

JUL•AUG '26 | Vol. 67 No. 4

GREEN ISLANDS

Summit Metro Parks Bimonthly Magazine



**Summit
Metro
Parks** 

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- 18 ENJOY – The Pack is Back ... with New Friends

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



Jill M. Stritch Herb Newman S. Theresa Carter 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.

Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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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 or call 330-867-5511.

Green Islands can be downloaded online: summitmetroparks.org



ON THE COVER

Before the Gorge Dam (pictured) can be demolished, years of built-up sediment must be removed from the river behind it.

Enjoy MUSIC by the LAKE



This summer, the Metro Parks Ensemble is celebrating 25 years of music in your Metro Parks!

Treat yourself to **FREE** musical performances like Music by the Lake by the Ensemble, the park district's volunteer band. This family-friendly concert series allows visitors of all ages to

experience summer evenings outdoors while

enjoying music from the big band era, Broadway musicals, films, TV themes and more. See **PAGE 10** for more information on these and other musical performances. ●

Discover YOUR BACK YARD

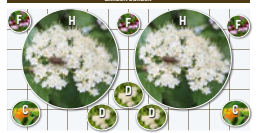
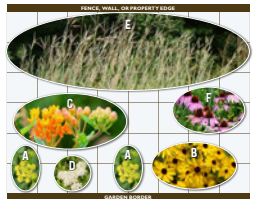


PLANNING FOR NATIVE BIODIVERSITY ... AND A GREENER GENERATION

Christopher Chaney, Biologist

Support Ohio mammals, birds and pollinators NATIVE GARDEN TEMPLATES: FUI

Interested in starting a wildlife-supporting garden or landscaping project, but don't know where to start? Sample designs at different sizes have been provided below and can be modified to fit your Wild Back Yard!




Four different PDF templates are available to download to fit the sun exposure and soil of your back yard.

At Summit Metro Parks (SMP), we know the long-term success of our mission is dependent on our connection to the younger generation. One of the ways we inspire today's youth is by inviting students to make meaningful contributions to our work.

In the spring of 2025, Dr. Randy Mitchell invited us to develop a final project for his Restoration Ecology students at The University of Akron. One group elected to put together a series of native garden design templates for our Wild Back Yards initiative. They collaborated with multiple

SMP departments, and their project is now published on our website as a resource for anyone who wants to support biodiversity but doesn't know where to start.

Throughout this project, the students had to consider impacts to biodiversity and how to effectively mitigate these impacts in a human-centered landscape. They synthesized different viewpoints and constraints into a tangible and digestible way for the public to engage in conservation. We encourage you to visit bit.ly/WildBackYards to explore the students' garden templates. 

Dirty Work FOR **A** BET

Water quality during dredging operations is monitored using turbidity monitors.



TER *River*

Claire Merrick,
Marketing & Public Relations Manager

The first time I saw the barge, which would hold the necessary equipment needed to remove contaminated sediment from the Cuyahoga River and make dam removal possible, I wasn't fully focused on the barge itself. I was watching my colleague, who has dreamed of (and worked toward) the Gorge Dam removal for decades. "Wow," she murmured, awestruck. When you consider the mechanics of the operation, plus the years of overcoming challenges, planning and logistics that made it possible, "wow" is right!

continued on page 6



Larger debris is separated out from the sediment during dredging using screens that catch the material.

continued from page 5

Sediment remediation is achieved using a hybrid system of dredging mechanically and pumping hydraulically. An excavator removes sediment from the Cuyahoga River and places it into a mixing tank on the barge. Inside the tank, augers mix the material with just enough water to make it pumpable. Then, pumps pull it from the tank and send it through a pipeline to the sediment placement site on Peck Road where it's discharged into a containment area. It holds about 6,000 cubic yards.

Next, Portland cement is added. The sediment and cement are mixed thoroughly using a pug mill or augers. The cement dries and strengthens the material to prevent it from slumping when placement cells are built.

Of course, there's more than sediment at the bottom of the dam pool. That's where filtering comes in — this, too, occurs on the barge prior to pumping. When the excavator empties material into the mixing tank, the material passes over an angled screen. Sediment

and water pass through, while debris hits the screen and gets diverted into a separate bin. When the bin is full, the debris is unloaded and sampled to determine where it goes; it could be recycled, diverted to a landfill or, in some cases, sent to the Peck Road site, depending on size, material type and sampling results.

Among the sediment, organic debris like sticks and vegetation is expected. Unexpectedly, dredging operations have also uncovered freshwater mussel shells. Because



An aerial view of the sediment surge basin, the first step for sediment before it is processed for final placement. (August 2025)

[Find links to the Free the Falls podcast, view project updates and more at bit.ly/freethefalls.]


freshwater mussel shells are slow to decay, they can provide a 100-year ecological record of mussel presence in the Cuyahoga River and exciting new research opportunities for Summit Metro Parks staff.

Dredging operations could also uncover artifacts contained within the sediment. Experienced equipment operators, the sediment screening process and characterization help flag archaeological discoveries like these.

In the event of an archaeological discovery, project staff follow an Inadvertent Discovery Plan,

which provides guidelines for the onsite contractor and project management staff if unanticipated artifacts are discovered. Through careful planning, Summit Metro Parks staff, project stakeholders and contractors can work together to ensure that important cultural resources are handled properly and get the care they require. The fate of such artifacts depends largely on their nature. Some items that have been submerged for a long time can deteriorate quickly once they're removed from the water or mud, making them difficult to preserve.

Other objects may be too large or not feasible to add to a collection. When possible, the park district may share photos or 3D models of items of interest so there's a record of these pieces of history that can be shared with the public. We also have established procedures in place if an item requires collection and permanent curation.

As progress continues on land and water, we look forward to sharing more updates on this exciting project to Free the Falls! 



Explore PROGRAMS & EVENTS

JULY

Wednesday, July 1, 9 – 11 a.m.

DRAWING OUTDOORS

Bring your drawing pad and pencils for an outdoor lesson in drawing. Beginners are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the program. Portable chairs and drinking water are recommended. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be canceled. LP/ Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, July 1, 4 – 8 p.m.

SUMMIT LAKE 5TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Join us to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Summit Lake Nature Center with family-friendly activities, including yard games, fishing, a guided hike, music, refreshments and more! For full program details, visit

summitmetroparks.org. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Thursday, July 2, 9:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SENIOR CYCLING

Join like-minded senior Summit Metro Parks supporters as we ride and explore various trails. We will gather to socialize and determine the route, distance and pace. Expect to ride at least 10 to 12 miles at a casual (10-12 mph) pace. Please bring your own helmet and bicycle. Helmets are required to participate. TT/Big Bend Trailhead: 1337 Merriman Rd., Akron



Thursday, July 2, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

KIDS IN THE GARDEN

Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron for hands-on gardening activities for children of all ages. Seed, sow, water, harvest... and enjoy! We'll have a game or craft, garden activity and a snack themed around what is growing and ready to harvest in the garden. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be held indoors. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Thursday, July 2, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOOD GARDEN TALKS: PEST MANAGEMENT & BENEFICIAL INSECTS



Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron and OSU Extension to learn how to encourage beneficial insects and manage pests in the vegetable garden. Let's Grow Akron Headquarters: 467 Harvey Ave., Akron

Friday, July 3, 4 – 6 p.m. & 7 – 9 p.m.

INTRO TO STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING & SUNSET STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING

Learn how to paddleboard and take a guided tour around the lake with a certified instructor during daylight, or in the evening to view a beautiful sunset. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Location subject to change based on water conditions. Cost: \$15/person. Registration required (6/1). NR/Lot C4: 5550 Christman Rd., Green

Saturday, July 4, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

BOOMING BLOOMS

Discover nature's fireworks in the form of beautiful blooms as we celebrate and discuss all the land has to offer. SFB/Prairie Trail: 1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.

Saturday, July 4, 1 – 3 p.m.

SNAKES OF SUMMIT METRO PARKS

Join a naturalist as we discover the world of snakes. Did you know there are no venomous snakes in Summit County? Learn why these misunderstood creatures play a vital role in the health of our parks. We may even have some slither in for an up-close encounter! LP/ Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg



Beginning Sunday, July 5

SELF-GUIDED STORY TRAIL: SOME BUGS

Enjoy fun and exploration while following a self-guided story trail based on the book, "Some Bugs." This experience will be available along the 0.8-mile Daffodil Trail through July 26. FR/Daffodil Trail: 3100 Brush Rd., Richfield

Key

WEB: bit.ly/SMPevents Register online beginning on the date in parentheses.

ZOOM: zoom.us/join Key in the Meeting ID number.

(date) Registration start date

BHT Bike & Hike Trail

F Firestone

G Gorge

NR Nimisila Reservoir

SLNC Summit Lake Nature Center

\$ Fee

CV Cascade Valley

FR Furnace Run

HH Hampton Hills

ONW O'Neil Woods

SR Sand Run



Fall Hiking Spree credit

DLQ Deep Lock Quarry

FT Freedom Trail

LP Liberty Park

SC Silver Creek

TT Towpath Trail

FASN F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm

GYH Goodyear Heights

MF Munroe Falls

SFB Springfield Bog

WH Wood Hollow



Beginning Sunday, July 5

**SELF-GUIDED TRAIL:
BANQUET FOR BIODIVERSITY**

Walk the 0.25-mile Maple Loop Trail through July 26 to discover how native plants support biodiversity, particularly pollinators! Informative signs will guide your learning experience. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Monday, July 6, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

SNAKES FOR KIDS

Kids and their adult companions: Join a naturalist to learn about the fascinating slithering creatures found in our parks. We'll start in the shelter for activities and to meet an animal ambassador before walking along the paved 0.25-mile Maple Loop Trail in search of snakes in their natural habitat. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Thursday, July 9, 5 – 8 p.m.

ARCHERY OPEN HOUSE

Join us for a free, hands-on opportunity to try international-style target archery! Time slots, equipment and instruction provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants must be 9 years old and 50 inches or taller. Children must have a parent or guardian present. HH/Archery Range: 1940 W. Steels Corners Rd., Cuyahoga Falls

Friday, July 10, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

SUMMER NATURE TALES

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

Friday, July 10, 1 – 3 p.m.

FISHING FRIDAY

Come try your hand at fishing. We'll provide the rods and bait, so all you have to do is show up! Anyone over the age of 16 will need a valid Ohio fishing license. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Saturday, July 11, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

SUMMIT LAKE FLOAT

Apply sunscreen and join us on Summit Lake! Presented by the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition and Summit Metro Parks, Summit Lake Float offers a morning of free kayaking and canoeing, followed by afternoon pontoon boat rides. That's not all the floating we'll do — root beer floats will be available while supplies last. *Registration required* (6/1). Summit Lake NorthShore Park: 460 W. South St., Akron



Saturday, July 11, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

BIRD NERDS: BELTED KINGFISHER

Bird enthusiasts of all kinds are welcome to join us for a deep dive into one of Ohio's most recognizable species each month. You see them. You love them. But how well do you really know them? After our indoor presentation, those interested can join for a guided birding walk. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



Saturday, July 11, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

NATURE SAUNTER

Appreciate the outdoors at a leisurely pace on a meander to observe ferns and other summer flora and fauna along the 1.1-mile Ledges Trail. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Saturday, July 11, 1 – 4 p.m.

CYCLING FRIENDS! PREVIEW

Join Summit Metro Parks, South Street Ministries, and local cyclists Brian Bortz and Lilly Usner for a preview of Cycling FRIENDS! — an eight-week program focusing on cycling and friendship delivered through fun and interactive activities. The program is open to kids in second through sixth grade who know how to ride a bike. Come for a relaxed 2-mile ride (6–8 mph) with us and learn about this exciting opportunity. Please bring your own bicycle and helmet. Helmets are required to participate. TT/Big Bend Trailhead: 1337 Merriman Rd., Akron



KINDEREALM: BUTTERFLIES

Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions can learn all about amazingly beautiful butterflies and their mesmerizing metamorphosis through a story, craft and short hike. *Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers.* Registration required (6/1).

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 8

FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, July 15

LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, July 22

SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Sunday, July 12, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

TENT CAMPING OPEN HOUSE

Families are invited to join naturalists for a fun-filled tent camping experience! Try your hand at canoeing, s'more-making, tent-pitching and other camping activities. All necessary equipment is provided. Optional: Pack a lunch or snacks and folding chairs to relax in between activities. Meet at Maple Shelter. MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls

Sunday, July 12, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

BACK YARDS GONE WILD: JUST ADD WATER

Join a naturalist to learn how to help backyard wildlife beat the heat by adding water to your landscape! We'll cover everything from bird baths and bubblers to misters and small ponds with tips and tricks about how to get started. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Thursday, July 16, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

HOMEGROWN HABITAT: BUTTERFLY BLOOMS

Calling all people with yards or green spaces big and small! Join us and learn how to rewind your home landscape. This month, butterflies are front and center. We'll discuss host plants, nectar plants and best practices for attracting the adult stage of these charismatic gems.

FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, July 17, 9:30 – 11:30 p.m.

MAGNIFICENT MOTHS

Join a naturalist as we delve into the world of moths. These amazing insects come in many different shapes, colors and sizes. From the pink and yellow rosy maple moth to the camouflaged pandorus sphinx moth, come and see what flies in. Bring bug spray and your camera. DLQ/Quarry Trail: 5779 Riverview Rd., Peninsula

Saturday, July 18, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
& 1 – 3 p.m.

INTRO TO KAYAKING

Learn how to kayak and take a guided tour around the lake with a certified instructor. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Location subject to change based on water conditions. Cost: \$15/person. Registration required (6/1). NR/Lot C4: 5550 Christman Rd., Green



Saturday, July 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

CYCLING TOUR: CUYAHOGA FALLS

Join us as we embark on an exploration of the historical, cultural and economic significance of downtown Cuyahoga Falls. Please bring your own bicycle and helmet. Helmets are required to participate. Expect to ride approximately 10 miles, at a casual (10-12 mph) pace on trails and roadways. Glens Parking Lot: 1659 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls

Saturday, July 18, 12 – 1:30 p.m.

DRAGONFLY QUEST

Ferocious hunters prowl our lands during the summer. Adventure out with a naturalist to get up close looks at amazing dragonflies. Insect nets will be provided for those who dare to try capturing these elusive predators. SR/Big Bend Area: 1337 Merriman Rd., Akron



MUSIC BY THE LAKE

Enjoy a performance by the Metro Parks Ensemble, presented by Wayside Furniture! Please bring your own chairs and blankets, and a picnic if you prefer. The concert will be canceled if it rains; call 330-865-8060 if wet weather is in the forecast.

7 – 8 p.m.

Tuesday, July 7

MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls

Tuesday, July 14

SC/Sherman Shelter:
5000 S. Hametown Rd., Norton

Tuesday, August 4

MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls

Tuesday, August 11

SC/Sherman Shelter:
5000 S. Hametown Rd., Norton



Cycling Without Age trishaw bikes will be available at **Munroe Falls Metro Park** concerts from

5:30 – 7:30 p.m. to carry riders with limited mobility on a bench seat for an unobstructed view of nature and the feeling of riding a bike in the outdoors. *Cycling Without Age is available with the support of The Andrea Rose Teodosio Foundation.*

Sunday, July 19, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**CYCLE & CELEBRATE:
NATIONAL ICE CREAM DAY**

Join us in collaboration with South Street Ministries as we celebrate National Ice Cream Day! We'll ride south from Summit Lake Nature Center, stopping at Scoops Ice Cream for a sweet treat before returning. Please bring your own bicycle, helmet and money. Helmets are required to participate. Expect to ride approximately 12 miles, at a casual (10-12 mph) pace on trails. **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**

Sunday, July 19, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**STAND-UP PADDLEBOARD
OPEN HOUSE**

Stop by to learn basic paddleboard techniques and take a short self-guided paddle on the lake under the guidance of certified instructors. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. Wear clothes that can get wet and bring a water bottle. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Space is limited; paddleboards are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Location subject to change based on water conditions. **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**

Sunday, July 19, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

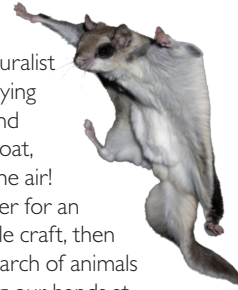
**POWERING TOMORROW
SUSTAINABLY**

Join a naturalist in this monthly series to explore how emerging energy technologies and evolving policies are shaping our daily lives and paving the way toward a more sustainable future. This month, we'll take a look at the local, state, national and global policies driving green energy and funding sustainable development. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Monday, July 20, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**FOR KIDS: THE WONDERS
OF FLIGHT**

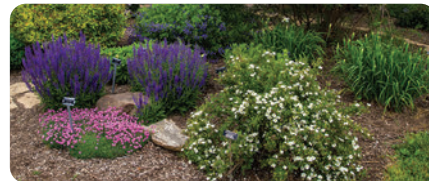
Kids and their adult companions: Join a naturalist to learn about birds, flying squirrels, butterflies and other creatures that float, fly and glide through the air! We'll start in the shelter for an introduction and simple craft, then take a short walk in search of animals in the sky before trying our hands at flying kites. Some will be available to borrow, or feel free to bring a kite from home. **WH/Downy Loop Trail: 2121 Barlow Rd., Hudson**



Tuesday, July 21, 7 – 8 p.m.

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Enjoy a performance by the Metro Parks Ensemble! Please bring your own chairs and blankets, and a picnic if you prefer. The concert will be canceled if it rains; call 330-865-8060 if wet weather is in the forecast. **SR/Treaty Line Area: 995 Treaty Line Rd., Akron**



Wednesday, July 22, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

**MEET ME IN THE GARDEN:
CREATING A COTTAGE GARDEN**

Join Brian Gregory from Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens to learn how to design and maintain a small-space garden brimming with flowers, fruit, fragrance and loads of charm! **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Thursday, July 23, 9:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SENIOR CYCLING

Join like-minded senior Summit Metro Parks supporters as we ride and explore various trails. We will gather to socialize and determine the route, distance and pace. Expect to ride at least 10 to 12 miles, at a casual (10-12 mph) pace. Please bring your own helmet and bicycle. Helmets are required to participate. **FT/Middlebury Trailhead: 1324 Middlebury Rd., Kent**

Friday, July 23, 4 – 6 p.m. & 7 – 9 p.m.

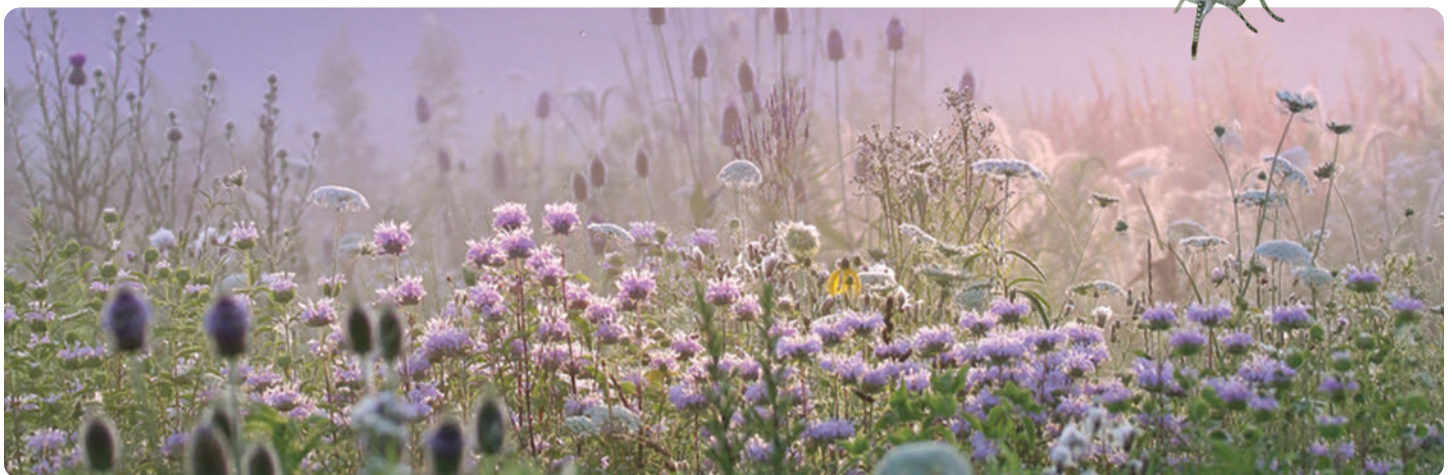
**INTRO TO STAND-UP
PADDLEBOARDING & SUNSET
STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING**

Learn how to paddleboard and take a guided tour around the lake with a certified instructor during daylight, or in the evening to view a beautiful sunset. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Location subject to change based on water conditions. Cost: \$15/person. Registration required (6/1). **NR/Lot C4: 5550 Christman Rd., Green**

Friday, July 24, 1 – 3 p.m.

FISHING FRIDAY

Come try your hand at fishing. We'll provide the rods and bait, so all you have to do is show up! Anyone over the age of 16 will need a valid Ohio fishing license. **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**



Friday, July 24, 8 – 9 p.m.

**YOUNG BIRDERS:
SWOOPIN' SWALLOWS**

Kids ages 8 and up are invited to learn about swallows and martins through a short presentation, then watch as these birds prepare for a long journey south. An adult companion is required to remain for the entirety of the program. **NR/Lot C4: 5550 Christman Rd., Green**



Saturday, July 25, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

BEEES AND BLOOMS

Join naturalists to look for midsummer bees and blooms as we discuss the dynamics of the dog days of summer and its effect on pollinators. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Sunday, July 26, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

KAYAK & CANOE OPEN HOUSE

Stop by to learn basic paddling techniques and take a short self-guided paddle on the lake under the guidance of certified instructors. Minimum age to kayak is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Canoes available for families with younger children. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. Wear clothes that can get wet and bring a water bottle. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Space is limited; kayaks and canoes are available on a first come, first served basis. Location subject to change based on water conditions. **MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls**

Monday, July 27, 7 – 8 pm

**CONCERT AT LIBERTY PARK:
CUYAHOGA VALLEY
CONCERT BAND**

Bring your chair or blanket and enjoy an evening of instrumental music by the Cuyahoga Valley Concert Band, performing around Northeast Ohio since 1969. Tap your toes along with the drums, trumpets, flutes and more! Popcorn and lemonade will be provided. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Wednesday, July 29, 9 – 11 a.m.

DRAWING OUTDOORS



Bring your drawing pad and pencils for an outdoor lesson in drawing. Beginners are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the program. Portable chairs and drinking water are recommended. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be canceled. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Friday, July 31, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

SUMMER NATURE TALES

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

AUGUST

Saturday, August 1, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

INTRO TO MOUNTAIN BIKING

Are you curious about mountain biking but nervous to try the trails by yourself? Then this program is for you! Join us in collaboration with South Street Ministries to review mountain biking safety and trail tips, followed by a ride on the beginner and moderate mountain biking loops. Please bring your own helmet and bicycle. Helmets are required to participate. *Registration required* (7/1). **HH/ Mountain Bike Area: 2092 Theiss Rd., Akron**

Beginning Sunday, August 2

**SELF-GUIDED:
DAMSELS & DRAGONS**

Follow signs along the 1.6-mile Buttonbush Trail through August 23 to explore the world of damselflies and dragonflies and observe these amazing insects as they cruise nearby to catch mosquitoes. **LP/Pond Brook Conservation Area: 3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg**

Beginning Sunday, August 2

**SELF-GUIDED STORY TRAIL:
IN THE TALL, TALL GRASS**

Enjoy some exercise and fun exploration with a self-guided story trail based on the book "In the Tall, Tall Grass." This experience is available along the 0.6-mile Bluebird Trail through August 23. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**





Sunday, August 2, 7:30 – 10 a.m.

BEAT THE HEAT DISTANCE HIKE

Before the heat of the day settles in, hit the trail with a naturalist for an extended, evenly paced hike through forest, prairie and lakeside habitat. Expect to hike over 5 miles along all the trails the park has to offer. **MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls**



TOUCH-A-TRUCK

**Saturday, August 1,
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Join us for Touch-a-Truck, presented by Wayside Furniture! People of all ages can sit in and explore more than a dozen Summit Metro Parks and local emergency response vehicles.

A special autism- and sensory-friendly hour, free of sirens, music and flashing lights, will be held 10 to 11 a.m.

(view the Touch-a-Truck Social Story at bit.ly/TaTsocialstory).

The fun will continue from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. *Please note: The presence of emergency response vehicles, including Akron Children's Hospital's Air Bear, is subject to availability.*

**MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd.,
Munroe Falls**

Monday, August 3, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

FOSSILS FOR KIDS

Kids and their adult companions can join a naturalist to explore the stream in search of fossils and learn about the ancient creatures that once called this park home. Follow posted signs to meet in the picnic area for an introduction and to make a fossil of your own to take home. Dress to get wet; closed-toe shoes required. **FR/Brushwood Area: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield**

Wednesday, August 5, 9 – 11 a.m.

DRAWING OUTDOORS

Bring your drawing pad and pencils for an outdoor lesson in drawing. Beginners are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the program. Portable chairs and drinking water are recommended. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be canceled. **FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Wednesday, August 5, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

SUMMER INSECTS TAKE FLIGHT

Join Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Denny Reiser and an SMP naturalist to explore the colorful world of summer insects. We'll enjoy a seated presentation on Seneca Deck followed by a stroll through the Rock & Herb Garden in search of some summer favorites! **FASN/Seneca Deck: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Thursday, August 6, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

KIDS IN THE GARDEN

Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron for hands-on gardening activities for children of all ages. Seed, sow, water, harvest... and enjoy! We'll have a game or craft, garden activity and a snack themed around what is growing and ready to harvest in the garden. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be held indoors. **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**

Thursday, August 6, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOOD GARDEN TALKS: WATERING THE GARDEN

Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron and OSU Extension to discuss effective methods for watering in the vegetable garden. **Let's Grow Akron Headquarters: 467 Harvey Ave., Akron**

Thursday, August 6, 8:30 – 10 p.m.

BATS, UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

Bats are some of the most fascinating and beneficial creatures of the night! Join us to learn about these fantastic flying insect controllers up close as park biologists attempt to catch them with nets for observation and data collection. The program will take place in the outdoor shelter. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**



Friday, August 7, 1 – 3 p.m.

FISHING FRIDAY

Come try your hand at fishing. We'll provide the rods and bait, so all you have to do is show up! Anyone over the age of 16 will need a valid Ohio fishing license. **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**



KINDEREALM: SKUNKS

Pee-yew! Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions can come learn all about the striped, smelly skunk through a story, craft and short hike. *Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers.* Registration required 📍 (711).

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, August 12

FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, August 19

LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Wednesday, August 26

SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Friday, August 7, 8 – 9:30 p.m.

NOCTURNAL CREATURES NIGHT HIKE

Ever wonder what happens in the woods at night when the daytime critters go to sleep? Join a naturalist on the 1.2-mile Oxbow Trail to see what our local wildlife is up to when the sun goes down! **CV/Oxbow Area: 1135 Cuyahoga St., Akron**

Saturday, August 8, 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

BIRD NERDS: AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

Bird enthusiasts of all kinds are welcome to join us for a deep dive into one of Ohio's most recognizable species each month. You see them. You love them. But how well do you really know them? After our indoor presentation, those interested can join for a guided birding walk. **FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

1828 Smith Rd., Akron



Sunday, August 9, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

BUG HUNT FOR GROWN UPS

Do you remember exploring as a kid, searching for bugs with a net and jar in hand? Join a naturalist for a hands-on deep dive into the world of insects to rekindle that sense of wonder! We'll begin in the shelter for an introduction and microscope viewing, then strike out into the field and pond edge to search for insects for observation. **WH/Downy Loop Trail: 2121 Barlow Rd., Hudson**

Sunday, August 9, 1 – 2 p.m.

NATURE REALM HISTORY HIKE

Enjoy your hike along the 1.2-mile Seneca Trail as we talk about the history of F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm and how it became the amazing park we have today! **FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Wednesday, August 12, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB: MOZART'S STARLING



New visitors and regular adult readers are invited to share in a lively discussion about "Mozart's Starling," by Lyanda Lynn Haupt. *Registration required* 📍 (711).

A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registering.

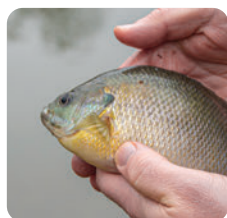
Thursday, August 13, 9:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SENIOR CYCLING

Join like-minded senior Summit Metro Parks supporters as we ride and explore various trails. We will gather to socialize and determine the route, distance and pace before rolling out. Expect to ride at least 10 to 12 miles, at a casual (10-12 mph) pace. Please bring your own helmet and bicycle. Helmets are required to participate. **TT/Mustill Store Trailhead: 57 W. North St., Akron**

Thursday, August 13, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

WHO IS LIVING IN THE RIVER?



Join park district staff as we explore life in the river. Discover how these surveys help measure the river's health and get an up-close look at the

fish we catch before they're safely released back into the water. **BHT/SR 91 Lot: 130 N. Main St., Munroe Falls**

Thursday, August 13, 4 – 5:30 p.m. & 6:30 – 8 p.m.

INTRO TO ARCHERY

Participants will learn international-style target archery and test their marksmanship at an outdoor range. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Must be 9 years old and 50 inches or taller. Cost: \$10/person. *Registration required* 📍 (711). **LP/Tinkers Creek Area: 10303 Aurora Hudson Rd., Streetsboro**

Thursday, August 13, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

HOMEGROWN HABITAT: CATERPILLARS COUNT

Calling all people with yards or green spaces big and small: Join us and learn how to rewind your home landscape. This month, we'll discover the hidden world of caterpillars. We'll dive deeper into understanding how to best support the larval stage of butterflies and moths. **FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, August 14, 9 – 11 p.m.

MAGNIFICENT MOTHS

Join a naturalist as we delve into the world of moths. These amazing insects come in many different shapes, colors and sizes. From the pink and yellow rosy maple moth to the camouflaged pandorus sphinx moth, come and see what flies in. Bring bug spray and your camera. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**



PROMISES IN THE PARK

Summit County Probate Court and Summit Metro Parks are partnering to offer a free outdoor wedding ceremony and vow renewal for Summit County residents. The event will take place outside Himelright Lodge, featuring beautiful park views. Learn more and complete the required registration at bit.ly/promisesinthepark2026.

11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Friday, August 7

**CV/Himelright Lodge:
1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron**



Saturday, August 15, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
CYCLING TOUR: WEST AKRON & HIGHLAND SQUARE

Join us in collaboration with South Street Ministries as we embark on an exploration of the historical, cultural and economic significance of Akron's West Hill and Highland Square neighborhoods. Please bring your own bicycle and helmet. Helmets are required to participate. Expect to ride approximately 10 miles, at a casual (10-12 mph) pace on trails and roadways. **TT/Mustill Store Trailhead: 57 W. North St., Akron**

Sunday, August 16, 10 – 11:30 a.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. Registration required** 🏹 (7/1). **F/ Coventry Oaks Lodge: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Sunday, August 16, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

STAND-UP PADDLEBOARD OPEN HOUSE

Stop by to learn basic paddleboard techniques and take a short self-guided paddle on the lake under the guidance of certified instructors. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. Wear clothes that can get wet and bring a water bottle. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Space is limited; paddleboards are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Location subject to change based on water conditions. **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**

Sunday, August 16, 12:30 – 2 p.m.

ARCHERY GAMES

Practiced participants will review international-style target archery principles and test their marksmanship through a variety of fun and challenging shooting games. All equipment and hands-on instruction provided. Must be 9 years old and 50 inches or taller. Previous archery experience preferred. Cost: **\$10/person. Registration required** 🏹 (7/1). **F/Coventry Oaks Lodge: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Sunday, August 16, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

POWERING TOMORROW SUSTAINABLY

Join a naturalist for this monthly series to explore how emerging energy technologies and evolving policies are shaping our daily lives and paving the way toward a more sustainable future. This month, we'll highlight sustainability efforts led by individuals, industries and communities — locally, statewide and around the world. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**



Tuesday, August 18, 7 – 8 p.m.

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Enjoy a performance by the Metro Parks Ensemble! Please bring your own chairs and blankets, and a picnic if you prefer. In the event of inclement weather, the concert will be moved indoors.

FR/Brushwood Area: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield



Beginning Wednesday, August 19

SELF-GUIDED: GOODBYE, BIRDS!

Fall flyers are gearing up to take off for migration! Through August 28, hike the 0.9-mile Fernwood Trail and discover which birds we'll say goodbye to this autumn. FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, August 19, 9 – 11 a.m.

DRAWING OUTDOORS

Bring your drawing pad and pencils for an outdoor lesson in drawing. Beginners are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the program. Portable chairs and drinking water are recommended. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be canceled. FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, August 21, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

SUMMER NATURE TALES

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

Friday, August 21, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

PRIDE IN THE PARKS: SUNSET KAYAK

Learn how to kayak and take a guided tour around the lake with a certified instructor to view a beautiful sunset. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. Wear clothes that can get wet and bring a water bottle. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Location subject to change based on water conditions. Cost: \$15/person. Registration required 📍 (7/1). SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Friday, August 21, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

NATURE TRIVIA HIKE

Join a naturalist for a 1.5-mile trivia-filled hike! We'll test you on all sorts of summer facts from wildlife to the Olympics! So, bring your competitive spirit. But as long as we're outside, isn't everybody a winner? SR/Old Portage Area: 1300 Sand Run Pkwy. Akron

Saturday, August 22, 10 – 11 a.m.

BEEES FOR BEGINNERS

Would you bee-lieve how amazing bees can be? Explore the world of bees and discover our most common species in this program for bee beginners. FASN/Nature Realm: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Saturday, August 22, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

NATURE SAUNTER

Appreciate the outdoors at a leisurely pace on a stroll along the 1.6-mile Buttonbush Trail to observe end of summer nature. LP/Pond Brook Conservation Area: 3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg

Sunday, August 23, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

THE FALL HIKING SPREE

HIKING SPREE KICK-OFF

Get a head start on the 2026 Fall Hiking Spree! Join guided hikes of the 1.8-mile Parcours Trail at

9:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. or hike it anytime on your own this day to earn spree credit. Staff will be available to provide hiking forms and answer questions. Fall Hiking Spree t-shirts will be available for sale, along with other items from Maple Leaf Gifts. To receive your hiking staff and/or shield, all other hikes must be completed between September 1 and November 30. GYH/Main Entrance: 2077 Newton St., Akron 📍



Sunday, August 23, 12 – 2 p.m.

TENT CAMPING SKILLS FOR BEGINNERS

Prepare for the fall camping season with an informational session on the basics of tent camping. We'll learn about preparedness, gear and campfire cooking. Registration required 📍 (7/1). FASN/Seneca Deck: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



*Wednesday, August 26, 4 – 6 p.m.
& 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

**INTRO TO STAND-UP
PADDLEBOARDING & SUNSET
STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING**

Learn how to paddleboard and take a guided tour around the lake with a certified instructor during daylight, or in the evening to view a beautiful sunset. Minimum age is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Location subject to change based on water conditions. Cost: \$15/person. *Registration required* (7/1). NR/Lot C6: 5550 Christman Rd., Green



Wednesday, August 26, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

**MEET ME IN THE GARDEN:
BENEFITS OF ATTRACTING
WILDLIFE TO YOUR
OUTDOOR SPACES**

Join Wildlife Communications Specialist Monika Bowman Bell of the Ohio Division of Wildlife as she discusses the benefits of attracting wildlife into your outdoor space and tactics to deter nuisance species. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Thursday, August 27, 9:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SENIOR CYCLING

Join like-minded senior Summit Metro Parks supporters as we ride and explore various trails. We will gather to socialize and determine the route, distance and pace before rolling out. Expect to ride at least 10 to 12 miles, at a casual (10-12 mph) pace. Please bring your own helmet and bicycle. Helmets are required to participate. TT/Big Bend Trailhead: 1337 Merriman Rd., Akron



Friday, August 28, 5 – 6:30 p.m.

GONE FISHIN'

Welcome all ages to fishing! Youth ages 15 and younger can learn the basics of fishing, then drop a line and see what they can catch! Some rods and reels will be available for use. Bait is provided. Adults must supervise their children and must have a current Ohio fishing license if they want to fish. FR/Brushwood Area: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield

Saturday, August 29, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GETTING TO KNOW GRASSES

Often overlooked and under loved, grasses play an essential role in our communities. Join for a hike along the 1.6-mile Prairie Trail to explore the fantastic features that make grasses so fascinating. SFB/Prairie Trail: 1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.



Saturday, August 29, 7 – 8 p.m.

**YOUNG BIRDERS:
NOVEL NIGHTJARS**

Kids ages 8 and up are invited to discover the novelties of nightjars through a short presentation and bird walk. An adult companion is required to remain for the entirety of the program. CV/Valley View Area: 1134 Cuyahoga St., Akron



Sunday, August 30, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

KAYAK & CANOE OPEN HOUSE

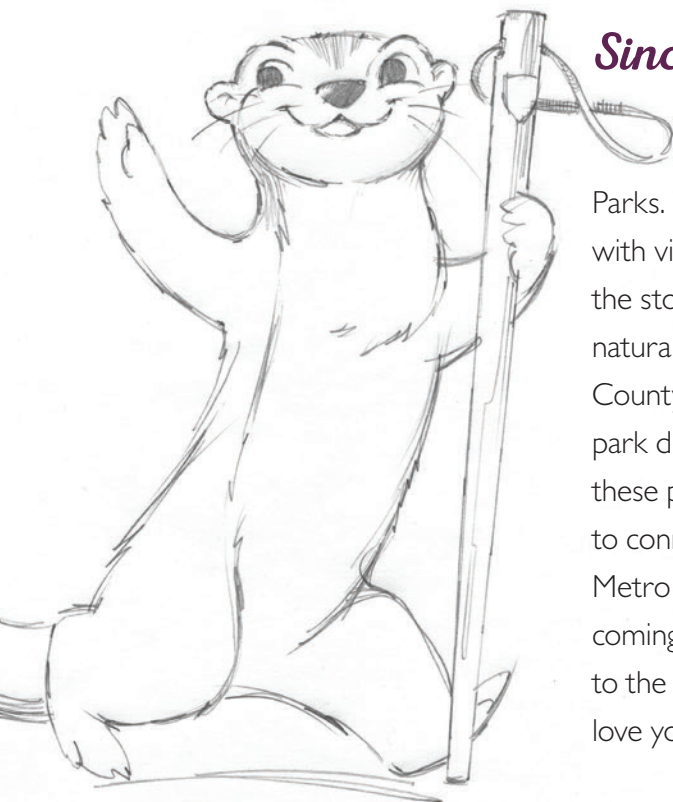
Stop by to learn basic paddling techniques and take a short self-guided paddle on the lake under the guidance of certified instructors. Minimum age to kayak is 13; ages 13 to 17 must be with an adult participant. Canoes available for families with younger children. Participants must wear closed-toe shoes and be able to swim. Wear clothes that can get wet and bring a water bottle. All equipment, including life jackets, will be provided. Space is limited, kayaks and canoes are available on a first come, first served basis. Location subject to change based on water conditions. MF/Lake Area: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls



Enjoy SUMMIT METRO PARKS

THE PACK IS BACK ... *with New Friends* (and names chosen by YOU!)

Back in 2008, Summit Metro Parks introduced a group of animal characters — later dubbed “*The Metro Pack*” — to the community. We asked visitors like you to help name them, and you delivered! That’s how we ended up with *Whiff* the skunk, *Sir Pent* the garter snake, *Sunflower* the chickadee, *Cheeks* the chipmunk and *Ruckus* the raccoon. ♡



Since then, The Metro Pack has become a familiar (and friendly) part of your Metro Parks. They’ve helped us connect with visitors of all ages and share the stories of the wildlife and natural spaces that make Summit County special. And now, as the park district continues caring for these places and finding new ways to connect people with nature, The Metro Pack is growing! We’re welcoming three new animal characters to the crew and, once again, we’d love your help naming them.

How to enter:

Whether your idea is clever, funny or inspired by the outdoors, we can’t wait to hear it. Read about our new critters below to spark your creativity. Who knows? Your name might be the next one that sticks.

Submit your ideas at bit.ly/SMPcritters (case sensitive) or mail in the form by August 15.

The naming contest is open to Summit County residents only. Winners will be chosen by Summit Metro Parks staff. In the event of a tie, the winning name will be selected by random draw. Summit Metro Parks staff are not eligible to participate. Winners will be announced in December.

River Otter

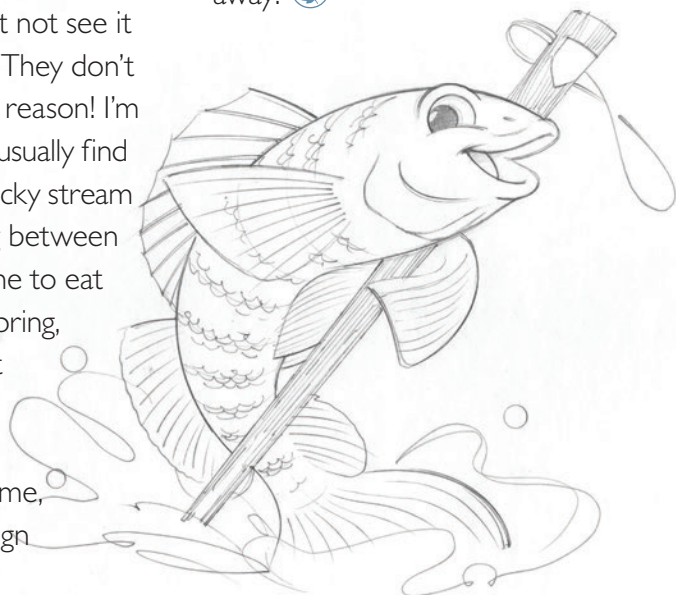
Splash! I’m a playful swimmer who loves rivers, lakes and streams, using my strong tail and webbed feet to glide through the water. I was born not knowing how to swim, but my



mom taught me (thanks, mom!). I have whiskers that give me the power to sense the movement of my prey. Fish are my favorite snack, but I'll also munch on frogs and crayfish. In winter, I don't hibernate — I slide, swim and explore all season long, even through icy water. When I'm with my friends on land, we're called a romp. When we're together in the water, we're called a raft!

Rainbow Darter

Blink and you might miss me! I'm not "The Rainbow Fish" you grew up with. I'm a tiny fish with big color, though you might not see it from above the water. They don't call me a darter for no reason! I'm a little shy, but you can usually find me zipping along the rocky stream or river bottom, hiding between stones — unless it's time to eat or look for love! Each spring, I show off my brightest colors to impress my neighbors. Clean, fast-moving water is my home, so if I'm around, it's a sign the stream is healthy.



Indiana Bat

Did something small just swoop past your head? It might have been me, out on my nighttime bug hunt! I use special sounds (you can't hear them!) to find tasty insects in the dark. On summer days, I tuck myself under tree bark like a secret superhero hiding out. I can do that because I'm small, but my wingspan can be more than twice my size! When winter comes, I curl up in a cave with lots of friends like me and sleep for months. Don't worry; I'll be back in spring, hungry and ready to help keep pesky bugs away! 🦇

NAME THE CRITTERS Contest

After reading about the new critters, fill out the form completely and mail it to the address below, or scan the QR code to provide your submission electronically.

the river otter

the rainbow darter

the Indiana bat

Last Name

First Name

Middle Initial

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Age

Phone Number

Email

NOTE: If submitting this form on behalf of a minor, please provide the parent's or guardian's phone number and email on the appropriate lines above.







Mail to: **ATTN: Marketing**
Summit Metro Parks
975 Treaty Line Rd.
Akron, OH 44313

JUL·AUG '26 | Vol. 67 No. 4


GREEN ISLANDS

Summit Metro Parks Bimonthly Magazine

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TOUCH-A-TRUCK

at Munroe Falls Metro Park / Lake Area



Presented by:
Wayside
Furniture

Saturday

AUGUST 1, 2026 | 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

Sensory & autism-friendly hour – 10 to 11 a.m.

Touch-a-Truck continues – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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