

PARKEXPLORER

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE



WINTER 2024

Boardwalk at Bessie Benner
Metzenbaum Park in Chester Twp.

4 Partnering with our friends of Geauga Ohio Horseman's Council

6 Spend some time at "Gauga's Little Grand Canyon"

16 Enter or visit our community art show inspired by trees

18 Are you ready for our total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024?

UPCOMING EVENTS *Mark your calendars!*



All public programs and special events are subject to change or be cancelled. Please check our website for updates before heading out.



Snowshoe Program

January - March

Register to add your name to the call list for spontaneous naturalist-led snowshoe programs when weather conditions are just right! Borrow our snowshoes (first-come, first-served) or bring your own. Details on page 7.



The forest is calling
and I must

create

Enjoy a variety of artwork on display in the form of paintings, drawings, sculptures and multi-media creations inspired by trees at The West Woods Nature Center!

This tree-inspired community art show opens Saturday, February 3, with a reception from 1-3 PM. It will remain open daily 10 AM to 4 PM through April 21. Details on page 16.

Amphibian Awakening



February 15 - April 10 • The West Woods

Register to add your name to the call list for our annual program to witness the natural phenomenon of spring breeding behavior of Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers and possibly large salamanders as they move into woodland pools on a warm, rainy night. Details on page 10.



Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, February 16, 17 & 18 11 AM - 4 PM at The West Woods Nature Center

Join us at the big windows to help identify and count birds, and become an official Citizen Scientist, during this worldwide bird count. Details on page 12.



Welcome signs of spring with maple sugaring fun!

Sundays, February 25, March 3 & 10 • Noon - 4 PM at Swine Creek Reservation in Middlefield Twp.

Get a sweet taste of how maple sugaring methods have evolved throughout history, help gather sap in the sugarbush with a horse-drawn sled, and see sap boil in the sugar house!

Also a stop March 3 & 10 on the statewide Ohio Maple Madness Tour (ohiomaple.org) and Maple Tour of Northeast Ohio (mpneoh.com)



THE GREAT GEauga TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE 4-8-2024

Geauga Park District is planning a FREE grand viewing event to be held at the Geauga County Fairgrounds. Pre-eclipse activities will run from 11 AM to 2 PM, then eclipse viewing begins at 2 PM with provided eclipse glasses for safety (while supplies last – then we share). Total eclipse is at 3:15 PM, with 3 minutes 27 seconds of darkness, and the receding eclipse ends at 4:30 PM.

WINTER PROGRAMS *on pages 7-15*

- Registration is required in advance for limited-enrollment programs on a first come, first served basis. Registration can be completed online or at 440-286-9516.
- Programs may be cancelled in the event of severe weather or a storm warning.
- Programs are generally free of charge; those with fees are noted. Payment of fees must be made at the time of registration with a credit/debit card.
- Registration fees are refundable up to five days prior to the event, or if the Park District cancels the program.
- If you or a member of your family has special needs, please call the Park District regarding available accessibility accommodations.



Gauga Gems Trekking Series Program
Naturalist-led hike recommended to take toward your Trekking Series reward



Nature's Not To Be Missed
Program focused on unique encounters with Nature



Virtual Program
Register and receive a login to participate from home



Fully Wheelchair/Stroller Accessible



Nature Scopes – Program recommended for our fifth-grade Nature Scopes students

Upcoming Events	2
Feature: Trail Riding Our Geauga Parks	4-5
Park Spotlight.....	6
January Programs.....	7-9 & 15
February Programs	10-12 & 15
March Programs.....	12-15
Archery Programs.....	15
Community Art Show	16
Geocaching	17
Agents of Discovery	17
In Nature: Our Total Solar Eclipse	18
Fun Page	19

Park Mission

The mission of Geauga Park District is to preserve, conserve and protect the natural features of Geauga County and to provide outdoor recreational experiences to our residents of every age, every ability and at all times of the year.

Park Hours

Daily 6 AM – 11 PM

Big Creek Park's Donald W. Meyer Center is open weekdays 10 AM – 4:30 PM

The West Woods Nature Center is open daily 10 AM – 4:30 PM

Observatory Park is open daily till 1 AM from Memorial Day to Labor Day and till 11 PM from Labor Day to Memorial Day; its Robert McCullough Science Center and Oberle Observatory are open 2nd & 4th Fridays & Saturdays of each month 6 – 11 PM and every other Sunday of each month 1 – 4 PM

The Maple Highlands Trail is open daily dawn till dusk

Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve is open daily 6 AM – 9 PM

www.geaugaparkdistrict.org
info@geaugaparkdistrict.com

Phone: 440-286-9516
Fax: 440-214-3032

From the Desk of THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Executive Director
John Oros

Dear Geauga County Friends & Neighbors,

Welcome to the winter edition of your *Park Explorer*. One of the things I value about Geauga County are the times when the Lake Erie snow machine turns on and provides us with a blanket of snow. I suspect, if you didn't feel the same way, you might retreat further south to get out of lake effect snow. Every year, our friends from Cleveland television make the trek to Chardon to report on the white stuff. We are happy to host both them and the beautiful blanket of snow.

What better place to experience everything your Geauga Park District has to offer this winter than one of your parks or trails? With snow comes the opportunity to groom The Maple Highlands Trail and Observatory Park for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The Ohio State Snowmobile Association continues to support our efforts by volunteering to groom these trails. We sure hope the winter of 2023/2024 will provide us with quality skiing, snowmobiling, sledding and cross-country skiing.

Another way to enjoy this winter is to attend one of our naturalist-led hikes. The Welton's Gorge Winter Hike (1/21), Wonders of Winter Hike (2/3), Winter Habitat Hike (2/4) and Hike The West Woods: Cabin Fever Cure Hike (3/17) will provide various ways to experience Nature this season — no pre-registration required. Truly, opportunities to see wildlife unobstructed by a dense forest canopy of leaves, or at least identify animal tracks left on a fresh blanket of snow, are only found by getting outside in the wintertime.

Finally, if cozying up to an indoor fireplace is more your style, don't forget about the opportunity to reserve one of our lodges for your event with family or friends. We would be honored to host you. I hope you and your family get to the parks often this winter. When cabin fever kicks in, we look forward to seeing you at Geauga Park District.

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS



Howard Bates



Jolene Carnabuci



Ray Guarino



Les LaGatta



Frank Stein

Park Board Meetings

Dates and times are subject to change. Find the current schedule on our website under About GPD, or call 440-286-9516.

A close-up photograph of a horse's lower legs and hooves as it walks through a snowy field. The hooves are dark with white markings, and the snow is bright white and slightly disturbed by the horse's movement.

FEATURING
PARK FRIENDS

Trail Riding Our Geauga Parks

By Michelle Rossman



Geauga County is rich with horses! In addition to the Amish horses you might see on the road, there are thousands of horses in Ohio. According to the American Horse Council Foundation's 2017 survey, the horse industry contributes \$122 billion annually to the U.S. economy and employs 1.74 million people. It is also estimated that the number of horses nationwide is 7.2 million, and that 1,370,000 people volunteer their time for horse-related activities every year. (<https://horsesonly.com/horse-industry>)

The Ohio Horseman's Council (OHC) is the largest non-profit equine organization in Ohio. It is organized by county chapters and represents riders of all ages, all riding disciplines, and all equine breeds. You can find out more information about the OHC at its website, <https://ohconline.com>. Among its offerings to the community it serves is a

grant process allowing county chapters to apply for mini grants supporting the improvement or addition of trails.

In 2010, the Geauga chapter of the OHC established a Bridle Trail Fund that is managed by the Foundation for Geauga Parks. Its purpose is to expand bridle trails. This fall, the Geauga OHC determined that the addition of a mile-long trail at The West Woods is a good and appropriate use of this fund – so, with construction beginning next year, we are pleased to announce that Geauga Park District will be adding another loop to the park's existing trails. With interest in learning more about this great local equine organization and the Bridle Trail Fund, please visit <https://geaugacountyohc.com>.

Park trails are full of people using them in different ways. Trail riders love to see walkers and others on the trails. Sometimes, horse riders may ask a runner to walk. This is because horses are prey animals, and they may perceive something moving rapidly towards them as a predator. A horse's instinct to avoid attack is fight or flight. If a horse is startled by something, it may try to run away or kick out. This is why we ask runners to announce themselves when coming up from behind a horse and to walk, rather than run, toward a horse. All this is good trail etiquette, and of course, safety first!

We ride horses on the trails in all seasons. You might see us less frequently in the winter due to road conditions or ice under the snow on the trails. Personally my favorite season for riding is the fall when the leaves are beautiful and the weather is cool.

My horse, Holly, and I ride frequently at The West Woods. It is my favorite park because of its varied terrain and diverse natural environment. I also enjoy Big Creek, Holbrook Hollows and Headwaters parks. People sometimes stop and are curious about the boots that Holly wears. Holly wears boots instead of horseshoes to protect her feet from rocks and debris, and the boots also provide traction. If you see us on the trail, please stop and say hello! 🍁

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I have lived in Chesterland for the last 23 years. My very favorite thing to do is to ride my horse in the Geauga and surrounding Metroparks. We are so fortunate to have wonderful bridle trails throughout our park systems! As a volunteer for Geauga Park District, I also help our Naturalist Dottie on her public horseback rides, which are great fun.

I belong to several horse clubs, most notably the Geauga County Ohio Horseman's Association (OHC), an organization made up of individuals interested in horsemanship. For that club, I serve as membership chair and liaison to both Geauga Park District and the Foundation for Geauga Parks.



My horse is a palomino mare named Holly that I purchased at the end of August 2022. She is 13 years old and a lot of fun to ride. For 22 years, my best pal horse was a chestnut (red) horse named Jane. I hope to see you on the trails!



Spend Some Time at Welton's Gorge

Photo by Tom Elesh Jr.

This approximately 87-acre park is home to an impressive 45-foot gorge exposing Sharon sandstone and Sharon conglomerate. Rivers of long ago carried sediments that were deposited in layers and cemented into rock. Then, over thousands of years, glacial meltwater and post-glacial rain events carved the bedrock to form the gorge we now know and love.

Outcroppings in Welton's Gorge create a cool moisture-rich environment where various lichens, mosses and ferns are dominant. Eastern hemlock, yellow birch and lowbush blueberry

typically inhabit more northern climates, but thrive here because of moisture-rich soils and cool summers. Shaded and cold groundwater-fed primary headwater streams offer the perfect habitat for salamanders like the



Northern Red and Long-tailed salamanders. Sloping banks provide preferred nesting sites for birds like the Dark-eyed Junco and the Louisiana Waterthrush. Cool, moist soils in the gorge are preferred by the Camel Cricket.

This park's .33-mile entrance trail meanders along its premiere feature, with two scenic overlooks of the gorge. To explore another 1.5 miles through forest and field, explore the Dogwood Trail. An open-air shelter with picnic tables and a fire pit is also available here, first come, first served. 🍁



FIELD NOTES:

IF YOU VISIT DURING OR RIGHT AFTER A GOOD RAIN, YOU WILL BE GREETED UPON ENTERING THE TRAIL BY THE SOUND OF WATER RUSHING THROUGH THE GORGE. SEEING THE GORGE FROM THE TRAIL CAN BE QUITE IMPRESSIVE ANY TIME OF YEAR. SPECIAL OVERLOOKS PROVIDE PARTICULARLY SWEET VANTAGE POINTS OF THIS GENUINE GEUGA FEATURE.

Let This Be Your Reminder...

If you plan to attend a program without registration, please remember to mark your calendars or set an alarm, as reminder emails cannot be sent for those programs.

Registration is always required of programs with fees or limited attendance, but fewer programs now require registration in advance. We hope you like the change, and to see you more in the parks going forward!



Geauga Park District is planting **1,000 TREES!** at Veterans Legacy Woods in Newbury & Burton Townships

Natural Resource Management thanks all who assisted with fall reforestation efforts October 12 & 13 at Veterans Legacy Woods.

In total, we planted more than 200 native trees and shrubs, contributing nicely to our 1,000-tree goal. This important initiative is one of several projects working toward the ecological restoration of this former golf course, providing new wildlife habitat and watershed protection benefits for generations to come.

Fall supporters included *tree-mendous* sponsors Covia Best Sand (\$3,000), Avonlea Gardens & Inn (\$250), Sage's Apples (apples) and Sunrise Springs Water Co. (water), as well as planting groups of five or more people from NDCL (environmental science students and Conservation Club members), Philips, Solid Rock on Which We Stand, LLC, Nestlé, the Murzynski family and Geauga Park District's volunteer corp.

Thanks again to our very generous October planting sponsors



JANUARY

Registration begins at 10 AM on December 20 for Geauga residents and December 27 for others. Sign up online or by calling 440-286-9516.

■ Adventure/Discovery ■ Arts ■ Astronomy ■ Kids ■ Seniors

Snowshoe Program Call List

January through March, times and locations to be determined

Register to get your name on our call list for special naturalist-led snowshoe programs that will be "called into action" whenever the snow conditions are right for snowshoeing. Borrow our snowshoes (first come, first served) or bring your own. Programs may be anytime day or evening at any of our parks depending on conditions.

Geauga Gems Trekking Series Registration

January 1–September 30

Register for an emailed link to our printable Geauga Gems Trekking Card that you can use to track your trails all year long (card also available at nature centers). Annual awards available Nov. 1 through Dec. 31, 2024. **Registration required.** Learn more on our website under Activities, then Hiking.

6 Scout Day: Junior Girl Scout "Geocacher Badge"

Saturday, January 6, 9:30–11:30 AM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Junior Girl Scouts, join us for a high-tech hide-and-seek as you work toward your Geocacher Badge (not provided). GPS units provided. Outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** only for participating scouts.

6 Scout Day: Webelos "Into the Wild Adventure"

Saturday, January 6, 1:30–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Webelos, join us to work on your "Into the Wild" elective. Indoors and outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** only for participating scouts.

7 Learn to X-Country Ski

Sunday, January 7, 1–3 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Learn the basics of cross-country skiing including proper clothing, types of equipment and proper technique. Indoor presentation followed by outdoor instruction. Ski rental available in advance from Geiger's, 50 Shopping Plaza, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022, 440-247-4900. Special rental rate for this program: \$19 for patron pick-up Saturday after 3 PM and return Monday during business hours. **Registration required.**

7 Travelogue: Making the Most of the National Park Pass

Sunday, January 7, 1–2 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

From Arizona to Michigan to West Virginia to Virginia to Maryland, join Holly and Brad Sauder as they share a year's worth of adventures using the "America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass."

7 Screening "Polkas in Nature"

Sunday, January 7, 2:30–3:45 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join Jake Kouwe of The Chardon Polka Band for a screening of *The World According to Polka's* episode about polkas in Nature! The local bandleader will also share a bit about how the PBS series was made and why the band chose to feature the parks so heavily in this episode, and perform a song or two.

7 Upcycled Vinyl Solar System Painting

Sunday, January 7, 1–2:30 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Fee: \$5 Geauga resident, \$6 out-of-county

Learn about the planets in our solar system as we create a piece of upcycled art. We'll use acrylic paint to paint the planets on an old vinyl record, so dress for a mess. **Registration required.**

13 Nature Break: Women's Retreat

Saturday, January 13, 8:30 AM–1 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$8 Geauga residents, \$10 out-of-county

Retreat to the park to re-energize and relax. Activities include snowshoeing or walking, an aerobic activity, and a Nature-themed activity and lesson. Includes light breakfast and hot lunch. Dress in layers with comfortable clothes for indoor and outdoor activities. **Registration required.**

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

13 Thompson Ledges Hike

Saturday, January 13, 10 AM–Noon
Thompson Ledges Township Park,
16755 Thompson Rd, Thompson, OH
Explore the improved southern portion of magnificent Thompson Ledges on primitive trails through oak and hemlock forests with the possibility of icicles in the ledges. Must be capable of hiking several miles through rocky, uneven terrain with some steep slopes and logs to step over. Dress for the weather with sturdy footwear. Walking sticks and traction enhancers like Yaktrax recommended. **Registration required.**

13 Plant a Seed & Sow Success

Saturday, January 13, 10–11:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
There are many ways to “native-ize” your property, and seeding is a great way to do it. While it is cost effective, it does require forethought and patience. Join Ohio Prairie Nursery’s Barb Holtz to learn about the four P’s of seeding native forbs and grasses, the best road to sowing success, maintenance, and why natives are a beautiful and sustainable addition to your landscape. In collaboration with the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio.

13 Thompson Ledges Backcountry Hike

Saturday, January 13, 1–4 PM
Thompson Ledges Township Park,
16755 Thompson Rd, Thompson, OH
Explore the northern undeveloped portion of Thompson Ledges on primitive trails through oak and hemlock forests, hoping for snow-covered hemlocks decorating the ledges. Hikers must be capable of traveling several miles through rocky, uneven terrain with some steep slopes and logs to step over. Dress for the weather with sturdy footwear. Walking sticks and traction enhancers like Yaktrax recommended. **Registration required.**

14 Nature Journaling: Introduction

Sunday, January 14, 1–2 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
For those new to Nature journaling only, this is a one-hour introduction covering basic journaling techniques to record your observations. Fee includes a new journal, pen and other supplies. If you wish to stay for the more advanced Nature Journaling session, register for it separately. **Registration required** by phone only at 440-286-9516.

14 Nature Journaling: Wonders of Winter

Sunday, January 14, 2–4:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
Following an introduction for first-timers (separate registration), let’s draw inspiration this month from the winter season. Taking photos is optional. First-timers pay max fee for start-up supplies. Those who’ve attended before, but not within the calendar year, pay \$10 (Gauga residents) or \$12 (out-of-county) for additional instruction and supplies. Those who’ve already attended within the calendar year are free. **Registration required** by phone only at 440-286-9516.

14 Backyard Bird Feeding 101

Sunday, January 14, 2–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Interested in putting bird feeders in your yard but don’t know where to start? Learn the dos and don’ts of backyard bird feeding and review common backyard feeder birds so you can create a feeding station providing food, water, sanitation and shelter from predators.

15 X-TREME Winter Fun Day! (Grade 5-10)

Monday, January 15, 1–4 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge
Spend the afternoon having an X-TREME amount of winter fun outside with friends! Try snowshoes, bring your sled for some fun downhill rides, learn about winter wildlife, and warm up by a fire with hot cocoa and s’mores. Outdoors, so dress for the weather. Drop-off program, but parents are welcome to stay for the winter fun, too! All participants must have a signed waiver. **Registration required.**

18 Elderberries: The Bear Facts

Thursday, January 18, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Lost with the settlement of Ohio, the Black Bear is attempting a comeback here after a 150-year absence. Seniors, join Chief Naturalist John Kolar to discover the “bear facts” about Ohio’s largest mammal through a sit-down presentation. Refreshments served. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**



18 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, January 18, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Singers and musicians take turns presenting tunes as others join in. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing, or simply enjoy as an audience member.

19 Homeschool Days: Awesome Astronomy

(Ages 5-7 & 8-12)
Friday, January 19, 10:30 AM–Noon
The West Woods, Nature Center
Homeschoolers discover the stars, moon and planets with fun activities and an amazing inflatable star dome! **Registration required** for all attending, including adults and younger or older siblings.

20 Backcountry Hike

Saturday, January 20, 9 AM–Noon
Orchard Hills Park
Go off trail to explore areas not typically seen by the public. Expect hills, mud, other obstacles and a lot of fun as we traverse the forests. Pack any food or water you may need. Ages 7+; no younger children, please. **Registration required.**

20 Orienteering 101

Saturday, January 20, 10 AM–12:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Learn about the rising sport of orienteering as the Northeastern Ohio Orienteering Club educates and preps folks for the upcoming event in February. This introductory level program will give you the basics on how to navigate your way around the woods using a map and compass. Indoor class followed by outdoor practice course, so dress for the weather.

20 Whatever-the-Weather Venture

Saturday, January 20, 2–3:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove
It may be a bit optimistic, but we’re hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are just right for snowshoeing, that is what we’ll do. If not, we’ll take a cold-weather hike. Whatever the weather, let’s get outside! Borrow a pair of our snowshoes or bring your own. Ages 8+ with adult. **Registration required** for all participants.

20 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, January 20, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park,
Nassau Astronomical Station
Stop in to discover this awesome facility and join members of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society taking in the wonders of the night sky using our restored telescope! A limited number of people will be permitted inside the building at a time, which may result in a wait to enter. No registration required. Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.



21 Welton's Gorge Winter Trail Hike

Sunday, January 21, 2–3:30 PM
Welton's Gorge

Hike with a naturalist to discover the sights and sounds of winter. Must be able to hike at least 2 miles rain, snow or shine, so dress for the weather. We won't not go into the gorge, but enjoy views of the gorge from above.

21 Living History: John Muir

Sunday, January 21, 2–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Travel back in time to meet the famous naturalist John Muir as he recalls some of his more memorable "hands-on" experiences with nature! Followed by a short hike led by Muir.

24 Hound Hike

Wednesday, January 24, 2–3 PM
Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park

Dogs and their humans, join us for a short winter walk on two easy trails. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share some helpful tips and tricks to practice. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and bags for clean-up. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog, kept on leash at all times.

25 Early Morning Hike

Thursday, January 25, 8:30–9:30 AM
Beartown Lakes Reservation

Get your day started with an early morning, up-paced hike through the woods. We'll talk as we walk with little stopping.

2 16 30 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
January 2, Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
January 16, Claridon Woodlands
January 30, Eldon Russell Park

Hike for active seniors of about 2 miles on hilly terrain. For other weekly hikes in Geauga County and surrounding areas, call Geauga Senior Center at 440-279-2167.

5 7 Coffee with the Birds

Friday, January 5 & Sunday, January 7,
9–10 AM & 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird viewing and identification of winter birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required**; please choose just one session.

25 Full Moon Hike: The Hardwood Moon

Thursday, January 25, 6:30–7:30 PM
Observatory Park

Listen for the sound of popping trees as we explore the woods on this after-dark hike, then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes.

27 Learn to Snowshoe

Saturday, January 27, 9–11 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Learn the basics of snowshoeing including proper clothing, types of equipment and proper technique. Indoor presentation followed by outdoor instruction and a snowshoe hike. Borrow a pair of ours or bring your own. Ages 8+ with adult. **Registration required.**

27 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Saturday, January 27, 10 AM–Noon
The West Woods

Hike with a naturalist to Ansel's Cave to discover its history written in rock – a rare opportunity to go into this restricted area! Dress for the weather with sturdy foot gear. Hike is 2 miles over hilly terrain with a stream crossing.

27 Nature Explorers: Ohio's Wild Canines

(Ages 6–11 w/adult)
Saturday, January 27, 1–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Learn amazing facts about Ohio's wild canines of the past and present. Indoors and outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending.



RECURRING PROGRAMS

12 26 The Southern Sky

Friday, January 12, 7–8 PM,
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

Friday, January 26, 7–8 PM
Virtual Program

Learn about the treasures of the part of the sky that North America never sees! From supernovas to the Southern Cross to horseflies to llamas, we'll take a tour of the southern sky indoors, followed by outdoor night sky viewing, weather permitting. January 26 is an online presentation via Zoom; register for the program and receive a link to join. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

Fully Accessible Nature Scopes

27 Nature at Night Hike

Saturday, January 27, 7–8:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands

Walking through a park in the dark is a unique experience. Even during the hush of winter, all our senses become enhanced as we hike without the use of lights. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

28 Important Bird Area Walk

Sunday, January 28, 8–10 AM
Orchard Hills Park, Parking Lot

Join Blackbrook Audubon Society on our Important Bird Area (IBA) walks on the fourth Sunday of each month. Good for beginners and experienced birders, Learn more bird identification tips firsthand. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. For more info, visit blackbrookaudubon.org.

28 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Sunday, January 28, 2–2:45 PM &
3–3:45 PM, Observatory Park,
Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week.



29 Baskets 101

Monday, January 29, 7–8:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Interested in learning how to make baskets but don't know where to start, or want to learn more about the process? Naturalist Renell will tell you all about the materials, terminology and basic techniques used in basket weaving. **Registration required.**

12 13 26 27 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, January 12 & 26, 8–11 PM
Saturdays, January 13 & 27, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

If skies are clear, observe the night sky through the Oberle telescope and other telescopes spaced out around the plaza. Planetarium presentation if cloudy.

21 23 Timbertots: Winter Wonders

(Ages 3–5 w/adult)
Sunday, January 21, 1–2 PM & 3–4 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Tuesday, January 23, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM,
Claridon Woodlands, Lodge

There's so much to discover about winter – snow, trees, animals and more – and we'll have fun activities to explore! Indoors and outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

3 Wonders of Winter Hike

Saturday, February 3, 10 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove

Discover signs of the season on a 2-mile hike along these trails. Dress for the weather with warm, sturdy boots.

3 "The Forest is Calling and I Must Create" Opening Reception

Saturday, February 3, 1–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join us for the opening of our new community art show "The Forest is Calling and I Must Create," featuring pieces that are tree-inspired or tree-themed and created by community artists.

4 Winter Habitat Hike

Sunday, February 4, 10:30–11:30 AM
The Rookery

Enjoy a morning trail walk experiencing wetland, forest and meadow in their winter wonder.

4 Nature in Music: Beethoven & the Immortal Beloved

Sunday, February 4, 1:30–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Beethoven was a Nature lover and often musically inspired by his trips to the countryside. In keeping with Valentine's Day, we will look at a song cycle entitled "To the Distant Beloved" and learn how it is tied in with Nature and a mystery woman known as "the immortal beloved."

4 Forests Are More Than Trees

Sunday, February 4, 3:30–4:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Explore the forest – indoors! Spend a half hour exploring our amazing new community art show and try some hands-on forest-themed activities, then enjoy a presentation exploring trees and their benefits.

6 Nature Book Discussion: "White Pine" by John Pastor

Tuesday, February 6, 7–8 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Cozy up with the book "White Pine" by John Pastor, and learn all about the Eastern White Pine tree this winter! We'll discuss the book, learn the tree's life cycle, and share tips on where to spot some truly spectacular local pine trees.

7 Coffee with the Birds

Wednesday, February 7,
9–10 AM & 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird viewing and identification of winter birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required**; please choose just one session.



Photo by Tami Gingrich

9 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Friday, February 9, 9:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods

Hike with a naturalist to Ansel's Cave to discover its history written in rock – a rare opportunity to go into this restricted area! Dress for the weather with sturdy foot gear. Hike is 2 miles over hilly terrain with a stream crossing.

10 Orienteering Event: TWW-O 2024 Race

Saturday, February 10, 11 AM–2 PM
The West Woods

Join the Northeastern Ohio Orienteering Club for a special orienteering event, co-hosted by Geauga Park District, including five classic-style courses ranging from beginner through advanced skill levels. All can be done solo or as a group and will take 45-120 minutes to complete. Dress for the weather. For details and registration, visit <https://neoc.com/upcoming-events>. Wish to learn more about orienteering in advance? Attend Orienteering 101 on January 20.

11 Nature Journaling: Winter Wildflowers

Sunday, February 11, 1–3:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county

Practice basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month our inspiration will be winter wildflowers. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. First-timers pay max fee for start-up supplies. Those who've attended before, but not within the calendar year, pay \$10 (Gauga residents) or \$12 (out-of-county) for additional instruction and supplies. Those who've already attended within the calendar year are free. **Registration required** by phone only at 440-286-9516.

11 Travelogue: Brazil Wildlife Adventures

Sunday, February 11, 2–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

With the third most bird species in the world, the largest river, and largest tropical wetland complex, Brazil is a wildlife watcher's paradise. Join Andy Avram in a presentation about his Summer 2023 trip to explore the Amazon River basin and the Pantanal to see jaguars, macaws, piranhas and more!

15 Elderberries: The Dirt on Groundhogs

Thursday, February 15, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Do groundhogs really come out of hibernation in the beginning of February? How do they get ready for their long slumber? Seniors, join Naturalist Renell indoors to get answers to these questions and more as we dish the dirt on groundhogs. Refreshments served. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required**.



Amphibian Awakening Call List

February 15–April 10,
8–9:15 PM & 9:30–10:45 PM
The West Woods

Register your name to witness the natural phenomenon of spring breeding behavior of Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers and possibly large salamanders as they move into woodland pools on a warm, rainy night. We'll call you the day of the program likely between early March and early April. Dress for the weather. Bring flashlights. **Registration required**.

17 Maple 101 Workshop

Saturday, February 17, 9 AM–Noon
The West Woods, Nature Center

Beginners and experienced producers wishing to hone sugaring skills will learn everything they need to know! Agenda includes: Demographics and History of Maple Production, How Sap Flows, Maple Tree ID and Sugarbush Management, Tapping Procedure and Guidelines for Tree Health, Collection Systems, Processing Maple Sap and Finishing Maple Syrup, Canning and Packaging Maple Syrup, Making Quality Maple Syrup, and Maple Syrup Production Economics. Presented by the Geauga County OSU Extension Office. **Registration required** through the OSU Extension Office at 440-834-4656.

17 Hound Hike

Saturday, February 17, 2–3 PM
Eldon Russell Park

Dogs and their humans, take a winter walk along these easy trails. Bring dog towels, a water bowl, water, poop scoop and bags for clean-up. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog on leash at all times.

17 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, February 17, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station

Stop in to discover this awesome facility and join members of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society taking in the wonders of the night sky using our restored telescope! A limited number of people will be permitted inside the building at a time, which may result in a wait to enter. No registration required. Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

18 How to Be a Successful Birdhouse Landlord

Sunday, February 18, 2–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Bluebirds, tree swallows, wrens and chickadees are cavity-nesting birds we enjoy watching raise young in nest boxes. Join a naturalist for tips to successfully attract and monitor birdhouses to increase the abundance of these beautiful and beneficial native birds, plus enter a birdhouse raffle thanks to Nature's Way Bird Products.

20 Early Morning Hike: The Rookery

Tuesday, February 20, 8:30–9:30 AM
The Rookery

Get your day started with an early morning, up-paced, hike through the woods. We'll talk as we walk with little stopping.

22 Art Workshop: Wood Carving Spirit Face Walking Stick

Two-part class—Thursdays,
February 22 & 29, 6–8 PM
Holbrook Hollows, Lodge

Fee: \$45 Geauga residents, \$50 out-of-county
Award-winning wood carver Robert Stadtlander leads a class to carve a spirit face walking stick in this two-part class. Fee includes a carveable 2"x2"x5" block that can be attached to your own walking stick, or the artist will have carveable walking sticks available for an additional fee at the first class. Supplies and tools provided, bring your own, or tools available for purchase if desired. Ages 18+. **Registration required.**

22 K-2nd Grade Scout Astronomy Night

Thursday, February 22, 6–7:30 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

Geauga Park District is pleased to offer a night of astronomy to K-2nd graders at this International Dark Sky Park! Activities will include a planetarium show and night sky viewing (weather permitting) to peer deep into the night sky to see planets, nebula and other celestial features. Please dress for the weather! **Registration required** for participating scouts only.

22 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, February 22, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Singers and musicians take turns presenting tunes as others join in. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing, or simply enjoy as an audience member.

23 Moonlight Ski or Hike

Friday, February 23, 6–7:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Ski the McIntosh and Harvest Trails by the light of the snow moon. Must have ability to ski as no instruction provided. Will hike if no snow. Call after 2 PM on program day to check conditions. Ski rental available in advance from Geiger's, 50 Shopping Plaza, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022, 440-247-4900. Special rental rate for this program: \$19 for patron pick-up Friday after 3 PM and return Monday during business hours. **Registration required.** - Volunteers needed

24 Whatever-the-Weather Venture

Saturday, February 24, 10 AM–Noon
Observatory Park, Cygnus Shelter

It may be a bit optimistic, but we're hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are just right for snowshoeing, that is what we'll do. If not, we'll take a cold-weather hike. Whatever the weather, let's get outside! Borrow a pair of our snowshoes or bring your own. Ages 8+ with adult. **Registration required** for all participants.



24 Icy Insects

Saturday, February 24, 2–3:30 PM
Whitlam Woods

Some bugs' love light heats up when the weather cools down. A sharp eye can find springtails, stoneflies, spiders and more crawling around on the winter ground, even on top of the snow! Let's explore the park for these creatures on this cool winter hike.

24 Full Moon Hike: The Crow Moon

Saturday, February 24, 6:30–7:30 PM
Observatory Park

Even during winter, Nature is active at night. Join us on a hike to see what's left its tracks, then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes.

25 Important Bird Area Walk

Sunday, February 25, 8–10 AM
Orchard Hills Park, Parking Lot

Join Blackbrook Audubon Society on our Important Bird Area (IBA) walks on the fourth Sunday of each month. Good for beginners and experienced birders. Learn more bird identification tips firsthand. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. For more info, visit blackbrookaudubon.org.

25 Sap's-a-Risin'!

Sunday, February 25, Noon–4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation

Visit Geauga Park District's sugarhouse, sugarbush and lodge for a sweet taste of how maple sugaring methods have evolved from the Native American tradition to modern methods! Help gather sap in the sugarbush alongside a horse-drawn sap sled, experience the tapping, gathering and boiling methods used throughout history, see sap boiling in the sugar house and taste some maple syrup, then warm up with live music and maple treats in the lodge. Also March 3 & 10.

25 Buckeye Trail Highlight Hike

Sunday, February 25, 2–3:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands

The Buckeye Trail winds nearly 1,444 miles around Ohio. Let's visit one of the eight Geauga Park District parks that can access the Blue Blazes. Must be able to hike 2-4 miles. Rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.

25 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Sunday, February 25, 2–2:45 PM & 3–3:45 PM, Observatory Park,
Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week.

25 Travelogue: Columbia, A Land of Natural Diversity in Any Discipline

Sunday, February 25, 2–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Columbia always vies for being number one in natural diversity in any discipline. Take a photographic tour of this amazing country as Tom Sampliner shares his January 2023 three-week journey to discover the culture of Columbia. In collaboration with the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio.

FEBRUARY

Registration begins at 10 AM on December 20 for Geauga residents and December 27 for others. Sign up online or by calling 440-286-9516.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

RECURRING PROGRAMS

9 23 Astronomy Pioneer: José Joaquín de Ferrer

Friday, February 9, 7–8 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Friday, February 23, 7–8 PM, (Virtual)

Our Astronomy Pioneer series continues with a profile of José Joaquín de Ferrer. Learn about this globe-trotting, Spanish-born astronomer who surveyed the Ohio River and discovered the sun's corona during a solar eclipse, followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. February 23 is an online presentation via Zoom; register for the program and receive a link to join. **Registration required** for virtual program only.



9 10 23 24 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, February 9, 8–11 PM
Saturday, February 10, 7–11 PM
Friday, February 23, 8–11 PM
Saturday, February 24, 8–11 PM

Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

If skies are clear, observe the night sky through the Oberle telescope and other telescopes spaced out around the plaza. Planetarium presentation if cloudy.

10 13 Timbertots:

Forest Friends (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Saturday, February 10 & Tuesday, February 13, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM, The West Woods, Nature Center, Mastin Classrooms

Join Nora the Explorer to discover fun facts about forests and the animals calling them home. We'll explore the new indoor community art show, then head outside, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending.

13 27 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
February 13, Holbrook Hollows
February 27, Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

Hike for active seniors of about 2 miles in Geauga County and surrounding areas, call Geauga Senior Center at 440-279-2167.

16 17 18 Great Backyard Bird Count: The West Woods

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, February 16, 17 & 18, 11 AM–4 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Stop by any time during these hours to help tally birds seen at the big windows. Become an official Citizen Scientist during this worldwide bird count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.



MARCH

Registration begins at 10 AM on December 20 for Geauga residents and December 27 for others. Sign up online or by calling 440-286-9516.

1 Early Morning Hike: Headwaters

Friday, March 1, 8:30–9:30 AM
Headwaters Park, Rt. 322 Parking Lot

Get your day started with an early morning, up-paced, hike through the woods. We'll talk as we walk with little stopping.

1 Nature Lecture Series: Geauga's Mighty Trees

Friday, March 1, 7–8:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Gauga County was once covered in a nearly unbroken, ancient forest. Today we have a patchwork of forests, agriculture and residential areas. Learn about the trees we've lost and the trees fighting to hold on, and see some of our remaining giants.

2 Paint a Frog

Saturday, March 2, 2–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$5 Geauga residents, \$7 out-of-county
3D printers have made printing anything possible, including things in Nature. Learn about Geauga County's frogs, then try your hand at painting a 3D-printed model of a Woodfrog, Gray Treefrog or Spring Peeper! All supplies included. **Registration required.**

8 Whatever-the-Weather Venture

Friday, March 8, 6–7:30 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

It may be a bit optimistic, but we're hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are just right for snowshoeing, that is what we'll do. If not, we'll take a cold-weather hike. Whatever the weather, let's get outside! Borrow a pair of our snowshoes or bring your own. Ages 8+ with adult. **Registration required** for all participants.



9 Wonderful Waterfowl Van Trip

Saturday, March 9, 9 AM–4 PM
The West Woods

As the landscape starts to thaw, the waterfowl start congregating on large lakes, ponds and marshes. We'll keep our options open but plan to visit Lake Erie and other large bodies of water to look for gulls, ducks, grebes and more. Bring a sack lunch and binoculars and dress warm. **Registration required.**

9 Nature Trek Fitness Hike

Saturday, March 9, 9–10:30 AM
The Rookery

Let's move it, people! Burn off those calories on this fitness hike, learning some cool Nature facts along the way. Must be able to hike at least 4.5 miles on level terrain. Dress accordingly and bring water. **Registration required.**

10 The Big Hike at Tupelo Pond

Sunday, March 10, 9 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Tupelo Pond Parking Lot

Are you ready to hike as many Tupelo Pond trails as possible covering 5+ miles? If yes, this is the perfect hike for you! Adults only. Bring water and a snack. **Registration required.**





10 Nature Journaling: Sapsuckers

Sunday, March 10, 1–3:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
Practice basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month our inspiration will be plants and animals that utilize tree sap for food. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. First-timers pay max fee for start-up supplies. Those who've attended before, but not within the calendar year, pay \$10 (Gauga residents) or \$12 (out-of-county) for additional instruction and supplies. Those who've already attended within the calendar year are free. **Registration required** by phone only at 440-286-9516. ♿

11 Coffee with the Birds

Monday, March 11, 9:30–10:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Register to join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird viewing and identification of winter birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required.** ♿

13 Make a Binocular Field Cover

Wednesday, March 13,
1–2 PM, 2:30–3:30 PM, 6:30–7:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Learn some basic binocular maintenance and make a protective leather cover for your binoculars. All material provided. Bring binoculars to measure for best fit. **Registration required.** ♿

16 Campfire Cooking: Pie Iron Breakfast

Saturday, March 16, 8–9:30 AM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Fee: \$4 Geauga residents, \$6 out-of-county
Learn a new outdoor skill and get inspired for your next camping adventure! Pie irons are great for sandwiches and dessert pies over the campfire, and this time we're making breakfast fair: French toast and other fixin's like eggs, bacon, cheese, etc. **Registration required** for all participants. ♿

16 Astrotots XL: "Now You See It..." (Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, March 16, 9:30-10:45 AM & 1-2:15 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
"...and now you don't!" But why? Come discover how to view the upcoming total solar eclipse, plus assemble your own SUNsational project to make this once-in-a-lifetime event even more memorable. **Registration required** only for children ages 6-11. ♿

23 Hound Hike

Saturday, March 23, 9:30–10:30 AM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Dogs and their humans, join us for a 1.5-mile hike on easy trails. Companions Dog Training will also share some helpful tips and tricks to practice. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and bags for clean-up. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog, kept on leash at all times.

16 Maple Sugaring Van Trip

Saturday, March 16, 1–4:15 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Join a naturalist to visit two local maple producers: Seldom Seen Farm and Salo Maple in Montville Township. Each includes a tour of each producer's method from sugarbush to sugarhouse. Dress for the weather and prepare for a walk through the woods, which may include mud and uneven trails. **Registration required.**

16 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, March 16, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau Astronomical Station

Stop in to discover this awesome facility and join members of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society taking in the wonders of the night sky using our restored telescope! A limited number of people will be permitted inside the building at a time, which may result in a wait to enter. No registration required. Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice. ♿

17 Hike The West Woods: Cabin Fever Cure

Sunday, March 17, 10:30 AM–12:30 PM & 1:30–3:30 PM, The West Woods

Join a naturalist in search of early indicators that spring is on the way. Weather is variable and trails include hills, so dress for the weather with sturdy shoes that can get wet.

19 Blackbrook Audubon: Maple Sugaring

Tuesday, March 19, 7–8:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Blackbrook Audubon Society has Naturalist Karie teaching about her favorite time of year – sugaring season! We'll learn the history of maple syrup, how maple syrup is made at Geauga Park District, the chemistry of maple syrup, and its surprising health benefits. ♿



♿ Fully Accessible ♿ Nature Scopes



21 Elderberries: Total Solar Eclipse

Thursday, March 21, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Seniors, join Naturalist Karie indoors to learn about the upcoming total solar eclipse right here in Geauga County! Refreshments served. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.** ♿

21 Skydance: Flight of the Woodcock!

Thursday, March 21, 7–8:30 PM
The Rookery

This annual rite of spring returns to The Rookery since habitat restoration has made the area along the Woodcock Trail more suitable to our featured species. Get a behind-the-bushes look at the courtship antics of one unique bird, the American Woodcock, highlighted by its amazing "sky dance" with "wing song" and careening descent. ♿



23 Waterfowl Migration Watch: Mosquito Lake Van Trip

Saturday, March 23, 7 AM–Noon
The West Woods

March and April are good times to see spring migratory waterfowl. We'll take the park van to visit one of Trumbull County's birding hot-spots. Bring binoculars or scope, camera, etc. and dress for the weather since we will be in and out of the van at various locations. **Registration required.**

23 Scout Day: Wolf Scout "Call of the Wild Adventure"

Saturday, March 23, 9–10:30 AM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

Wolf Scouts, join us to work on your "Call of the Wild" Adventure. Indoors and outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** only for participating scouts.

23 Wildlife Egg-stravaganza

Saturday, March 23, 10:30 AM–1 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Go on an indoor/outdoor adventure to discover local wildlife and the eggs they lay. Scavenger hunt prizes awarded upon completion. Drop in anytime during program hours.

23 Scout Day: Cadette "Trees Badge"

Saturday, March 23, 1–3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge
Join us in the sugarbush as we work toward your Cadette Trees Badge (not provided). **Registration required** for participating scouts only.



23 Backcountry Hike

Saturday, March 23, 1–4 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

Take an off-trail hike in a mature woodland to enjoy views along Affelder Stream and Silver Creek, visiting new park property and one of the biggest tulip trees in the state of Ohio! Must be capable of several miles of strenuous on- and off-trail hiking including muddy, wet woodlands with some steep slopes and several stream crossings. **Registration required.**

24 Important Bird Area Walk

Sunday, March 24, 8–10 AM
Orchard Hills Park

Join Blackbrook Audubon Society on our Important Bird Area (IBA) walks on the fourth Sunday of each month. Good for beginners and experienced birders. Learn more bird identification tips firsthand. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. For more info, visit blackbrookaudubon.org.

24 Hidden Gems Hike

Sunday, March 24, 2–3:30 PM
Whitlam Woods

Hike with a naturalist along these beautiful trails to discover some of Nature's hidden gems! Must be able to hike 2 miles over hilly terrain. Rain or shine; wear footwear that can get wet and muddy.

24 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Sunday, March 24, 2–2:45 PM & 3–3:45 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. ♿

24 Full Moon Hike: The Worm Moon

Sunday, March 24, 7:30–8:30 PM
Observatory Park

Join us for this naturalist-led hike of 1.5-miles over level terrain at a gentle pace to search for worms and the woodcocks that eat them, then observe the rising full(-ish) moon using park telescopes, weather permitting.

25 Waterfowl Watch

Monday, March 25, 8:30–10:30 AM
Headwaters Park, Rt. 608 Main Parking

Learn about the waterfowl taking a rest from migration as we walk along lake's edge. Bring binoculars. Park in lot and walk back to the boathouse. ♿

26 Spring Break Planetarium Show

Tuesday, March 26, 11 AM–Noon & 2–3 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Get a preview of what to look for in the night sky this spring, plus learn how to watch the upcoming total solar eclipse. ♿

27 Nature Explorers: Campfire Cooking

(Ages 6–11 w/adult)
Wednesday, March 27, 1–3 PM
Holbrook Hollows, Lodge

Learn about campfire cooking as we demonstrate Dutch oven cooking and pie irons. Each family will get to make a treat in a pie iron. Mostly outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending.

27 Bring In Your Garden Tools

Wednesday, March 27, 1–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Have a shovel that needs sharpened? Clippers that need cleaned? Drop in anytime during these hours with your tools and we'll help you spruce them up during this pre-spring maintenance session. Should your gear need more major repairs, though, we may arrange a drop-off and pick-up instead. ♿

28 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, March 28, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Singers and musicians take turns presenting tunes as others join in. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing, or simply enjoy as an audience member. ♿

29 Frogs, Flowers & Fun

Friday, March 29, 10–11:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Celebrate spring with fun activities like seed planting, scavenger hunt, a Nature craft and more! Indoors and outdoors, so dress accordingly. Activities will be geared for ages 3+. Adults must attend with children. **Registration required** for all attending.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

2 6 Timbertots: Maple Sugar Time!

(Ages 3–5 w/adult)
Saturday, March 2 & Wednesday, March 6, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM

Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

Explore outdoors and enjoy hands-on activities to discover where and how we get real maple syrup! All outdoors, so dress for the weather. Snow boots encouraged. **Registration required** for all attending.

3 10 Maple Driving Tour

Sundays, March 3 & 10, 10 AM–5 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Sugar House

Gauga Park District is a featured stop on the statewide Ohio Maple Madness Tour and the Maple Tour of Northeast Ohio. Stop in any time during listed hours, with sap collection in our sugarbush alongside a horse-drawn sap sled from 1–4 PM. Visit ohiomaple.org or mpneoh.com for more information.



3 10 Sap's-a-Risin'!

Sundays, March 3 & 10, Noon–4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation



Visit Gauga Park District's sugarhouse, sugarbush and lodge for a sweet taste of how maple sugaring methods have evolved from the Native American tradition to modern methods! Help gather sap in the sugarbush alongside a horse-drawn sap sled, experience the tapping, gathering and boiling methods used throughout history, see sap boiling in the sugar house and taste some maple syrup, then warm up with live music and maple treats in the lodge. Also February 25.

8 9 Weave a Square Basket with a Handle

Friday, March 8 & Saturday, March 9
Noon–6 PM, The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$25 Gauga residents, \$29 out-of-county
Weave a square basket with a wooden handle using an alternative fiber splint made from paper. Finished basket measures roughly 11"x11"x6". Skill level: intermediate. **Registration required.** ♿



8 22 Predicting Eclipses

Friday, March 8, 7–8 PM, Observatory Park,
Robert McCullough Science Center 
Friday, March 22, 7–8 PM, (Virtual) 

From ancient knowledge to modern methods, learn how humans figured out how to predict eclipses, followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. March 22 is an online presentation via Zoom; register for the program and receive a link to join. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

8 9 22 23 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, March 8 & 22, 8–11 PM
Saturdays, March 9 & 23, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

If skies are clear, observe the night sky through the Oberle telescope and other telescopes spaced out around the plaza. Planetarium presentation if cloudy.  

12 26 Geauga Walkers


Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
March 12, Headwaters Park, Rt. 608 Main Parking
March 26, The West Woods, Affelder House

Hike for active seniors of about 2 miles on hilly terrain. For other weekly hikes in Geauga County and surrounding areas, call Geauga Senior Center at 440-279-2167.

15 16 Astrotots: Hide & Seek Sun

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Friday, March 15, 9:30–10:30 AM, 11 AM–Noon, 1–2 PM,
Saturday, March 16, 11:30 AM–12:30 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Let's learn a few first facts about the upcoming solar eclipse! Commander Melvin will help present a fun, pre-K primer on sun safety with sun songs, sun games and a "partly-sunny" make-n-take craft. **Registration required** only for children ages 3-5. 




Archery Games for Kids

(Ages 9-16 w/adult)

Saturday, January 13, 10–11:30 AM


Youth take the next step in improving their aim through playing archery games. Must have attended a GPD intro program to register.

Registration required for youth only, but adult must also attend. 

Introduction to Archery for Kids

(Ages 9-16 w/adult)

Saturday, January 13, 12:30–2 PM

Youth learn the basics of target archery. Participants must be at least 50" tall and wear closed-toed shoes. **Registration required** for youth only, but adult must also attend. 


Archery Practice

(Ages 9+)

Saturday, January 13, 2:30–3 PM

Sunday, January 14, 3:30–4 PM
Monday, January 15, 3–3:30 PM & 3:45–4:15 PM

Sunday, February 11, 5:45–6:15 PM

These 30-minute sessions exist for you to take the next step in improving your aim through practice. Must have attended a GPD intro program to register. **Registration required**; adult must attend with youth. 

ARCHERY FOR EVERYONE

Introduction to Archery for Adults

Sunday, January 14, 11 AM–12:30 PM

Friday, February 9, 3–4:30 PM

Adults learn the basics of target archery. Wear close-toed shoes. **Registration required.** 


Archery Games for Adults

Sunday, January 14, 1:30–3 PM

Friday, February 9, 7:30–9 PM

Sunday, February 11, 4–5:30 PM


Take the next step in improving your aim through playing archery games. Must have attended a GPD intro program to register.

Registration required. 



Archery Games for Families

Monday, January 15, 10:30 AM–Noon


Take the next step to improve your aim by playing archery games. Must have attended a GPD intro program to register. Participants must be age 9+, at least 50" tall, and accompanied by an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all participants. 

During the winter, archery programs are held indoors at The Rookery's Great Blue Heron Lodge.

Introduction to Archery for Families

(Ages 9+ w/adult)


Monday, January 15, 1–2:30 PM

Families with children ages 9+ learn the basics of target archery together. Participants must be at least 50" tall and accompanied by an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all participants. 

Introduction to Archery for Homeschool Families

(Ages 9+ w/adult)

Friday, February 9, 1–2:30 PM


Homeschool families learn the basics of target archery together! Participants must be 50" tall and wear closed-toed shoes. Indoor space limited; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all participants. 

Archery Camp for Kids

Tuesday, March 26

9 AM–Noon, (Ages 9-11)

1–4 PM, (Ages 12-15)

Does your kid want to learn, or do they already enjoy, the sport of target archery? Sign them up for this 3-hour, drop-off Archery Camp! We'll go over safety, how to use the equipment, and practice techniques, plus work on our aim by playing a few games and take a Nature walk. **Registration required.** 



Walk Among the Trees

at Geauga Park District's New Community Art Show



...and this time, by “walk among the trees,” we mean paintings, drawings, photos, sculptures and other creations inspired by trees that you can see beginning Saturday, February 3, during our new community art show at The West Woods Nature Center.

Trees have inspired the creativity of artists throughout history. Walk among these trees to discover the ways artists interpret their beauty and connection to the human spirit.



Show hours will be daily
10 AM to 4 PM through April 21.

Indeed, we are connected to trees in many ways. Aside from the physical need for trees in our environment — providing oxygen, food, shelter and wood for building materials — trees provide us with emotional well being. We instinctively like being around trees. Property values increase with the presence of trees. Research has found that trees planted in front of buildings make them more inviting. We visit parks to be around trees, to walk in the woods and picnic in their shade. Being near them is proven to lower our stress levels, lower our blood pressure and connect us with Nature.

It's no wonder, then, that trees provide such an inspiration to us artistically. *The Forest is Calling and I Must Create* celebrates our admiration for trees and what they mean to us. Visit and you

will see trees depicted in all seasons, all stages, all varieties and all different media, from pencil and paint to wood and recycled materials. Should a piece move you, some artwork will also be available for purchase so you can enjoy it for years to come.

To submit artwork, entries must be tree-inspired or tree-themed; they can be made from various media or created of wood. Drop entries off at The West Woods Nature Center on Monday, January 22, between 10 AM and 3 PM, or Tuesday, January 23, between noon and 7 PM. Applications are available at The West Woods Nature Center, Big Creek Park's Meyer Center, and online at www.geaugaparkdistrict.org under Activities, then Special Events & Art Shows.



Geauga Gems: The Year of the Amethyst

Let's Hike the Seasons!

To complete this year's series, hike a minimum of four trails each season from the seasonal lists our naturalists created. Attending a naturalist-led hike? Count it as one of your trails. Don't see your favorite trail? Add it to the list. Hike a total of 16 trails over four seasons by 12-31-24 to earn your commemorative sticker for the year (and trekking pole if you are a first-time finisher). Note the option also still exists to hike 60 self-guided miles to earn your reward(s).

For more information, visit our website under Activities, then Hiking, Walking & Running.



ADVENTURES in Geocaching



N 41° 26.415
W -81° 21.807

Check out the new geocache
at Modroo Preserve in Russell Twp.

Expires April 1, 2025. Find details on our website under Activities.

Who really knew about wonderful Modroo? A great place for walks and to gather your thoughts. This meadow trail likely holds lots of memories, but please be warned that this park contains no amenities. Hiding a cache out in the open, this tip should be pretty easy, we're hopin'. No more hints will be posted where this cache is now hosted. Find it this winter, or wait for spring; we just hope you have fun locating this thing!

What's New with Agents of Discovery in '24



Install the free app and
start an account to play!

We're excited to be returning with Agents of Discovery in the new year, featuring some new twists and turns — different parks to explore and Agents-branded prizes for some of our most favorite explorers!

Swine Creek Reservation will be a featured mission this season as we "investigate" the art of maple sugaring. Download the app so the game can tell you which trails to walk, and as you approach each challenge, it will become available for you to play.

Haven't tried the game yet? Nine new missions will be yours to try throughout 2024, and we'll soon introduce tiers of prizes that you can earn.

To learn how a naturalist can guide your way around the parks *virtually* through Agents of Discovery, and for Agents updates year-round, just visit our website under Activities, then Geocaching & Location-Based Games, or follow your parks on social media.



Photo by Sarah Marcus-Donnelly



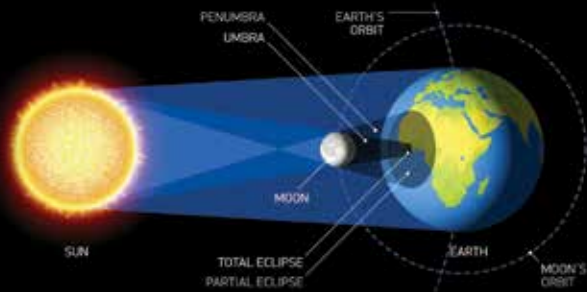
Donations to
Geauga Park District
August through
October 2023

Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors

Avonlea Gardens & Inn	1,000 Trees	\$250.00
Cleveland Foundation	Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Fund	\$2,000.00
Cleveland Foundation	Lewis & Ruth Affelder Fund	\$526.75
Deborah Nemecek	Donation in memory of Katy Berquist	\$100.00
Lynne Charney & Lori Pilat	Donation to Chip Henry Institute in memory of Larry & Donna May	\$70.00

Geauga County's Total Solar Eclipse

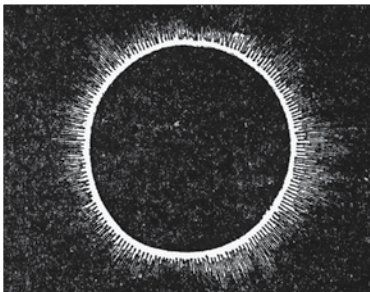
**...bringing
several minutes
of night-like
darkness to the
middle of the
day!**



A RARE & SPECTACULAR EVENT

On April 8, 2024, Geauga County will experience a total solar eclipse. This rare, natural spectacle occurs when our Earth, moon and sun align so perfectly that the moon's shadow falls on Earth — and for Earthlings lucky enough to live in the narrow path of the moon's shadow, this event brings several minutes of night-like darkness in the middle of the day.

As this occurs, the moon's shadow will trace a narrow path across Earth, just over 100 miles wide through Ohio. Luckily, all of Geauga County will lie within the moon's shadow on the big day of April 8, 2024, and we are predicted to experience almost three and half minutes of darkness. A total solar eclipse occurs somewhere on Earth about every 18 months, but a particular location might have to wait centuries between total eclipses, and Geauga County and Ohio last experienced one back in 1806...so you may want to mark your calendar now!



Daniel Dayton, a then-new resident of Burton Township, recorded his eyewitness account of the June 16, 1806 eclipse in the book "Pioneer and General History Of Geauga County, Ohio." While a crew of neighbors and fellow townsmen busily hauled logs and split shingles to construct Dayton's house, the eclipse caught them by surprise. "In the afternoon," Dayton wrote, "darkness came on. The fowls sought cover, and the animals gathered in the shadow of that day. The men stopped work until the sun should come from behind the great cloud. There was something of

terror in the gloom of the Great Eclipse – that spread its night over the day and the land."

Dayton's account is the only one from Geauga County that I've been able to find. (Leicester Perkins, a future Auburn Township trustee, experienced the eclipse from Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains while on his way to settle in Geauga County with his family; alas, his story counts as "almost" from Geauga County.) If you or another local history sleuth know of another local eyewitness account of the 1806 eclipse, let us know! Email info@geaugaparkdistrict.org with "Eclipse history" in the subject. 🌿

**THE GREAT GEAUGA
TOTAL SOLAR
ECLIPSE 4-8-2024**

Join Geauga Park District to view the eclipse at the Geauga County Fairgrounds! This FREE event includes pre-eclipse activities from 11 AM to 2 PM, followed by eclipse viewing from 2 to 4:30 PM with provided eclipse glasses for safety (while supplies last – then we share). The total eclipse will occur at 3:15 PM.



The Wonderful Woodpecker

Complete these wonderful facts about woodpeckers by choosing the correct word from the word bank (the blue square to the right) to fill in the blanks. Then place the letters in the colored circles into the corresponding colored circles below to answer the question. Good Luck!

Woodpeckers are known for _____ wood; they are named for it, after all. But **how** and **why** they do it is what makes them wonderful.

The woodpecker _____ is long, sharp and very strong. It allows them to chisel, dig and pry into the wood. The bird's _____ is very thick, which makes it very strong as well. It has a special shock-absorbing layer that helps to protect the _____ from the force of pecking.

They also have strong _____ muscles that allow them to move their heads back and forth very quickly and give them the power needed to chip away at hard wood. Pecking speed is different depending on the type of woodpecker, but is usually 10 to 20 times per _____!

Woodpeckers have strong, stiff _____ feathers they use for balance and extra support to stay on a vertical tree trunk while pecking.

In their special _____ foot arrangement, two toes point forward and two backward, giving them a strong grip on tree trunks and branches. Their _____ are sharp and curved to prevent them from slipping from the side of a tree trunk.

Woodpeckers peck on dead branches or hollow trees to make loud sounds that can be heard from far away. This behavior is called _____, used for many purposes including communicating, attracting a mate and claiming their territory.

They also create _____ in trees to search for food: mostly insects, but some also feed on sap, berries and nuts as well. Their long, specialized _____ help them reach food that other birds can't. They hollow out larger spaces that make great _____ to raise their babies. Sometimes other animals use these holes for their homes as well.

Woodpeckers don't harm a tree by pecking holes. In fact, they can actually help a tree's _____ by eating insects that may cause the tree harm!

DRUMMING
TAIL SECOND PECKING
NESTS TONGUES SKULL
BRAIN CLAWS
ZYGODACTYL HOLES
BEAK HEALTH NECK



RED-BELLIED
WOODPECKER

A famous cartoon woodpecker named Woody, first appearing on television in 1957, shares some of the characteristics of this, the biggest woodpecker found in North America. Its wingspan is just over two feet wide! From the red crest on its head to the funny laugh resembling its call, it is believed Woody was inspired by this common species of woodpecker found in our own backyards.

WHO AM I?



_____ woodpecker

Do you recognize these other species of woodpeckers found in Geauga County?



DOWNY
WOODPECKER



RED-HEADED
WOODPECKER



YELLOW-BELLIED
SAPSUCKER



NORTHERN FLICKER



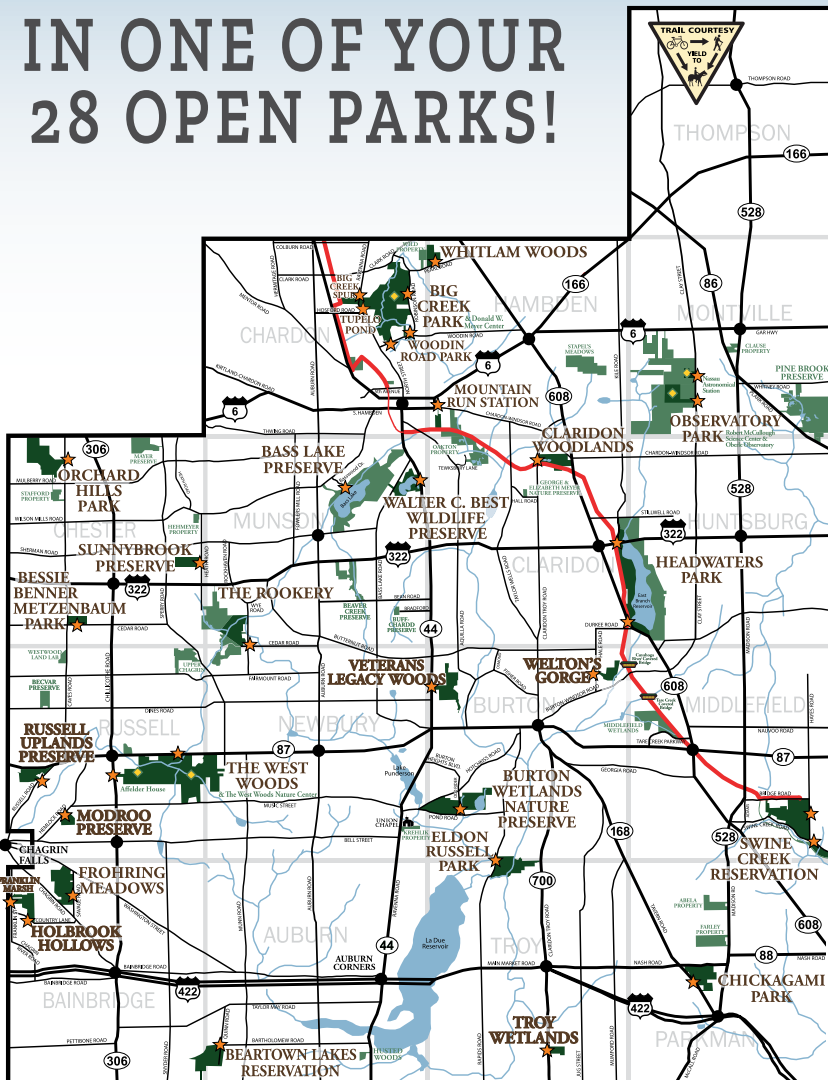
HAIRY
WOODPECKER



Geauga Park District
9160 Robinson Road
Chardon, OH 44024-9148

FIND YOUR ADVENTURE

IN ONE OF YOUR 28 OPEN PARKS!



THE GREAT GEAUGA
**TOTAL SOLAR
ECLIPSE 4-8-2024**

SAVE THE DATE

**Start planning for this
once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!**
FREE event at the Geauga County Fairgrounds

**Geauga Park District's
Annual Sugaring Celebration**

Sap's- a-Risin'!

Gather sap,
experience the
history of syrup production,
taste a sample & warm
up to live music and
treats in the
lodge!

**Sundays Noon-4 PM
Feb. 25, March 3
& March 10**
Swine Creek Reservation in Middlefield



Printed on paper using
10% post-consumer waste

www.geaugaparkdistrict.org
440-286-9516



PECKING, BEAK, SKULL, BRAIN, NECK, SECOND, TAIL, ZYGODACTYL,
CLAWS, DRUMMING, HOLES, TONGUES, NESTS, HEALTH

Answer to the question is **PILEATED**