

MAR•APR '25 | Vol. 66 No. 2

GREEN ISLANDS

Summit Metro Parks Bimonthly Magazine



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Our parks are like green islands in an urban landscape.

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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
- » S. Theresa Carter
- » Herb Newman
- » 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.



ON THE COVER

The beauty of nature is captured on a foggy morning at the Valley View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park.



Our Power, Our Planet

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22

Did you know humans already possess the solutions needed to create clean, inexpensive and unlimited energy for the planet through renewable solar, wind and other technologies? This Earth Day, consider harnessing renewable energy to build a healthy, sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for us all. Join Summit Metro Parks for Earth Day programs (page 12), or learn more about a powerful, renewable future at summitmetroparks.org.

Discover YOUR BACK YARD



Keepers of the Forest

*Dave Daly,
Lead Naturalist*



Forests are dynamic, ever-changing ecosystems. From tiny insects to towering sycamores, a healthy woodland is a welcome, inviting space for a wide variety of life. Our healthiest forest habitats are diverse in composition, including their tallest inhabitants: trees.

We have a wonderful variety of trees in Northeast Ohio, many of which are native. Native trees contribute greatly to the health and vitality of forest environments. Nut producers, like oaks and hickories, provide food for deer, squirrels and turkeys. Flower fluff from the mature seedheads of cottonwoods and willows is a desirable nesting material for hummingbirds and warblers.

On the other hand, non-native trees have little to no established relationships in our forest

settings and may even be detrimental to them. Some non-native species have gained notoriety for being invasive, crowding out native species and even using allelopathic chemicals in the soil to stunt and kill off competition. Remember to consider a tree's native range when choosing a species for planting.

When trees reach the end of their lives, their relationship with fellow forest dwellers doesn't end. Cavities and hollow spaces in old, dying trees make excellent homes for a host of birds and mammals. Detritivores like insects, fungi and bacteria promote decomposition and return fallen trees and branches to the soil, making nutrients and other resources available again. 🍁

OUR *Greener* FUTURE



*Michael Johnson, Chief of Conservation and Lindsay Smith,
Chief of Marketing & Communications*

More than 100 years ago, the citizens of Summit County created Summit Metro Parks and established a county-wide organization dedicated to conservation. We began as green islands in an urban and agricultural sea. Over time, we grew into an archipelago and became a chain of ecological diversity and protected cultural resources. With hard work and dedication, many of the islands are connected by an isthmus through which fish, wildlife and people can move, live and thrive.

Summit Metro Parks is still dedicated to our mission of conservation and a green future. But what does conservation mean and what does a green future look like? To address these questions, we first have to ask: *Why we should care? What do these green islands do for you?*

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continued from page 5

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Nature works for us

One of the most important reasons for conservation is that human society depends on the natural world. We rely on clean air and clean water, and the food we eat is ultimately a product of nature. Park biologists have determined that the forested areas of our district store over 690,000 metric tons of carbon and annually sequester an additional 22,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide. Most of the medicines we rely on were not invented in laboratories, they were copied from chemical compounds found in nature. That little snail on the verge of extinction might just produce a chemical compound that is a cure for cancer. The term *ecosystem services* has been applied to this line of thought. We protect the services nature provides by conserving land and water.

ACCESS TO NATURE:

Nature is for everyone

Nature is our ancestral home. We are all hardwired to seek out nature. Medical science has proven time spent in nature improves our mental and physical health. This benefit can be enhanced further when people begin to understand the natural world that is around them. In the park business, we call this interpretation: being able to understand the complexities of ecosystems and our role in protecting the natural world. Access to nature is important regardless of where you live but many areas of Summit County have historically not had equitable access to nature. This year, count on Summit Metro Parks to continue providing programs, parks and trails that allow ALL people to experience nature and the individual benefits it provides.





BIODIVERSITY:

Nature benefits the human condition

But there is a larger reason to protect nature — one that is deeply connected to the human condition. Humans collect and conserve the things we value. Protecting nature is really no different than protecting art in museums or literature in libraries. Every species on planet earth is the culmination of millennia of biological perfection. Today, we use the term *biodiversity* to refer to all life on earth and the complex interactions and ecosystems that support them. Every species of life has value and extinction of even a single species is not acceptable.

Summit Metro Parks is in a unique position to address these issues. When we talk about conservation, it's in a broader sense and encompasses managing natural areas to protect ecosystem services, provide access to nature

and benefit human well-being. From the sandstone cliffs at Liberty Park to the huckleberry bogs at Springfield Bog Metro Park, our parks and conservation areas protect thousands of species. The wetlands in our parks help clean our drinking water. Our forests filter pollutants from the air and sequester carbon. Our parks are a refuge not just for wildlife, but for people seeking to connect with the natural world.

Through our focus on these principals of conservation, this year we will share more about what we are doing to protect our local resources and ensure a sustainable future. We will be sharing our conservation and restoration work as well as actions you can take to reduce impacts to the natural world.

We have done a lot over the past 100 years.

> **But it's not enough.**

We're just getting started. 



Explore

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

MARCH

Saturday, March 1, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

FLAPJACKS AND SAP FACTS: A MAPLE SUGARING BREAKFAST

Join us as we reap the fruits of our labor by enjoying a traditional pancake breakfast with our own Liberty Park maple syrup. As we wrap up breakfast, there will be a presentation and discussion about the notable history of maple syrup production in and around Summit County. *Registration required* 📞 (2/19). LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Beginning Sunday, March 2

SELF-GUIDED STORYBOOK TRAIL: NORTH COUNTRY SPRING



Bring the family to enjoy some exercise and fun while following a self-guided story trail based on the book "North Country Spring." This experience will be available along the

1.4-mile Quarry Trail through March 30. DLQ: 5779 Riverview Rd., Peninsula

Wednesday, March 5, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. *Registration required* 📞 (2/26). FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



Wednesday, March 5, 1 – 2 p.m.

VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing. No experience is necessary; all you need are pencils, paper and a sense of humor. *Registration required* 📞 (2/26). 📺 A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registering.

Thursday, March 6, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. *Registration required* 📞 (2/26). SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Thursday, March 6, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOOD GARDEN TALKS: SEED STARTING

Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron and OSU Extension to learn best practices for starting seeds for the vegetable garden. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Friday, March 7, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

BREAKFAST WITH WATERFOWL

Drop in at the campground boat launch to start your morning right with a campfire, pie iron pancakes and birdwatching. We'll have binoculars, a spotting scope and field guides set out to enjoy. *Registration required* 📞 (2/28). NR/Lot C4: 5550 Christman Rd., Green

Friday, March 7, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

WINTER NATURE TALES

Spring is almost here! Young children and their adult companions can celebrate the change of seasons in an interactive, spring-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, March 7, 8 – 10 p.m.

OWL PROWL

Whooo goes there? Hike the 2-mile Chippewa Trail at night to get a glimpse into the nocturnal world of owls. SC/Big Oak Area: 5199 Medina Line Rd., Norton

Key



CALL: 330-865-8065 Advance registration required, beginning at 10 a.m. on the date in parentheses.



ZOOM: ZOOM.US/JOIN Key in the Meeting ID number.



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

(date) Registration start date

\$ Fee

BHT Bike & Hike Trail

CV Cascade Valley

DLQ Deep Lock Quarry

FASN FA. Seiberling Nature Realm

F Firestone

FR Furnace Run

FT Freedom Trail

GYH Goodyear Heights

G Gorge

HH Hampton Hills

LP Liberty Park

MF Munroe Falls

NR Nimisila Reservoir

ONW O'Neil Woods

SC Silver Creek

SFB Springfield Bog

SLNC Summit Lake Nature Center

SR Sand Run

TT Towpath Trail

WH Wood Hollow



Saturday, March 8 & Sunday, March 9, 12 – 4 p.m.

MAPLE MANIA

Everyone loves real maple syrup! Join us as we learn the ins and outs of maple sugaring. See how the trees are tapped, how sap is collected and how it's boiled down to sweet amber syrup. The best part? You can satisfy your sweet tooth by sampling syrup from our own Liberty Park maple trees! *This event is sponsored by Friends of Metro Parks.* LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Sunday, March 9, 12 – 1:30 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS

Join our interpretive artist for this entertaining lesson in nature drawing for kids ages 6 to 12. All materials will be provided. *Registration required* 📞 (2/27). FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, March 9, 2 – 3 p.m.

VIRTUAL NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS

Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing for kids ages 6 to 12. All you need is a pencil and paper. *Registration required* 📞 (2/27). **📺 A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registration.**

Tuesday, March 11, 1 – 3 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. *Registration required* 📞 (2/26). LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Beginning Wednesday, March 12

SELF-GUIDED: MISSING LINK TRAIL

Enjoy a hike along the 1.1-mile Missing Link Trail *through March 19* and learn more about one of the park district's newest trails along the way. CV/Valley View Area: 1134 Cuyahoga St., Akron

Thursday, March 13, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

NATURE COLLAGE

Let's make a beautiful nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist for this easy, fun lesson. All materials will be provided. *Registration required* 📞 (3/6). FASN/Seneca Deck: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Thursday, March 13, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

VIRTUAL: NATURE COLLAGE

Let's make a beautiful nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist for this easy, fun lesson. *Registration required* 📞 (3/6). **📺 A list of materials and a Zoom invite will be emailed after registering.**

Thursday, March 13, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

HOMEGROWN HABITATS: SHADE PLANTS

Calling all people with yards or green spaces, big and small: Join us for this monthly series and learn how to rewild your home landscape. This month we'll spotlight shade-dwelling plants to add to your outdoor spaces with less than 3 hours of direct sunlight. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Friday, March 14, 7 – 8 p.m.

DUCK POND PAPERCRAFT

Learn what makes Summit Lake an amazing home for waterfowl in the winter while making your own origami duck and paper pond diorama. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave, Akron

Friday, March 14, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

WOODCOCK WALK

Join a naturalist as we partner with The University of Akron Field Station at Bath Nature Preserve for a chance to see the legendary timberdoodle! These birds put on a show you won't want to miss. *Please drive all the way down the driveway to the field station.* The University of Akron Field Station: 4240 Ira Rd., Akron



Saturday, March 15, 12 – 1:30 p.m.

BIRD NERDS: SPARROW ID

Newbies and experts alike are welcome to join our ongoing series to unpack a unique bird identification challenge each month. After an indoor presentation, we'll head out to the field to put our skills to the test. This month we're sifting through sneaky sparrows! FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Sunday, March 16, 7:30 – 9 a.m.

EARLY MORNING HIKE

Rise and shine! Get an early start to the day by hiking the 1-mile Prather Trail with a naturalist. Along the way, we'll explore who else might be up early. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars, if you have them. Extra pairs will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. CV/Valley View Area: 1134 Cuyahoga St., Akron



Sunday, March 16, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

SALAMANDER SLIME

Slime is all around us, even if we don't notice it! Join a naturalist for a quick talk about slime and our slimy friend, the salamander! Afterwards, we will make our very own slime. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron



KIDS IN THE GARDEN

Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron for weekly hands-on gardening activities for children of all ages. Seed, sow, water, harvest and enjoy! Each week 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.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Thursday, March 6
Thursday, March 13
Thursday, March 20
Thursday, March 27



KINDEREALM: HERONS

Here come the herons! We invite children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions to join us as we learn about great blue herons through a short lesson, story and craft. *Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers. Registration required* 📞 (2/20).

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 5
SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Wednesday, March 12
FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, March 19
LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd.,
Twinsburg

Wednesday, March 19, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

COFFEE CRAWL: WAKE UP WITH THE TURTLES

Wake up from winter with good coffee and conversation as we hike the 0.9-mile Walking Course. We will look for turtles waking up from brumation and discuss the unique strategies they employ to get going without a cup o' joe. *F/Warner Road Area: 200 E. Warner Rd., Akron*

**Thursday, March 20,
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. &
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

HOMESCHOOLERS: SPRING EQUINOX

Homeschoolers ages 7 to 12: Join a naturalist to learn about the natural phenomena that make our springs so full of life. *Registration required* 📞 (3/12). *F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron*

Thursday, March 20, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOOD GARDEN TALKS: HISTORY OF FOOD CROPS

Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron and OSU Extension to learn about the interesting history of common fruits and vegetables grown in gardens. Discover how different crops made their way around the world, changing tastes and cuisines along the way. *GYH/Goodyear Heights Lodge: 2077 Newton St., Akron*

Friday, March 21, 12 – 1:30 p.m.

NATURE SAUNTER

Appreciate the outdoors at a leisurely pace with a stroll along portions of Downy Loop Trail. Enjoy a warm beverage and nature conversation afterward. *WH: 2121 Barlow Rd., Hudson*

**Friday, March 21,
4:30 – 6 p.m. & 6:30 – 8 p.m.**

INTRO TO ARCHERY

Participants 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** 📞 (3/12). *F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron*

Saturday, March 22, 6:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

MIGRATION MADNESS FIELD TRIP

Join Summit Metro Parks naturalists on a bus trip to Wayne County to experience migrating waterfowl and shorebirds in the wetlands of Killbuck Marsh and Funk Bottoms. Pack binoculars, spotting scopes, snacks and a lunch. Dress for all-day comfort out in the elements. Cost: **\$55/person. Registration required** 📞 (3/7). *FASN: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron*

Beginning Sunday, March 23

SELF-GUIDED: AMPHIBIAN LIFE



Enjoy a hike on the 1.1-mile Redwing Trail while learning about our local amphibians. Discover 10 stations to learn about their lifecycle, seasonal happenings and different species.

This experience is *available through March 30*. *F/Tuscarawas Meadows Area: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron*

**Sunday, March 23,
1 – 2 p.m. & 3 – 4 p.m.**

BACK YARDS GONE WILD: DIY BLUEBIRD BOXES

Join a naturalist for this monthly series focused on creating nature-friendly back yards. This month we will learn about cavity-nesting birds such as chickadees, bluebirds and wrens. After a short presentation, participants can make a bluebird box to take home, free of charge, courtesy of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Limit one kit per household. *Registration required* 📞 (3/13). *LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg*



Monday, March 24, 2 – 4 p.m.

HISTORY HIKE: LIBERTY PARK

Hike the 2.1-mile Black Bear Trail with a naturalist to learn about the cultural history of Liberty Park and the surrounding city of Twinsburg, from Indigenous cultures and early pioneers to farming and preservation of the park today. *LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg*

Tuesday, March 25, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

BLUEBIRDS IN YOUR BACK YARD

Join the Greater Akron Audubon Society to dive into the world of bluebirds. Dale Rabung, a charter member of the Ohio Bluebird Society, has been working on bluebird trails since 1979 and has fledged over 8,000 birds. Learn about monitoring efforts, nest boxes and building bluebird trails. *GYH/Goodyear Heights Lodge: 2077 Newton St., Akron*

Wednesday, March 26, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

**MEET ME IN THE GARDEN:
NATURAL AND ORGANIC
WEED SPRAYS**

Controlling weeds in the garden is challenging and the demand for weed-killing sprays that are kinder to the environment has led to the proliferation of home remedies and the development of organic herbicide products. This presentation will discuss the pros and cons of such sprays including their effectiveness. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Thursday, March 27, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**LET'S GET CRAFTY:
NATURE EMBROIDERY**

Start an embroidery project while learning about the wildlife in your creation, then finish the project at your own pace. Guidance and supplies are included in the registration fee. For people 16 and older. Cost: \$10/person. *Registration required* (3/20). **FR/Brushwood Area: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield**

Friday, March 28, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

SPRING NATURE TALES

Young children and their adult companions can celebrate spring in an interactive, spring-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, March 28, 6 – 7 p.m.

**WORDS OF THE SEASON:
SPRING**

Join a writer-turned-naturalist to discover the literary meanings of spring and their real-life connections. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, March 28, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT FROGS



Venture out on a night hike in search of frogs and discover the important roles amphibians play in our world. Please bring a headlamp or flashlight. **CV/Valley View Area: 1134 Cuyahoga St., Akron**

Saturday, March 29, 9 – 11 a.m.

RISE AND SHINE HIKE

Enjoy a mid-morning hike celebrating the arrival of spring along the 3.2-mile Adam Run Trail, taking us by Adam Run Stream and Top 'O the World. Wear good hiking shoes and bring your hiking staff if you have one! **HH/Main Entrance: 2925 Akron Peninsula Rd., Akron**

Saturday, March 29, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

**CHANGING FORESTS
OF PHEASANT RUN**

Ohio's forests come in many forms. Hike through the successional forests of the 1.2-mile Pheasant Run Trail to learn what a successional forest is, how it got here and what life it supports. **SC/Lake House & Pheasant Run Area: 5000 Hametown Rd., Norton**

Saturday, March 29, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

IN SEARCH OF SPRING

Hike with a naturalist along Pond Brook and through wet woods on the 1.6-mile Buttonbush Trail to see what signs of spring we can find. Binoculars, boots and bug repellent are recommended! **LP/Pond Brook Conservation Area: 3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg**

Sunday, March 30, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**LITTLE HIKERS: SPRING
INTO STORYTIME**

Storytime is better on the trail! Bring your little ones for a 1.4-mile hike on Alder Trail with stops along the way for a story and games to celebrate the season. Consider a jogging stroller or carrier for younger children unable to hike. **GYH/Pioneer Area: 550 Frazier Ave.**

*Sunday, March 30,
12:30 – 2 p.m. & 2:30 – 4 p.m.*

INTRO TO ARCHERY

Participants 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* (3/21). **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Sunday, March 30, 1 – 3 p.m.

**HIKING SPREE
SHIELD ASSISTANCE**

Is attaching the hiking spree shield more challenging than actually hiking the eight trails? Summit Metro Parks volunteers will gladly attach it for you at no charge. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**





APRIL

Wednesday, April 2, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. *Registration required* 📞 (3/26).

FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, April 2, 1 – 2 p.m.

VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing. No experience is necessary; all you need are pencils, paper and a sense of humor. *Registration required* 📞 (3/26). 📺 A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registering.

Thursday, April 3, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. *Registration required* 📞 (3/26).

SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Thursday, April 3, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

HOMESCHOOLERS: EARTH DAY

Homeschoolers ages 7 to 12: Let's take a close look at one of the most important holidays, Earth Day! We'll discover how people from across the world celebrate and come up with some of our own meaningful ways to honor our planet. *Registration required* 📞 (3/28).

FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Thursday, April 3, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOOD GARDEN TALKS: SOIL HEALTH



Soil is the foundation of your garden and determines whether or not your plants will thrive. Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron and OSU Extension to learn how to

restore your urban or suburban soils with soil amendments to create healthy living soil for your plants. SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Saturday, April 5, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

VERNAL POOL PARTY

Join naturalists for an in-depth exploration of vernal pond ecosystems. From salamanders to fairy shrimp, these pools support a wide variety of wildlife during their fleeting existence. Be prepared for wet, muddy conditions and wear sturdy footwear. LP/Pond Brook Conservation Area: 3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg

Beginning Sunday, April 6

SELF-GUIDED STORYBOOK TRAIL: THE EARTH AND I

Enjoy a spring walk along the 1.6-mile Buttonbush Trail while following a self-guided story trail based on the book "The Earth and I." This experience will be available through April 27. LP/Pond Brook Conservation Area: 3973 E. Aurora Rd., Twinsburg

Sunday, April 6, 2 – 3 p.m.

VIRTUAL: NATURE DRAWING FOR KIDS

Join our interpretive artist online for this entertaining virtual lesson in nature drawing for kids ages 6 to 12. All you need is a pencil and paper. *Registration required* 📞 (3/27).

📺 A Zoom invitation will be emailed to participants after registration.

KIDS IN THE GARDEN



Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron for weekly hands-on gardening activities for children of all ages. Seed, sow, water, harvest and enjoy!

Each week 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.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Thursday, April 3

Thursday, April 10

Thursday, April 17

Thursday, April 24

Sunday, April 6, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
WOODCOCK WATCH & OWL PROWL

Join a naturalist to discover some interesting and unusual feathered friends at dusk. We'll start with a short presentation in the shelter to learn about these fascinating birds. Afterward, we'll witness the woodcock's spectacular courtship flight over the fields at sunset before taking a short walk to call for owls. Patience and silence are essential. Bring a flashlight if you wish. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**



Tuesday, April 8, 1 – 3 p.m.
NATURE DRAWING FOR ADULTS

Join our interpretive artist for an entertaining lesson in nature drawing. Bring a sketchbook, pencil and a sense of humor. Beginners are welcome. **Registration required 📞 (3/26).** **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Beginning Thursday, April 10
SELF-GUIDED: TUSCARAWAS HISTORY

Travel along the 1.6-mile Willow Trail at your own pace and learn about the rich history of the Tuscarawas River, which flows through Firestone Metro Park. This experience is available through April 25. **F/Tuscarawas Meadows Area: 2620 Harrington Rd., Akron**

Thursday, April 10, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
NATURE COLLAGE

Let's make a beautiful nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist for this easy, fun lesson. All materials will be provided. **Registration required 📞 (4/3).** **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Thursday, April 10, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
LIL' SPROUTS

This biweekly program is designed to engage young children and accompanying adults in the wonderful world of gardening. Each class builds upon the last and will be centered on what's growing and ready to harvest! Adults are asked to actively participate with children during the program. **Registration required 📞 (4/2).** **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**

Thursday, April 10, 1 – 2 p.m.
VIRTUAL: NATURE COLLAGE

Let's make a beautiful nature-inspired collage using recycled paper! Join our interpretive artist for this easy, fun lesson. **Registration required 📞 (4/3).** 📺 **A list of materials and a Zoom invite will be emailed after registering.**

Thursday, April 10, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
HOMEGROWN HABITATS: RAIN GARDENS

Calling all people with yards or green spaces big and small: Join us for this monthly series and learn how to rewind your home landscape. This month we'll talk about plants that require wet feet and how to transform that area of standing water in your yard into a rain garden habitat. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, April 11, 3 – 4 p.m.
BIRDING BUCKET LIST: SPRING MIGRATION

Spring sings as migration begins! From warblers to waterfowl, let's talk about what migrants you'll see this season so you can check them off your birding bucket list. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, April 11, 8 – 9 p.m.
AMPHIBIAN NIGHT LIFE

Break out your flashlight and join naturalists to search for amphibians! Along the way, we'll discuss what these tiny yet awe-inspiring creatures get up to on a "big night" this time of year. **SR/Old Portage Area: 1300 Sand Run Pkwy., Akron**

Saturday, April 12, 8 – 9:30 p.m.
MOONLIT MYTHICAL MADNESS

Celebrate National Unicorn Day around the campfire as our naturalists tell tales of history's greatest folktale legends. Are Sasquatch, Mothman and unicorns really out there? You decide. Please bring your own chair. **CV/Oxbow Area: 1135 Cuyahoga St., Akron**

Saturday, April 12, 8:30 – 10:30 p.m.
MOON OVER LIBERTY PARK

Join a naturalist as we hike the 1.2-mile Coyote Run Trail while learning fun facts about the moon. Telescopes will be available to look for the "man in the moon" after the hike! **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Sunday, April 13, 9 – 10:30 a.m.
GONE FISHIN'

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. **MF/Shady Shelter: 521 S. River Rd., Munroe Falls**



FISHING DERBIES

Anglers are invited to cast a line in Little Turtle Pond at Firestone Metro Park! Trophies will be awarded for the three largest fish caught. These programs are free and open to the public. Please bring fishing gear. A limited number of rods and reels will be available for use during the derby, and bait will be supplied. Visitors are encouraged to bring lunch if fishing the entire day.

Presented by Wayside Furniture.

**F/Little Turtle Pond:
 2400 Harrington Rd., Akron**

Saturday, April 12, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
KIDS' FISHING DERBY
 For kids 15 and younger.

Tuesday, April 15, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
SPECIAL NEEDS FISHING DERBY
 For adults and children with special needs.



KINDEREALM: APRIL SHOWERS

Children ages 3 to 6 and their adult companions can learn how April rains prepare plants and animals for spring. A craft and hike are part of the program. *Please make other arrangements for younger children unable to remain in infant seats or strollers.* Registration required 📞 (3/20).

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 2

SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron

Wednesday, April 9

FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Wednesday, April 23

LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Sunday, April 13, 1 – 2:30 p.m.

LET'S GO GREEN: WHAT IS CLIMATE SCIENCE?

Join a naturalist for the first program in our monthly Let's Go Green series as we look into the facts and fiction of climate change and the science behind it. Subsequent programs will cover the possible threats and solutions, alternative energy options and how minor changes can make a big difference to your carbon footprint. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Beginning Tuesday, April 15

SELF-GUIDED: AWAITING WARBLERS

Hike the 0.9-mile Fernwood Trail through April 29 to discover the world of warblers as we await these colorful migrants. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Thursday, April 17, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOOD GARDEN TALKS: GUERRILLA GARDENING

Neglected, abandoned and unmaintained public spaces can burden any community, but there's potential for change. Join us in collaboration with Let's Grow Akron and OSU Extension to learn how to ethically and responsibly revitalize these overlooked public spaces with guerrilla gardening practices. GHY/Goodyear Heights Lodge: 2077 Newton St., Akron

Thursday, April 17, 8:30 – 10 p.m.

DRIVE-IN ASTRONOMY NIGHT

Join a naturalist for a drive-in style program on the science and history of our night sky. Learn what a light year is, why stars twinkle and how to navigate the night sky by looking for planets, constellations and other objects. You will be in your car just like the old drive-in movies, enjoying popcorn while listening through your car radio. Arrive early to get a good parking spot! Weather permitting, we will scan the sky to see what might be visible after the presentation. If wet weather is in the forecast, the program will be moved indoors. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg

Friday, April 18, 10:30 – 11 a.m.

SPRING NATURE TALES

Young children and their adult companions can celebrate spring with an interactive, spring-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, April 18, 8 – 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT FROGS

Venture out on a night hike in search of frogs and discover the important roles amphibians play in our world. Please bring a headlamp or flashlight. BHT/Young Road Lot: 5090 Young Rd., Stow

Saturday, April 19, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

BIRD NERDS: WARBLER ID

Newbies and experts alike are welcome to join our ongoing series to unpack a unique bird identification challenge each month. After an indoor presentation, we'll head out to the field to put our skills to the test. This month, we're getting prepped for warbler season. FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron

Beginning Sunday, April 20

SELF-GUIDED: SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK



Welcome, spring! Hike the 1.1-mile Ledges Trail to discover delicate spring blooms of all shapes, sizes and colors. Interpretive signs will be posted along the way to point out these beauties and share

fun facts. This experience will be available through May 3. LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg



Tuesday, April 22, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

**PLANT BY NUMBERS:
ATTRACTING BIRDS,
BUTTERFLIES, BEES & BEYOND**

Join the Greater Akron Audubon Society to learn more about how gardeners play a vital role in the development and conservation of habitat for pollinators and other creatures. Program Director Denise Ellsworth will share her knowledge from the OSU Bee Lab and introduce the Plant by Numbers Garden Guides, featuring plants that support birds, butterflies, bees and beyond. **GYH/Goodyear Heights Lodge: 2077 Newton St., Akron**

Wednesday, April 23, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

WILDFLOWER HIKE

Enjoy a hike along the 1.8-mile Parcours Trail to look for and learn about spring's early blooms. **GYH/Main Entrance: 2077 Newton St., Akron**

Thursday, April 24, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

LIL' SPROUTS

This biweekly program is designed to engage young children and accompanying adults in the wonderful world of gardening. Each class builds upon the last and will be centered on what's growing and ready to harvest! Adults are asked to actively participate with children during the program. *Registration required* 📞 (4/2). **SLNC: 411 Ira Ave., Akron**

Thursday, April 24, 4 – 5:30 p.m.

INTRO TO ARCHERY

Participants 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* 📍 (4/16). **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Thursday, April 24, 6:30 – 8 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* 📍 (4/16). **F/Coventry Oaks: 40 Axline Ave., Akron**

Friday, April 25, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

APPRECIATING TREES

Today is Arbor Day! Let's take time to appreciate our native trees as we hike the 1.3-mile Seneca Trail. **FASN/Visitors Center: 1828 Smith Rd., Akron**

Friday, April 25, 12 – 1:30 p.m.

NATURE SAUNTER

Appreciate the outdoors at a leisurely pace with a stroll to look for spring wildflowers along portions of Ledges Trail. Enjoy a beverage and more nature conversation afterward. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**



Friday, April 25, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

SALAMANDER STROLL

Get to know these mysterious amphibians along the lower trails of Hampton Hills Metro Park. Hopefully we'll get to see some up close! Bring waterproof shoes and prepare to get dirty! **HH/Main Entrance: 2925 Akron Peninsula Rd., Akron**

Saturday, April 26, 9 – 10 a.m.

PLEASANT PHEASANT RUN HIKE

Enjoy a mid-morning hike along 1.2-mile Pheasant Run Trail. Along the way we'll learn about ring-necked pheasants that were introduced to Ohio and once were plentiful. **SC/Lake House & Pheasant Run Area: 5000 Hametown Rd., Norton**

Saturday, April 26, 1 – 3 p.m.

**SPRING WINGS AND
WILDFLOWERS**

Join a naturalist for a peek at the park district's Wetmore Conservation Area on portions of Cuyahoga Valley National Park's Wetmore Trail to see which varieties of birds and spring wildflowers we can find. We'll hike approximately 2.5 miles, with stream crossings possible. Binoculars, boots and bug repellent are recommended! **Wetmore Conservation Area: 4653 Wetmore Rd, Cuyahoga Falls**

Saturday, April 26, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

FOLD YOUR OWN FROG

Meet at Pioneer Shelter to learn how to fold your own origami frog. Afterwards we'll explore the area looking, listening and learning about our local frogs. **GYH/Pioneer Area: 550 Frazier Ave. Akron**

Sunday, April 27, 8:30 – 10 a.m.

BIRDING THE BOG

Join a naturalist to bog around and look for birds! On this 1.6-mile hike, we'll also discuss how native prairies and wetland environments support birds and other wildlife. Some binoculars will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. **SFB/Prairie Trail: 1400 Portage Line Rd., Springfield Twp.**

Sunday, April 27, 1 – 3 p.m.

SPRING MIGRATION WARM-UP

Join a naturalist as we get ready for spring migration, warbler season and the Biggest Week in American Birding! We will review the basics of warbler identification, as well as other spring migrants. There will be several preserved specimens to provide a bird's eye view of the species that will be migrating through in the coming weeks. This program is designed for all levels of birding experience. **LP/Nature Center: 9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg**

Monday, April 28, 2 – 4 p.m.

HISTORY HIKE: FURNACE RUN

Stroll along the 1.4-mile Old Mill Trail with a naturalist to learn how Furnace Run Metro Park came to be, including its connections to the invention of electric streetlamps, the depression era Civilian Conservation Corps and even the Wizard of Oz! **FR/Brushwood Area: 4955 Townsend Rd., Richfield**





Enjoy

SUMMIT METRO PARKS

SURVEYING THE SUMMIT

Multiple Techniques

Russell Pier, recent graduate of The University of Akron



Entrance to Summit County Home Cemetery at Tallmadge Meadows Area in Munroe Falls Metro Park



Pier (left) and Dr. David Perry operating the Subterra Grey soil spectroscopy machine.

Within the Tallmadge Meadows Area of Munroe Falls Metro Park lies a cemetery, surrounded by woods and maintained by the park district. The cemetery served as the final resting place for residents of the Summit County Home, which housed those who were impoverished, in need of mental care or physical rehabilitation, or had nobody else to care for them. The home operated from 1921 to 1970 and was razed in 1978. Some records from the Summit County Home suggest there are 900 or more burials in the cemetery. While we only know the names of a handful of the people buried there, there are methods available to help determine the precise boundaries of the cemetery (which have become blurred over time), how many graves there are and where the residents were buried.

To obtain some of this information, the cemetery was the focus of a minimally invasive archaeological survey in 2024 that used three overlapping techniques. The use of multiple survey techniques

over the known boundary area of the cemetery garnered more reliable and precise results than using any single technique. The first was human remains detection (HRD) dogs. As their name suggests, these highly trained dogs can detect the scent of human remains. The second was ground penetrating radar (GPR), which can help reveal disturbed soil, indicating a possible burial. GPR is effective in covering large areas, ideal for the mowed area of the cemetery. The third was subsurface soil spectroscopy (Subterra Grey), which can also help detect disturbed soil as well as fatty acids from human remains. Once the data was collected, it was mapped to coordinate different collection techniques and display the results.

The survey showed that rows of currently unmarked graves line the cemetery area. Potentially, these rows extend into the woods to the north and east. This is shown by rows continuing outside of the area surveyed, suggesting a larger cemetery than the

COUNTY HOME CEMETERY:

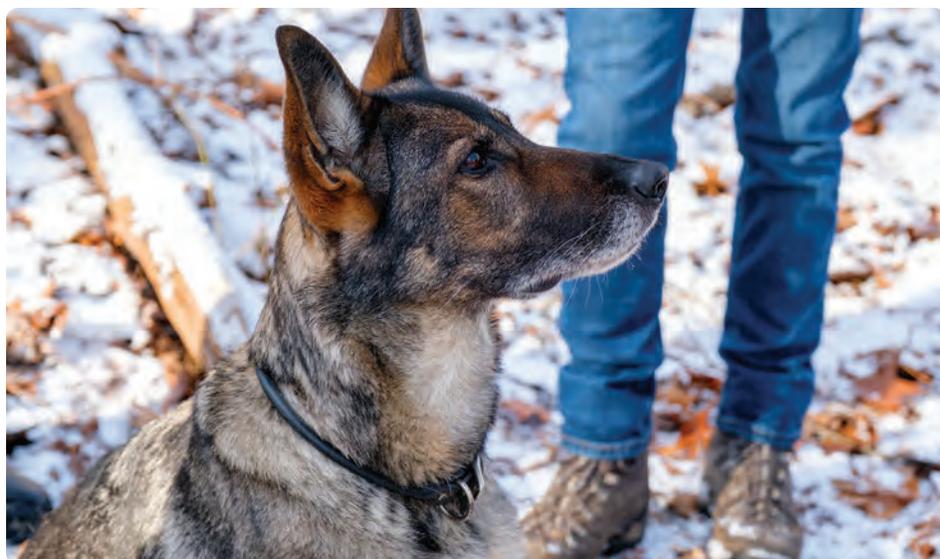
for One Goal

current boundary. The exact number of graves has not yet been determined, however, knowing where the graves are can help the park district in the continued preservation of what remains of the cemetery. Though we can now identify where burials are most likely to be, unfortunately, it is not possible to match names and burials with the archaeological and historical information available. 🌿



Assistant Professor Maeve Marino and student Rebecca Pier of The University of Akron operate the GPR machine.

Pier is a recent graduate of The University of Akron. This article summarizes Pier's project for his MA in Applied History and Public Humanities, done in collaboration with Summit Metro Parks.



🐾 HRD Besa of Ohio Special Response Team takes her job very seriously!

👁️ HRD survey being conducted by Ohio Special Response Team



Rooted in CONSERVATION

*Claire Merrick,
Marketing & Public
Relations Manager*



Within the scenic expanse of Liberty Park lies a vital hub for conservation and sustainability: the park district's 4,000-square-foot nursery. Managed by Biologist Christopher Chaney, the nursery is more than just a space for cultivating plants; it is a cornerstone of the park's ecosystem restoration efforts and community engagement.

Chaney's passion for plants began when he was a teenager, nurturing cacti and succulents and eventually studying botany at Kent State University. His early forays into native plant horticulture made him the ideal fit for the biologist role at Summit Metro Parks, which involved developing the park's native plant nursery. What began with 1,500 seedlings has grown into a thriving operation supporting thousands of plants and over 150 species.

Sustainability is at the heart of the nursery's operations. Shade cloths conserve water, and a programmable sprinkler system ensures efficient watering. Chaney and his team

repurpose pots and recycle planting media, reducing waste while maximizing resources. All seeds are ethically sourced, with a focus on local native species to maintain ecological integrity. Managing the nursery is a year-round endeavor. Winters are spent preparing seeds for cold stratification (exposing seeds to cold, moist conditions to help them germinate and grow), while springtime means watering, transplanting and pest management. Challenges abound, yet Chaney finds joy in witnessing the transformation of seeds into thriving plants — a process that sometimes takes years but is well worth the wait.

The nursery engages the community not only by contributing to the overall park visitor experience, but also through plant giveaways at park events and partnerships with local organizations. These initiatives encourage residents to transform their yards into thriving habitats by incorporating



The nursery produces a wide variety of plants, from ferns and grasses to shrubs and trees.



native plant species and reducing non-natives, part of the Wild Back Yards initiative. The constant challenge of weeds blown into the nursery from surrounding natural areas serves as a reminder of how interconnected our landscapes are. Some of those seeds originate in local parks, but what grows in the parks often comes from nearby back yards and landscapes. This is one of the many reasons why cultivating a Wild Back Yard is a crucial step in supporting our shared environment (learn more at bit.ly/wildbackyards).



Repurposed pots help the park district grow green in more ways than one.

Through thoughtful conservation efforts and a commitment to sustainability, Chaney and park district staff are creating a legacy that will take root for generations, illustrating the ways in which the quiet power of plants can transform the world around us. 🍃



Chris Chaney, park biologist, and Mark Smalley, park manager at Liberty Park, at the Pond View tree planting



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GREEN ISLANDS

Summit Metro Parks Bimonthly Magazine

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Mother's Day 5k

MAY 11, 2025



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