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CELEBRATE THE SMP CENTENNIAL DURING THE 58th ANNUAL FALL HIKING SPREE

Hike the "Celebration Trail" and Tour the Himmelright Lodge at Valley View

The largest and longest-running event of its kind in the nation – the annual [Fall Hiking Spree](#) – begins September 1 in Summit Metro Parks. This year, the spree celebrates the park district's 100th anniversary and participants are invited to enjoy both the Fall Hiking Spree and [Centennial Tour](#) at the same time! Most Fall Hiking Spree trails are stops on the year-long, self-guided Centennial Tour, so you can earn double rewards in the parks that have been "Your Back Yard for 100 Years."

New this year, hikers can explore the "Celebration Trail" at the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park (1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron). Over the past five years, Valley View has been transformed from a golf course to a renaturalized area featuring a restored Cuyahoga River. The 1.6-mile trail is available to use as a "hiker's choice" option on the Fall Hiking Spree form and features educational signage along the way. The former dairy barn is now a renovated lodge, with free tours available each weekend from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. beginning on September 4.

Participants can get a head start on the 58th annual Fall Hiking Spree by participating in Fall Hiking Spree Kick-Off on Sunday, August 29, from 12 to 3 p.m. at Firestone Metro Park (2620 Harrington Rd., Akron). Visitors will meet Summit Metro Parks staff and mascots and can hike the 1.6-mile Willow Trail for spree credit. Fall

Hiking Spree t-shirts and other gift shop merchandise will be for sale and Fall Hiking Spree forms will be available.

What began in the mid-1960s as a way to encourage people to visit a variety of trails has continued to be a family-friendly tradition through the years. A first-time participant who completes eight hikes through November 30 will earn a hiking staff and metal shield. A veteran spree hiker will earn a shield. Hikes can be completed on a person's own schedule and at their own pace. Guided hikes are listed on the [website](#).

Every year, an estimated 50,000 people participate in the spree, and between 11,000 and 12,000 hikers earn rewards. In 2020 there were a record-breaking 17,000 spree finishers. Fall Hiking Spree rewards are free to Summit County residents. Out-of-county residents pay to receive rewards (\$10 for first-year hikers, \$5 for veteran hikers). Hiking forms are available [online](#), in the September/October issue of Green Islands magazine and by visiting F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron), Liberty Park Nature Center (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg) or Summit Lake Nature Center (411 Ira Ave., Akron). Forms have also been placed in a dropbox outside the park district's administrative offices (975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron).

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Established in 1921, Summit Metro Parks is celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2021. The park district manages more than 14,000 acres throughout 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 150 miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance in 2020 was 6 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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