17th ANNUAL
**SPREE
FOR ALL**

SPRING HIKING EVENT

INDIVIDUAL &
FAMILY/GROUP
HIKING FORM

PRIMARY PARTICIPANT

FIRST-YEAR Hiker VETERAN SUMMIT CO. RESIDENT

Primary Participant's Last Name	First Name	M.I.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Address		City	State		Zip
Email		Phone			

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

FIRST-YEAR Hiker VETERAN SUMMIT CO. RESIDENT

Last Name	First Name	Zip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	Zip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	Zip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	Zip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Last Name	First Name	Zip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

MULTIPURPOSE TRAIL

TRAILHEAD

DATES (Volunteers or staff may be available to date your form.)

Bike & Hike Trail	Barlow Road
Freedom Trail	Middlebury
Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail	Big Bend
Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail	Franklin
Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail	Clinton

METRO PARK

LOCATION

Cascade Valley	Overlook Trail
F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (no pets)	Rock & Herb Garden
Furnace Run	Brushwood Area
Goodyear Heights	Alder Trail
Liberty	Maple Loop
Munroe Falls	Meadow Loop
Sand Run (Old Portage Area)	Jogging Trail

Please note: Before starting any fitness program, it is the participant's responsibility to contact their physician with respect to any past or present illness or injury that may affect their ability to participate in the program.