

# GREEN ISLANDS

*Summit Metro Parks*



*Bi-monthly Magazine*



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Our Future

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Natural area  
protected thanks  
to land donation

Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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• **Cover photo by Amateur Photography Exhibit**  
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This magazine is mailed free of charge to Summit County residents. To join the mailing list, send your name and mailing address to [contact@summitmetroparks.org](mailto:contact@summitmetroparks.org) or call 330-867-5511.

Green Islands can be downloaded online:  
[summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org)

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                      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.

• fifth in a series of five •

## SMP GREEN TIPS

### GREEN GIVING



• **Gift green!** Check out our order-by-phone selections available from **Maple Leaf Gifts** for some unique and eco-friendly gift ideas. When wrapping, consider upcycling newspaper, fabric or other items around the house rather than buying new materials. *See gift shop items at [summitmetroparks.org/gift-shop.aspx](http://summitmetroparks.org/gift-shop.aspx).*



• **Feed me!** Our hardy resident birds that stick around all winter need easy food to keep them going through the cold months ahead. Consider hanging a bird feeder filled with black oil sunflower seeds — a calorie-rich, fatty seed enjoyed by many of our avian neighbors.

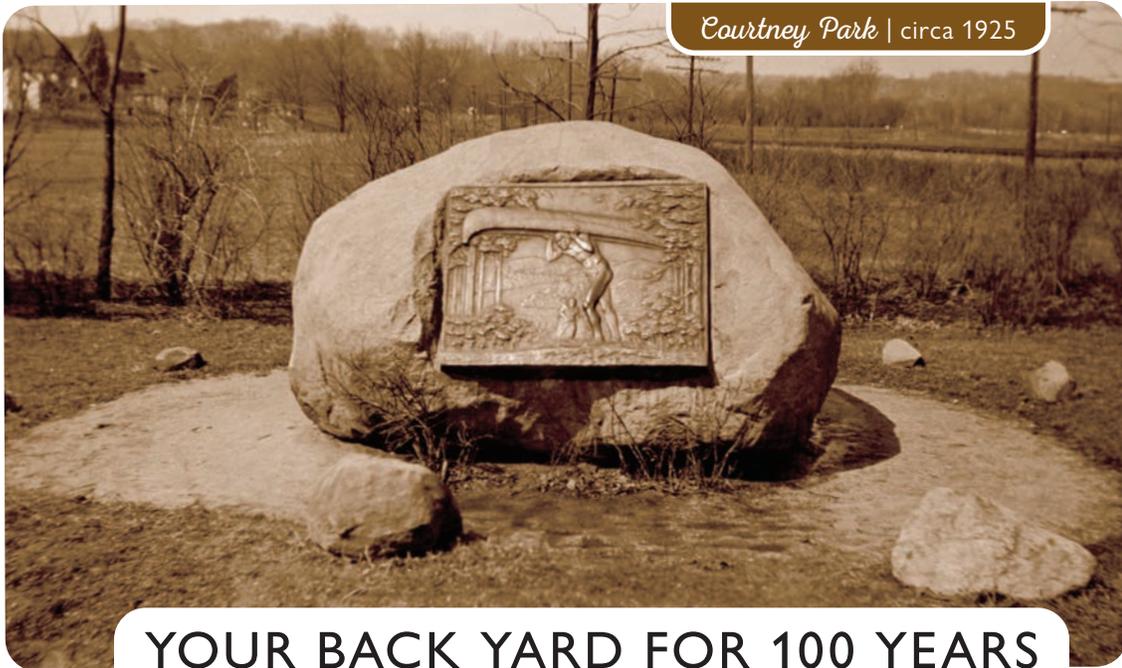


• **Go native!** As a natural part of our ecosystem, native plants require less maintenance and water. Give your yard a gift — early November is the time to prepare soil, lay down seeds and let mother nature do the rest.

5

# DISCOVER

YOUR BACK YARD



## YOUR BACK YARD FOR 100 YEARS

*Lindsay Smith,  
Marketing & Public  
Relations Manager*

In 2021, your Summit Metro Parks will be 100 years old! To reach a centennial milestone is a significant achievement, and it would not have been possible without generous support over the years from the residents of Summit County.

We're looking forward to a new year of celebration and stories that collectively weave together to create today's park district. The story of our centennial will be told through four pillars: protecting natural resources; celebrating cultural

heritage; connecting people to nature and honoring community support. We invite you to join us on this journey — we'll soon unveil a centennial website and introduce several engaging and interactive initiatives that will fill 2021 with both a look at our history and meaningful ways that, together with you, we'll propel SMP into its next century of conservation of natural resources and connecting people to nature. We can't wait to celebrate with you! 🍁



# BUILD

*As 2020 comes to an end,* we look back with gratitude at a challenging, yet productive year. We thank Summit County voters for their ongoing support of the park district, and we commit to continuing our careful stewardship of resources and service to the county and its residents. In this spirit, we are excited to usher in our centennial year with meaningful progress on several initiatives that help set the stage for our next century.

# ING OUR FUTURE

*Lindsay Smith, Marketing & Public Relations Manager*

## VALLEY VIEW AREA

Acquired by the park district in 2016, the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park in Akron has already undergone a significant transformation and continues to evolve and take shape. Several substantial state and federal grant awards have helped the park district re-naturalize the land and

reimagine the property's historic barn that once served as a golf clubhouse. Where man-made modifications once redirected water and prevented native vegetation, free-flowing waterways and the start of prairie and forest habitats are now in the works. In 2021, the park district will launch a prototype hiking trail near the barn, which will allow

visitors access to explore and watch us grow. When river restoration work is complete, the next project will be developing pedestrian access to the Cuyahoga River.

Originally identified in the park district's first master plan, Valley View provides a critical link between three Metro Parks and connects visitors to the Cuyahoga River, hiking and biking trails, the Towpath, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and more.



*Originally a dairy barn built in the mid-1800s, renovations at Valley View will highlight the building's soaring ceilings, historic barnstone foundation and scenic position on the property.*

## SUMMIT LAKE NATURE CENTER

The new Summit Lake Nature Center is coming to life at the former pump house building along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Akron. This building was donated to the park district by

*continued on page 6*



*This architectural rendering shows another look at the Summit Lake Nature Center.*

*continued from page 5*

the City of Akron, and its development has been made possible with the help of generous in-kind services and grant funding. On the first floor, visitors will find a large gathering space with 14-foot high ceilings and public restrooms. With expansive views of Summit Lake, the second floor includes a kitchenette and a large area for interpretive programs. The nature center will feature engaging educational exhibits that tell the story of the site's cultural past and highlight its natural history. Initial concepts include a welcome desk, ample seating and gallery-style displays, as well as live educational animals. The anticipated grand opening is set for spring 2021.

## GORGE METRO PARK UPDATES

This year, Gorge Metro Park received enhancements that improve the visitor

experience. When arriving at the ADA-accessible main parking lot, visitors are greeted with a new concrete plaza featuring a large interactive boulder and barnstone seat walls. Completing the main entrance area are a bike rack, updated kiosk area with sandstone seating and steps leading to a multi-purpose lawn, refurbished stone picnic area under shade trees and a new flush restroom. To help with access, a new sidewalk along Front Street leads to an updated pedestrian entrance to

the park. Park staff are currently in the early stages of creating a master plan for additional improvements that will be implemented after the anticipated removal of the Gorge Dam. If you haven't been to Gorge Metro Park in a while, we recommend a visit to enjoy unobstructed late-fall views of the Cuyahoga River!

Summit Metro Parks has provided clean and safe parks for nearly 100 years and we continue to evolve to serve our community while remaining true to our mission. Improvements and new projects undertaken today set the stage for future generations to enjoy visits to parks in their own back yards. We invite you to join us in our centennial anniversary by visiting us at these new and updated locations. 🌿

*Recent improvements at Gorge Metro Park create a welcoming entrance.*





SMP Community SPOTLIGHT:

# TRACI BUCKNER

Executive Director, Akron Children's Museum

*Lindsay Smith, Marketing & Public Relations Manager*

Before setting off to promote a safe space for children and families to learn through play together as executive director of Akron's first children's museum, Traci Buckner spent the bulk of her career in education. Once a middle school teacher, Buckner excelled through several administration roles in the Akron Public Schools district. When she's not at Akron Children's Museum, Buckner and her family enjoy time spent in Summit Metro Parks.

"One park experience that is most memorable is when me and my husband, Tobin, took our two sons, Jackson and Justice, to a night out at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm to learn from a naturalist,

catch lightning bugs and make s'mores around a campfire. This is something we still enjoy doing at our home around the fire pit now that my sons are older," Buckner recalled.

We are grateful to Buckner for her leadership in our community, especially through an unusually challenging year. Like many people, she and her family found the parks to be a refuge during the early days of the pandemic. "One evening we took a drive (and) ended up at Sand Run Metro Park on a trail we had never walked before. There, we bumped into our neighbors who live a couple of houses over and who we hadn't been able to see because everyone was

confined to their homes," Buckner says. "We were so surprised and happy to see each other along the trail and couldn't believe that of all of the Metro Parks to choose from we would end up at the same trail at the same time for the same purpose: a much-needed refuge to find peace in our community's beautiful parks."

We'll leave you with her pro tip for cinema lovers: "If you love *Star Wars*, you'll feel as if you have just stepped into one of their movie scenes when hiking Silver Creek Metro Park. A portion of (Pheasant Run Trail) has a line of trees that are breathtaking" 🌳



# HAMPTON & FRIENDS

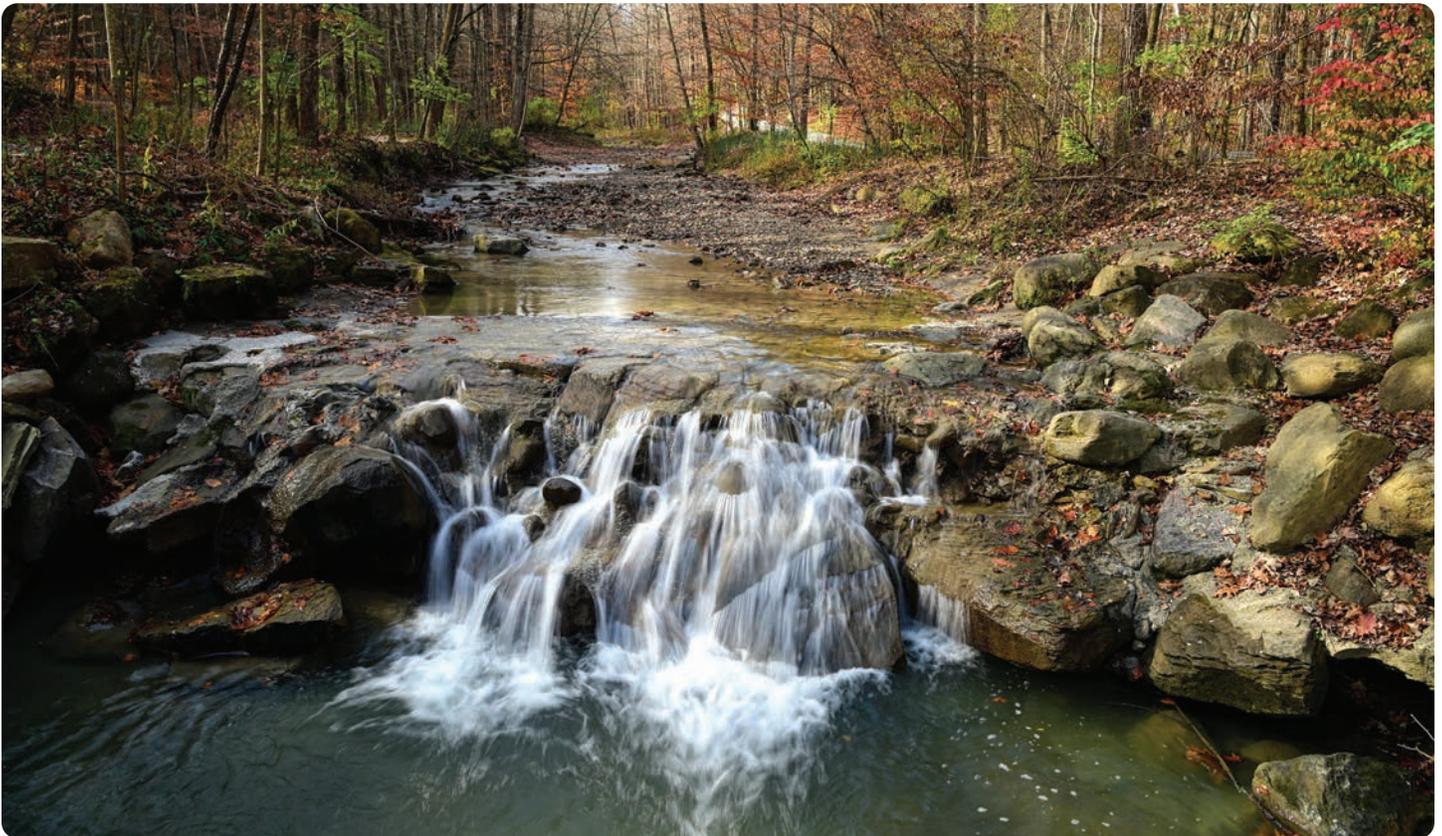
Activities for Adventurers of All Ages

**PARK BINGO** – Hit the trail looking for these items as you hike.  
Can you find five across, down or diagonal?

 <p><b>P</b> Black-capped Chickadee</p>	 <p><b>A</b> White-tailed Deer (Doe)</p>	 <p><b>R</b> Oak Leaf</p>	 <p><b>K</b> Bird Nest</p>	 <p><b>S</b> Pine Needles</p>
 <p>Boulder</p>	 <p>Pine Cone</p>	 <p>Tufted Titmouse</p>	 <p>Gray Squirrel</p>	 <p>Beech Leaf</p>
 <p>Sweetgum Leaf</p>	 <p>Hiking Boots</p>	 <p>FREE</p>	 <p>Wild Turkey</p>	 <p>Raccoon</p>
 <p>White-tailed Deer (Buck)</p>	 <p>Northern Cardinal (female)</p>	 <p>Acorn</p>	 <p>Maple Leaf</p>	 <p>Log</p>
 <p>Ohio Buckeye Nut</p>	 <p>Tuliptree Leaf</p>	 <p>Chipmunk</p>	 <p>Rocks</p>	 <p>Great Blue Heron</p>

# EXPLORE

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS



Due to the evolving nature of the community's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are continually evaluating the safest way to offer a modified selection of programs and events. The latest information is available on our website at [summitmetroparks.org](https://summitmetroparks.org).

# MAPLE LEAF GIFTS

## SUMMIT METRO PARKS IS GLAD TO OFFER A VARIETY OF PRODUCTS FOR PURCHASE BY PHONE ORDER

Items can be shipped for a fee or may be picked up curbside at the Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron) on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you'd like to make a purchase, please call 330-865-8065. If you don't speak to a member of our staff immediately, please leave a message and your call will be returned within 24 hours.

*Please note: we are only able to accept credit card payment at this time.*

*View our full product offering on our website [summitmetroparks.org/gift-shop.aspx](http://summitmetroparks.org/gift-shop.aspx)*

### SMP HONEY



### WATER BOTTLES



### SOCIAL DEPT POSTERS



### MAGNETS / STICKERS



MUGS



NESTLED PINES / DON DRUMM ORNAMENTS



LONG SLEEVE TEE / SWEATER FLEECE

CAPS / BEANIES



REUSABLE STRAWS



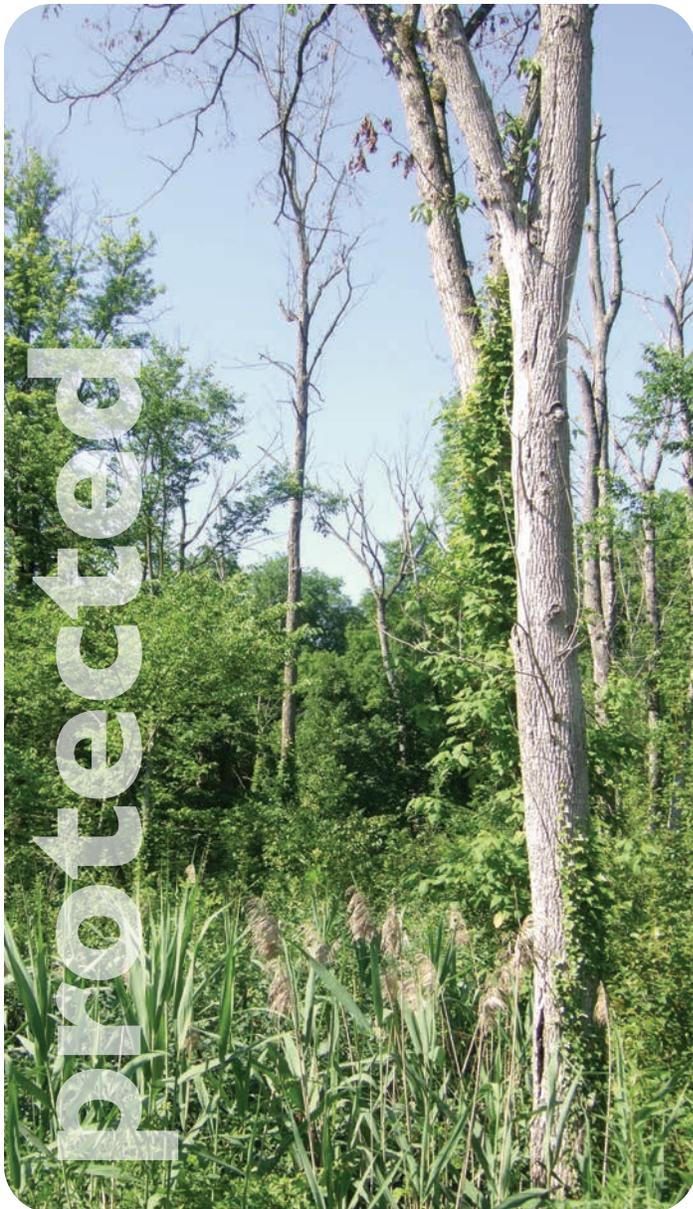
DOG BOWL / LEASH



PATCHES



# Summit County protected



One of the park district's newest conservation properties was donated by local residents James and Neille Vitale and is now named the John R. Morris III Nature Preserve in honor of Neille's father. This preserve is located adjacent to Seven Ponds Trail in the Tinkers Creek Area of Liberty Park, on Old Mill Road in Twinsburg Township. The property protects 44 acres of high-quality riparian forest and Category 3 wetlands and connects to other protected natural areas along the Tinkers Creek corridor. A special feature of this property is a stream that artfully meanders, creating several oxbow wetlands that are habitat for a variety of sensitive amphibian species. As a protected conservation area, it will remain closed to the public.

# natural area thanks to land donation

*Mark Szeremet,  
Land Acquisition Specialist/Park Planner*

Summit Metro Parks took over management of the 355-acre Tinkers Creek State Park and 786-acre Tinkers Creek State Nature Preserve in 2014. Together, these parks are now known as the Tinkers Creek Area of Liberty Park. Most of the Tinkers Creek Area is maintained in its original state as a swamp and marshland that abounds with diverse plant and animal life. Nesting waterfowl and songbirds may be seen during the spring and early summer. Canada geese and wood ducks nest throughout the marshes and can be viewed from the trails around the Seven Ponds area. Beaver ponds dot the preserve and add to the diversity of plant and animal life by providing habitat for a greater number of species. White-tailed deer, raccoon,

mink, weasel, muskrat and fox are also frequently spotted in this area. Among the reptiles and amphibians present are snapping turtles, water snakes, four-toed salamanders and bullfrogs. Even though it is located near a large metropolitan region, the Tinkers Creek Area has remained isolated from development and retains much of its pristine charm and natural integrity.

Summit Metro Parks is grateful to the Vitales and other generous citizens who have helped us achieve our mission over the years. If you are interested in donating property for protection and conservation by the park district, please contact Mark Szeremet at [mszeremet@summitmetroparks.org](mailto:mszeremet@summitmetroparks.org). 





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 through June 30, 2020. 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.

### DONOR LISTING

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- Board of Directors Annual Giving Fund
  - Capital Fund
  - Civic Affairs

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First Energy Foundation

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- Reimagining the Civic Commons – Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, convener
  - The JPB Foundation
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Summit Metro Parks Foundation  
*Green Islands Legacy Society*



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

- |                     |                    |                           |
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## 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 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