

# PARK EXPLORER

## GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE



*Streamlife Exploration for Families program at Affelder (Details on page 12)  
Photo by Sonny Williams*

SPRING 2025

**4** How riding bicycles can foster youth resilience

**15** Let Nature inspire you to write a poem or short story

**16** View all the 2025 summer camps for kids entering grades 3-10

**18** Does your spring checklist look like a naturalist's?

# 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.



## Saturday, April 19, Veterans Legacy Woods *Details on page 8*

**Earth Day Tree Planting** - Register to plant trees with our Natural Resource Management team, learning about trees along the way.

**Earth Day Drive-Through** - Fee: \$5. Register to swing by the park and pick up a stash of native plants for your yard and information about caring for our Earth.

## ROPES & BOATS

**Saturday, May 24, is opening day for Headwaters Park's kayak/canoe borrowing and Claridon Woodlands' high ropes course.**

For activity details & restrictions, visit our website under News & Updates.



## Saturday, June 21, Headwaters Park

**PADDFEST** *Put your paddling skills to the test!*

Execute three activities challenging your endurance, maneuverability and navigation. Start times are 9 AM, 10 AM & 11 AM. Fee: \$10. Details on page 14.



**Music Concerts at Big Creek Park's Amphitheater at 7 PM**

**New Barleycorn 6/21**

**Tom Todd's Trip to Buffettville 7/19**

**Big North Band 8/16**

**Outdoor Movie Nights at Observatory Park with pre-show activities at 6 PM & movies at 7 PM (earlier this year thanks to the use of a huge LED screen!)**

**Finding Nemo (G, animated) 6/14**

**Men in Black (PG-13) 7/26**

## SAVE-THE-DATE!



## Saturday, August 9, Veterans Legacy Woods

Pack a picnic and join us for a day of great summer fun including hikes, Nature activities, outdoor family games and more! Details will be forthcoming in the summer edition of your Park Explorer.

## SPRING 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.



**Geauga Gems Trekking Series Program**  
Naturalist-led hike recommended to take toward your 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

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## 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 the 2nd & 4th Fridays & Saturdays of each month 6 – 11 PM and every other Sunday of each month 1 – 4 PM

The Maple Highlands Trail and Welton’s Gorge are open daily dawn till dusk

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

[www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org)  
[info@geaugaparkdistrict.com](mailto: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 spring edition of your Park Explorer! Spring weather and the change of the seasons is a welcome sight after a winter that lived up to Geauga County expectations. As I write this letter, maple sugaring season is right around the corner. I hope you and your family were able to make it to one of our Sap’s-a-Risin’ Sundays at Swine Creek Reservation. Maple sugaring season is truly a wonderful sign of the seasons here in Geauga County.

In February, I was honored to attend the annual Ohio Parks & Recreation Association’s annual conference to accept an award on behalf of Geauga Park District. There, your newest park, Troy Wetlands, received a third place award. With more than 900 people in attendance at the conference – a new conference record – the distinction was quite an honor. This award would not have been possible without the contributions and support of you, our Geauga County resident. You are a staunch supporter of parks and recreation services in Geauga County.

In this edition, please find our annual Year in Review special insert. The report summarizes our accomplishments throughout 2024. We are thrilled to highlight some of your newest investments in parks and recreation services. For instance, we encourage you to visit the now-statewide-recognized Troy Wetlands in Troy Township. It has proven to be a birding hotspot, and what better time to acquaint yourself with birds than the spring migration of songbirds!

For those who have not hiked the new Tulip Trail at The West Woods, we also encourage you to check it out. Since its completion, we are receiving rave reviews from many of our residents.

Enjoy reviewing all of the opportunities to enjoy your parks this spring – our annual Earth Day celebration, the opening of high ropes at Claridon Woodlands, the opening of free kayak rentals at Headwaters Park, Nights Out in the Parks featuring movies and live music, and so much more! We look forward to seeing you out in one of your parks.

## 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.

FEATURING PARK FRIENDS

# Shenanigans in the Park

By Matthew Mesarchik



“Shenanigans Jr. Cycling Club is dedicated to using cycling, racing, and most of all outdoor adventure to provide an environment that helps kids become the best version of themselves. Our programs foster resilience, commitment, and community.”

Drafting that mission statement took a surprisingly long time. Condensing what we do with kids on bikes into a short statement was a bit of a challenge, perhaps because our programs are so big! When I look back on where it all started in 2019, with four kids and two parents going to races, I still can't believe we got where we are now. Those four kids thought it was great, the two parents were winging it, and we learned as we went from race to race. Even in those early days, I wanted Shenanigans to be about more than just going to races. The goal was



always to have a positive impact on kids and build an organization that would be around for many years. As we head into our seventh year, we are now a couple dozen volunteers running two distinct programs serving about 60 kids. We ain't done growing yet!

The race team evolved to become the Shenanigans Adventure Race Team, and that name includes "adventure" because the kids get the opportunity to participate in many race disciplines including cross country mountain biking, cyclocross, gravel and endurance events. For four years, we have had kids as young as 12 on the start line of the toughest mountain bike race in North America, the Marji Gesick, and the kids get to compete in about 15 races a year. That includes the Shenanigans At Big Creek Park race, where we bring a USA Cycling-sanctioned event to the woods of Geauga County. The common threads in all the races are fun and community, and the kids never even realize they are learning the lessons in our mission statement.

In 2022, we embarked on a new project, the Adventure Bike Club. ABC is not a race program, but is instead focused on getting kids ages 5 to 12 outside on a bike

with kids their age for weekly adventures. We meet Wednesday evenings in Geauga parks starting in June. Along the way, we also teach some bike skills and encourage the kids to take on challenges like riding two whole miles in the woods! Hey, for a 5-year-old that just got off training wheels, two miles is a HUGE adventure!

Like the race team, ABC also started small, 12 kids and just a few adults. But in 2024 we had more than 40 kids and about a dozen adult leaders. We spend a lot of time splashing in creeks, picking up snails, and stopping for snack breaks in the woods. (Snack breaks are very important to the Adventure Bike Club kids!) At the end of those eight weeks, each kid comes away riding better on a bike, but also stronger and more confident in themselves!

Kids that start the program saying "Mom, I can't ride a bike that far" end the summer saying "Mom, you won't believe how far we rode today!" Adults know it was only two miles, but to the kids, it was a grand adventure.

Our partnership with Geauga Park District has been a valued asset to the success of our youth programs. We host 11 events in Geauga Parks each year that benefit Northeast Ohio youth, and that is before you count all the days our race team kids are riding the mountain bike trails at Big Creek! As we head into 2025, we are looking forward to many more years of Shenanigans in Geauga parks!

All that is just a sample of what Shenanigans Jr. Cycling is about. If you want to know more, know a kid that should come race, or want to volunteer, please visit our website, [www.shenaniganscycling.com](http://www.shenaniganscycling.com). 🍁



To learn more about Adventure Bike Club, visit [www.shenaniganscycling.com/adventure-bike-club](http://www.shenaniganscycling.com/adventure-bike-club). To learn about the Shenanigans race at Big Creek Park on September 28, part of the Northern Ohio Mountain Bike Series, visit [www.bikereg.com/shenanigans-at-big-creek-park](http://www.bikereg.com/shenanigans-at-big-creek-park).



### FIELD NOTES:

WHEN YOU ENTER THE PARKING LOT, IT'S HARD TO RESIST WALKING DIRECTLY TO THE ONE-ACRE POND ACROSS THE ADJACENT OPEN MEADOW. IN ALL SEASONS IT IS A PEACEFUL SPOT TO SIT AND OFFERS PLENTY OF ROOM IN THE FIELD TO RECREATE, MAKING THE PARK MORE DIVERSE.

# Spend Some Time at Russell Uplands Preserve

A small gem in Russell Township provides the perfect escape to Nature. Three trails total two miles and are great for year-round hiking and cross country skiing in winter. They have just enough of a rolling landscape to keep hiking at an easy level yet provide that picturesque landscape we all love to appreciate while exploring.

Russell Uplands Preserve is 122.9 acres and mainly wooded, but has a nice mix of diverse habitats as well. The property is made up of wet floodplain and dry upland forests, the latter being home to some large red oak trees with trunks three to four feet in diameter!



Another important fact about Russell Uplands Preserve is that it is located in the Chagrin River watershed, meaning that its many headwater and riparian wetlands protect the water that flows into the Chagrin River. These protected streams and wetlands are very visible when you visit, so watch for them. Springtime will also be a wonderful time to enjoy finding the wildflowers that like to grow along floodplain areas, but don't wait too long or else they'll be gone! 🌱



Photo by Jim Marquardt

Remember to mark your calendars or set an alarm to attend non-registration programs, as reminder emails cannot be sent for them. Thanks.

# APRIL

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

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

## 1 Snipe Hunt & Hike

Tuesday, April 1, 8:30–10 AM  
Frohning Meadows

Ever been fooled into a snipe hunt? Never been to see a real snipe? Let's turn this practical joke into the real deal. Witness the aerial courtship displays of Wilson's Snipe for a memorable rite of spring.

## 5 Interurban Railroad 100th Anniversary History Hike

Saturday, April 5, 9–11 AM, The Rookery  
Learn the fascinating history of the Interurban Railroad as we hike 2.5 miles on level terrain along the old railroad bed. Held rain or shine except in the event of severe weather; check website for status.



## 5 Nature Explorers: Native Solitary Bees

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, April 5, 1–3 PM  
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

Solitary insects like mason and leafcutter bees are gentle, beneficial native pollinators. Build a pollinator house and learn tips to increase the numbers of these native bees beneficial to farms and gardens. Indoors and outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending.

## 6 Coffee with the Birds

Sunday, April 6,  
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 spring birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required**; please choose just one session.

## 6 Bald Eagle Hike

Sunday, April 6, 9–11:30 AM  
Headwaters Park

Learn amazing facts about Bald Eagles and hike to an active nest to hopefully observe eagle activity! Hike is 2.5 miles over rolling terrain with some off-trail. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather with sturdy footwear and bring binoculars.

## 6 Nature Journaling: Sounds of Spring

Sunday, April 6, 1–3:30 PM  
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county  
A monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month's inspirations are the sounds of spring. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. First-time participants must pay \$20 for Geauga residents or \$24 for out-of-county residents to purchase a new journal, pen and other supplies. Those who attended the series before, but not within the calendar year, must pay \$10 for Geauga residents or \$12 for out-of-county residents to cover additional instruction and supplies. Those who already registered within the calendar year are free. **Registration required** by phone only.

## 6 Lesser Celandine, An Undesirable Beauty

Sunday, April 6, 1–2 PM  
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Lesser celandine is an invasive, aggressive menace to wildflowers, gardens and lawns. Emily Rauschert, associate professor of plant ecology at Cleveland State University, will share recent lesser celandine research. Learn how to identify and get rid of this plant. If you want to attend the hike that follows, you must register for that separately. **Registration required.**

## 6 Wildflowers & Invasives Backcountry Hike

Sunday, April 6, 2–4:30 PM  
Orchard Hills Park

Take a strenuous off-trail hike into rugged, wet woodland ravines to enjoy native spring wildflowers and view the invasive, aggressive lesser celandine that threatens to choke out the native flowers. Must be able to hike on steep terrain and possible wet areas. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy waterproof footwear. Walking stick recommended. **Registration required.**

## 8 Art Workshop: Suncatcher Workshop

Tuesday, April 8, 6:30–8:30 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$38 Geauga residents, \$40 out-of-county  
Create a wire-wrapped suncatcher using beach glass and driftwood to accent your art with beads and shells. All materials provided, but you may bring pieces of glass, rocks or shells from your own collection to add to your piece. Instructed by Brittany Paynter. Fee includes all materials, instruction and refreshments. Ages 15+. **Registration required.**

## 9 Odds & Ends Baskets

Wednesday, April 9,  
Noon–4 PM & 5–9 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center  
Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county  
Use your creativity! A basic pattern will be provided, then you'll design and weave your basket. Some experience recommended. **Registration required.**

## 11 Homeschool Days: Signs of the Season

(Ages 5-7 & Ages 8-12)  
Friday, April 11, 10:30 AM–Noon  
The West Woods, Nature Center  
Join a naturalist to explore spring things! We'll learn about what the weather, plants and animals are doing during this amazing season. **Registration required.**

## 12 Nature Trek Fitness Hike

Saturday, April 12, 12:30–2 PM  
Veterans Legacy Woods

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 up to 4.5 miles on various trail conditions. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.

## 12 Hound Hike

Saturday, April 12, 3–4:30 PM  
Holbrook Hollows

Dogs and their humans, join us for a medium-level 3-mile hike along White Pine Way and Old Ironsides Run, then take home an "Adventure Ready" dog scarf to remember it by. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share helpful tips and tricks to practice as we hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and clean-up bags. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog, kept on 8 ft. max leash at all times. Dogs must be non-aggressive to people and other dogs.

## 12 April Evening Adventure

Saturday, April 12, 7:30–9 PM  
Eldon Russell Park

Join us for a woodcock air show accompanied by a chorus full of Spring Peeper piping, Barred Owl bantering, beaver tail-slapping and Great Blue Heron flapping – a most memorable spring evening hike for families! **Registration required.**

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

## 12 Full Moon Hike: The Spring Peepers Moon

Saturday, April 12, 8–9 PM  
Observatory Park

Join us on a hike to look for nighttime signs of spring. Then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. 🏠

## 13 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Sunday, April 13, 1–3 PM  
The West Woods, Deer Run Shelter

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



## 13 Warbler Warm-up

Sunday, April 13, 2–4 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

Noted local birders Matt Valencic and Kelly Stanek present techniques for IDing spring warblers using color patterns, habitat, behaviors and song. For novice to intermediate birders. Special attention will be paid this year to common warbler species. Program hand-outs will be emailed upon request. In collaboration with the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland. 🏠

## 13 Family Campfire Safety

Sunday, April 13, 2–3:30 PM  
Bass Lake Preserve, Lodge

Campfire safety is important for everyone in the family. We'll discover how to properly build, maintain and extinguish fires, then watch a few fire-building demos and roast a marshmallow or two. **Registration required.** 🏠

## 13 Birding for Beginners

Sunday, April 13, 3–4:30 PM  
Eldon Russell Park

Curious or new to birding? Learn the basics of bird identification on this slow-paced bird walk. Experienced leader will assist participants with observation and identification. Binoculars available to borrow. 🏠

## 14 "Yarn Over" in the Park

Monday, April 14,  
1–2:30 PM & 6–7:30 PM  
Big Creek Park, Deep Woods Lodge

Celebrate spring and the colors of our early-spring wildflowers! Bring four colors of yarn that depict spring to you – pale yellow, pink, lavender, light blue or light green, perhaps – to work our project (details emailed before program), or bring another project to work instead. This is not a "learn to" program, so participants must already know how to crochet or knit. **Registration required.** 🏠

## 17 Elderberries: Earth Day Adventure

Thursday, April 17, 9–11 AM  
Veterans Legacy Woods

Seniors, join our Natural Resource Department team to learn how to properly plant a tree, then plant a few at a former golf course-turned-park in honor of Earth Day! Participants should be comfortable with walking up and down steep grades and digging/moving dirt. Breakfast will be sponsored by Jennings at Notre Dame Village. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

## 17 What's in My First Aid Kit?

Thursday, April 17, 7–8 PM (Virtual) 📺

Your first aid kit is essential for outdoor activities. Let's discuss the most common outdoor injuries and ailments and see if our first aid kits are up to the job. This is a virtual program; we will send you the link a few days before the program. **Registration required.**

## 18 Wildlife Egg-stravaganza

Friday, April 18, 10:30 AM–1 PM  
The West Woods

Go on an indoor/outdoor adventure to explore local wildlife and their eggs in this egg hunt with a Nature twist! All participants will be awarded fun prizes upon completion. Drop in anytime during program hours. **Registration required.**

## 19 Top 10 Trails Hike: Big Blue Stem Trail

Saturday, April 19, 2–3:30 PM  
Frohning Meadows

You voted and now we hike! Let's explore this trail together and see what makes it special enough to be chosen among your Top 10 Trails.

## 19 Earth Day Extravaganza Tree Planting

Saturday, April 19, 9 AM–Noon  
Veterans Legacy Woods

Join our Natural Resource Management team to help plant native trees, learn proper planting techniques, and learn on a walking tour about our efforts to restore this park. If possible, please bring your own shovel and gloves. Meet in Tribute Lodge's lower level. **Registration required.**

## 19 Earth Day Extravaganza Drive-Through

Saturday, April 19, Noon, 12:15 PM, 12:30 PM, 12:45 PM, 1 PM, 1:15 PM, 1:30 PM & 1:45 PM, Veterans Legacy Woods  
Fee \$5

Choose your time to pick up a mixed bag of native Ohio trees and wildflowers to plant at home in order to improve wildlife habitat! **Registration required** per vehicle, not the number of people inside. Please arrive during your 15-minute session only.

## 19 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, April 19, 8–11 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. Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

## 24 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, April 24, 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.

## 25 Early Morning Hike

Friday, April 25, 8–9:30 AM  
Orchard Hills Park

Join a naturalist for an early morning up-paced hike on the moderately hilly terrain.

## 25 Nature Night Lecture Series: Irritating Nature

Friday, April 25, 7–8:30 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

We all love exploring the outdoors, but let's be honest, there are sometimes things that can make the experience unpleasant – ticks, mosquitoes, poison ivy and more. We'll take a little in-depth look at some of these species, avoidance techniques, and some in-the-field remedies to make your outdoor experiences a little more pleasant! 🏠

## 26 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Saturday, April 26, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. These cart tours are a great way to help you explore Nature! As we tour the trails, we'll make stops to talk about interesting natural and cultural features we discover. All participants must be able to enter and exit a six-seat golf cart. Please limit registration to yourself and one guest. **Registration required.**



**26 Backcountry Hike: Ravines, Rocks & Ledges**

Saturday, April 26, 1–4 PM  
The Rookery

Join a naturalist for an off-trail adventure into some of the rock ledges, streams and ravines of the protected preserve portion of this park. Must be capable of several miles of rugged off-trail terrain. Dress for the weather with sturdy boots. **Registration required.**

**26 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show**

Saturday, April 26, 2–2:45 PM  
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

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

**26 Campfire Cooking: Pie Irons**

Saturday, April 26, 4–6 PM  
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

Fee: \$4 Geauga residents, \$6 out-of-county  
Learn a new outdoor skill and get inspired for your next camping adventure! Together we'll practice making sandwiches over a campfire using pie irons. A variety meats, cheese, and other topping will be provided to mix and match. **Registration required.**

**27 The Big Tobacco Cleanup in the Parks**

Sunday, April 27, 9 AM–1 PM  
The West Woods Nature Center

Geauga Park District, Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers Inc. and University Hospitals are partnering to clean littered tobacco products from our parks. Meet at The West Woods for in an introductory talk, then everyone will be sent out to different parks to clean up tobacco litter (and other trash). To finish, we'll reunite at The West Woods for a wrap-up and food. **Registration required.**

**27 Scout Day: Webelos Walkabout Adventure**

Sunday, April 27, 9–11 AM  
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Join us for the Webelos Walkabout Adventure! We'll complete all requirements, starting indoors with a brief opening program, then proceeding outside for a 2-mile hike. Dress for the weather. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult leaders must attend.

**27 Scout Day: Junior Flowers Badge**

Sunday, April 27, 1–3 PM  
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Junior Girl Scouts, join a naturalist to work toward your flower badge. Dress for the weather, as the majority of this program will be held outdoors exploring flowers! **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult leaders must attend.



**27 Wildflower Wander**

Sunday, April 27, 2–4 PM  
Swine Creek Reservation

Wander along one of your parks' most beautiful trails for wildflowers, the Valley Trail, to learn about early spring wildflowers and their natural history and folklore. Walk will be 1.5 to 2 miles involving a steep descent and ascent in and out of the valley.

**29 Waterfowl Watch**

Tuesday, April 29, 8–10 AM  
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

Take an opportunity to view migrating waterfowl on the tranquil waters of this beautiful lake. Bring binoculars.

**29 Wildflower Wander**

Tuesday, April 29, 10:30 AM–12:30 PM  
Headwaters Park, Rt. 322 Parking Lot

Wander along the trail with a naturalist in search of early spring wildflowers to learn their natural history and folklore. Walk will be 2 to 3 miles.

**30 Eco Printing Workshop**

Wednesday, April 30, 6–9 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$48 Geauga residents, \$50 out-of-county  
Artist Deb Berkebile will lead this workshop on a form of natural dyeing, utilizing bundled plant materials and direct contact printing to draw pigments from plants, leaving interesting and surprising marks on fibers, which are then transferred to fabric via heat press. Participants will create a silk scarf. No previous experience necessary. Dress for mess and bring 6-12 leaves for experimentation. Ages 15+ **Registration required.**

RECURRING PROGRAMS

**3 5 Bald Eagle Van Trip**

Thursday, April 3 & Saturday, April 5,  
Noon–5 PM, The West Woods

Learn amazing facts about Bald Eagles as we drive to various eagle nests and hot spots around Geauga County. Dress for unpredictable weather and bring binoculars, water and a snack. **Registration required.**

**5 8 Timbertots: Amazing Amphibians**

(Ages 3-5 w/adult only)  
Saturday, April 5, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM  
Tuesday, April 8, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM  
The West Woods, Nature Center

Spring has sprung and the amphibians have awakened! We'll experience the sights and sounds of these cool creatures with fun activities and an outdoor walk. Indoors and out. Dress for the weather. **Registration required.**

**8 22 Geauga Walkers**

Tuesdays, 1-2:30 PM  
April 8, Headwaters Park, Route 322 Parking  
April 22, The Rookery

Active seniors, join a naturalist-led hike of about 2 miles. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

**11 25 Citizen Science Astronomy Projects**

Friday, April 11, 7–8 PM  
Observatory Park   
Friday, April 25, 7–8 PM (Virtual)

Space science needs you! Learn how to join in a bunch of "citizen science" projects that rely on you to help find exoplanets, map Mars, and accomplish other outer-space pursuits. Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. April 25 is a virtual program; we will send you the link a few days before the program. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

**11 12 25 26 Night Sky Viewing**

Fridays, April 11 & 25, 8–11 PM  
Saturday, April 12, 9–11 PM  
Saturday, April 26, 7–11 PM  
Observatory Park

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

**13 20 27 Annual Spring Bird Walk Series**

Sundays, 7:30-9:30 AM  
April 13, Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve  
April 20, Frohring Meadows  
April 27, The Rookery

See a variety of birds as they return to prime breeding habitat during spring migration. Experienced leaders will assist participants with observation and identification. Dress for the weather; bring binoculars. Also May 4, 11 & 18 at different locations.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors



### 3 Wildflower Wander

Saturday, May 3, 1–3 PM  
Claridon Woodlands

Wander along the trail with a naturalist in search of spring wildflowers to learn their natural history and folklore. Hike will be approximately 1.5 miles over level terrain.

### 3 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Saturday, May 3, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM  
Beartown Lakes Reservation

Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. These cart tours are a great way to help you explore Nature! As we tour the trails, we'll make stops to talk about interesting natural and cultural features we discover. All participants must be able to enter and exit a six-seat golf cart. Please limit registration to yourself and one guest. **Registration required.**

### 4 Scout Day: Tiger Cub Scouts "My Tiger Jungle"

Sunday, May 4, 9:30–11 AM

Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

Explore Nature in your own jungle! Held outdoors, so dress for the weather.

**Registration required** for scouts only, but adult leaders must attend.

### 4 Tea & Wildflowers

Sunday, May 4, 12:30–2:30 PM

Big Creek Park, Deep Woods Lodge

Fee: \$5 Geauga residents, \$7 out-of-county

Celebrate spring with a fun and informative talk on wildflowers as you enjoy a variety of teas and light lunch, then head out on a short trail hike to look at the wildflowers in bloom. Held rain or shine. **Registration required.**

### 4 Scout Day: Brownie Bugs Badge

Sunday, May 4, 1–3:30 PM

Swine Creek Reservation, Lake Side Shelter

Brownies, come work toward your Brownie Bugs Badge. Held outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult leaders must attend.

### 4 Nature Journaling: The Weather Around Us

Sunday, May 4, 1–3:30 PM  
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county

Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month our inspiration will be the weather around us. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. First-time participants must pay \$20 for Geauga residents or \$24 for out-of-county residents to purchase a new journal, pen and other supplies. Those who attended the series before, but not within the calendar year, must pay \$10 for Geauga residents or \$12 for out-of-county residents to cover additional instruction and supplies. Those who already registered within the calendar year are free. **Registration required** by phone only. 📞

### 10 Let's Go Birding!

Saturday, May 10, 8–10 AM

Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Warblers, orioles, vireos, and more – the bird migration in May is not to be missed! Grab your binoculars and meet us for a morning of birding in the parks.



### 10 Hound Hike

Saturday, May 10, 9–10:15 AM

Orchard Hills Park, Parking Lot

Dogs and their humans, take a medium-level 2-mile hike along the Cricket and McIntosh trails, then take home an "Adventure Ready" dog scarf to remember it by. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share helpful tips and tricks to practice as we hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and clean-up bags. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog, kept on 8 ft. max leash at all times. Dogs must be non-aggressive to people and other dogs.

### 10 Winging It & Wine Bird Walk

Saturday, May 10, 9:30 AM–Noon

Laleure Winery

Explore the bird diversity on the Laleure Winery property, situated in the Grand River watershed. This wonderful piece of property has a variety of pristine habitats that are beneficial to migratory birds. Begin with a bird walk and end at the winery's tasting room. Wine and soft drinks will be available for purchase; bring your own lunch. Sturdy hiking shoes and pants recommended. More information/directions will be provided to registrants. **Registration required.**

### 10 Lake Kelso Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)

Saturday, May 10, 1–2:30 PM

Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Paddle the tranquil waters of Lake Kelso, enjoying the wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Ages 10+ with adult, no younger children please. Basic kayaking skills required; instruction is not given. Life vests provided. Held rain or shine, except in thunderstorm. Wear shoes to get wet or muddy and bring a water bottle, sunscreen and change of clothes. No private boats. **Registration required** beginning May 3 at 10 AM.

### 10 Bilingual Chinese/English Wildflower Walk

Saturday, May 10, 3–4 PM

Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

双语野花远足 Get to know the surprising variety of Ohio's native spring wildflowers while also learning some Mandarin Chinese as we translate from English to Mandarin. Our walk will be less than 2 miles over uneven terrain. Dress for the weather.

### 11 Take Me to the Migration Van Trip

Sunday, May 11, 8–4 PM

Big Creek Park, Meyer Center Parking Lot

May in Ohio means bird migration! We will point the van in the direction of the best local bird reports and rare bird sightings in our local area. Bring a sack lunch and binoculars and dress warm in case we end up along Lake Erie. Adults only, please. **Registration required.**

### 12 Early Morning Hike: The Rookery

Monday, May 12, 8–9 AM

The Rookery

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

### 12 Full Moon Hike: The Whippoorwill Moon

Monday, May 12, 9–10 PM

Observatory Park

Join us for a hike under the rising full moon while we search for signs of animals at night. Then, weather permitting, observe the full moon using park telescopes. 📡

### 13 Magee Marsh Birding Van Trip

Tuesday, May 13, 6 AM–6 PM

The Rookery

Fee: \$10 Geauga residents, \$15 out-of-county

Take a van trip to one of the best birdwatching spots in the country to witness the spring spectacle of bird migration along the shores of Lake Erie! We will also visit multiple other bird hotspots depending on birding conditions. Naturalists will assist with bird identification. Bring your own binoculars, water and sack lunch. **Registration required.**

### 15 Elderberries: Fishing!

Thursday, May 15, 9–11 AM  
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove

Seniors, explore Big Creek Park through a hike, fishing and hands-on Nature activity. Fishing poles and bait will be provided, and breakfast will be provided by Ohman Family Living at Holly. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.** ♿

### 17 World Migratory Bird Day Bird Sit

Saturday, May 17, 6:30–11:30 AM  
The Rookery, Interurban Trail Covered Bridge

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day with a bird sit. We will record all the birds we see during the program time. Drop in anytime during program hours and spend as much or as little time as you'd like, sitting on the covered bridge over the river with a naturalist. Bring a chair and relax with binoculars, a camera, and whatever you need to be comfortable. Dress for the weather, noting that program will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain or storms (check our social media). ♿

### 17 What's in My First Aid Kit?

Saturday, May 17, 9 AM–Noon  
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Your first aid kit is essential for outdoor activities. Let's discuss the most common outdoor injuries and ailments and see if our first aid kits are up to the job, then have a practical exercise out on the trail. Held indoors and out, so dress for the weather. Not a training or certification. **Registration required.**

### 17 Buckeye Trail Highlight Hike: Trail Town Chardon

Saturday, May 17, 2–3:30 PM  
Chardon Trailhead Parking Lot, 312 Park Ave, Chardon, OH 44024

The Buckeye Trail winds nearly 1,444 miles around Ohio. Let's visit the Geauga Trail in the Chardon! Meet at the Chardon bike trailhead and together we'll follow the Blue Blazes south for a 3-mile loop along The Maple Highlands Trail to the Buckeye Trail and back. Must be able to hike 3-4 miles. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.

### 17 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, May 17, 9–11 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. Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

### 18 Horseback Trail Ride

Sunday, May 18, 10 AM–1 PM  
Holbrook Hollows, Horse Trailer Parking

Bring your own horse and join a naturalist for this trail ride, enjoying spring woodlands and the connection to Cleveland Metroparks from a seat in the saddle at a leisurely pace. Helmets recommended. Anticipate varied terrain, stream crossings, bridges, a boardwalk and a short stretch of roadside riding. Must trailer your own horse and bring a shovel to clean up after your horse in the parking lot. **Registration required.**

### 18 Top 10 Trails Hike: Summit Trail

Sunday, May 18, 2–3:30 PM  
Bessie Benner Metzbaum Park

You voted and now we hike! Let's explore this trail together and see what makes it special enough to be chosen among your Top 10 Trails. About half of this half-mile gravel trail is uphill; the other half comes back down.

### 22 Toddler Time: Sensing the Spring (Ages 1-2 w/adult)

Thursday, May 22, 9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon  
Beartown Lakes Reservation, North Point

Enjoy experiencing Nature with your little one as we see, smell and touch springtime in the park. Strollers and carriers welcome. All attending must register including adults and siblings. **Registration required.** ♿

### 22 Maple Town Tune Traders



Thursday, May 22, 7–9 PM  
Veterans Legacy Woods, Freedom Hall  
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. Please note new location! ♿

### 24 Holbrook Heron Hike

Saturday, May 24, 1–4:30 PM  
Holbrook Hollows

Take a 6–to 7-mile hike out and back to the Chagrin River site of a nesting colony of Great Blue Herons, enjoying spring birds, wildflowers and Nature lore en route to the river floodplain. Wear sturdy footgear and bring water and snacks. **Registration required.**



 Fully Accessible  Nature Scopes

### 24 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Program

Saturday, May 24, 3–4 PM  
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for an all-ages planetarium presentation to learn what to look for in the sky this month! ♿

### 25 Lost Lake Kayak Expedition on Upper Cuyahoga River (Ages 16+ w/adult)

Sunday, May 25, 9:15 AM-1 PM  
Burton Square Parking Lot (in front of Burton Library)

Experienced kayakers, take a rugged but rewarding three-hour kayak trip to a remote, seldom-seen wild lake accessed from the Upper Cuyahoga River! Ages 16+ only. Be prepared for the possibility of wading and muddy portages as shallow water and beaver-felled trees provide the adventure. Participants must be able to get in and out of a kayak without assistance. Bring water and we will provide all the necessary equipment. No private boats. **Registration required** beginning May 18 at 10 AM.

### 25 Top 10 Trails Hike: Interurban Trail at the Rookery

Sunday, May 25, 2–4 PM, The Rookery  
You voted and now we hike! Let's explore this trail together and see what makes it special enough to be chosen among your Top 10 Trails. Trail is 3 miles on gravel.

### 27 Orienteering Adventure for Families (Ages 8+ w/adult)

Tuesday, May 27, 12:30-3 PM  
Claridon Woodlands, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge

Learn the basics of using a compass, then venture into the woods to practice. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes with good traction. Adult must attend with child and have the ability to walk without assistance off-trail in rugged terrain and up to 3 miles. **Registration required** for all participants.

### 31 Authorized Access Hike: Wildlife of the Landfill

Saturday, May 31, 9:30–11:30 AM  
Waste Management's Closed Lake County Landfill

Back by popular demand! Take this opportunity to explore the grasslands and wetlands of a restored landfill to see how the former solid waste site protects and is naturally reclaimed by an amazing diversity of animals and plants including grassland birds. Directions will be provided to registrants. **Registration required.**

# MAY

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


Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

## 2 4 7 Birding for Beginners

Friday, May 2, 9–11 AM  
Veterans Legacy Woods

Sunday, May 4, 9 AM–1 PM  
Observatory Park

Wednesday, May 7, 6–8 PM  
Eldon Russell Park

*Curious or new to birding? Learn the basics of bird identification on this slow-paced bird walk. Experienced leader will assist participants with observation and identification. Binoculars available to borrow.* 

## 3 8 **Timbertots:**

**Flower Fun** (Ages 3-5 w/adult)  
Saturday, May 3, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM  
Big Creek Park, Deep Woods

Thursday, May 8, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM  
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

*Find out how flowers can be fun with colors, counting and exploration! Held outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required.***

## RECURRING PROGRAMS

### 4 11 18 Annual Spring Bird Walk Series


Sundays, 7:30–9:30 AM  
May 4, Eldon Russell Park  
May 11, Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove  
May 18, Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

*See a variety of birds as they return to prime breeding habitat during spring migration. Experienced leaders will assist participants with observation and identification. Dress for the weather; bring binoculars. Also April 13, 20 & 27 at different locations.*

### 6 20 **Geauga Walkers**

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM  
May 6, Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge  
May 20, Big Creek Park, Deep Woods  
*Active seniors, join a naturalist-led hike of about 2 miles. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.*

### 9 23 **The Zodiac**



Friday, May 9, 7–8 PM  
Observatory Park 

Friday, May 23, 7–8 PM (Virtual) 

*What's YOUR sign? We'll delve into the details of the zodiac, the collection of stories across the middle of the sky. Learn which one the sun passes through on your birthday and explore the fascinating history of this collection of constellations, followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. May 23 is a virtual program; we will send you the link a few days before the program. **Registration required** for virtual program only.*

### 9 10 23 24 **Night Sky Viewing**

Fridays, May 9 & 23, and  
Saturdays, May 10 & 24, 8–11 PM  
Observatory Park

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

# JUNE

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



## 1 **Bald Eagle & Osprey Kayak** (Ages 10+ w/adult)

Sunday, June 1, 10 AM–Noon & 1–3 PM  
Headwaters Park, Boat Launch

*Take a float on this beautiful lake as we search for Osprey and Bald Eagles and learn cool facts about these amazing birds of prey! Previous kayaking experience required. Bring a snack, water and sunscreen. Total distance of 2-3 miles. **Registration required** beginning May 25 at 10 AM.*

## 5 **Inclusive Experience: Signs of the Season Exploration**

Thursday, June 5, 10:30–11:30 AM  
Veterans Legacy Woods

*A special program for adults in the developmental disability community! Join a naturalist on this outdoor exploration to discover the amazing plants and animals around us. **Registration required** for all participants.*

## 5 **Streamlife Exploration for Families**

Thursday, June 5, 1–3 PM  
The West Woods, Affelder House Parking

*Venture into a forested stream to discover wildlife such as crayfish, salamanders and crane fly larva. This is a family program that is outdoors, even in light rain, so dress accordingly and wear shoes or boots for wading in a rocky stream; no sandals, please. **Registration required** for all participants.*


## 7 **Rockhounding in the Valley**

Saturday, June 7, 9–10:30 AM  
Swine Creek Reservation, Valley

*Join us to explore the beautiful rocks left behind by the glaciers in the Swine Creek Valley. We will gather interesting and beautiful rocks and discuss what they might be! Wear sturdy shoes that can get wet.*

## 7 **Astrotots XL: Mars Mania** (Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, June 7,  
9:30–10:45 AM & 1–2:15 PM  
Observatory Park, Robert  
McCullough Science Center

*Learn where and how to see Mars in the night sky, discover what we might learn about Earth by travelling to Mars, listen to some of the Mars myths that have endured the test of time, and make-n-take a diorama of the Martian surface! **Registration required** just for the children.* 

## 7 Restoring Habitat at Home

Saturday, June 7, 1–2:30 PM  
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Join Naturalist Karie as she shares her passion for restoring habitat at home! She and her husband are in the process of planting natives, removing invasives, and enjoying the wildlife returning to their yard! Come learn through their firsthand experience how you, too, can restore habitat at your home. ♿

## 7 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Saturday, June 7, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM  
Welton's Gorge

Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. These cart tours are a great way to help you explore Nature! As we tour the trails, we'll make stops to talk about interesting natural and cultural features we discover. All participants must be able to enter and exit a six-seat golf cart. Please limit registration to yourself and one guest. **Registration required.**

## 8 Nature Journaling: Life Around the Pond

Sunday, June 8, 1–3:30 PM  
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve,  
Sunset Shelter

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county  
Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month our inspiration will life around the pond. All outdoors. Taking photos is optional. First-time participants must pay \$20 for Geauga residents or \$24 for out-of-county residents to purchase a new journal, pen and other supplies. Those who attended the series before, but not within the calendar year, must pay \$10 for Geauga residents or \$12 for out-of-county residents to cover additional instruction and supplies. Those who already registered within the calendar year are free. **Registration required by phone only.** ♿

## 10 Grandparents in the Park Summer Picnic

Tuesday, June 10, 11:30 AM–1:30 PM  
Frohning Meadows, Katydid Lodge

Grandparents and grandchildren, enjoy a day in the park together with a picnic and fun activities for all ages. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging. Food and beverages provided. **Registration required** for all attending. ♿

## 11 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer

(Ages 1-2 w/adult)

Wednesday, June 11,  
9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon  
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve,  
Sunset Shelter

Experience Nature with your little one as we see, smell and touch early summertime in the park. Strollers and carriers welcome. **Registration required** for all in attendance including adults and siblings. ♿

## 11 Full Moon Hike: The Strawberry Moon

Wednesday, June 11, 9–10 PM  
Observatory Park

Learn a bit about the strawberries that ripen this month, and join us on a moonlit walk to experience nature at night. Then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. ♿



## 12 Early Morning Hike

Thursday, June 12, 8–9:30 AM  
Veterans Legacy Woods

Start your day with an up-paced hike of 2-3 miles on hill terrain.

## 14 Bass Lake Kayak

Saturday, June 14,  
10 AM–Noon & 1–3 PM  
Bass Lake Preserve

Paddle the tranquil waters of Bass Lake, enjoying the wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Basic kayaking skills required; instruction is not given. Life vests required. Held rain or shine, except in event of thunderstorm. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy and bring drinking water. **Registration required** beginning June 3 at 10 AM.

## 14 Practical Knots for Camping

Saturday, June 14,  
10 AM–12:30 PM & 2–4:30 PM,  
Big Creek Park, Campsite A

Camping is a great family activity. Join us to learn some useful knots used around the campsite. We'll practice 6+ knots, from bowline to taut-line hitches on basic tarp shelters and more. **Registration required.** ♿

## 14 ASM Minerals Garden and Dome Tour

Saturday, June 14, 3–4 PM  
Offsite, ASM International's Headquarters  
Join us for a tour of the minerals garden at ASM International's headquarters, learn the history of the site's iconic geodesic dome, and explore the fascinating science of the minerals found here. Directions will be provided to registrants. **Registration required.** ♿

## 14 Movie Night: Finding Nemo

Saturday, June 14,  
6–10 PM  
Observatory Park

Join us to watch Finding Nemo (rated G)! New this year, we'll start earlier thanks to the use of a huge LED screen! Pre-show activities at 6 PM; movie at 7 PM! Bring your own blankets, lawn chairs and refreshments. Movie shown indoors if inclement weather.



## 15 Dragonfly Van Trip: Hidden Valley Park

Sunday, June 15, 10 AM–3:30 PM  
The Rookery, Parking Lot

Explore a stretch of the Grand River and surrounding areas for dragonflies and damselflies at Lake Metroparks Hidden Valley Park. This park is a popular spot for river dragonflies. Let's see how many we can find! **Registration required.**



Photo by Sonny Williams

## 15 Family Stream Adventure

Sunday, June 15, 1–3 PM  
Swine Creek Reservation,  
Siltstone Stream Parking Area

Venture into a forested stream to discover wildlife such as crayfish, salamanders and crane fly larva. This is a family program that is outdoors, even in light rain, so dress accordingly and wear shoes or boots for wading in a rocky stream; no sandals, please. **Registration required.**

## 19 Elderberries: Chair Yoga

Thursday, June 19, 9 AM–Noon  
Veterans Legacy Woods, Freedom Hall

Seniors, join us for breakfast, chair yoga, a craft and a hike at this beautiful park. Breakfast will be provided by Burton Healthcare. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

## 21 Paddle Fest 2025

Saturday, June 21, start times at 9 AM, 10 AM & 11 AM, Headwaters Park, Boathouse Fee: \$10

Hit the water for our first-ever Paddle Fest to put your paddling skills to the test! Three activities will challenge your endurance, navigation and maneuverability. Bring your own kayak or canoe or reserve one of our kayaks. PLEASE ARRIVE 30 MINUTES BEFORE YOUR START TIME to get set up with your boat. Completion should take more than an hour but no more than two; stay out as long as you need until your time is up. **Registration required** by phone only.

## 21 Summer Solstice Day: Horseback Trail Ride Connecting the Parks

Saturday, June 21, 10 AM–2 PM  
Holbrook Hollows

Bring your own horse for a summer solstice naturalist-led trail ride from Holbrook Hollows to Cleveland Metroparks' South Chagrin Reservation. Bring a lunch and water bottle for a mid-ride break. Expect gravel trails, bridges, boardwalk, stream crossings, river crossings, a ride along a road and bicycles. Must trailer your own horse to Holbrook Hollows. Helmets recommended. Please bring a shovel to clean up after your horse in the parking lot. **Registration required.**



Photo by Jim Marquardt

## 21 Van Trip: Pinebrook Preserve

Saturday, June 21, 10 AM–3:30 PM  
The Rookery, Parking Lot

Five-lined Skinks, dragonflies, birds – what will we find exploring the habitats of our farthest east park property, Pinebrook Preserve? This property was once known as the “Montville Swamp” and has some very nice swamp forest habitat. **Registration required.**

## 21 Nights Out in the Parks: The New Barleycorn

Saturday, June 21, 7–8:30 PM  
Big Creek Park, Amphitheater

Our summer amphitheater concerts kicks off with a night with The New Barleycorn! The New Barleycorn presents a live Irish show with vitality, passion and a touch of humor, singing and playing both contemporary folk and traditional Celtic songs and music, which they have woven into their own musical tapestry of intricate rhythms and melodies. Held indoors if inclement weather. ♿

## 21 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, June 21, 9–11 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. Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

## 22 Hidden Gems Hike: Big Creek Park

Sunday, June 22, 1–3 PM  
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center Parking Lot  
Discover the natural wonders of early summer along some of the beautiful trails of Big Creek Park! Hike will be approximately 2.5 miles over hilly terrain. Held rain or shine. Wear footwear that can get wet and muddy.

## 26 Backcountry Adventure for Youth & Teens: Streams, Ravines, & Ledges (Grades 5-10)

Thursday, June 26, 10 AM–3 PM  
Affelder House

Young people, join a naturalist for an off-trail adventure into some of the rock ledges, streams and ravines of the Affelder and Silver Creek Streams, discovering amphibians, reptiles and other wildlife as we explore. Hikers must be capable of several miles of rugged on and off-trail terrain. Dress for the weather with boots or shoes with good traction that can get wet and muddy. Bring lunch, snacks and a water bottle for a mid-day break. Must have signed waiver. **Registration required.**

## 26 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, June 26, 7–9 PM  
Veterans Legacy Woods, Freedom Hall  
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. Please note new location! ♿

## 28 Searching for Snakes

Saturday, June 28, 10 AM–Noon  
The Rookery  
Snakes! Why did it have to be snakes? Because snakes are amazing creatures that are an important part of the environment! Bring a sense of adventure as we explore likely habitats to find snakes and other reptiles and amphibians. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

## 28 The Sky Tonight Planetary Show

Saturday, June 28, 3–4 PM  
Observatory Park, Robert  
McCullough Science Center

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

## 29 Hound Hike

Sunday, June 29, 9:30–10:45 AM  
Observatory Park, Cygnus Shelter

Dogs and their humans, join us for an easy 3-mile hike along the Nassau Connector Trail and Woodland Loop, then take home an “Adventure Ready” dog scarf to remember it by. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share helpful tips and tricks to practice as we hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and clean-up bags. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog, kept on 8 ft. max leash at all times. Dogs must be non-aggressive to people and other dogs.

## 29 Polliwog Paddle Family Canoe (Ages 5+ w/adult)

Sunday, June 29, 1–2:30 PM  
Eldon Russell Park, Horwath’s Landing  
Families, take an easy-paced, short-distance float on the wildlife-rich Upper Cuyahoga River. Bring water bottle, sunscreen and a change of clothes in case of capsize. All children must be accompanied by an adult. **Registration required** by phone only beginning June 22 at 10 AM.

## 29 Stream Hike (Ages 7+ w/adult)

Sunday, June 29, 1–2:30 PM  
Sunnybrook Preserve  
Salamanders, minnows, crayfish – there is so much life to discover in our streams and, of course, getting into the water helps beat the summer heat! Bring creek-walking shoes (we’ll bring the nets) and let’s hike down to the stream. Children must be accompanied by an adult. **Registration required.**

## 29 Family Campfire Safety

Sunday, June 29, 2–3:30 PM  
Beartown Lakes Reservation,  
North Point shelter  
Campfire safety is important for everyone in the family. We’ll discover how to properly build, maintain and extinguish fires, then watch a few fire-building demos and roast a marshmallow or two. **Registration required.** ♿



Photo by Tami Gingrich

## RECURRING PROGRAMS

### 3 17 Geauga Walkers

Summer Picnic - Tuesday, June 3, Noon-2:30 PM, Claridon Woodlands, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge  
Tuesday, June 17, 1-2:30 PM  
Chickagami Park, Overlook Shelter  
Active seniors, join a naturalist-led hike of about 2 miles. June 3 is the annual picnic. Bring a dish to share and we'll eat after the naturalist-led hike. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

### 6 7 Astrotots:

**Meet Mars!** (Ages 3-5 w/adult)  
Friday, June 6, 9:30-10:30 AM, 11 AM-Noon, 1-2 PM  
Saturday, June 7, 11:30 AM-12:30 PM  
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center  
Collect first facts about where space travel might take our children and grandchildren someday in the not-too-distant future, discover some differences between our blue planet and the red planet, Mars, and giggle and wiggle as we join Commander Melvin in an out-of-this-world dance, The Martian Hop. **Registration required** just for the children. ♿

### 13 27 Navigate By The Stars

Friday, June 13, 7-8 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center ♿  
Friday, June 27, 7-8 PM (Virtual) 📺  
Get a taste for celestial navigation and learn how to figure out your position on Earth using the stars. We'll also explore the fascinating history of how the sky has helped humans and animals find their way, followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. June 27 is a virtual program; we will send you the link a few days before the program. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

### 13 14 27 28 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, June 13 & 27, 8-11 PM  
Saturdays, June 14 & 28, 9-11 PM  
Observatory Park  
If skies are clear, observe the night sky through the Oberle telescope and other telescopes spaced out around the plaza. Planetarium presentation if cloudy. ♿👁️

### 20 22 Timbertots: Peeking in a Pond

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)  
Friday, June 20, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM  
Swine Creek Reservation, Lake Side  
Sunday, June 22, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM  
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove  
Grab a net with Nora the Explorer to discover all kinds of critters that live in a pond! Held outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required.**

♿ Fully Accessible    👁️ Nature Scopes



## ARCHERY FOR EVERYONE

### Archery Practice (Ages 9+)

Monday, June 9, 5:30-6 PM  
Chickagami Park, Archery Range  
These 30-minute sessions are for you to take the next step in improving your aim through practice. Must have previously participated in our Introduction to Archery program to register. Ages 9+, no younger children please; under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. **Registration required.**

### Introduction to Archery for Families

Monday, June 9, 6:30-8 PM  
Chickagami Park, Range  
Families with children ages 9+, learn the basics of target archery together. Participants must be 50" or taller, wear closed-toe shoes and be accompanied by an adult if under 18 years of age. **Registration required** for all attending.

• POETRY & PROSE    • 3 AGE CATEGORIES    • GET PUBLISHED!

# Let Nature Inspire Your Writing

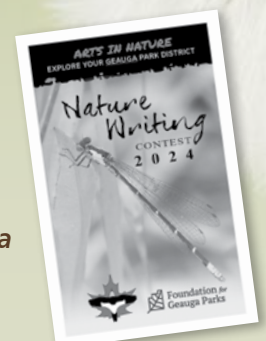
## Enter Geauga Park District's 30th Annual Nature Writing Contest

Tuesday, April 22, is Earth Day — and the deadline for writers of all ages to submit Nature-inspired poetry, prose or both to this annual contest.

**\$100** for 1st Place Adults and Adolescents  
**\$50** for 1st Place Children

Thanks to the  
 Foundation for Geauga Parks  
for sponsoring these great prizes

Get your application online at <http://bit.ly/gpdnwc2025> or at The West Woods Nature Center, Big Creek Park's Meyer Center, or your favorite Geauga library. In addition to cash prizes, winners are published in our Nature Writer's Chapbook and online, and get invited to a special winners coffeehouse celebration in July at Claridon Woodlands. Good luck!





# 2025 summer camps



## Nature Adventure Day Camp

**Youth entering grades 5-7 (3 sessions)**  
Monday through Friday, June 9–13, June 23–27 & July 28–August 1

**Teens entering grades 8-10 (2 sessions)**  
Monday through Friday, June 16–20 & July 14–18

All sessions 9 AM–3 PM daily  
Fee: \$150 Geauga residents, \$175 out-of-county residents

*Join us for an exciting week of exploring through Nature study and recreational activities — biking, kayaking, trying archery and more! Older groups also get to try out the high ropes course. Campers begin and end each day at various parks: Claridon Woodlands Monday and Tuesday, Headwaters Park on Wednesday, Observatory Park on Thursday, and Chickagami Park on Friday.*

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED for all sessions**  
<http://bit.ly/gpdccamps2025>  
or call 440-286-9516

*Waivers and other details will be sent prior to camp. Campers bring lunch, water and a raincoat in a backpack each day. Sunscreen and insect repellent are also recommended. All other equipment is included in the fee and provided. Financial assistance is available; please call for details.*

## Junior Naturalist Day Camp

**Youth entering grades 5-7 (2 sessions)**  
Monday through Friday, June 2–6 & July 21–25  
9 AM–3 PM daily at Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge  
Fee: \$150 Geauga residents, \$175 out-of-county residents

*Join us for an exciting week of exploring streams, ponds and forests in search of insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and more. There is so much to see and learn! Campers spend their days both on-trail and off-trail at this single park. Drop-off and pick-up at the lodge.*

## Nature Explorer Day Camp

**Youth entering grades 3-4 (2 sessions)**  
Monday through Friday, July 7–11 & August 4–8  
9 AM–3 PM daily at The West Woods, Affelder House  
Fee: \$150 Geauga residents, \$175 out-of-county residents

*Join us for an exciting week of exploring streams, ponds, and forests in search of insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and more. There is so much to see and learn! Campers spend their days both on-trail and off-trail at the Affelder House (entrance at 15139 Chillicothe Road in Russell Township).*



Photo by Olivia Hoffman

# Let's discover the Great Outdoors!

# ADVENTURES in Geocaching

Enjoy a short walk, but away from the dock.  
 No need for a paddle or time to dilly-daddle.  
 There's no trail sign around to find this spot off the ground.  
 Its own little forest, this tree is so great.  
 It boasts many tree trunks – in fact, it has eight.  
 I'd like to write more, but by now you have found it.  
 This park might seem small, but it's the land that surrounds it.

Check out the new geocache  
 at Bass Lake Preserve in Munson Twp.

Expires June 1, 2026.  
 Find details on our  
 website under  
 Activities.

N 41° 33.041'  
 W -81° 13.759'



## AGENTS of Discovery Rewards Have Landed!



Agents, did you hear? Not only is 2025 offering you six different missions to complete — it will also offer you six NEW reward items to claim!



Once you've completed your first mission of 2025, snap a screenshot of your completion screen and head into The West Woods Nature Center (open daily 10 AM to 4 PM) to choose an item from our 2025 Rewards Grab-Bag.

Assuming you also enjoyed said mission, we'll collect your name and email address so we can notify you when new missions drop every month and a half. Collect all six and we'll even honor you on social media at the end of the year.

Not sure what Agents of Discovery is or how it works? Explore the app now by downloading it on your smartphone and creating a free account, then head to the park to play.

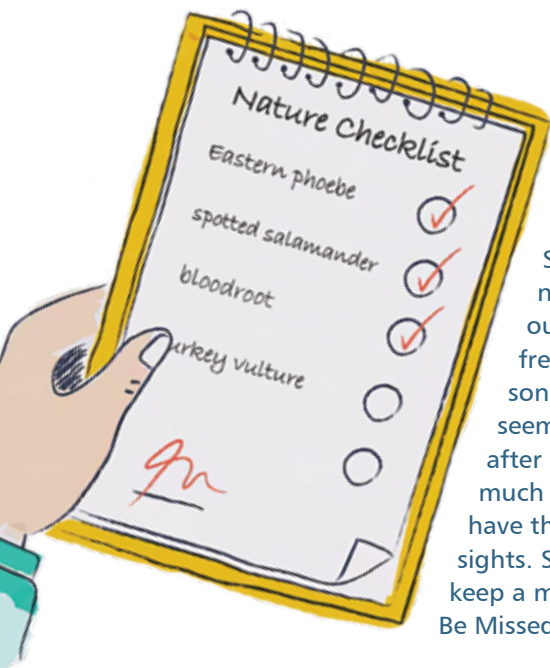


Donations to  
 Geauga Park District  
 November 2024  
 through  
 January 2025

### Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors

Beth Nagusky	Unrestricted donation	\$100.00
Christine Belliveau	Donation in memory of Ron Johnson	\$50.00
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Donation for reimbursement of Gallo Trail improvements	\$34,703.53
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Donation for reimbursement of Nature Scopes 2024-25 expenditures	\$27,748.00
Gary L. Bryant	Donation for Nature Scopes	\$1,000.00
Geauga Walkers	Unrestricted donation	\$100.00
James J. McMonagle	Unrestricted donation	\$5,000.00
Lisa Mann	Unrestricted donation	\$50.00
Lori Jo Folger	Donation for trail maintenance	\$300.00
Michele L. Nelson	Unrestricted donation	\$275.53
Patterson Farms	Unrestricted donation	\$1,000.00
Richard F. Hill	Donation from Laleure Vineyards & Winery from sale of Nine Bridges wine	\$402.00

## The Naturalist's Spring Checklist



Spring might arguably be most naturalists' favorite season to be outside exploring Nature. From freshly budding trees to spring bird songs and the buzzing of insects, it seems like everything is back in action after a restful winter. Incredibly, so much happens this season that we don't have the ability to see all its awesome sights. So, I and other naturalists like to keep a mental checklist of Nature's Not to Be Missed that we want to see the most.

By the time the maple sap has stopped flowing, it is game on and it can even get a little competitive. Who heard the first American Woodcock, Eastern Phoebe or Killdeer, or saw their first soaring Turkey Vulture? These harbingers of spring are an exciting start to the coming northern migration for many birds.

Spring ephemeral wildflowers are a big part of the spring list. While skunk cabbage has been slowly sneaking up since February, our spring wildflowers give the woods a much-anticipated pop of color throughout the parks. Spring beauties and trout lilies seem to thrive along most park trails. However, one flower that might require more effort to find is bloodroot. This relatively large, white showy flower can drop its petals within days of blooming.

As the temperature rises and spring rain falls, then, another natural phenomenon is at risk of slinking under your feet without notice if it's not on your checklist. Eleven months out of the year, mole salamanders remain unseen underground. However, in early spring, they emerge from the forest floor and crawl their way to breeding wetlands and pools for just a few nights to spawn a new generation. Bonus: the migration of Spotted and Jefferson salamanders shares this time with other amphibians doing the same. Scoring up to eight species of amphibians in one night is totally possible, but we have to make time to go outside and look in order for it to happen!

Of course our Nature-seeking drive does not stop when we leave the park either. Naturalists also keep a yard list. My backyard may not be big enough to host the amount of wildlife viewed in the Geauga parks; I've mostly seen birds. But I've also had deer, skunks, toads, snakes and more visiting my yard from time to time, and have recently been trying to boost my yard list by removing non-native plants and replacing them with plants that are native to Ohio. Maybe I can increase the number of butterflies and birds in my yard this spring. Do you have a yard list or think you might start one?



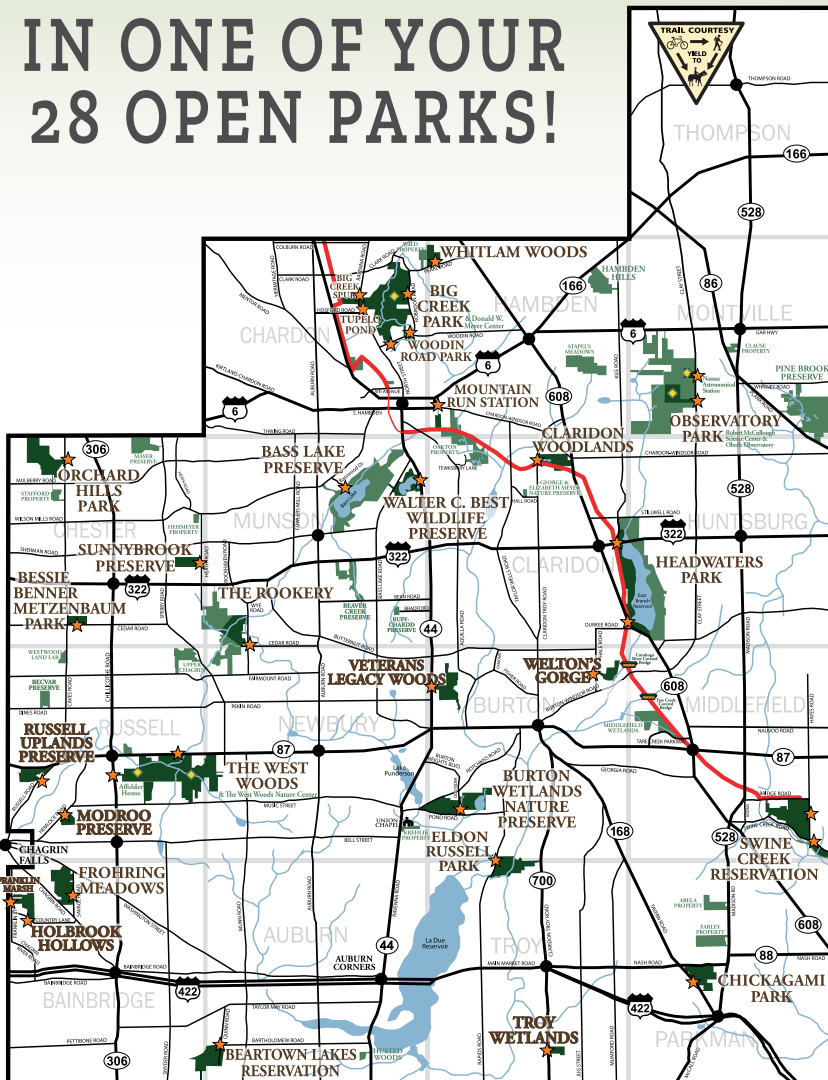




**Geauga Park District**  
 9160 Robinson Road  
 Chardon, OH 44024-9148

# FIND YOUR ADVENTURE

IN ONE OF YOUR  
 28 OPEN PARKS!



- Bass Lake Preserve** MUNSON
- Beartown Lakes Reservation** AUBURN/BAINBRIDGE
- Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park** CHESTER
- Big Creek Park** CHARDON
- Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve** BURTON/NEWBURY
- Chickagami Park** PARKMAN
- Claridon Woodlands** CLARIDON
- Eldon Russell Park** TROY
- Frohring Meadows** BAINBRIDGE
- Headwaters Park** CLARIDON/HUNTSBURG
- Holbrook Hollows** BAINBRIDGE
- The Maple Highlands Trail  
Big Creek Spur** CHARDON
- Modroo Preserve** RUSSELL
- Mountain Run Station** HAMB DEN
- Observatory Park** MONTVILLE
- Orchard Hills Park** CHESTER
- The Rookery** MUNSON
- Russell Uplands Preserve** RUSSELL
- Sunnybrook Preserve** CHESTER
- Swine Creek Reservation** MIDDLEFIELD
- Troy Wetlands** TROY
- Tupelo Pond in Big Creek Park** CHARDON
- Veterans Legacy Woods** NEWBURY/BURTON
- Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve** MUNSON
- Welton's Gorge** BURTON
- The West Woods** RUSSELL
- Whitlam Woods** HAMB DEN
- Woodin Road Park** CHARDON



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[www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org)

440-286-9516



LEAVES, TWIGS, BARK, MUD, STRAW, GRASS, MOSS, FUR, ROOTS, LICHENS, SPIDER, FEATHERS – MASTERPIECE!