

PARKEXPLORER

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE



SUMMER 2025

4 How Swine Creek shaped a love of Nature and birding

6 Claridon Woodlands is an awesome summer hangout, and here's why

16 Place your 2026 facility reservations sooner this year

16 Who won the 30th Annual Nature Writing Contest?

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.

Nights Out in the Parks

*A great way to spend
a summer evening!*

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

**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!)**

Men in Black (PG-13) 7/26



Saturday, August 9, at Veterans Legacy Woods

Pack a picnic and join us for a memorable afternoon of summer fun with Nature activities, outdoor family games, crafts, cart tours and more! See listing on page 10 and details online in July.

Moths & Meteors Overnight Event



**Tuesday, August 12, 9 PM - Wednesday, August 13, 6 AM
at Observatory Park**

Spend a night under the stars and take in the Perseid Meteor Shower, plus up-close views of night-flying moths attracted to our black light and mercury vapor lamps.

Registration required, and don't delay — only 200 people can attend!



THE GREAT GEAUGA COUNTY FAIR

Thursday, August 28 - Monday, September 1 • 11 AM - 7 PM

Visit our building in the Natural Resources Area to see all your Park District can offer you and encounter the spectacular Monarch Butterfly!

Daily Monarch program/taggings at 3:30 PM as butterflies are available

SAVE THE DATE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

How far will you go?



Watch for registration (opening this summer) to run, jog or walk this two-hour race in which each completed lap equals travel through space!



SUMMER 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
info@geaugaparkdistrict.com

Phone: 440-286-9516

From the Desk of THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Executive Director
John Oros

Dear Geauga County Friends & Neighbors,

Welcome to summer in Geauga County!

Warm days remind us that now is a great time to enjoy our water resources, and whether it is a lake, pond or river, Geauga Park District has something special for you to enjoy.

Your parks offer 13 different locations for fishing that are spread throughout the entire county. Species you'll pull out of various waterways include Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Pumpkinseed, Yellow Perch, Crappie, Channel Catfish, Northern Pike and Rainbow Trout. A complete list of peaceful places to fish, as well as the species of fish found there, is always available on our website under Activities, then Fishing. We hope you can find some time this summer to go fishing as a family. Maybe that outing will even give someone to the opportunity to catch their first fish!

If fishing isn't your thing, don't worry, your parks offer several other experiences on the water for you to try or revisit. Perhaps a canoeing or kayaking excursion is something for you. Headwaters Park's East Branch Reservoir is a phenomenal place to hit the water and enjoy a sunrise or sunset, or just float around, with boat borrowing available all summer long from the boathouse. Watch our website under News & Updates for details. Eldon Russell Park provides access to the upper Cuyahoga River, and an excursion down the Cuyahoga never disappoints. Seeing and hearing such a variety of birds and other wildlife makes any summer float on the Cuyahoga a great time.

No matter what your interests, your parks have something for you, guaranteed. Please browse these pages to find something you'd like to try or do. Other ideas include the Summer Nature Celebration in August at Veterans Legacy Woods, various Nights out in the Parks with live music and outdoor movies, and Family Night Campfire programs.

Gauga Park District is Outdoors & All Yours! Whatever your experience with us this summer, we always look forward to seeing you out there.

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS



Howard Bates



Ray Guarino



Les LaGatta



Sally LaMarca



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

Generations of Memories *Made in the Park*

By Chester Kurtz

One sunny Sunday, we decided to head to Swine Creek Reservation. It was a spontaneous decision inspired by the beautiful weather. I called my parents and siblings and let them know we were having an impromptu picnic. We packed the coolers and the children on the buggy, and we were off! The traditional going-to-the-park bucket hung from the rear axle. It held charcoal and grain, and it would also be used to water the horse. There was enough room on the buggy for the bucket, but my dad always tied it on the axle, so it had to be. It's our special going-to-the-park banner.

I have so many memories of Swine Creek Reservation. There's so much for a child to explore and do! Feeding stale bread to the fish, hiking Valley Trail, wading in the creek, and trying to catch the biggest crawdad (Moi! a five inch). My dad showed me the small cemetery near the Lodge Pond. It was just a few stone markers in the woods. There wasn't a trail there, he only knew because his father had shown him.



Geauga Park District and their amazing team of naturalists really helped me develop a love for nature. Even as a teenager, I still enjoyed the park outings, and I always associate them with family time. I remember taking rides on the horse-drawn wagon through the woods. It was on one of those rides that I learned about the Indian Pipe plant. That discovery really sparked my passion for the plants and animals of the forest. I spent my next allowance on a wild plant ID book, which I still have.

Fast forward 30 years, and one spring day in May, my oldest son and I had the chance to join a birding trip to Magee Marsh with a bus of other aspiring Amish birdwatchers. Joining us for the day was a team of



Geauga Park District naturalists who acted as tour guides and helped us find and identify the migrating warblers. I was hooked, and so was my son. Jon really got into the bird world and soon became better at birding than me.

Jon, a 14-year-old at the time, was going through a tough time finding his confidence and sense of self. But then he went on that birding trip, and it changed everything. It was like my own experience with Geauga Park District when I was his age. Now Jon is 20, and I've seen him grow so much, not just as a birding enthusiast, but as a person. Birding helped him discover who he was. During those challenging teenage years, Jon and I shared a special bond through birding, thanks to the amazing Geauga

Park District staff. I'm so grateful for that.

It was like a full circle moment when we hiked the Wagon Trail again that Sunday afternoon. This time, it was with my children and their cousins. We took our time, and the adults lagged while the kids ran ahead, burning off excess energy. Suddenly, my six-year-old nephew stopped and exclaimed, "Hey! What's that bird?" There, perched on a branch just 10 feet away, was a stunning male Scarlet Tanager. These birds are usually elusive, found high up in the forest canopy. They're often heard but rarely seen, so this was a truly special moment for all of us.

If you ever see a horse and buggy with a pail tied to the axle, give us a wave! We're on a mission to make some unforgettable memories. 🍀



Photo by Jim Marquardt

Chester and Mary Kurtz are members of the Old Order Amish and live in Troy Township. Blessed with seven children and various animals, there is never a dull moment.

Park Spotlight

Spend Some Time at Claridon Woodlands



Photo by Tom Elesh Jr.

Found near the top of Claridon Township, this 127 acres seems to have it all. Claridon Woodlands is home to forested areas of various ages, two manmade ponds, and about 4,230 feet of Cuyahoga River tributaries. Three wonderful trails total 2.2 miles, and recreation areas include a high ropes course, pump track/single mountain bike track, freeform boulder wall, Nature-based playground, and spacious fishing platform and viewing decks overlooking Upper Pineside Pond.



Photo by Kristi Farmer



Photo by Abby Smith



Looping around the main parking area and lodge, the paved Whitetail Trail also leads to the play areas and The Maple Highlands Trail. The gravel Drake Trail bisects the play areas and leads you between the ponds and both peaceful viewing platforms. Those who want to head out into the woods, then, take the Tree Tapper Trail — relatively flat terrain that's great for escaping the summer sun to chill in the shade of a mature forest dominated by beech and sugar maple trees.

Claridon Woodlands is also home to one of our most reserved facilities, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge, offering a food prep area and running water ideal for more formal events. A small pavilion nearby is not reservable, though, making it more often available for a perfect summer picnic in the park. 🍁



Photo by Tom Elesh Jr.

Introducing our New Park Board Commissioner



Geauga Park District is pleased to welcome its newest Board of Park Commissioners member: Sally LaMarca of Chesterland. A graduate of West Geauga High School, Ms. LaMarca has lived in the same house since ninth grade and loves the Geauga County life. Her favorite park to walk is Orchard Hills. "I like the parks because we've had family events there, or you can go there when you're alone or want quiet — it has a little bit of everything, just a nice environment to have close by," she said. Service to the parks also runs in her family; her niece is a K-9 officer for Cleveland Metroparks. Ms. LaMarca retired from Giant Eagle after 48 years in the grocery business and is very active in St. Anselm Catholic Church. She joins commissioners Ray Guarino, Howard Bates, Les LaGatta and Frank Stein on the board chosen by Geauga County Probate/Juvenile Court Judge Timothy J. Grendell, who swore her into office for a three-year term ending Dec. 31, 2027.

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

JULY

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

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

5 Hidden Gems Hike: Swine Creek Valley

Saturday, July 5,
9–10:30 AM & 1–2:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Valley Shelter
This is an amazing often-overlooked area of the park with beautiful trails. We'll hike 1.5 miles over hilly terrain with stream crossings. Wear footwear that can get wet and muddy. Held rain or shine.


6 Bass Lake Kayak

Sunday, July 6, 10 AM–Noon & 1–3 PM
Bass Lake Preserve
*Paddle these tranquil waters enjoying the wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Basic kayaking skills required; instruction not given. Life vests required and provided, or bring your own. 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 27 at 10 AM.*

10 Union Chapel Bat Count

Thursday, July 10, 8:30–9:30 PM
Newbury Union Chapel on State Rte. 44
*Union Chapel is home to Geauga Park District's "Bat Condo," a nursery roost for Big and Little Brown Bats and their offspring. Help a naturalist count bats as they exit their daytime roost and head out to feed for the evening. Directions to site will be sent before program. **Registration required.***


10 Full Moon Hike: The Green Corn Moon

Thursday, July 10, 9:30–10:30 PM
Observatory Park
Learn a bit about the corn that ripens this month, join us on a moonlit walk to experience Nature at night, and then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. 

12 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

Saturday, July 12, 9–11:30 AM
Welton's Gorge
*Take a strenuous off-trail hike into a rocky woodland ravine with ledges and cool streams. Must be capable of hiking unassisted over rugged terrain including slippery rocks, steep slopes, downed trees and stream crossings. Held rain or shine. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes with good traction even in wet conditions. Bring walking stick or one will be provided. Long pants recommended. **Registration required.***

12 Bring In Your Telescope

Saturday, July 12, 4–6 PM
Observatory Park
Do you have questions about how to use your telescope? Drop in for a consultation with staff and astronomy volunteers! We'll help you practice setting up and using your telescope during the daytime so that you're ready to try on your own at night. 

13 Hound Hike

Sunday, July 13, 9–10:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
Dogs and their humans, join us for a medium-level, 2-mile hike along the Beechwoods and Hemlock 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 that we can practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and bags for dog clean-up. One dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog that is kept on leash at all times (8 ft max). Dogs must be non-aggressive to people and other dogs.

13 Family Stream Adventure

Sunday, July 13, 1–3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
*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.***

13 Holbrook Hollows Hike

Sunday, July 13, 1–2:30 PM
Holbrook Hollows
Join us for an afternoon hike through this beautiful park. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather.

14 "Yarn Over" in the Park



Monday, July 14, 1–2:30 PM & 6–7:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge
*Celebrate summer with the colors of the season! Bring 4-5 colors of yarn that depict summer to you: shades of lush green, bright sunny yellow, and brilliant sky blue, for example. Participants must know how to crochet or knit, as this is not a "learn to" group. Project details sent prior to program. Participants may also choose to bring their own projects to work instead. **Registration required.** *



Photo by Paige Orvis

15 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer (Ages 1-2 w/adult)

Tuesday, July 15, 9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon, Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park, Wisteria Hill
*Experience Nature with your little one as we see, smell and touch summertime in the park – strollers and carriers welcome! **Registration required** for all attending, including siblings. *

17 Elderberries: Peddling & Paddling in the Park

Thursday, July 17, 9 AM–Noon
Headwaters Park, Boathouse
*Seniors, enjoy a morning at Headwaters Park! Choose from activities including kayaking, hiking, a craft or biking (in which case, please bring your own bike). Breakfast provided and sponsored by Burton Healthcare. A collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.***

17 Introduction to Nature Journaling for Families

Thursday, July 17, 3–5 PM & 6–8 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods
*Fee: \$5 Geauga residents, \$7 out-of-county
Learn the art of Nature journaling! We'll make our own journals and learn about sit-spots, sound maps and other techniques. Fee covers materials cost. Ages 9+, please. **Registration required** for all attending.*

18 Habitat Hike

Friday, July 18, 3–4:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
Join a naturalist for an afternoon walk to explore this beautiful area of many habitats! Approximately 1 mile.

18 Basic Learn to Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Friday, July 18, 6:30–8:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse
*Learn basic kayak-handling techniques for safe kayaking on flat water. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy and bring water and a change of clothes. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children and no private kayaks. **Registration required** beginning July 11 at 10 AM.*

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

18 Family Night Campfire & Fun

Friday, July 18, 7:30–9 PM
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove

Enjoy an evening of family fun with Nature activities followed by a campfire and s'mores! **Registration required.**



19 Breeding Birds Van Trip

Saturday, July 19, 8 AM–4 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Northeast Ohio is home to a number of exciting breeding birds which are actively raising young in July. Travel with us by van to Cuyahoga Valley National Park and surrounding natural areas in search of hard-to-find warblers, sparrows, and vireos while also enjoying our more familiar breeding birds. Bring binoculars and a sack lunch and dress for the weather. Adults only, please. **Registration required.**

19 Spears to Arrows

(Ages 9+ w/adult)

Saturday, July 19, 1–4 PM, Chickagami Park
Learn the history of how the technology of projectiles changed from a simple spear to the compound bow through this hands-on program. You'll see how far you can throw replica spears with an atlatl, then have the opportunity to shoot recurve and compound bows. Ages 9+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all participants.

19 Nights Out in the Parks: Tom Todd's Trip to Buffettville

Saturday, July 19, 7–8:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Amphitheater

Join us for a "trip to Buffettville," Tom Todd's Jimmy Buffett tribute! Cast off, don flip-flops, and grab your boat drinks for a musical cruise to Island Party Paradise! Tom captures the true parrot head feel. His repertoire of Buffett songs and other party, island, beach and boat tunes will put you right into the island mindset. Indoors if inclement weather. ♿

19 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, July 19, 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! Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

20 Buckeye Trail Highlight Hike

Sunday, July 20, 10 AM–12:30 PM
Mountain Run Station

The Buckeye Trail winds nearly 1,444 miles around Ohio. Let's visit a Geauga Park District park that follows the Blue Blazes! Must be able to hike about 6.5 miles on paved surfaces. A shuttle will take us to our starting place. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children please. **Registration required.**

20 Nature Journaling: Mapping

Sunday, July 20, 1–3:30 PM
Holbrook Hollows

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month we'll learn some different techniques to add maps to our journals. 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.

23 Grandparents in the Park: Summer Fun

Wednesday, July 23, 10–11:30 AM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Grandparents and grandchildren, enjoy a morning of all-ages fun including a Nature-based play area. Mostly outdoors, so dress for the weather and bring snacks to share. Beverages provided. **Registration required.**

24 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, July 24, 7–9 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Please note new location! 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 Stream Walk

Friday, July 25, 1–2:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Valley Shelter
Salamanders, minnows, crayfish...there's so much life to discover in our streams, and getting in the water helps us beat the summer heat! Bring your closed-toe creek-walking shoes, we'll bring the nets, and together we will hike down to the stream. Ages 7+ with adult; no younger children, please.

26 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, July 26, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. No registration required. ♿

26 Movie Night: Men in Black

Saturday, July 26, 6–10 PM
Observatory Park

Join us to watch Men in Black (rated PG-13). New this year, we'll start earlier thanks to the use of a huge LED screen, with pre-show activities at 6 PM and the movie at 7 PM. Bring your own blankets, lawn chairs and refreshments. Movie shown indoors if inclement weather.



27 Stream Exploration & Monitoring at Swine Creek

Sunday, July 27, 1–4 PM

Swine Creek Reservation, Valley Shelter
Hike on a primitive trail to gain access to enter Swine Creek. We'll catch and identify stonefly larvae, water pennies and other invertebrates, plus rainbow darters and stream fish, which are indicators of stream water quality. Dress for the weather with sturdy, hiking footwear that can get wet in possible knee-deep water. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required.**

27 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Sunday, July 27, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve

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.**

28 Early Morning Hike

Monday, July 28, 8–9 AM
Russell Uplands Preserve

Join us for an early-morning up-paced hike through the hilly forest of this beautiful park. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather.

30 Monarch Egg-Collecting Hike

Wednesday, July 30,
10 AM–Noon & 1:30–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Hike with a naturalist to scour milkweed plants for Monarch eggs, which we'll then collect and rear for display as adult butterflies at The Great Geauga County Fair! Hike up to 2 miles on rolling terrain, some off-trail, rain or shine. Long pants recommended. Harvesting for personal use is not permitted. **Registration required.**

30 Nature Explorers: Cuyahoga Canoe

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)
Wednesday, July 30, 2-5 PM
Eldon Russell Park

Let's paddle along the Cuyahoga River in search of wildlife and other Nature! All Nature Explorers must be registering with two adults, ideally with some canoe experience. Canoes and life jackets provided. Bring sunscreen, bug spray, water bottle and wear shoes that can get wet. **Registration** opens July 23 at 10 AM by phone only.

31 Drop-in Nature Craft: Canvas Art

Thursday, July 31,
3-4:30 PM & 6-7:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove

Drop in during program hours to create a piece of Nature-inspired art while supplies last. This craft uses Mod Podge, paint and markers, so dress for a mess. Children must be accompanied by an adult. No registration required. ♿

RECURRING PROGRAMS

1 15 29 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1-2:30 PM
July 1, Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
July 15, Holbrook Hollows
July 29, Whitlam Woods

A naturalist-led hike for active seniors of approximately 2 miles. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

6 7 Timbertots: Wildlife Wonders

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Sunday, July 6, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM
Holbrook Hollows

Monday, July 7, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
From little ants to big deer, discover how wild animals can be seen, heard and appreciated all around us! **Registration required** for all attending.

11 25 How to Track an Asteroid

Friday, July 11, 7-8 PM ♿
Observatory Park

Friday, July 25, 7-8 PM 📺
Virtual program

How can you tell if an asteroid might hit the Earth? Learn how asteroids are spotted and tracked, and how you can contribute to the effort. Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. July 25 is virtual; register and we'll send you a link a few days before the program. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

11 12 25 26 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, July 11 & 25, 8-11 PM
Saturdays, July 12 & 26, 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. No registration required. ♿ 📺

♿ Fully Accessible

🌿 Nature Scopes



19 20 Lake Kelso Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Saturday, July 19, 9-10:30 AM
Sunday, July 20, 10-11:30 AM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Spend the morning on these tranquil waters, enjoying wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Basic kayaking skills required as instruction is not given. Life vests provided. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please, and no private kayaks. Held rain or shine, except in event of thunderstorm. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy and bring a water bottle, sunscreen and a change of clothes in case of capsizes. **Registration required** beginning July 3 at 10 AM.

25 26 Weave an Oriole Basket

(Skill Level: Intermediate)
Friday, July 25, Noon-6 PM
Saturday, July 26, Noon-6 PM
Holbrook Hollows

Fee: \$25 Geauga residents, \$28 out-of-county

Build on your skills to weave a basket designed after an oriole nest. Weaving on a wooden frame will help give shape to the basket. Due to program preparation expenses, a refund may not be processed if cancellation occurs within five days of the program. **Registration required.** ♿

AUGUST

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



1 Moth Madness

Friday, August 1, 10:30 PM-12:30 AM
The West Woods, Affelder House

Drop in anytime during program hours and bring your curiosity to the Affelder House to see what species have been attracted to the lights - an awesome opportunity to capture images of night-flying insects! Flashlights and cameras recommended. Be prepared for mosquitos.

2 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

Saturday, August 2,
9-11:30 AM & 1-3:30 PM
Welton's Gorge

Take a strenuous off-trail hike into a rocky woodland ravine with deep rock ledges, cool streams, wildflowers, salamanders and other stream life. Must be capable of hiking unassisted over rugged terrain including slippery rocks, steep slopes, downed trees and stream crossings. Held rain or shine. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes with good traction even in wet conditions. Bring walking stick or one will be provided. Long pants recommended. **Registration required.**

3 Dragon Hunting Hike

Sunday, August 3, 1:30-3:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands

Explore these wetland habitats, discover what dragonflies inhabit the area, learn about these amazing insects, observe their interesting behaviors, and try your hand at catching some! Nets provided; bring your own binoculars, camera, sunscreen and water. Wear sturdy walking shoes (no flip-flops) in case we venture off-trail. 📺



Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

3 Monarch Egg-Collecting Hike

Sunday, August 3, 1:30–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park

Hike with a naturalist to scour milkweed plants for Monarch eggs, which we'll then collect and rear for display as adult butterflies at The Great Geauga County Fair! Hike up to 2 miles on rolling terrain, some off-trail, rain or shine. Long pants recommended. Harvesting for personal use is not permitted. **Registration required.**

6 Inclusive Experience: Insect Exploration

Wednesday, August 6, 10:30–11:30 AM
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve, Sunset Shelter

A special program for people in the developmental disability community! Join a naturalist to discover insects through hands-on activities and a short, accessible walk. **Registration required** for all participants. ♿

9 Basic Learn to Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Saturday, August 9, 8–10 AM
Headwaters Park

Learn basic kayak-handling techniques for safe kayaking on flat water. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy and bring water and a change of clothes. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children and no private kayaks. **Registration required** beginning August 1 at 10 AM.

9 A Salute to Summer

Saturday, August 9, 1–4 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Spend your afternoon at this new special event celebrating the Great Outdoors with indoor and outdoor activities for all ages – games, activities, bingo, crafts, cart tours, refreshments and more. Pack a picnic to make your outing complete!

9 Hike The West Creek Conservancy Addition

Saturday, August 9, 3–4:30 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau Astronomical Station

Visit the newest addition to Geauga Park District's parks and preserves, a hundred-acre site adjacent to Observatory Park that was formerly the West Creek Conservancy's Cuyahoga Headwaters Initiative. This is a soggy, off-trail hike, so dress accordingly. **Registration required.**

9 Full Moon Hike: The Sturgeon Moon

Saturday, August 9, 9–10 PM
Observatory Park

Join us on a moonlit walk to experience Nature at night and learn about the amazing lake sturgeon, then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. ♿

Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques and record your Nature observations.

10 Nature Journaling: Welton's Gorge Overlook

Sunday, August 10, Noon–2 PM
Welton's Gorge

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
This session, we'll be inspired by the view from the overlooks above Welton's Gorge. (A separate afternoon session will travel into the gorge, which is a strenuous hike.) Taking photos is optional. **Registration required.**

10 Nature Journaling: Welton's Gorge

Sunday, August 10, 2:30–5 PM
Welton's Gorge

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
This session, we'll be inspired by traveling down into Welton's Gorge for a closer look. (A separate morning session will instead draw inspiration from the overlook view.) This is a rugged and strenuous hike off-trail with slippery rocks, crossing of streams and downed trees, so you must have the ability to walk without assistance off-trail in rugged terrain. Wear shoes or hiking boots that give good traction even in wet conditions and dress for the weather. Held rain or shine. Taking photos is optional.

Fee terms for both Nature Journaling programs: 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 Polliwog Paddle

Family Canoe (Ages 5+ w/adult)
Sunday, August 10, 1–2:30 PM
Eldon Russell Park

Families with children ages 5+, take an easy-paced, short-distance float on the wildlife-rich Upper Cuyahoga River. Bring water, sunscreen and a change of clothes. All children must be accompanied by an adult, and there must be two adults in each canoe with up to two children (ages 5-11) in the middle. **Registration required** by phone only beginning August 1 at 10 AM.

10 Celebrating National S'more Day

Sunday, August 10, 6:30–9 PM
Claridon Woodlands

How did the s'more become popular? On National S'more Day, roast a marshmallow and build a delicious campfire treat to find out! **Registration required** for all participants. ♿

11 Drop-in Nature Craft: Nature & "Zentangles"

Monday, August 11, 3–4:30 PM & 6–7:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Drop-in during program hours to create your own Zentangle art, using patterns found in Nature as our inspiration, while supplies last. Children must be accompanied by an adult. ♿

12 Moths & Meteors Overnight Event

Tuesday, August 12, 9 PM through
Wednesday, August 13, 6 AM
Observatory Park

Register to bring your tent and spend the night enjoying the Perseid meteor shower (best viewing 1–3 AM) during this one-night-only camping event! We'll also have black light and mercury vapor lamps attracting night-flying moths you can observe or help sample and survey. A naturalist will be onsite sunset to sunrise. **CAMPING GUIDELINES:** Tents only. Arrive to set up after 4 PM and leave the next morning by 9 AM. No campers, trailers, generators, alcoholic beverages, grills or open fires. Pets must be leashed at all times. Cancelled in case of inclement weather. Must show registration receipt prior to entering the park, and only those registered will be permitted to enter. **Registration required** for all attending, up to six people per reservation.

14 Homeschool Days: Family Learning Fair!

Thursday, August 14, 10:30 AM–12:30 PM & 1:30–3:30 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Homeschoolers and families, register to drop in during program hours to participate in fun activities and gather information from Geauga County organizations offering educational opportunities for your students! Follow us on social media for an updated listing of participating organizations as they become available. Partially outdoors, so dress for the weather. Allow an hour or more to participate. **Registration required** for all attending. ♿

16 Nature Break: Women's Retreat

Saturday, August 16, 8:30 AM–1 PM
Chickagami Park

Fee: \$8 Geauga residents, \$10 out-of-county
Take a break and relax in the park! Activities include yoga, archery, hiking and a Nature-themed lesson and activity. Continental breakfast and lunch provided. Bring a mat or beach towel for yoga, and dress in layers with comfortable clothes for being outside and for yoga. **Registration required** for all attending.

16 Nights Out in the Parks: Big North Band

Saturday, August 16, 7–8:30 PM

Big Creek Park, Amphitheater

Enjoy a heaping helping of traditional country music from the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s! The Big North Band pays tribute to Waylon, Merle, Johnny and a smorgasbord of other Nashville, Texas and Bakersfield legends. Tasteful and twangy – just the way you like it! Held inside if inclement weather.

16 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, August 16, 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! Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

17 Nature Trek Fitness Hike

Sunday, August 17, 10–11:30 AM

Sunnybrook Preserve

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 hilly trails. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.

17 Family Stream Adventure

Sunday, August 17, 1–3 PM

The West Woods, Affelder House

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.**

17 Prairie Blooms Hike

Sunday, August 17, 1–2:30 PM

Frohring Meadows

There is no better time to visit a prairie than summer when flowers are at their peak bloom. This easy hike will explore the park's grasslands to view and identify many of the flowers, grasses and pollinators that depend on these plants.

17 Nature Night Lecture Series: Mini Mammals

Sunday, August 17, 7–8:30 PM

Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Shrews, voles, mice and more...most of the mammals in our wild areas are pretty small. However, these creatures have interesting life histories and are an important part of our food chain. Let's take a closer look at these mini, magnificent mammals!

19 Early Morning Hike

Tuesday, August 19, 8–9:30 AM

Swine Creek Reservation, Valley shelter

Join us for an early-morning, up-paced hike on the Razorback Trail with hilly terrain and stream crossings. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather.

19 Art Workshop: Blacksmithing Experience

Tuesday, August 19,

2:30–5 PM & 6–8:30 PM

Beartown Lakes Reservation, Minnow Pond

Fee: \$75 Geauga residents, \$80 out-of-county

Join Tim Cunningham of The Urban Forge for a unique blacksmithing experience! Participants will forge a hook with either a maple leaf or a heart shape. Must wear natural fiber clothing and closed toe/heel shoes with no crocks or synthetic materials. Age 18+. **Registration required.**

21 Elderberries: "Back-in-the-Day" Camp

Thursday, August 21, Noon–2:30 PM

Claridon Woodlands

Fondly remember summer camp antics and adventures of yesteryear and join in the merriment of silly songs, goofy games, and a mish-mash of old-school camp activities like leaf printing, insect collecting, knot tying and much more! Don't miss this chance to reflect, re-enact and rejuvenate. Lunch provided and sponsored by Ohman Family Living at Blossom. A collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

21 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Thursday, August 21, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM

Headwaters Park

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**

23 Trail Horse Nature Challenge

Saturday, August 23, 10 AM–3 PM

Swine Creek Reservation

Sign up to challenge yourself and your horse on a 1-to 2-hour challenge course with natural trail obstacles and Nature questions along the trails. Awards and certificates will be given in youth and adult divisions. Helmets recommended. Trailer your horse to the Woods Edge Shelter parking lot. Participants will be assigned a departure time and ride out individually or in pairs at a leisurely pace. Once finished, you may ride other trails on your own. Expect hills, gravel, mud, streams, bicycles, hikers and other challenges. Bring a shovel to clean up after your horse in the parking lot. **Registration required.**

23 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, August 23, 4–5 PM

Observatory Park

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. No registration required.

24 Singing Insects Evening Concert

Sunday, August 24, 7:45–9:30 PM

Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

The summer insect ensemble resounds on warm August nights, but how can we tell who's singing in the dark? Let's discuss some of the musicians and learn how to distinguish their songs. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants and bring a flashlight for spotting singing insects.

26 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer

(Ages 1-2 w/adult)

Tuesday, August 26,

9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon

The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Enjoy experiencing Nature with your little one as we see, smell and touch summertime in the park – strollers and carriers welcome! **Registration required** for all attending, including siblings.

26 The Bird Tornado Strikes Again!

Tuesday, August 26, 7:15–8:30 PM

Burton Square Gazebo

Gauga Park District and Schoolyard Studio are teaming up for this annual program! Join Naturalist Linda for some Chimney Swift natural history and to witness a cyclone of swifts swirling, then plummeting into an old chimney – a migratory motel along their journey to South America. Bring a chair and sit in the Schoolyard Studio parking lot for this unforgettable spectacle! **Registration required.**

28 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, August 28, 7–9 PM

Veterans Legacy Woods

Please note new location! 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.

30 Family Night Campfire & Fun

Saturday, August 30, 7:30–9 PM

The West Woods, Affelder House

Enjoy an evening of family fun with Nature activities followed by a campfire and s'mores! **Registration required.**

AUGUST

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

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

8 22 How Did the Great Lakes Form?

Friday, August 8, 7–8 PM
Observatory Park
Friday, August 22, 7–8 PM
Virtual

Explore the surprising connection between present-day earthquakes and the ancient formation of the Great Lakes in this indoor presentation. Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. August 22 is virtual; register and we'll send you a link a few days before the program. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

8 22 23 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, August 8 & 22, 8–11 PM
Saturday, August 23, 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. No registration required.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

12 26 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, August 12, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

Tuesday, August 26, 1–2:30 PM
Sunnybrook Preserve

A naturalist-led hike for active seniors of approximately 2 miles. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.



24 25 Timbertots:

Camp Day (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Sunday, August 24,
10:30 AM–Noon & 1:30–3 PM
Chickagami Park

Monday, August 25,
10–11:30 AM & 1–2:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove

Enjoy this preschool version of big kid camp with activities, crafts and s'more! Held outdoors, weather permitting, so dress accordingly. **Registration required** for all attending, including siblings.

28 29 30 31

The Great Geauga County Fair

Thursday through Sunday
August 28-31, 11 AM–7 PM
Monday, September 1, 11 AM–6 PM
Gauga County Fairgrounds,
Natural Resources Area

Visit our building to meet the Monarchs and see what's new with Geauga Park District! Daily live Monarch program and taggings occur at 3:30 PM if butterflies are available.

SEPTEMBER

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

1 The Great Geauga County Fair

Monday, September 1, 11 AM–6 PM
Gauga County Fairgrounds,
Natural Resources Area

Visit our building to meet the Monarchs and see what's new with Geauga Park District! Daily live Monarch program and taggings occur at 3:30 PM if butterflies are available.

4 The Bird Tornado Strikes Again!

Thursday, September 4, 7–8:30 PM
Burton Square Gazebo

Gauga Park District and Schoolyard Studio are teaming up for this annual program! Join Naturalist Linda for some Chimney Swift natural history and to witness a cyclone of swifts swirling, then plummeting into an old chimney – a migratory motel along their journey to South America. Bring a chair and sit in the Schoolyard Studio parking lot for this unforgettable spectacle! **Registration required.**



5 Chagrin River Bird Quest Birding Challenge

Friday, September 5, 4–6 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Calling all bird enthusiasts: a 24-hour birding marathon awaits you! This is the check-in event to confirm your registration, talk strategy with teammates and naturalists, and obtain your free maps, T-shirts, checklists and other materials. To get started, assemble a team and register it by clicking on the Bird Quest button at www.clevelandaudubon.org The challenge takes place exactly 24 hours Friday to Saturday. **Registration required.**

6 Thompson Ledges Backcountry Hike

Saturday, September 6, Noon–2:30 PM
Thompson Ledges Township Park

Explore off-trail the unimproved northern portion of Thompson Ledges Park with oak and hemlock forests and unique plant and bird life. Must be capable of hiking several miles of muddy, rocky terrain with some steep slopes. Wear sturdy footwear that can get wet and provide good traction. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required.**

6 Thompson Ledges Hike

Saturday, September 6, 3–4:30 PM
Thompson Ledges Township Park

Explore the developed part of Thompson Ledges Park south of Thompson Road, including oak and hemlock forests and unique plant and bird life. Must be capable of hiking several miles of muddy, rocky terrain with some steep slopes. Wear sturdy footwear that can get wet and provide good traction. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required.**

6 Discovery Hike

Saturday, September 6, 3–4:30 PM
Chickagami Park

Take an afternoon walk to discover this unique park that may become a favorite new place to explore! Approximately 1.25 miles. No registration required.

6 Chagrin River Bird Quest Celebration!

Saturday, September 6, 4–7:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

For those who participated in the 24-hour Chagrin River Bird Quest, this is the celebration at the end! Turn in your bird checklists for judging and enjoy hearty refreshments, awards and door prizes. Details at www.clevelandaudubon.org.

6 Family Night Campfire & Fun

Saturday, September 6, 7:30–9 PM
Chickagami Park

Enjoy an evening of family fun with Nature activities followed by a campfire and s'mores!
Registration required.

7 Spears to Arrows

(Ages 9+ w/adult)
Sunday, September 7, 1–4 PM
Chickagami Park

Learn the history of how the technology of projectiles changed from a simple spear to the compound bow through this hands-on program. You'll see how far you can throw replica spears with an atlatl, then have the opportunity to shoot recurve and compound bows. Ages 9+ with adult; no younger children, please.
Registration required for all participants.

7 In Search of Pawpaws

Sunday, September 7, 2–3:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove

Discover why the pawpaw has been called American's forgotten fruit and learn about its unique cultural and natural history as we go in search of pawpaws.



7 Full Moon Hike: The Pawpaw Moon

Sunday, September 7, 8–9 PM
Observatory Park

It's pawpaw season! Learn about the tasty native fruit that gives this month its name, join us on a walk to explore Nature at night, and then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes.

13 20 Hunter Education Course (2-Day Course)

Saturdays, September 13 & 20,
9 AM–3 PM both days
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Geauga Park District is pleased to train young and beginner hunters on safety, archery, ammunition, ethics and conservation. Attendance is necessary both days to complete the coursework, which ends with a quiz. Students under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. **Registration required** through the Ohio Division of Wildlife at <https://oh-web.s3licensing.com/Event/Index>.

13 Horseback Riders: Amish Buggy Training & Trail Ride

Saturday, September 13,
9:30 AM–1:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation

Bring your horse to meet and experience a stationary and moving Amish horse and buggy in a non-threatening way courtesy of Sara Jane Miller. You and your horse will learn to safely share the trail with buggies until 11 AM. Then join a naturalist-led trail ride on the Wagon, Meadowlark and Gray Fox trails. Finally, at 12:30 PM, bring your lunch to share time with other riders at Woods Edge Shelter. Expect hills, gravel, mud, streams, bicycles and Amish buggies. Helmets recommended. Bring a shovel to clean up after your horse in the parking lot. Ages 10+ with adult who are able to ride. **Registration required.**

13 ASM Minerals Garden & Dome Tour

Saturday, September 13, 3–4 PM
ASM International

Join us for a tour of the minerals garden at ASM International's headquarters to learn the history of the site's iconic geodesic dome, then explore the fascinating science of the minerals in the garden. Directions provided after registration.
Registration required.

13 14 Nature Journaling: Camping Experience (Overnight Campout)

Saturday, September 13, 4 PM through
Sunday, September 14, 9 AM
Chickagami Park

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county
Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques and record your Nature observations. This is an overnight experience that includes camping activities like campfire cooking, a Nature hike and astronomy. More information will be sent to those who register. You do not need to camp overnight to attend this program. 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.

14 Monarchs & Meadow Insects

Sunday, September 14, 12:30–4 PM
Orchard Hills Park

Drop in at any time during program hours to net Monarch butterflies and a variety of other butterflies, grasshoppers, praying mantids and native pollinators. Nets provided or bring your own. Sun protection, socks, hat and long pants recommended. No insect collecting for removal from park. Monarchs will be tagged by our naturalists, recording the name of the person who netted it so that we can contact you if that butterfly is recovered in Mexico.

14 Hound Hike

Sunday, September 14, 2–3:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Crystal Lake
Picnic Area

Dogs and their humans, join us for an easy hike along the Buckeye Trail, then take home an "Adventure Ready" dog scarf to remember it by! Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share some helpful tips and tricks we can practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and bags for dog clean-up. One dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog, kept on leash at all times (8 ft max). Dogs must be non-aggressive to people and other dogs.

16 Early Morning Hike

Tuesday, September 16, 8–9:30 AM
Observatory Park, Cygnus Shelter
Join a naturalist for an early-morning, up-paced hike.

17 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer

(Ages 1-2 w/adult)
Wednesday, September 17,
9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon
Orchard Hills Park

Enjoy experiencing Nature with your little one as we see, smell and touch the last days of summertime in the park – strollers and carriers welcome! **Registration required** for all attending, including siblings.

18 Elderberries: Monarchs & Meadow Insects

Thursday, September 18, Noon–2 PM
Orchard Hills Park

Seniors, join us to learn about the Monarch Butterfly's life cycle and how tagging helps scientists learn more about their amazing migration to Mexico. After our presentation, borrow a net and see what you can find in the meadow. If you catch a Monarch, a naturalist will tag it for you to release! Lunch provided and sponsored by Eliza at Chagrin Falls. A collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

20 Astrotots XL: Down to Earth

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)
Saturday, September 20,
9:30–10:45 AM & 1–2:15 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

Why do people wish they could GO to space when we are already IN Space? Learn about the Earth's movement and motions, discover the reason for the seasons, and celebrate earthlings' annual trip around a star. **Registration required** just for the children.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

20 Scout Day: Lion Cub Scouts "Mountain Lion Adventure"

Saturday, September 20, 9:30–11 AM
Orchard Hills Park

Lion Cubs, let's work toward your Mountain Lion Adventure! **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult leaders must attend.

20 Make a Wax Hobo Stove

Saturday, September 20, 10–11:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove Shelter

Join us to make a simple-yet-efficient hobo stove out of cardboard and melted wax – a light and portable backup option for camping and fun! Ages 10+ with adult. **Registration required.** ♿

20 Positive Dog Training in the Real World

Saturday, September 20,
11 AM–12:30 PM

Swine Creek Reservation, Lake Side

Are you frustrated with your dog's leash-pulling? Imagine finally enjoying leashed walks with your dog this fall! Join Johanna Teresi, a local certified pet dog trainer with Four Legged Scholars, to learn how to get your dog to walk nicely on the leash. Friendly dogs only. All attending will receive a free clicker. Please bring the following with you: a 4-6-foot cloth or leather lead (no Flexi leads allowed), flat collar, head collar or front hook harness. No choke, prong or shock collars permitted, and back hook harnesses not recommended. Also bring a water bowl with water, bag that can attach to your pants to carry treats, and poop bags. Tick protection for your dog recommended. **Registration required.**

20 Scout Day: Brownie Bugs Badge

Saturday, September 20, 1–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park

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

20 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, September 20, 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! Cancelled if cloudy; check our website or social media for notice.

21 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Sunday, September 21, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Sunnybrook Preserve

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.**



21 Salamander Search

Sunday, September 21, 9–10:30 AM
The West Woods, Affelder House

The cooler, wet weather of early fall sparks increased salamander activity. Let's explore ravines, streams and forests for these creatures along with other amphibians and reptiles. Wear sturdy hiking boots and dress for the weather conditions. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

25 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, September 25, 7–9 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Please note new location! 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. ♿

27 Nature Explorers: Adventures in Archaeology

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, September 27, 9–11 AM
South Newbury Union Chapel

Nature Explorers ages 6-11 with an adult, learn some of the incredible history of South Newbury Union Chapel and take part in an archeological dig to discover what lies below! Dress for the weather, and old clothes are a must. **Registration required** for all attending.

27 The Sky Tonight Planetary Show

Saturday, September 27, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park

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

27 Nature at Night Hike

Saturday, September 27, 8–9:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Deep Woods Parking Lot

Walking through a park in the dark is a unique experience. During the calm of early fall, all our senses become enhanced as we hike without the use of lights, making wildlife easier to discover. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

28 Get to Know Your Nature Neighbors: Spider ID

Sunday, September 28, 2–3 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

We all hear stories about what people do if they see a spider in their house. Well, hold off on grabbing the blow torch as we learn a little more during this indoor presentation about these critters that seem to be all around us. Let's explore basic identification tips that can help answer questions and concerns about our eight-legged neighbors. (An outdoor exploration of spiders to follow will require separate registration.) **Registration required.** ♿


28 Get to Know Your Nature Neighbors: Spider Walk

Sunday, September 28, 3:30–4:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Cherry Room

Come explore forest and field as we look for amazing arachnids! (This hike follows an indoor presentation covering basic identification, which requires separate registration.) Dress for the weather and some off-trail exploration. **Registration required.**



30 Spectacular Spiders

Tuesday, September 30, 7–8 PM 

Ohio is home to more than 680 species of spiders, and all have important roles in their environments. Let's look at some of the more common spiders in our area and answer frequently asked questions that many people have about these interesting animals. This is a virtual program; we'll send you a link a few days before the program. **Registration required.**

RECURRING PROGRAMS

7 11 Timbertots:

"Smammals" (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Sunday, September 7,
10–11 AM & 1–2 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge
Thursday, September 11,
10–11 AM & 1–2 PM, Frohring Meadows
*Small + Mammals = Smammals...not only fun to say, but great to discover! Learn a little about critters like mice, shrews and voles, then go out on a smammal search! Dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending, including siblings.* ♿

9 23 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
September 9, Frohring Meadows, Katydid Lodge
September 23, Observatory Park
A naturalist-led hike for active seniors of approximately 2 miles. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

12 26 Astronomy Community Showcase

Friday, September 12, 7–8:30 PM ♿
Observatory Park
Friday, September 26, 7–8 PM 📺
Virtual

*It's like speed-dating for your brain! Learn from a sampler of short presentations from amateurs in the local astronomy community. Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. September 26 is virtual; register and we'll send you a link a few days before the program. **Registration required** for virtual program only.*

12 13 26 27 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, September 12 & 26, 8:30–11 PM
Saturdays, September 13 & 27, 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. No registration required. ♿ ♿

19 20 Astrotots: Our Place in Space (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Friday, September 19, 9:30–10:30 AM,
11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM
Saturday, September 20,
11:30 AM–12:30 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
*There's no place in space that is as "people perfect" as Earth. Join us as we ROTATE, ORBIT and "monkey around" with Commander Melvin to discover what makes our home planet so special. **Registration required** just for the children.* ♿

21 22 Weave a Cranberry Basket (Skill Level: Advanced)

Sunday, September 21, 10 AM–6 PM
Monday, September 22, 10 AM–6 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Fee: \$40 Geauga residents, \$45 out-of-county
*Weave a cranberry basket using techniques you already learned – twining, start-stop weaving, and shaping a basket – and learn a new decorative weave to create a design on the outside of this round, swing-handled basket. Must be able to follow a basket pattern for design detail. Due to program preparation expenses, a refund may not be processed if cancellation occurs within five days of the program. **Registration required.*** ♿

27 28 Union Chapel Archaeological Dig

Saturday, September 27, 1–3 PM and
Sunday, September 28, 9–11 AM
South Newbury Union Chapel
*Learn some of the incredible history of South Newbury Union Chapel and take part in an archeological dig to discover what lies below! Dress for the weather, and old clothes are a must. **Registration required** for all attending.*

Archery Games for Adults

Saturday, July 26, 10:30–Noon
Sunday, August 17, 3–4:30 PM
Saturday, September 13, 1:30–3 PM
*Take the next step in improving your aim by playing archery games. Must have taken one of our Intro to Archery programs to attend. **Registration required.***

Introduction to Archery for Families

Saturday, July 26, 1:30–3 PM
Sunday, August 17, 1–2:30 PM
Saturday, September 13, 10:30–Noon
Saturday, September 27, 5–6:30 PM
*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. **Registration required** for all participating.*

Archery Practice

(Ages 9+ w/adult)
Saturday, July 26, 3:30–4 PM
Saturday, August 2, 8:30–9 AM
Saturday, August 23, 3:30–4 PM
Saturday, September 13, 3:30–4 PM
Sunday, September 14, 12:30–1 PM
*These 30-minute sessions are for you to work on improving your aim through practice. Must have taken one of our Intro to Archery programs to register. Ages 9+ with an adult. **Registration required.***

♿ Fully Accessible

🌿 Nature Scopes



ARCHERY FOR EVERYONE



All summer archery programs are held at Chickagami Park's Archery Range

Please arrive 15 minutes early to walk the quarter mile to the range.

Introduction to Archery for Adults

Sunday, July 27, 11 AM–12:30 PM
Saturday, August 23, 10:30 AM–Noon
Saturday, September 27, 3–4:30 PM
*Adults, learn the basics of target archery together. Wear close-toed shoes. **Registration required.***

Introduction to Archery for Kids (Ages 9-16)

Sunday, July 27, 2–3:30 PM
Saturday, August 2, Noon–1:30 PM
Sunday, September 14, 10:30 AM–Noon
*Learn the basics of target archery. For ages 9–16 and at least 50" tall. **Registration required** for child only, but adult must attend.*

Archery Games for Families

Sunday, July 27, 4–5:30 PM
Saturday, August 23, 1:30–3 PM
*Take the next step in improving your aim by playing archery games. Must have taken one of our Intro to Archery programs to attend. Ages 9+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required.***

Archery Games for Kids

(Ages 9-16)
Saturday, August 2, 9:30–11 AM
*Ages 9-16, take the next step in improving your aim by playing archery games. Must have taken one of our Intro to Archery programs to attend. **Registration required** for child only, but adult must attend.*



Earlier Facility Reservations for 2026

This fall, 2026 reservations for park lodges, facilities and campsites will open to Geauga residents on Wednesday, October 1, at 8 AM.

Reservations for out-of-county residents will open Monday, November 3, at 8 AM. Please check our News & Updates page in September for tips.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

It's important that we often revisit the leash law governing Geauga Park District's 28 open parks. Enforced through the Ranger Department for the wellbeing of all park visitors, habitats and wildlife, **the law requires dogs be kept on leash at all times during visits to the park.** Parks are great places for dogs and their humans to walk trails, but let's be respectful while we're there, as some other dogs and humans are fearful or just don't want dogs approaching them while they're enjoying their time.



Leash laws are in effect for the safety of your dog, as well. Even trained dogs can become unpredictable and protective if they encounter other dogs or accidentally provoke a coyote near its den.

Please follow the law. The park's wild residents *and* your fellow visitors will thank you for it!

Nature Writing Contest Winners

Congratulations to these 28 talented winners of our 30th Annual Nature Writing Contest!

Child Poetry

1stJosephine Weisburger
2ndClaire Feldkamp
3rdAnnelise Espiritu
HMZoey Thornton
HMAudrey Romanski

Child Prose

1stVizcaya Labuda
2ndTori Dailey
3rdRaina Roy Augustin
HMAlonna Rice
HMSaurav Mathur

Adolescent Poetry

1stBrady Irvin
2ndGrace Rahz
3rdSaoirse Niehus
HMMorgan Bitto
HMElla Kosher

Adolescent Prose

1stPeter Tiber
2ndCarmen Hu
3rdValeria Kislyansky
HMKendall Sims
HMLucia Marabito

Adult Poetry

1stDavid Adams
2ndAndrew Herman
3rdKarly Smith
HMMarilyn Klemens
HMGreyson Hudak

Adult Prose

1stLeah Fletcher
2ndPatricia Geschke
3rdJohn Udovic

Thank you



for again sponsoring more substantial cash prizes in 2025!

Read all the winning works, and learn more about the contest and our judges, on our website under **News & Updates.**

ADVENTURES in Geocaching

Check out the new summer geocache
at Observatory Park in Montville Twp.

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

N 41° 35.191'
W -81° 04.630'

*There are more than just stars in this lovely park of ours.
Take a stroll past Cygnus to get straight to business.
Take a right into the meadow and look down wherever you go.
One of these planks is not like the other —
It opens up like a kitchen cupboard.
(Maybe not quite, but you'll do alright.)
The cache is so good that it looks just like wood.*



HIKE-A-THON

HIKE • RIDE • BIKE • RUN

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS & SUPPORT GEAUGA COUNTY PARKS & TRAILS!

June 15 - July 31, 2025

Lace up, saddle up, or gear up and make a difference! The Foundation for Geauga Parks' Hike-A-Thon is your chance to get outside, explore the beauty of Geauga County, and protect the parks, trails and wildlife we all love. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or just looking for a fun reason to hit the trail, every step you take helps fund the natural spaces that make our community special. Hike, ride, bike or run – it's all for a great cause this summer!

HOW IT WORKS

Register online: FoundationForGaugaparks.org

Secure donations for the miles you walk, ride, bike, or run from June 15 to July 31, 2025

Collect donations to benefit the development and preservation of parks and trails in Geauga County



LEARN MORE



Donations to
Gaugapark District
February 2025
through
April 2025

Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------|
| Cleveland Foundation | Hanes Family Foundation - unrestricted donation | \$5,000.00 |
| Cleveland Foundation | Hanes Family Foundation - <i>Nature Scopes</i> donation | \$500.00 |
| Foundation for Geauga Parks | Reimburse 2024 summer camp expenditures | \$8,776.80 |
| Foundation for Geauga Park | Donation for Nature Writing Contest prizes | \$450.00 |
| Foundation for Geauga Park | Reimburse Tulip Trail expenditures | \$1,605.66 |
| Ruth E. Johnson | Donation in memory of Ron Johnson | \$200.00 |
| Sunita Dayal | Unrestricted donation | \$25.00 |
| Thalia Hutter | Unrestricted donation | \$50.00 |
| Thomas & Janet M. Overberg | Donation in memory of Ron Johnson | \$40.00 |
| Town & Country Garden Club | Donation for conservation | \$100.00 |

A BIT ABOUT BEAVERS

Visit one of our parks and you may just discover a beaver lodge or dam. Beavers alter the landscape more than any other wildlife species, and can be readily overserved with the right information. But before I tell you how to see them in the wild, let's learn a bit more about our wonderful American Beaver!



Averaging about 40 pounds, with the heaviest beavers topping 100 pounds, beavers are the largest rodents after the capybaras. They have a large, flat, scaly tail which is used as a rudder, a prop, and to slap the water as a warning signal. Like all rodents, they have large, constantly growing incisors. The fronts of their incisors are made of iron-infused enamel, making them very hard (and orange!), while the backs of the teeth are a softer dentin. As a beaver chews, the dentin wears away faster than the enamel, forming a chisel shape.



Beavers use their tremendous teeth for feeding and cutting down trees! They eat bark, twigs, water lilies and other soft green plants. Rather than eaten, larger branches are used as building material, along with mud and stones. These hard-working rodents build dams to create ponds in a stream, and lodges to live in. Lodges may be a mound of branches built in the middle of pond, or else a beaver will burrow into a bank and build a lodge around the burrow entrance. To protect themselves from predators, beavers make sure all lodge entrances are underwater.

Ponds that are created by beavers provide habitat for many species, including fish, frogs, herons, ducks and other aquatic creatures. As they fill in, they eventually become meadows, providing habitat for species like deer, hawks, snakes and more. Unfortunately, this habit of flooding areas can also put beavers in conflict with humans. An example is when they flood roadways.

Humans have trapped beavers for their fur, used to make hats – think Indiana Jones' fedora. So many were trapped at one point that they were wiped out of Ohio until they started returning to the state in the 1970s. Today, they have made an impressive comeback and are fairly common to see throughout Geauga County.

To view a wild beaver, you must first find a water source with recent beaver activity. Look for chewed trees and bushes, or lodges and dams. Recommended locations are The Rookery, Orchard Hills and Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve. Then position yourself near open water right at dusk — when it's nearly too dark to see is the perfect time — and watch for movement to spot beavers swimming around!



Photo by Erin Avram



Photo by Erin Avram



Photo by Erin Avram



2025 summer camps

Space is very limited now!

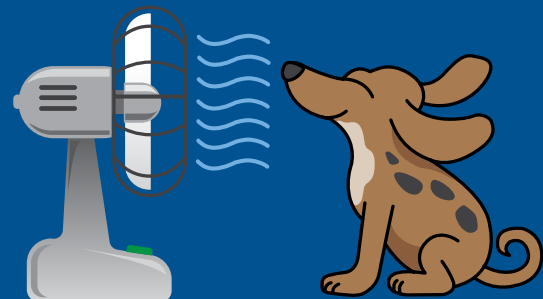
Junior Naturalist Day Camp For grades 5-7 June 2-6 & July 2-25

Nature Adventure Day Camp For grades 8-10 June 16-20 & July 14-18

All Monday-Friday 9 AM-3 PM; find current availability & details online

DID YOU KNOW THAT "DOG DAYS OF SUMMER" IS ROOTED IN ASTRONOMY?

When we use the term *dog days of summer*, we are talking about those really hot days of late July and early August that average to be the hottest days of the year. But why do we mention dogs? The term doesn't come from our furry friends, but rather from the Dog Star, Sirius, the brightest star in the sky (other than our sun). Sirius is also part of the constellation Canis Major, the Greater Dog.



Although this phrase is all about summer, winter is the easiest time to see Sirius and Canis Major.

The name Sirius comes from the ancient Greek word for scorching, *seírios*. Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that when they started to see the star Sirius rise with the sun (mid-to-late July in the northern hemisphere), the heat from the two stars together was the reason for the hottest days of the year. Because Sirius is called the Dog Star, this time of year then became known as "the dog days."

Listen to Crickets & They'll Tell You the Temperature!

Each July, we begin to hear the insect orchestra, and one of the main players is the cricket. A cricket is an **ectotherm**, meaning that its body temperature is based on the temperature of the air around them. Therefore, crickets also move and chirp according to the temperature! Colder temps yield slower chirps, while higher temps prompt faster ones. In 1897, American physicist Amos Dolbear discovered a formula showing that when you count the number of chirps in 15 seconds, then add 40 to that number, you get the air temperature in degrees Fahrenheit. Try it this summer and see for yourself!



Light-hearted Language: Animal Idioms

Idioms are funny ways to share an idea or a feeling. By definition, they are phrases where the meaning is completely different from the actual words. Here are some common animal examples... sound familiar?

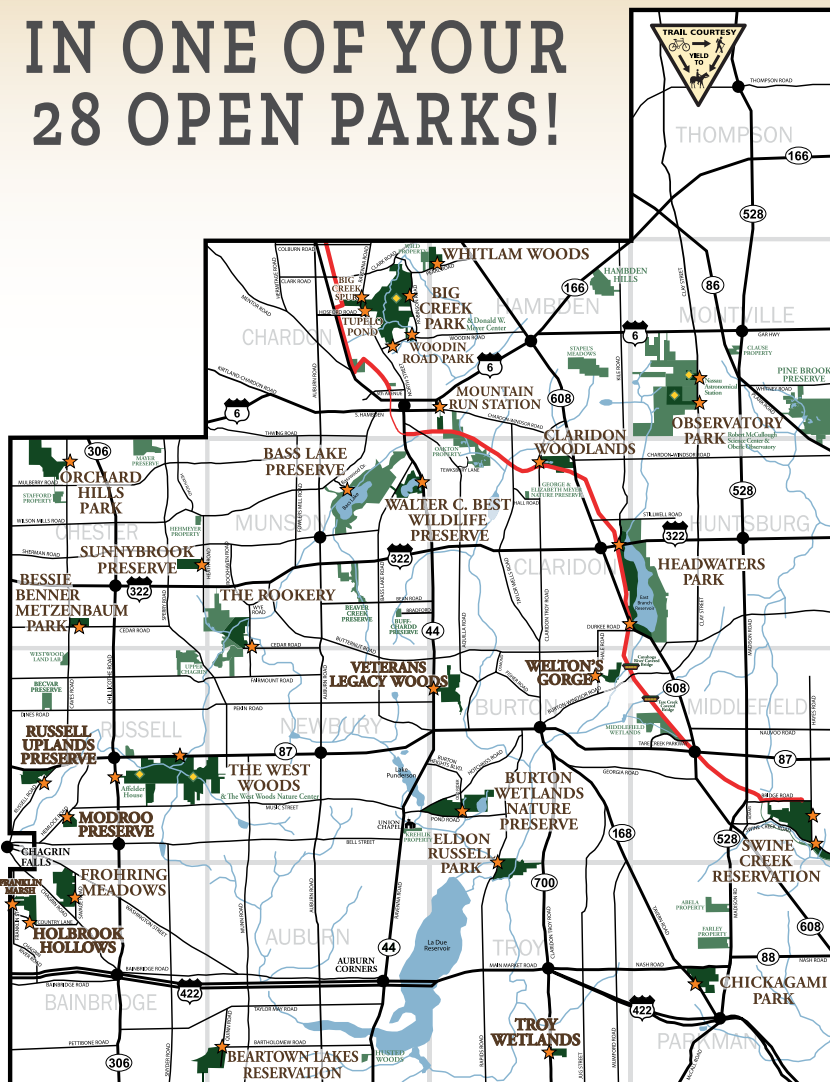
Busy as a _____
 Wild _____ chase
 Move at a _____ pace
 _____ eyes
 Get your _____ in a row
 _____ in your stomach
 Like a _____ out of water
 Hold your _____
 Open a can of _____
 Like a _____ to a flame
 _____ in your throat
 _____ in your pants
 I smell a _____



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

FIND YOUR ADVENTURE

IN ONE OF YOUR
28 OPEN PARKS!



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www.geaugaparkdistrict.org

440-286-9516



*Celebrate the Great
Outdoors at this New
Special Event for the
Whole Family!*

**Saturday, August 9,
at Veterans Legacy Woods
1-4 PM**

See listing on page
10 and watch for
more information
online in July.

