

GREEN ISLANDS

Vol. 67 No. 3 / MAY-JUN '26

Summit Metro Parks Bi-Monthly Magazine

ON THE INSIDE

page 4 DISCOVER

25 Years of Clean Ohio Funding

page 9 EXPLORE

Programs and Events

page 20 ENJOY

SMP Foundation Donor Listing

Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

IN THIS ISSUE

Scenic Summit Metro Parks Online Photo Contest

“Fin-tastic” Native Fish

25 Years of Clean Ohio Funding

Programs & Events

SMP Foundation Donor Listing

Spree for All Hiking Form

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Herb Newman Chair

Joel D. Bailey

S. Theresa Carter

Jill M. Stritch

Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr.

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.

Lisa M. King Executive Director

EDITORS

Claire Merrick Marketing & Public Relations Manager

Victoria Putnam Community Engagement Manager

Lindsay Smith Chief of Marketing & Communications

DESIGN & ART DIRECTION

John DiNicola Graphic Designer

Karl Simonson Graphic Designer

Summit Metro Parks

975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44313-5837

Administrative Offices: 330-867-5511

F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm: 330-865-8065

Liberty Park Nature Center: 330-487-0493

Summit Lake Nature Center: 330-864-8431

Seasonal Information: 330-865-8060

Volunteer Information: 330-865-8047

summitmetroparks.org

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY:

Kimberly Ardelian • Rob Blair • Jackie Boesinger-Meredyk • Jerry Cannon • Christy Counterman • Doug Dawes • Lauren Delgado • Mike Droppelman • Katelyn Freil • Erin Krumpe • Ramsey Langford • Tim McGinnis • Ashley Mikulec • Terri Pouliot • JJ Prekop Jr. • Robert Roach • Karl Simonson • Heath Smith • Sheila Stransky • Mallerie Strasser • Rob Vaughn • Rachel Whinnery

This magazine is mailed free of charge to Summit County residents. To join the mailing list, send your name and mailing address to marketing@summitmetroparks.org or call 330-867-5511.

Green Islands can be downloaded online:

summitmetroparks.org

copyright 2026 Summit Metro Parks

Your Metro Parks are funded by a small Summit County real-estate tax. This magazine is an example of your public dollars at work.

page 2

SCENIC SUMMIT METRO PARKS ONLINE PHOTO CONTEST

Have you captured a photo of nature in your Metro Parks worth sharing? Enter your photo in the Summit Metro Parks Foundation's photo contest! Scenic, nature-only photos taken in any Summit Metro Parks park are eligible. Entering is free and winners are decided by vote. With a \$1 online donation, anyone may vote, and the winning photo will become the featured artwork on a limited-edition deck of playing cards! All proceeds benefit Summit Metro Parks Foundation. Voting is open June 1 through July 31.

Learn more at

<https://foundation.summitmetroparks.org/events/>.

page 3

DISCOVER YOUR BACK YARD Section

"FIN-TASTIC" NATIVE FISH

New this year, the Fishing Derbies will take place in June, when native species are active and ready to bite. Join us to reel in a great catch and make lasting memories!

By Claire Merrick, Marketing & Public Relations Manager

There's no denying that fishing in your Metro Parks waters is "reel" fun for all ages! With free programs like our Kids' and Special Needs Fishing Derbies this June plus numerous lakes and ponds perfect for casting on your own, there's something for every angler to enjoy.

Since 2025, the park district has prioritized stocking native fish in its inland lakes and ponds. Native fish are important to aquatic ecosystems because healthy fish populations tend to mean a healthier aquatic environment, and conserving native fish is part of a

larger movement to conserve biodiversity. Focusing solely on clean water and improved habitat without addressing invasive species often favors proliferation of nonnative fish, like trout, that can harm the native species we're trying to protect.

Summit Metro Parks is grateful to partners like the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for support in stocking native fish and the Summit Metro Parks Foundation for funding the efforts.

[Catch native species like bluegill sunfish, largemouth bass and channel catfish at a free naturalist-led fishing program.]

pages 4 through 8

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CLEAN OHIO FUNDING

By Mike Johnson, Chief of Conservation & Mark Szeremet, Chief of Planning & Development

Summit Metro Parks strives to match every dollar of levy funding with outside grants and donations to maximize our ability to conserve land and provide outstanding outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. We regularly pursue a variety of funding sources, but one of our most impactful and valued partners has been the Clean Ohio Fund, which is celebrating 25 years of conservation investment across the state.

ORIGIN OF THE CLEAN OHIO FUND

In November 2000, Ohio voters approved a statewide bond initiative, commonly known as the Clean Ohio Fund, to invest in environmental restoration, conservation, farmland preservation and trail development. The fund was established in response to a long history of ecological decline, loss of wetlands and impacts to wildlife and overall biodiversity. The fund is managed by Ohio Public Works, which oversees the acquisition and restoration of natural areas, and the Ohio

Department of Natural Resources, which provides funding for trail construction and park development projects.

Projects funded through Clean Ohio provide a wide range of benefits to Ohioans, including job creation, tourism, increased property values, agricultural productivity, enhanced tax revenue and improved quality of life. These investments strengthen local economies while protecting the natural assets that make Ohio communities desirable places to live, work and visit.

Over the past 25 years, Summit County — and Summit Metro Parks in particular — has benefited tremendously from Clean Ohio funding. Nearly \$60 million has come to Summit County to support the acquisition, protection and restoration of conservation lands and to wisely develop trails for public enjoyment.

LOCAL IMPACT

Several Metro Parks would not exist without this support, including Springfield Bog Metro Park and the future Twin Creeks Metro Park (formerly Boughton farm).

Additionally, many existing parks and natural areas have been expanded with Clean Ohio assistance, increasing total protected acreage and enhancing public access to nature.

Many of these projects were completed in partnership with respected conservation organizations, including Trust for Public Land, West Creek Conservancy and The Western Reserve Land Conservancy. These partnerships further stretch local tax dollars and strengthen our collective ability to protect the natural and cultural heritage of our region.

Acquiring and protecting land alone is often not enough to fully realize ecological benefits — particularly in a region like Summit County, which has a long history of land modification from industrial development and agriculture. Clean Ohio has also played a vital role in restoring degraded natural environments. Park district

properties including Sand Run Metro Park, the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park and Pond Brook Conservation Area have been funded in large part through this program, resulting in improved water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat and healthier ecosystems.

In addition to protecting and restoring resources, the Clean Ohio Fund provides funding for land acquisition and construction that helps complete regional trail systems and improve connections for recreation and commuting. Through this program, Summit Metro Parks has received funding to help complete sections of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in New Franklin and Clinton, as well as portions of the Freedom Trail.

LOOKING AHEAD

Summit Metro Parks is deeply grateful to the State of Ohio and voters who continue to support conservation and recreation through programs like these. As we celebrate 25 years of Clean Ohio, we look forward to continuing this successful partnership to conserve Summit County's natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.

pages 20 & 23

SUMMIT METRO PARKS FOUNDATION

The Summit Metro Parks Foundation connects, conserves and inspires as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established in 1991 where donors can create a lasting legacy by supporting the park district. We are grateful to the many people, organizations, businesses and agencies who made gifts, grants and sponsorships January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025. These donations and other forms of support create thriving parks that are a cornerstone of Summit County's quality of life.

DONOR LISTING

TRIBUTE

in memory of Holly Acuff

Kenneth J. Acuff

in honor of Akron Garden Club's 100th Anniversary

Laura & Ernest R. Preston III Charitable Fund

in memory of Annie

Michele Provencher

in memory of Edna Autz

Mark & Leni Fearigo

in memory of Bill Barnes

Jen M. Harvey

in memory of Bill & Jo Ann Barnes

Mark & Roberta Rininger

in honor of Dante Biscotti

Jay Sheldon

in honor of Joan Booth

Kathryn Booth

in memory of Lisa Anne Botnick

Ellen W. Botnick

in honor of Dan L. Buie

Danielle Buie

in memory of Sandra M. Bulgrin

Holly Lyn Kemp

in memory of Jeanna Cesaratto

David Cesaratto

in memory of Kris Coder

Megan Coder

in honor of Robert Finley Crowley

Wendy L. Grant

in honor of Brenda Davison

Pam Leddon

in memory of Lisa Marie Dies

Natalie & Mitchell Gainer

Apex Electric Supply Co. Inc.

Massillon Women's Club History Section

Family and Friends of Linda M. Dies

in memory of Michael DiNicola

Brian & Kathleen Wellock

Tom F. Yeager

in memory of James Dolensky

John Hoffmann

in honor of Eugene Eyler

Scott & Marian Harmount

in memory of Nick George

Vicki Straus

in memory of Mitch Greenawalt

Susan Mason

in honor of Owen Griswold

Marsha Griswold

in memory of Cherli Gsellman

Patrick Gsellman

in memory of Sammie C. Harris

Tatia Harris

in memory of Shirley L. Hinkle

Jeff Hersh

Chris & Linda Loewer

Mary Susan Motz

Frank J. Zappala III

in memory of Audrey Hinks

William L. Hinks

in honor of Jan & Joe Hoffmann

Michael Hoffmann

in memory of Jim Hower

Milton James Foundation, Inc.

in memory of John Irvine
Thomas Dinardo

in memory of JB3
Joe Blanda

in memory of Scott Michael Jessie
Sara Ruble

in memory of William & Jennie Johns
Richard W. Johns

in memory of John "Jack" Kane
Megan Kane

in memory of Charles Keele
Jana Dynkiewicz
Chad Melvin
Brittany R. Michael

in honor of Allison King
Lisa M. King

in memory of Kenneth Lehman
Stow Friends

in memory of Jacqueline Lindquist
Kira M. Sandmann

in memory of Bill & Trudy Loeb
Betty E. Levinson

in memory of Richard "Dick" Loesch
Akron Metro Parks Hiking Club

in honor of Ann & Rich Malecky
John Hoffmann

in memory of George McWilliams
Lisa R. Barnes-Prince
Kevin Brooks
Amanda B. Champa
Elaine Conard
Cucuzza Family
Lauren Gates-Metheny

Mark & Pam Goldfarb
Tricia Grdina
Teresa Kormanik
Michael John Lehr
Mary Libby
Bridget Mattler
Rob & Susie McCarty
Laura A. Miller
Robin Petrucelli
Bernard & Rita Rochford
Linda Tucci Teodosio
Andrew Testa
David M. Tschantz
Gregory S. Wurgler
Elizabeth Yoho

in memory of Leslyie Jean Smiley-Johnson
Mary Amanda Johnson

in honor of Brenda Stull-Moledor
Sara Moledor

in memory of Lorraine Faye Moore
Patricia Moore

in memory of Eleanor Grace Moritz
E. Stewart Moritz & Maura K. O'Shea

in memory of Mike Smith and C. Donald Morris
Cherie Morris

in memory of Terry Nagy
Charlotte & Richard Cruse

in memory of Jeffrey Thomas Nicholas
Julie Nicholas Amos

in memory of Janice Peyak
Mark & Jo Hansel, John & Sandy Hansel and
Gary & Marcie Hansel

in honor of Robert "Bob" Pohelia Jr.
Rosie Brandon
Allen Pankow & Josco Melius

in memory of Robert "Bob" Pohelia Jr.

Kim Sue Kusmits

Kelli Miller

Tracey Pawlowski

Suzanne & Clifford Ray

Heidi Smith

The Ohio State University's Office of Technology
and Digital Innovation

in honor of Velma Pomrenke

Janet H. Anderson

in memory of Jacqueline Ross

Rebecca M. Crosby IEQ Capital LLC

in memory of Donald Ruegg

Akron Metro Parks Hiking Club

in memory of Peter J. Schloesser

Karen Schloesser Beck

in memory of Sarah Seiler

Annette Cryder

in memory of David Sellers

Emily M. O'Brien

in honor of Bethany Smeznik

Richard G. & Pamela Smeznik

in memory of Betty Ann Stewart

Joan P. Bowles

Jeff Klemm

Joyce A. Podojil

Carole Ann Sanford

Srividya Venkitachalam

in memory of Barry K. Sugden and James S. Sugden

Nancy A. Sugden and Robert Newbery

in memory of Teddy Sworniowski

Josephine Sworniowski

in honor of Norah Thomas

Amanda Wagner

Jennifer Warmus

in memory of Leslie Thompson

Al Amodie

in memory of Lawrence "Larry" Varner

Ralph & Rebecca Brislin

Carol & Donald Dillon

Last Wednesday Book Club

Fallon Miller

Dave & Mary Tschantz

Barbara Woerner

in memory of Pat Weigand

Carol Weigand

in honor of Jason Whittle

Alexa Sandmann

in honor of Wilkerson Family

Dages Family

in honor of Jim Naughton and Rebecca Wilson

Ben Naughton

in memory of Mary Elizabeth Wojno

Wendy Brock

in memory of Dolores Zuder

Myron Zuder

NON-TRIBUTE

Beau Abdenour

Ham & Beth Amer Fund

Janet H. Anderson

The Nancy Andrews Family Foundation

Anheuser-Busch

Anonymous (16)

Lois D. Arnold

Kevin M. Fongheiser

Lindsay Baldy

Erin Ford

Robert B. Barsan

Theresa Fraley

Jeremy Bartel

Bailey Gensley

Phil & Mindy Bartholomae

Pamela B. Gerus

Phil & Mindy Bartholomae Fund

Shawna Gfroerer

Bokom Foundation, Susan & George Klein

Joan & Toby Gorant

Linda Brashear

Geoffrey Goss

Nathanael Bucher

Gr8full, J.M.J

Gail E. Cheslock

Bruce D. & Erica Greer

Mark Cochran

The Bruce & Erica Greer Family Foundation

Steve Comunale & Jane Prem

Karen Greer

Jessica Cook

Larry & Michelle Grewe

Terence Crawford

Shannon Grigsby

Cheryl LeAnn Davis

Richard T. Halishak

Stephanie Dolan

Jeannie Hamilton

Robert & Lisa Drew

Daphne Haren

Thomas & Katrina Dunn

Jamie Haren

Jenny Earley

Jon Hawes

Earthly Suds Exchange

Verneda Hawkins

Chris Engelmann

Michael T. Hayes

Equifax

Frank Heckel and Jerilynn Ferguson Fund

Fast Girls Running Company

Sherry & Martin Hellman

Cathy Feltrup

Joe D. Henninger

Terry & Mary Kay Finn

HiHO Brewing Co.

Greg & Denise Hill

M.G. O'Neil Foundation

John Hoffmann

Toby Mackenzie

The Hubbell Foundation

Anne Martinez

Teresa L. Hughes

Connor McHugh

Chlondra Hunter

Jeffrey L. Meriwether

Brandon Huth

Microsoft

Thomas & Elizabeth Indriolo

David M. Milkovich

Robert J. Jenkins Jr.

Carol Miller

Lewis & Karen Johnson

Alicia Michelle Monteith

Mike Johnson

Brentt, Rosalyn & Carson Moore

Ron Johnson

Jo-Ann Moritz

Jennifer Joseph

Nancy A. Morrissey

Barb Kaplan

Ellen Moss

Dan Kephart

Martin D. Murphy

Phyllis Knepper

Kathy Neag

Taku Kopp

Robert Neiderman

Joyce A. Krysinski

Kristy Nelson

Joe M. Kunkel

Timothy Nichols

Michele Kurilec

Monica Maria Niemiec

Sandra Landskroner

OCSEA Summit Conglomerate Chapter 7700

Valerie LaRiche

Amelia Oriti

Steven Lenos

William C. & Caroline M. Parry

Betty E. Levinson

Cynthia A. Peterson

John & Joyce Lilya

Austen W. Rau & Jennifer L. Bournique

Gail Linsley

John & Sandie Rhoades

Rick & Alita Rogers

Dave & Mary Tschantz

Bruce & Ann Rowland

Verna Vander Kooi

Ryan Foster Schafer

Craig & Stephanie Walton

Sharon Schnall & R. Drew Sellers

The Richard & Beverly Waltz Family Trust

Victoria Schroeder

The Sean & Nancy Ward Charitable Foundation

John Sederwall

Joseph Warner

Mark & Nancy Shapiro

Waternish Fund

Jim & Barb Shriner

Thomas & Cheryl Wells Family Fund

Barbara Skomorowski

Wertz Geotechnical Engineering, Inc.

Edward & Cheryl Sliva

Western Reserve Racing, LLC

Karen Elizabeth Smith

Dale & Cynthia Woodling

Timothy & Karen Snyder

Daniel Young

Frederick & Elizabeth Specht

Steve Johnson & Laurie Zuckerman

Parker Spencer

Samuel Teague

2025 Summit Metro Parks and Summit Metro Parks
Foundation

Sportsmen of Tomorrow, Inc.

SPONSORS

Andrea & Sidney Steinberger

Albrecht Family Foundation and Acme Fresh Market

Stine Family

Akron Canton Builds

John & Laura Struhsaker

Akron Children's Hospital

Bonnie & Joe Sudomir

Buckingham

Summa's Maternal Home Care

Cavanaugh Building Corporation

Samuel Teague

Cleveland Clinic Akron General and Cleveland Clinic
Children's

Linda Tucci Teodosio

Country Maid Ice Cream & Orchard

T-Mobile

Davey Tree Expert Co.

Robert Trogdon

EnviroScience, Inc.

Beau Abdenour

Good Nature Organic Lawn Care

Julie Nicholas Amos

House of Plants, Inc.

Anonymous (4)

Leppo Rents

Elizabeth Baker

The Nightlight

Peter Bobkowski & Patrick Miller

Roetzel & Andress

David Bilas & Amy Dana

Rubber City Reuse

Alice M. Bittner

Vertical Runner

Bruce H. Buchholzer

Wayside Furniture

Edna L. Carlson

YellowLite

Helen S. Coup

Craig James Culler

2025 Summit Metro Parks Foundation

Laureen Drapp

GRANTS

Jennifer E. Gaylor

Akron Community Foundation, William C. and Betty J.
Zekan Fund and John A. McAlonan Fund

Christian Graham

Diana Gross

The Allstate Foundation

Jeannie Hamilton

The Andrea Rose Teodosio Memorial Foundation

James Hower

Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund

Samuel & Valerie S. Hudspath

Synthomer Foundation

Mike Johnson

David Jones

GREEN ISLANDS LEGACY SOCIETY

Kathryn Kilpatrick

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.

Mary A. Kincaid

Planned gifts (such as bequests) are a wonderful way to make a lasting difference for your parks.

Pamela Korenewych

Susan Korosa

Harold F. Levinson

Joan Leslie Long

Emil A. Merkle

Nancy A. Morrissey

Taylor Papiernik & Rachel Schlagel

Austen W. Rau & Jennifer L. Bournique

George E. Seccombe

Charles E. & Ruth A. Shea

James & Letha Skinner

Sharon Stump

Marion L. Taylor

Matilda Varga

Marilyn Vernon

Sachiko & Theodore Wachs

Mildred C. Walzer

Hoyt & Merdith Wells

Carol Zeh

###