

PARKEXPLORER

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE



Night Sky Viewing at
Observatory Park
Photo by Sonny Williams

SPRING 2026

4 Why West Geauga scouts love heading out in their parks

6 Spring migration brings the birds — but where to see them?

16 Summer camp offerings feature new age group & art camp

17 Spread the word: Nature Writing Contest deadline is Earth Day

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.



Community Art Show at The West Woods Opening Reception • Saturday, March 28, 1–3 PM

Experience our latest art show in the park, featuring pieces that have been created by community artists of all ages and abilities, all inspired by and depicting Nature that takes flight! Show will remain on display through July 26.



Saturday, April 25, 10 AM–2 PM • The West Woods

AMERICA 250 Ohio Moves: Transportation Month

Get an up-close look at the vehicles and equipment used by Geauga Park District to keep your parks in tip-top shape. Details on page 8.



Earth Day Drive-Through/Plant Sale with Natural Resource Management

Saturday, April 25, at Veterans Legacy Woods

Pay \$5 (Geauga County residents), then pull into the park to pick up a mixed bag of native Ohio trees and wildflowers to plant at home in honor of Earth Day and improve wildlife habitat. Details on page 8. Registration required.

ROPES & BOATS

Saturday, May 23, is opening day for kayak/canoe borrowing at Headwaters Park and the high ropes course at Claridon Woodlands.

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



Saturday, June 20, at Headwaters Park

PADDLEFEST *Put your paddling skills to the test!*

Complete three activities that challenge your endurance, maneuverability and navigation on the water. Fee: \$10. Start time details on page 14. Registration required.



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

Guys Without Ties 6/20

Bent String 7/25

Big North Band 8/8

Outdoor Movie Nights at Observatory Park with pre-show activities at 6 PM & movies at 7 PM

Finding Nemo (G, animated) 6/13

Superman (PG-13) 7/11



July 4, 2026, commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is a time to pause and reflect on our nation's past, and to honor the contributions of all Americans. To share in this celebration, Geauga Park District will offer special 2026 programs and events with ties to American and Ohio pride. Watch for the 250 icon that identifies them!

SPRING PROGRAMS *on pages 7–16*

- 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

Upcoming Events 2
 Feature: Scouts Discovering Nature 4-5
 Park Spotlight: Birding 6
 April Programs 7-9
 May Programs 9-12
 June Programs..... 12-15
 Archery Programs..... 15
 Geocaching 15
 Summer camp schedule 16
 Nature Writing Contest 17
 Donors for Nov. 2025 – Jan. 2026 17
 In Nature: Insect Artisans 18
 Fun Page 19

Park Mission

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

Park Hours

Daily 6 AM – 11 PM

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

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

Observatory Park is open daily till 1 AM from Memorial Day to Labor Day and till 11 PM from Labor Day to Memorial Day; its Robert McCullough Science Center and Oberle Observatory are open 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,

I’ve been thrilled that 2026 provided so many great opportunities for us to enjoy winter the Geauga County way — in our parks, anything from crisp morning walks to hand-feeding wild birds to memorable sledding, snowshoeing and cross country skiing adventures. Soon, longer days and warming sunshine will coax us back outdoors wearing fewer layers, and into the next season of opportunities for discovery.

This spring marks the return of Touch-a-Truck, our annual Earth Day plant sale, high ropes course climbing and boat borrowing near Memorial Day, and time to discover what’s new in Geauga Park District since last spring. In particular, plan visits to the new Nature-based playground and boardwalk area at Beartown Lakes Reservation, the second “tree house” campsite in Big Creek Park’s campground, and Tupelo Pond in Big Creek Park, with its new parking lot (and shelter coming soon) to enhance nearly three miles of hilly, wooded trail.

Looking ahead, we’re also excited to participate in the nationwide America250 celebration, honoring 250 years of our nation’s history. Watch this publication throughout the year for the official America250 icon, calling out programs and special events (like Touch-a-Truck and Nights Out in the Park) that will help us all commemorate Ohio’s important contributions to our country.

And finally, please find inside this edition our latest Year in Review. This important document highlights your Park District’s 2025 accomplishments. We’re so excited to share what we’ve done and appreciate your trust and continued investment in parks, conservation and recreation opportunities in Geauga County.

“Our Everyday Getaway” is this year’s slogan. May it inspire you to get outside, connect with Nature, and discover all your parks have to offer. We hope to see you out there this spring!

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS



Howard Bates



Ray Guarino



Sally LaMarca



John Ralph



Frank Stein

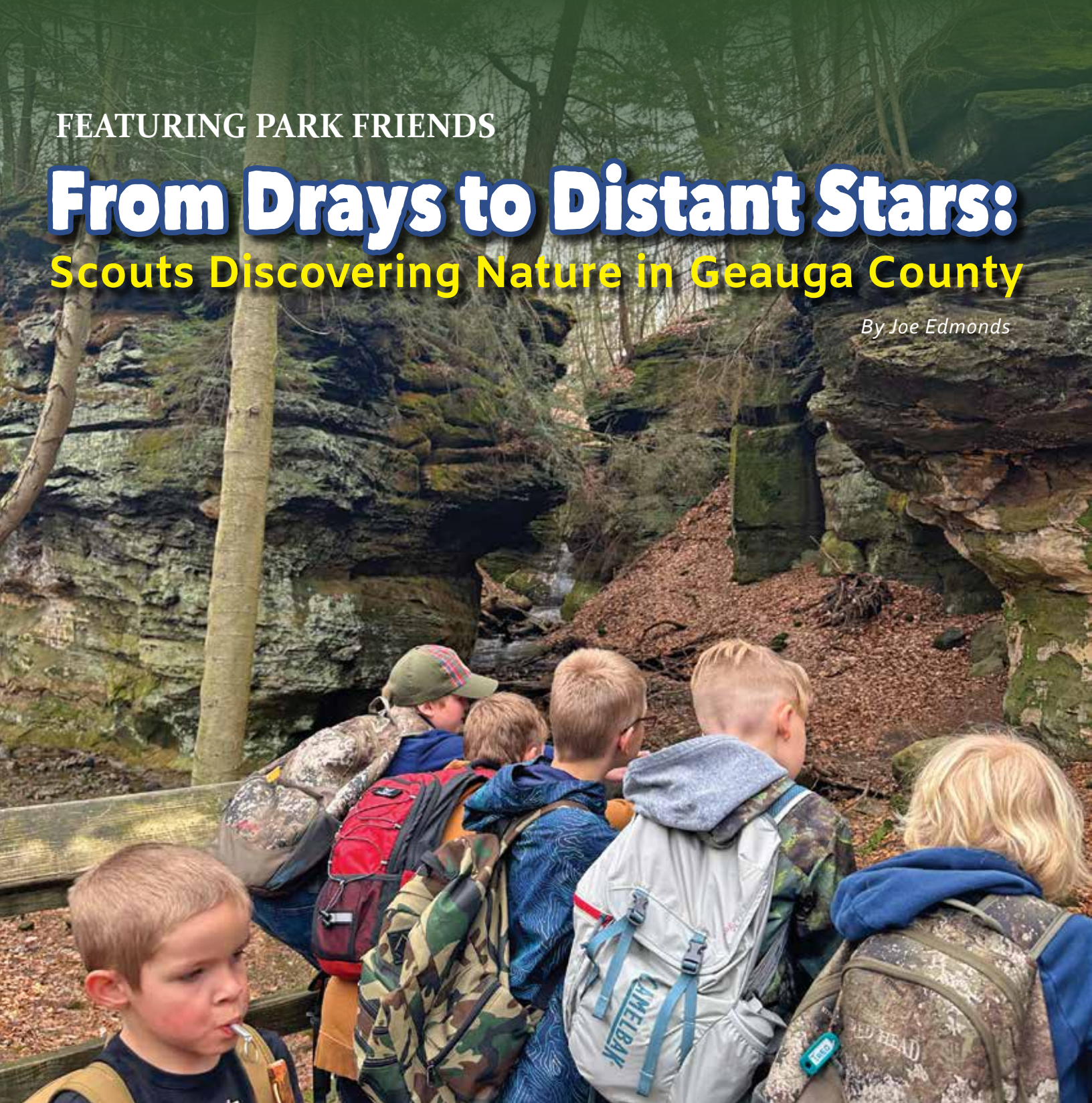
Park Board Meetings

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

From Drays to Distant Stars: Scouts Discovering Nature in Geauga County

By Joe Edmonds



Nothing says “scouts” quite like being in the woods, getting a little dirty, and exploring Nature!

For the past three years, we have been excited every time we get a flyer for the parks in the mail, as we skim through to see what events the naturalists will have planned for our scouts.

The West Geauga kids of Pack 3104 Wolf Den 6 love when we spend our time together with Geauga Park District. The events they put together align perfectly with our “Belt Loops” awards, so as a den leader, I know that planning for our group to be there will mean I don’t have to worry about planning that month; I know the Park District team has me covered.

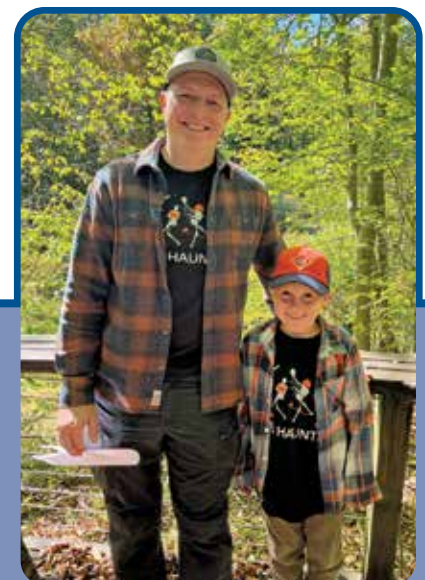
As a parent of a 7-year-old (“almost 8-year-old,” he tells me) and a 5-year-old, I can’t express how great it is to see young people put down their tablets and interact with the Nature around them, enjoy the outdoors, and get back to being kids.

Our den has gazed at the stars at Observatory Park and pointed out constellations in the sky, where we earned our Sky is the Limit award. We have also hosted several of our den meetings at the wonderful cabin-like Affelder House, which is always a great backdrop as we do crafts, have a magic show, or just hike down to the waterfall to see if we can spot any wildlife.

One of our den’s favorite facts came when we learned that a squirrel’s nest is called a “dray” as we hiked Big Creek Park with our favorite parks person, Karie, and earned our Paws on the Path required award.

Scouting, at least for our kids, wouldn’t be the same without Geauga Park District, the naturalists who host the programs, and the continued support of the community to afford us these wonderful areas to learn and grow these young minds.

I, for one, am beyond grateful for the amazing services that our park staff provide for these scouts, and hope that more people come out to join the Park District and the scouts in turning off the screens and turning on our desire to explore Nature found in our amazing Geauga County parks. 🍂



About the Author

My name is Joe Edmonds, and I moved to Geauga County about 10 years ago, as my wife and I wanted the best place to raise our family. We love the parks in Geauga County so much that we were actually married at Orchard Hills Park in Chesterland, and later bought a house neighboring one of our favorite parks in Novelty. Being outside and in the parks is a huge part of our lives, and it is great to be able to also share that with local scouts.

Best Parks for Birding

Springtime is prime time to look (and listen) for birds in Geauga County! Our spring migration begins in February, peaks in mid-May, and typically lasts until mid-June. To experience the most impressive variety of species — from year-round residents to colorful travelers passing through on their northern journeys — our naturalists recommend the following parks.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Swine Creek Reservation in May - Photo by Steve Humpal

Eldon Russell Park

Birding along the Upper Cuyahoga River here may offer views of the rare Prothonotary Warbler, which prefers habitats near water; the river's dense vegetation creates ideal breeding conditions. A large field at the park's western edge is managed as grassland for Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Bobolinks and swallows. Early May is typically the optimal time for birding here.



Wood Thrush - Photo by Linda Gilbert

Swine Creek Reservation

Watch for Great Blue Herons and Belted Kingfishers near the water, and for warblers, vireos, orioles and flycatchers migrating through this special valley habitat. Forests cover much of the park, while small streams divide the woods into upland and lowland. Dense meadow growth provides cover for Eastern Meadowlarks and Bobolinks. We recommend late April through mid-May for a birding visit.



Prothonotary Warbler - Photo by Linda Gilbert

The Rookery

Beech-maple forest and red maple stands provide habitat for songbirds such as the Wood Thrush and Veery, while a nice mix of forest edge, meadow, Chagrin River corridor and old railroad right-of-way creates ideal stopover and nesting habitat for many other species. High-quality wetlands, marshes and swamp forests also attract a wide variety of songbirds. For maximum diversity, come in late April or May.



Bobolink - Photo by Diane Valen

Troy Wetlands, Frohring Meadows & The West Woods

Some additional parks our naturalists recommend for spring birding. As birds pause in woodlands and wetlands to rest and refuel, they offer brief but memorable glimpses for observers. Enjoy the view! Need some guidance? Consider our **Annual Spring Bird Walk Series** and **Birding for Beginners** programs on pages 9 and 12.

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.

Since we can't send emails about non-registration programs, please remember to mark your calendar or set an alarm to attend.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

1 Snipe Hunt & Hike

Wednesday, April 1, 9–10:30 AM
Frohning Meadows

Ever been fooled into a snipe hunt? Never seen 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.

1 Full Moon Hike: The Crow Moon

Wednesday, April 1, 8–9 PM
Observatory Park

Take a hike at sunset to look for signs of spring wildlife. Then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. 📡

3 Wildlife Egg-stravaganza

Friday, April 3, 10:30 AM–1 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

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



4 Woodpecker Wander Hike

Saturday, April 4, 9–11 AM
Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Shelter

Discover all seven species of woodpeckers that reside in Ohio, including the majestic Red-headed Woodpecker, during this slow-paced bird walk. Experienced leader will assist participants with observation and identification. Binoculars available to borrow or bring your own. Possible wet/muddy conditions.

7 Homeschool Days: Welcome to a Woodland

(Ages 5-7 & 8-12)

Tuesday, April 7, 10:30 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

From the floor to the canopy, forests provide homes to wildlife of all kinds. We'll take a walk through the woods to discover hidden boxes that tell us who lives in each part of the forest. **Registration required** for all attending, including parents and siblings.

Photo by Sonny Williams



9 Inclusive Experience: Signs of the Season Exploration

Thursday, April 9, 10:30–11:30 AM
Claridon Woodlands

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 attending.

10 Skydance: Flight of the Woodcock!

Friday, April 10, 7:30–9 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Get a behind-the-bushes look at the courtship antics of one unique bird, the American Woodcock, highlighted by its amazing "sky dance" with "wing song" and careening descent. Some off-trail walking, so wear footwear that can get muddy. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars or we'll provide them.

11 What's In a Woods: A Forester's Perspective

Saturday, April 11, 1–4 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Pondsider Shelter

Take an off-trail hike with ODNR State Forester John Kehn and Consulting Forester Joel Firem to learn what foresters see when they look at a woodland. Learn how past land use created the present woodland and get recommendations for woodland management to achieve your future goals for your forest. An overview of landowner programs and resources will also be provided. **Registration required.**

11 Bring In Your Telescope

Saturday, April 11, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Do you have a telescope that you're unsure how to use? Bring it in for a quick consultation with an experienced astronomer in this "drop-in" workshop.

12 Veterans Legacy Woods Stream Restoration Presentation & Hike

Sunday, April 12, 10 AM–1 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Hear from Geauga Park District Biologist Paul Pira about his project to restore a coldwater stream at a former golf course during this indoor presentation, then reconvene at Veterans Legacy Woods for a hike out to the restoration site. Expect hilly terrain. In cooperation with the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio. Presentation 10–11 AM, hike 11:30 AM–1 PM, approximately.

12 Bald Eagle Hike

Sunday, April 12, Noon–2:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Main Parking

Learn amazing facts about Bald Eagles as we hike to observe eagle activity along the lake and view an active nest, rain or shine. Must be able to hike 2.5 miles over rolling terrain. Partially off trail. Wear appropriate foot gear, dress for the weather and bring binoculars.

12 Warbler Warm-up

Sunday, April 12, 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 Coffee with the Birds

Monday, April 13, 2–3 PM
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.**

14 "Yarn Over" in the Park

Tuesday, April 14, 1–2:30 PM & 6–7:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands

Join us to crochet or knit — each quarter in a different park! Participants must have knowledge of crocheting or knitting, as this is not a "learn to" group. Bring your own project to work on, reflecting what the colors and weather of the season mean to you. **Registration required.**

16 Elderberries: Create Nature Art

Thursday, April 16, 11:30 AM–2 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Seniors, join us to create Nature-inspired art and learn something new along the way! We'll start the program with a lunch sponsored by Jennings at Notre Dame. Then we'll spend time indoors and outdoors creating art inspired by and made with Nature. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

18 Backcountry Adventure for Youth & Teens: Thompson Ledges

(Grades 5-10)
Saturday, April 18, 10 AM–3 PM
Thompson Ledges Township Park,
16755 Thompson Rd, Thompson

Explore, on and off trail, the improved southern and unimproved northern portion of Thompson Ledges Park, with their oak and hemlock forests and unique plant, animal and bird life in the Sharon Conglomerate Ledges. Must be able to hike several miles of muddy, rocky terrain with some steep slopes. Sturdy foot gear needed. Bring lunch, snacks and a water bottle for a midday break. Teens must have signed waiver. **Registration required.**

18 Hound Hike

Saturday, April 18, 12:30–1:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Crystal Lake Picnic Area
Dogs (and humans), join us for an easy hike at Headwater's Park along the Buckeye Trail and take home a Geauga Park District logo'ed dog scarf to remember it by! Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share some helpful tips and tricks to practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and bags for dog clean-up. Only 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; aggressive behavior or excessive barking will result in participants being asked to leave.



18 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Saturday, April 18, 3–5 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 enter this restricted area! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear. Hike is 2 miles over hilly terrain with a stream crossing.

18 April Evening Adventure

Saturday, April 18, 7:30–9 PM
Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Shelter

Join us for an evening hike for a chance to see a woodcock air show accompanied by a chorus full of Spring Peepers! We may even get lucky and hear Barred Owls, Sandhill Cranes and other exciting wildlife. Sure to be a memorable spring evening hike for families. **Registration required.**

19 Backcountry Hike: Ravines, Rocks & Ledges

Sunday, April 19, 1–4 PM
The Rookery

Take a naturalist-led off-trail adventure into rock ledges, streams and ravines. Must be capable of several miles of rugged off-trail terrain with possible wet/muddy conditions. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy boots with good traction. **Registration required.**

19 Campfire Cooking: Dutch Ovens

Sunday, April 19, 4–6 PM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

Fee: \$4 Geauga residents, \$6 out-of-county
Learn a new skill and get inspired for your next camping adventure! We'll make breakfast for dinner this time, creating a hearty biscuit-and-gravy breakfast on the campfire using Dutch ovens, with a side of green beans and fruit. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. **Registration required.**

20 Sunrise Hike

Monday, April 20, 7:30–8:30 AM
Holbrook Hollows

Start your day with an up-paced hike of 1.5-2 miles just after the sun rises. **Registration recommended to receive reminders and updates.**

23 250 Ohio: Gateway to America (1775-2026)

Thursday, April 23, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Have you ever asked yourself, "How did we get here?" Join Dr. Dan Rager as he chronicles the step-by-step history of Ohio's ground transportation system, covering 250 years of Indian trails, stage coaches, taverns and inns, canals and locks, steamboats, railroads, interurbans, bicycles, motor bikes, automobiles, road developments and beyond. His presentation will bring to life Ohio's history through photos, maps and detailed descriptions of past generations, and show us how our history transcended into what we have today. **Registration required.**

23 Scout Day: Daisy Girl Scouts "Eco Learner Badge"

Thursday, April 23, 4–5 PM
The West Woods, Turkey Ridge

Daisy Girl Scouts, join us to work on the Eco Learner badge (not included). Held entirely outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required for scouts only, but adult leaders must attend.**



23 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, April 23, 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 Buckeye Trail LONG Haul Hike! (16.6 Miles)

Saturday, April 25, 8 AM–???

Headwaters Park, TMHT Parking, Rt. 608
Experienced hikers looking for big miles on paved and gravel trails — this is for you! Enjoy a self-guided hike from Headwaters Park north to Big Creek Park and we'll provide the shuttle service to get you back to your car (estimated hike time 5-7 hours). Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water and food. **Registration required.**



25 250 Touch-a-Truck

Ohio Moves: Transportation Month
Saturday, April 25, 9 AM–1 PM

The West Woods
Get an up-close look at the vehicles and equipment of Geauga Park District! The tractors, trucks of all sorts, and construction equipment that we use to keep your parks in tip-top shape will be parked here for hands-on discovery by kids of all ages! Shuttles will run from overflow parking at ASM International, .6 mile east of The West Woods on Rt. 87.

25 Earth Day Drive-Through

Saturday, April 25, 9 AM, 9:15 AM, 9:30 AM, 9:45 AM, 10 AM, 10:15 AM, 10:30 AM & 10:45 AM

Veterans Legacy Woods
Fee: \$5 Geauga residents, \$7 out-of-county
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.**

25 Wildflowers & Wine

Saturday, April 25, 9:30 AM–Noon
Laleure Winery

Come explore the diversity of wildflowers on the Laleure Winery property, situated in the Grand River watershed. Laleure has a variety of pristine habitats that are beneficial to many plants and animals. We'll start off with a wildflower 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.**

Please check our website for changes or cancellations before attending.

Since we can't send emails about non-registration programs, please remember to mark your calendar or set an alarm to attend.

Fully Accessible Nature Scopes

25 Positive Dog Training in the Real World

Saturday, April 25, 11 AM–12:30 PM
Frohning Meadows

Are you frustrated with your dog's leash-pulling? Join Johanna Teresi, local certified pet dog trainer with Four Legged Scholars, and learn how to get your dog to walk nicely on the leash. Friendly dogs only. Attend and receive a free clicker. Please bring the following to the class: a 4-6-foot cloth or leather lead (no Flexi leads allowed), a flat collar, head collar or front hook harness. No choke, prong or shock collars allowed, and back hook harnesses are not recommended. Also bring bowl and water for your dog, a treat bag to attach to your pants, and a Ziploc bag with pea-size treats. Owners must clean up after their dogs. **Registration required.**

25 Scout Day: Webelos Walkabout Adventure

Saturday, April 25, 2–4 PM
Frohning Meadows

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

25 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, April 25, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

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

25 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, April 25, 8–11 PM
Observatory Park,
Nassau Astronomical Station

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

26 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

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

Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. Thankfully our Nature cart tours are a great way to help you explore the parks! We ride along, stopping to talk about interesting natural and cultural features we discover in Nature. All participants must be able to enter and exit a 6-seat golf cart. We also ask that participants limit registration to themselves and one guest. **Registration required.**



26 Spring Wildflower Walk

Sunday, April 26, 4–5:30 PM
The West Woods

The West Woods has one of our greatest spring wildflower displays. Join us as we explore the trails to appreciate and identify our local spring wildflowers.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

7 21 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM

April 7, Headwaters Park, Rt. 322 Parking
April 21, The Rookery

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

10 24 Black Holes

Friday, April 10, 7–8 PM

Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Friday, April 24, 7–8 PM (Virtual)

Learn about these fascinating extreme-gravity zones, including where to find them in the night sky. Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. April 24 is a virtual program. Sign up and we will email you a link a few days before the program. (Be sure your email address is correct in your park registration account) **Registration required** for virtual program only.

10 11 24

Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, April 10 & 24, 8–11 PM

Saturday, April 11, 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.

12 19 26 Annual Spring Bird Walk Series

Sundays, 7:30–9:30 AM

April 12, Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

April 19, Frohning Meadows

April 26, 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 and bring binoculars. Also May 3, 10 & 17 at different locations.

12 13 Nature Journaling: Exploring Journaling Materials

Sunday, April 12, 1–3:30 PM &
Monday, April 13, 9:30 AM–Noon

Frohning Meadows, Katydid Lodge

Fee: \$25 Geauga residents, \$30 out-of-county

A monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month we'll explore the different kinds of multimedia materials used in Nature journaling: paper, pens and paints. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. Fees, which include the purchase of a new journal, pen and other supplies, are as follows: first-time participants pay \$25 (Gauga residents) or \$30 (out-of-county residents); those who've attended before, but not within the calendar year, pay \$12 (Gauga residents) or \$14 (out-of-county residents); those who've attended within the calendar year pay nothing. **Registration required** by phone only.

16 17 19 Timbertots:

Animal Babies (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Thursday, April 16, 10–11 AM and

Friday, April 17, 10–11 AM

Sunnybrook Preserve, Lodge

Sunday, April 19, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM

The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Join Nora the Explorer on an adventure to discover that spring is a time for animal babies! Held partially outdoors, weather permitting, so dress accordingly. **Registration required** for all attending including siblings and adults.

19 20 Basket Weaving: Wool Drying Basket

Sunday, April 19, Noon–6 PM &

Monday, April 20, Noon–6 PM

Holbrook Hollows, Lodge

Fee: \$45 Geauga residents, \$50 out-of-county

Skill Level: Intermediate. Join Naturalist Renell to weave a large square basket. We'll complete the bottom of the basket using a twill weave pattern, build the side with start-stop weaving, and finish it off by adding wooden legs. Due to program preparation expenses, a refund may not be processed if cancellation occurs within 5 days of program. **Registration required.**

23 27 Birding for Beginners

Thursday, April 23, 3–4:30 PM

Orchard Hills Park

Monday, April 27, 6:30–8 PM

Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Shelter

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.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

1 Full Moon Hike: The Sandhill Crane Moon

Friday, May 1, 8:30–9:30 PM
Observatory Park

Join us for a sunset hike for signs of spring! Then, weather permitting, watch the full moon rise using the park telescopes. This hike follows a trail of about 1.5 miles over level terrain. 📷

2 Early Bird Migration Van Trip to the Cuyahoga Valley

Saturday, May 2, 8 AM–4 PM
The West Woods

While the big bird migration push is just starting, the early migrants are already on their territories in Northeast Ohio. Travel with us by van to Cuyahoga Valley National Park and surrounding natural areas. We will look for hard to find warblers, sparrows and vireos while also enjoying any and all birds seen! Bring a sack lunch and binoculars and dress for the weather. Adults only, please. **Registration required.**

2 Afternoon Tea & Wildflower Walk

Saturday, May 2, 12:30–2:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Fee: \$5 Geauga residents, \$7 out-of-county
Celebrate spring with a fun and informative talk on wildflowers while you enjoy a variety of teas and pastries, then head out on a trail for a short hike to look at the wildflowers in bloom. Held rain or shine. **Registration required.**

3 "On the Wing" Nature Origami

Sunday, May 3, 10–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Create flying animal origami surrounded by our community art show, "On the Wing"! You'll have the chance to create origami of a butterfly, dragonfly, bird, bat and flying squirrel. All materials provided. **Registration required.**

3 Scout Day: Nature Walk

Sunday, May 3, 1:30–3 PM
Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Shelter

Scouts, join us for a hike along the Nature Trail and Duane Ferris Trail, a 1.5-mile hike to look and listen for sounds of Nature! **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult leader must attend.

3 Family Campfire Safety

Sunday, May 3, 2–3:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands

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

4 Birding for Beginners

Monday, May 4, 6:30–8 PM
Troy Wetlands

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. No registration required. 📷

8 Art Workshop: Blacksmithing Experience

Friday, May 8, 1–3 PM, 3:30–5:30 PM & 6–8 PM, Beartown Lakes Reservation, Minnow Pond

Fee: \$75 Geauga residents, \$80 out-of-county
Join Tim Cunningham of The Urban Forge for a blacksmithing experience! Participants will forge a hook with either a maple leaf or heart shape. Wear natural fiber clothing, closed toe and heel shoes, no crocks and no synthetic materials. Age 18+. **Registration required;** register for one session only.

9 Hound Hike

Saturday, May 9, 9:30–10:30 AM
Beartown Lakes Reservation

Dogs (and humans), hike along the 1.5-mile Whitetail Trail and take home a Geauga Park District logo'ed dog scarf to remember it by! Bring dog towels, a water bowl, water, poop scoop and bags for dog clean-up. Only one dog per handler, who must be able to fully control dog on leash at all times (8 ft. max). Aggressive behavior toward people or other dogs, or excessive barking, will result in participants being asked to leave.

9 Winging It & Wine Bird Walk

Saturday, May 9, 9:30–Noon
Laleure Winery

Come discover the bird diversity on the Laleure Winery property, situated in the Grand River watershed. Laleure has a variety of pristine habitats that are beneficial to migratory birds. We'll start off 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.**

9 Horseback Trail Ride

Saturday, May 9, 10 AM–1 PM
The West Woods, Horse Trailer Parking

Bring your own horse to join a naturalist for this trail ride of 6 to 8 miles along on the Pioneer Bridle, Affelder and Tulip trails and learn about spring wildflowers and Nature lore from a seat in the saddle, riding out at a leisurely pace in the company of others. Must trailer your own horse and bring a shovel to clean up in the parking lot. Helmets recommended. Anticipate hills, gravel, bridge and stream crossings. **Registration required.**

9 Native Wildflower Gardening

Saturday, May 9, 1–2 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Are you feeling inspired this spring to plant native wildflowers at home or just learn more about them? Join us to learn the benefits of native wildflowers, some of our naturalist's favorites, and where to find them locally.

9 ASM Minerals Garden & Dome Tour

Saturday, May 9, 4–5 PM, Offsite

Join us for an outdoor tour of the minerals garden at ASM International's geodesic dome to learn the history of the site's iconic geodesic dome, then explore the fascinating science of the minerals in the minerals garden. Directions provided to registrants. **Registration required.**

10 Wonders of Spring Hike

Sunday, May 10, 9–11 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center Parking

Wildflowers, amphibians and birds — oh my! Discover these and many other natural wonders of spring along some of these beautiful trails during a hike of about 2.5 miles over hilly terrain. Held rain or shine. Wear foot gear that can get wet and muddy.



Photo by Tami Gingrich

10 Mother's Day Wildflower Walk

Sunday, May 10, 1–3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge Parking

Wander along one of the best trails for wildflowers in our parks, the Valley Trail, and learn about spring wildflowers and their natural history and folklore. We'll walk 1.5-2 miles involving a relatively steep descent into and ascent out of the valley.

12 Magee Marsh Birding Van Trip

Tuesday, May 12, 6 AM–6 PM
The West Woods

Fee: \$10 Geauga residents, \$15 out-of-county
Join us for a trip to one of the best bird-watching spots in the country to witness the spring spectacle of bird migration along the shores of Lake Erie. We'll provide transportation and naturalists to assist with bird identification; bring your own binoculars, water and sack lunch. A couple other bird hotspots may also be visited depending on birding conditions. **Registration required.**

13 Sunrise Hike

Wednesday, May 13, 7–8 AM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge Parking

Start your day with an up-paced hike just after the sun rises, traveling 1.5-2 miles over hilly terrain. **Registration** recommended to receive reminders and updates.


Please check our website for changes or cancellations before attending.

Since we can't send emails about non-registration programs, please remember to mark your calendar or set an alarm to attend.

MAY

16 World Migratory Bird Day Bird Sit

Saturday, May 16, 6:30–11:30 AM
Holbrook Hollows

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day with a bird sit — a bird survey done from a single location for a period of time on one day. Come anytime during these hours to sit with a naturalist on the paved trail overlooking the ravine behind the lodge and spend as much or as little time as you'd like. We'll record all the birds we see or hear in the time period. Bring a chair and relax with binoculars, a camera, and whatever else you need to be comfortable. Dress for the weather. Cancelled in the event of heavy rain or storms (check website/social media). 

16 **Astrotots XL: All Because of Satellites** (Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, May 16, 11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

When was the last time YOU made use of a satellite? How would your life change if there were no satellites? Are satellites real or artificial? Come explore the history and mysteries of satellites and briefly become a satellite engineer, building your own model satellite to take home! **Registration required for children only.**

16 **Coffee with the Birds**

Saturday, May 16, 2–3 PM
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.**

17 Wildflower Wander

Sunday, May 17, 9–10:30 AM
The West Woods

Wander with a naturalist to discover what's blooming and learn about early spring wildflowers and their natural history and folklore, a walk of 1.5-2 miles over hilly terrain. **Registration** recommended for program updates and reminders.

17 Holbrook Heron Hike

Sunday, May 17, 1–4:30 PM
Holbrook Hollows

Take a 6-7-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. Bring water and snacks. **Registration required.**

19 **Blackbrook Audubon: Bird Trivia Night**

Tuesday, May 19, 7–8:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join the Blackbrook Audubon Society for a causal night of bird trivia. Let's test our knowledge and learn new things through friendly competition with fun prizes on the line! Teams can be formed in advance or on the night of the event; grab a partner or team of no more than six people, then pick an awesome team name. Bird-related trivia categories will range from picture ID to cultural history. The top three teams will have their pick of prizes, and we'll do tiebreakers to see who reigns supreme.

21 **Elderberries: Birding for Beginners**

Thursday, May 21, 9:30–11:30 AM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Seniors, join us for breakfast and a short indoor presentation about birding, then head out on the trails to see what you can see and hear! Binoculars will be available for use. Breakfast provided and sponsored by Ohman Family Living at Holly. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

23 **Wings of Spring**

Saturday, May 23, 10–11 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Spring brings back the migratory birds as they travel north from their warm winter homes. Join us for this beginner's look at different birds that can be seen and heard in our nearby forests, fields and backyards.

23 **Afternoon Stroll**

Saturday, May 23, 2–3 PM
The Rookery

Take a leisurely naturalist-led hike along the trail to enjoy the sights and sounds of a springtime afternoon, traveling about 2 miles over level terrain.

23 **The Sky Tonight Planetary Show**



Saturday, May 23, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

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

23 **Nassau Night Sky Viewing**

Saturday, May 23, 8–11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau Astronomical Station

If skies are clear, observe the night sky through the Nassau telescope and other telescopes spaced out around the plaza. Planetarium presentation if cloudy. No registration required.

 Fully Accessible  Nature Scopes

24 **Let's Go Birding!**

Sunday, May 24, 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 park.



Photo by Sonny Williams

24 **Accessible Nature Cart Tours**

Sunday, May 24, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. Thankfully our Nature cart tours are a great way to help you explore the parks! We ride along, stopping to talk about interesting natural and cultural features we discover in Nature. All participants must be able to enter and exit a 6-seat golf cart. We also ask that participants limit registration to themselves and one guest. **Registration required.**

24 **Big Tree Hike**

Sunday, May 24, 2:30–4:30 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

Hike our newest trail, the Tulip Trail, to discover our state-record tuliptree, one of the tallest trees in the state of Ohio! Hike is about 3 miles over rolling hills. Come prepared for variable weather conditions. Limited parking, so carpooling is highly recommended. **Registration required.**

27 **Toddler Time: Sensing the Spring** (Ages 1-2 w/adult)

Wednesday, May 27,
9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon,
Beartown Lakes Reservation

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

28 **Orienteering Adventure for Families** (Ages 8+ w/adult)

Thursday, May 28, 1:30–3:30 PM
Chickagami Park

Families with children ages 8 and up, learn the basics of using a compass, then venture out in the woods to practice. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes with good traction. Participants must have the ability to walk without assistance off-trail in rugged terrain up to 3 miles. **Registration required** for all attending; children must be accompanied by an adult.



Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

28 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, May 28, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Singers and musicians take turns presenting tunes as others join in. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing, or simply enjoy as an audience member.

30 Nature Trek Fitness Hike

Saturday, May 30, 9–11 AM
Headwaters Park, Main Parking
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 up to 4.5 miles on various trail conditions. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.

30 Authorized Access Hike: Wildlife of the Landfill

Saturday, May 30, 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. Bring binoculars or we will supply them. Directions will be provided to registrants. Registration required.

31 Birding Hallowed Ground

Sunday, May 31, 7:30–9 AM
Memorial Cemetery
Spend the morning birding at one of Geauga County's oldest cemeteries. As the floodplain of the Cuyahoga River is nearby, we'll also be excited to see what diversity of birds we can find in this historic location. Registration required.

31 How to Geocache 101

Sunday, May 31, 1–3:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Ever wonder what geocaching is, or how to play? This class will cover the basics of this real-world adventure treasure-hunting game as we find a few caches and plant a few more. Partially off trail, so dress according with sturdy foot gear. Registration required.

31 Full Moon Hike: A Blue Moon

Sunday, May 31, 9:30–10:30 PM
Observatory Park
Enjoy the second full moon in this calendar month by joining us for a sunset hike of about 1.5 miles over level terrain. Then, weather permitting, watch the full moon rise using the park telescopes.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

3 10 17 Annual Spring Bird Walk Series

Sundays, 7:30–9:30 AM
May 3, Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Shelter
May 10, Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
May 17, 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 and bring binoculars. Also April 12, 19 & 26 at different locations.

5 19 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
May 5, Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
May 19, Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park
Naturalist-led hikes for active seniors of about 2 miles. Other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

8 22 Radio Astronomy

Friday, May 8, 7–8 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Friday, May 22, 7–8 PM (Virtual)
Get a glimpse of what radio waves can teach us about the universe! Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. May 22 is a virtual program. Sign up and we will email you a link a few days before the program. (Be sure your email address is correct in your park registration account) Registration required for virtual program only.

8 9 22 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, May 8, 8–11 PM
Saturday, May 9, 8–11 PM
Friday, May 22, 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.



15 16 Astrotots: Good Night Satellite

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Friday, May 15, 9:30–10:30 AM, 11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM
Saturday, May 16, 9:30–10:30 AM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Do you know what a satellite is? Have you ever seen a satellite? Come learn about these amazing machines in space that make our life on Earth so much easier and safer than ever before! Commander Melvin has written a special book just for you on this topic. Registration required for children only.



Photo by Linda Gilbert

17 18 Nature Journaling: Spring Wildflowers

Sunday, May 17, 1–3:30 PM & Monday, May 18, 9:30 AM–Noon
The West Woods, Affelder House
Fee: \$25 Geauga residents, \$30 out-of-county. Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month our inspiration will spring wildflowers. Taking photos is optional. Fees, which include the purchase of a new journal, pen and other supplies, are as follows: first-time participants pay \$25 (Gauga residents) or \$30 (out-of-county residents); those who've attended before, but not within the calendar year, pay \$12 (Gauga residents) or \$14 (out-of-county residents); those who've attended within the calendar year pay nothing. Registration required by phone only.

28 29 30 Timbertots: Wonderful Wings

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Thursday, May 28, 10–11 AM
Friday, May 29, 10–11 AM & Saturday, May 30, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Discover all of the amazing things about wings! Fun activities will include a scavenger hunt through our "On the Wing" community art show. Registration required for all attending, including adults and siblings.

3 Inclusive Experience: For the Birds

Wednesday, June 3, 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

A special program for adults in the developmental disability community! Join a naturalist on this indoor and outdoor exploration to see and hear the amazing birds that live all around us. Includes indoor exploration of our "On the Wing" community art show. **Registration required** for all attending.



6 Searching for Snakes

Saturday, June 6, 10 AM–Noon
The Rookery

Snakes! Why did it have to be snakes? Well, because snakes are amazing creatures that are an important part of the environment, of course! 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.

6 Bald Eagle & Osprey Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Saturday, June 6, 10 AM–Noon & 1–3 PM
Headwaters Park, Boat Launch

Join us for 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 2-3 miles. **Registration required** beginning May 29 at 10 AM.

6 Stream Walk

(Ages 7+ w/adult)
Saturday, June 6, 2–3:30 PM
Sunnybrook Preserve

From salamanders to minnows to crayfish, there's so much life to discover in our streams — and, of course, getting into the water helps us beat the summer heat! Bring your creek-walking shoes, we'll bring the nets, and let's hike down to the stream together. **Registration required** for all attending; children must be accompanied by an adult.

7 Basket Weaving: Tote Basket

Sunday, June 7, 9:30 AM–5 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$55 Geauga residents, \$60 out-of-county
Skill Level: Intermediate. Learn more about the art of basket weaving with Naturalist Renell (some experience recommended) while making your own leather-handled tote basket. Finished basket will be approximately 16 1/2" L x 7 1/2" W x 12 1/2" D. **Registration required.**

7 Drop-in Nature Craft: Solar Prints

Sunday, June 7, 10–11:30 AM & 2–3:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Drop in during program hours to create a piece of art using natural items and solar print paper, available while supplies last. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

7 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Sunday, June 7, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center Parking Lot

Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. Thankfully our Nature cart tours are a great way to help you explore the parks! We ride along, stopping to talk about interesting natural and cultural features we discover in Nature. All participants must be able to enter and exit a 6-seat golf cart. We also ask that participants limit registration to themselves and one guest. **Registration required.**

7 Evening Bird Walk

Sunday, June 7, 7:30–9 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Explore the evening bird life of late spring with a stroll along the trails.

9 Sunrise Hike

Tuesday, June 9, 7–8 AM
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove

Start your day with an up-paced hike just after the sun rises, traveling 1.5- 2 miles over hilly terrain. **Registration** recommended to receive reminders and updates.

11 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer

(Ages 1-2 w/adult)
Thursday, 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 late springtime in the park! Strollers and carriers welcome. **Registration required** for all attending, including adults and siblings.

13 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Saturday, June 13, 9-11:30 AM
Welton's Gorge

Take a strenuous hike through a rocky woodland ravine where the stream is our "trail," discovering deep rock ledges, cool streams, salamanders and other unique features. Must be able to hike 2 miles without assistance off-trail in rugged terrain including slippery stream bottoms, steep grades and obstacles such as boulders, downed trees, poison ivy and thorn bushes. Wear sturdy shoes with good traction that can also get wet. Bring a walking stick. Yaktrax or similar cleats may be advisable based on slippery conditions. Held rain or shine. **Registration required.**



13 250 Movie Night: Finding Nemo

(Rated G)
Saturday, June 13, 6–10 PM

Observatory Park
Join us to celebrate "Ohio Goes to the Movies," part of America 250, by watching "Finding Nemo" at this International Dark Sky Park! This film has ties to Ohio – attend to learn about the Buckeyes who helped make it! Pre-show activities at 6 PM; movie at 7 PM. Bring your own blankets, lawn chairs and refreshments. Movie shown indoors if inclement weather.



14 Basic Learn to Canoe

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Sunday, June 14, 9 AM–Noon
Bass Lake Preserve

Learn basic canoe-handling techniques for safe canoeing on flat water. No private canoes or unregistered people, please. Wear close-toe shoes that can get wet or muddy and bring water and a change of clothes in case you get wet. **Registration required** by phone only beginning June 5 at 10 AM; children must be accompanied by an adult.

14 Streamlife Exploration for Families

Sunday, June 14, 1–3 PM
The West Woods

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 off-trail walking and wading in a rocky stream; no sandals, please. **Registration required** for all participants.

14 Nature Journaling: Life in a Riffle

Sunday, June 14, 1–3:30 PM
Monday, June 15, 9:30 AM–Noon
Sunnybrook Preserve

Fee: \$25 Geauga residents, \$30 out-of-county
Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month our inspiration is life in a riffle. Taking photos is optional. Fees, which include the purchase of a new journal, pen and other supplies, are as follows: first-time participants pay \$25 (Gauga residents) or \$30 (out-of-county residents); those who've attended before, but not within the calendar year, pay \$12 (Gauga residents) or \$14 (out-of-county residents); those who've attended within the calendar year pay nothing. **Registration required** by phone only.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

16 Spears to Arrows

(Ages 9+ w/adult)

Tuesday, June 16, 9 AM–Noon
Chickagami Park

Learn the history of how projectile technology changed from a simple spear to the compound bow in this hands-on program and see how far you can throw replica spears with an atlatl, then get the opportunity to shoot recurve and compound bows. Wear closed-toe shoes. **Registration required** for all participants.

17 Grandparents in the Park Summer Picnic

Wednesday, June 17, 11:30 AM–1:30 PM
Beartown Lakes Reservation, North Point

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 beginning June 1 at 10 AM.

18 Elderberries: Fire Building & Campfire Cooking

Thursday, June 18, 9 AM–Noon
Chickagami Park

Seniors, join us for a fun morning of learning how to build fires and cooking over a campfire! Breakfast provided and sponsored by Burton Health Care. In collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required**.

19 Basic Learn to Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)

Friday, June 19, 6:30–8:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

Learn basic kayak-handling techniques for safe kayaking on flat water. No private kayaks or unregistered people, please. Wear shoes that can get wet or muddy and bring water and a change of clothes in case the kayak overturns. **Registration required** beginning June 12 at 10 AM.

20 Paddle Fest 2026

Saturday, June 20, 9–10:30 AM,
10–11:30 AM, 11:30 AM–1 PM &
12:30–2 PM

Headwaters Park, Boathouse

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

Put your paddling skills to the test! Activities will challenge your endurance, navigation and maneuverability. Bring your own canoe or kayak or reserve one of ours. **NOTE: This event is not for beginners; this should not be your first time paddling.** Fest-goers must check in 15 minutes before their time slot, then can spend up to 2 hours on the water, returning to shore no more than a half hour after their time slot. Ages 12+ may paddle with just one adult in the canoe. Sorry, no pets allowed in boats. **Registration required** by phone only beginning May 15 at 10 AM; register for one session only.

20 Horseback Trail Ride Connecting the Parks

Saturday, June 20, 10 AM–2 PM
Holbrook Hollows

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

20 250 Nights Out in the Parks: Guys Without Ties

Saturday, June 20, 7–8:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Amphitheater
(Cherry Room is the rain location)

Celebrate America 250 at this summer's amphitheater concerts featuring American music! This month, Guys Without Ties present American horn-drenched rock and soul music... **ROCK ON!** Held indoors if inclement weather.

21 Dragonfly Hike

Sunday, June 21, 2–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Pondsider Shelter

Discover the dragonfly and damselfly diversity around Orchard Hills Park's restored habitat and pond and "meet" some of these amazing critters in-the-hand. We'll supply nets, you'll try out your netting skills.

21 Ansel's Cave Solstice Magic Hike

Sunday, June 21, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Turkey Ridge

Experience the sights and sounds of the longest day of the year as we hike 2 miles along the hilly terrain of the Ansel's Cave Trail, culminating in a magical encounter with Ansel Savage himself when he mysteriously appears to recount his days of yore in The West Woods! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear.

24 Nature Explorers: Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Wednesday, June 24, 9–11:30 AM
Welton's Gorge

Adventurous Nature Explorers, bring along your adventurous adult to explore a rocky woodland ravine with deep rock ledges, cool streams, wildflowers, salamanders and other stream life! This is a rugged, strenuous, off-trail hike using the stream as our "trail," so expect slippery stream bottoms, steep grades and obstacles like downed trees and stream crossings. All participants must wear sturdy footwear with good traction that can also get wet and bring a walking stick or we will provide one. Held rain or shine; dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all participants.

25 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, June 25, 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.

27 Practical Knots for Camping

Saturday, June 27, 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.** Wheelchair/stroller accessible. - Volunteers needed

27 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, June 27, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

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

27 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, June 27, 9–11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station

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



28 Hound Hike

Sunday, June 28, 9-10 AM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Dogs (and humans), join us for a hike at this hilly park, then take home a Geauga Park District logo'd dog scarf to remember it by! Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share some helpful tips and tricks to practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, poop scoop and bags for dog clean-up. Only 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; aggressive behavior or excessive barking will result in participants being asked to leave.

Please check our website for changes or cancellations before attending.

Since we can't send emails about non-registration programs, please remember to mark your calendar or set an alarm to attend.

ARCHERY

Fully Accessible Nature Scopes

28 Polliwog Paddle Family Canoe

(Ages 5+ w/adult)

Sunday, June 28, 1–2:30 PM

Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Shelter

Families seeking fun on the water, take an easy-paced, short-distance float together on the wildlife-rich Upper Cuyahoga River! Bring a water bottle, sunscreen, and a change of clothes in case of capsizes. Two adults must be in each canoe with up to two children ages 5-11 in the middle. Ages 12+ may paddle with just one adult in the canoe. **Registration required** by phone only beginning June 19 at 10 AM.

29 Full Moon Hike: The Strawberry Moon

Monday, June 29, 9–10 PM

Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for to explore during one of the latest sunsets of the year, traveling about 1.5 miles over level terrain. Then, weather permitting, watch the full moon rise using the park telescopes.



ARCHERY FOR EVERYONE

Introduction to Archery for Families

Saturday, June 13, 9–10:30 AM

Saturday, June 27, 10:30 AM–Noon

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 attending.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

2 16 30 Geauga Walkers

Summer Picnic

Tuesday, June 2, Noon–2:30 PM

The West Woods, Turkey Ridge Shelter

Naturalist-led hike for active seniors, followed by the annual picnic lunch. Bring a dish to share and we'll eat after the hike

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM

June 16, Chickagami Park

June 30, Beartown Lakes Reservation, North Point

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

8 10 13 Timbertots:

Fish Fun! (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Monday, June 8, 10–11 AM

Tuesday, June 9, 10–11 AM

Beartown Lakes Reservation, North Point

Saturday, June 13, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM

Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve, Sunset Shelter

Learn about our finny friends with fun games and activities. Entirely outdoors, so dress for the weather.

Registration required for all attending, including adults and siblings.

12 26 Make a Sundial

Friday, June 12, 7–8 PM

Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Friday, June 26, 7–8 PM (Virtual)

Make-and-take a paper sundial and learn the science behind these fascinating devices! Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. June 26 is a virtual program. Sign up and we will email you a link a few days before the program. (Be sure your email address is correct in your park registration account) **Registration required** for virtual program only.

12 13 26 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, June 12, 8-11 PM

Saturday, June 13, 8-11 PM

Friday, June 26, 8-11 PM

Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

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

All June archery programs are located at Chickagami Park's Outdoor Range. Arrive 10 minutes early to allow for the walk to the range.

Archery Practice (Ages 9+)

Saturday, June 13, 11–11:30 AM

Saturday, June 27, 1:30–2 PM

These 30-minute sessions are for you to take the next step in improving your aim through practice. Participants must have previously completed our Introduction to Archery program, be 50" or taller, wear closed-toe shoes, and be accompanied by an adult if under 18. **Registration required** for all attending.

Archery Games for Adults

Saturday, June 13, 12:30–2 PM

Saturday, June 27, 2:30–4 PM

Take the next step in improving your aim through playing archery games. Participants must have previously completed our Introduction to Archery program and wear closed-toe shoes. **Registration required.**



Check out the new spring geocache at Big Creek Park in Chardon Twp. 9160 Robinson Road

N 41° 37.311'
W -081° 12.152'

Some trees might be down, but no need to frown. They make a good place for this cache to be found. If you found the winter cache and came here from there, this one's on the same long trail, you might be aware. Now if you are askin', best park near shelter Aspen. Follow Blue Blazes to start where the Trillium parts. Now step off the trail and you'll surely prevail.

Expires June 1, 2027. Find details on our website under Activities.

2026 summer camps



Nature Adventure Day Camp

**Youth entering
grades 5-7 (3 sessions)**

Monday through Friday, June 8–12,
June 22–26 & July 27–31

**Teens entering
grades 8-10 (1 session)**

Monday through Friday,
June 15–19

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, Big Creek Park on Thursday, and Chickagami Park on Friday.

Junior Naturalist Day Camp

Youth entering grades 5-7 (2 sessions)

Monday through Friday, June 1–5 & July 13–17

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 6–10 & August 3–7

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).

**REGISTRATION
REQUIRED for all sessions**

<http://bit.ly/gpdcamps2025>
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; call for details.



Nature Nymphs Day Camp

**NEW
AGE GROUP
THIS YEAR!**

Youth entering grades 1-2 (1 session)

Monday through Wednesday, June 29–July 1

9 AM–3 PM daily at The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$90 Geauga residents,
\$105 out-of-county residents

Join us for an exciting week of exploring Nature! 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 Nature Center.

**ALSO
NEW THIS
YEAR!**

Nature Art Day Camp

Youth entering grades 8-10 (1 session)

Monday through Friday, July 20–24

9 AM–3 PM daily at The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$150 Geauga residents,
\$175 out-of-county residents

Are you ready to create art inspired by Nature? If so, join our new Nature Art Camp for an exciting week of creating art as you learn about Nature! Examples of activities include weaving, journaling and watercolor painting. Campers will begin and end each day at the Nature Center.



Let's discover the Great Outdoors!

Let Nature Inspire Your Writing

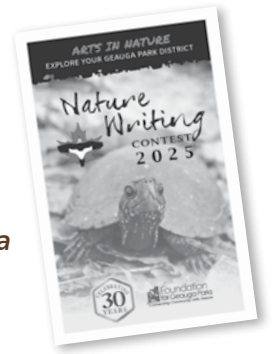
Enter Geauga Park District's 31st Annual Nature Writing Contest

Wednesday, 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/gpdnwc2026> 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!



Donations to
 Geauga Park District
 November 2025
 through
 January 2026

Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors

Beth Nagusky	Unrestricted donation	\$100.00
Lisa Mann	Unrestricted donation	\$50.00
Anonymous	Unrestricted donation	\$100.00
Sunita Dayal	Unrestricted donation	\$25.00
The Cleveland Foundation	Hanes Family Foundation unrestricted donation	\$5,000.00
Thalia Hutter	Unrestricted donation	\$50.00
Blackbrook Audubon Society	Unrestricted donation	\$200.00
The Cleveland Foundation	Lewis & Ruth Affelder Fund unrestricted donation	\$2,060.00
The Cleveland Foundation	Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Fund unrestricted donation	\$2,000.00
Doug & Lee Bannerman	Unrestricted donation	\$1,000.00
Jacqueline Samuel Clio Club	Unrestricted donation	\$50.00
Frank Rausche	Unrestricted donation	\$1,000.00
Lori Jo Folger	Donation for trail maintenance	\$300.00
Christine Belliveau	Donation in memory of Ron Johnson	\$50.00
Thomas & Janet M. Overberg	Donation in memory of Ron Johnson	\$40.00
Town & Country Garden Club	Donation for conservation efforts	\$100.00
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Reimburse 2024 summer camp expenditures	\$8,776.80
Ruth E. Johnson	Donation in memory of Ron Johnson	\$200.00
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Donation for Nature Writing Contest prizes	\$450.00
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Reimburse Tulip Trail expenditures	\$1,605.66
The Cleveland Foundation	Hanes Family Foundation Nature Scopes donation	\$500.00
Sonya Virant	Memorial Bench Plaque in memory of Luke Skotzke	\$500.00
Linda Angstrom	Nature Scopes donation	\$100.00
Ruth Johnson	Veteran's Tribute Plaque in memory of Ronald L. Johnson	\$500.00
Lord of Life Lutheran Church	Honorarium for requested program	\$100.00
Jessica & Bernadette Alpers	Veteran's Tribute Plaque in honor of Hugo Alpers	\$500.00
Claire Mersol	Donation for conservation efforts	\$600.00
Burroughs Nature Club	Nature Scopes donation	\$150.00
Melissa Fransko	Veteran's Tribute Plaque in memory of Paul P. Fransko	\$500.00
Nancy & Gary Parker	Donation in memory of beloved dog Kona	\$100.00
Nancy & Gary Parker	Donation in honor of Naturalist Karie Wheaton	\$100.00
Gaugu Walkers	Donation for Naturalist Department	\$100.00
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Donation for Nature Scopes 2025-26 school year	\$34,149.60
Foundation for Geauga Parks	Donation for 2025 Nature Adventure Camp	\$9,773.20
Lori Jo Folger	Donation for trail development	\$300.00
Robert Farinacci	Donation for naturalist programs	\$150.00

Insect Artisans: Caddisflies

What is a Caddisfly, you ask? Caddisflies are insects whose larva dwell in streams, ponds, marshes and vernal pools, and who are best known for building mobile cases for themselves to protect themselves from predators. Depending on the species, some Caddisflies use silk combined with sand, small pebbles, sticks, or leaf pieces to build these protective cases; some build a silk case only; and some are free-living and do not build a case at all.

Caddisflies are detritivores — that is, they consume decomposing plant and animal matter on the bottom of the stream or body of water. Finding stream-dwelling Caddisfly species is a sign of good water quality, as they need cold, well-oxygenated, pollution-free water to live. Adults resemble moths.

I know a lady who makes Caddisfly jewelry. She collects the larva from streams and moves them into an artificial stream set-up in her lab, where she gives them special materials to use for building their cases: rubies, turquoise, tiger's eye, emeralds and other gemstones. Once the Caddisflies complete their aquatic larval stage and emerge as adults (which are then released back into the wild), she collects the empty cases, covers them in epoxy resin and makes earrings, bracelets and necklaces. I have two Caddisfly case bracelets, one made with the gemstone tiger's eye and the other from a metamorphic rock called unakite.

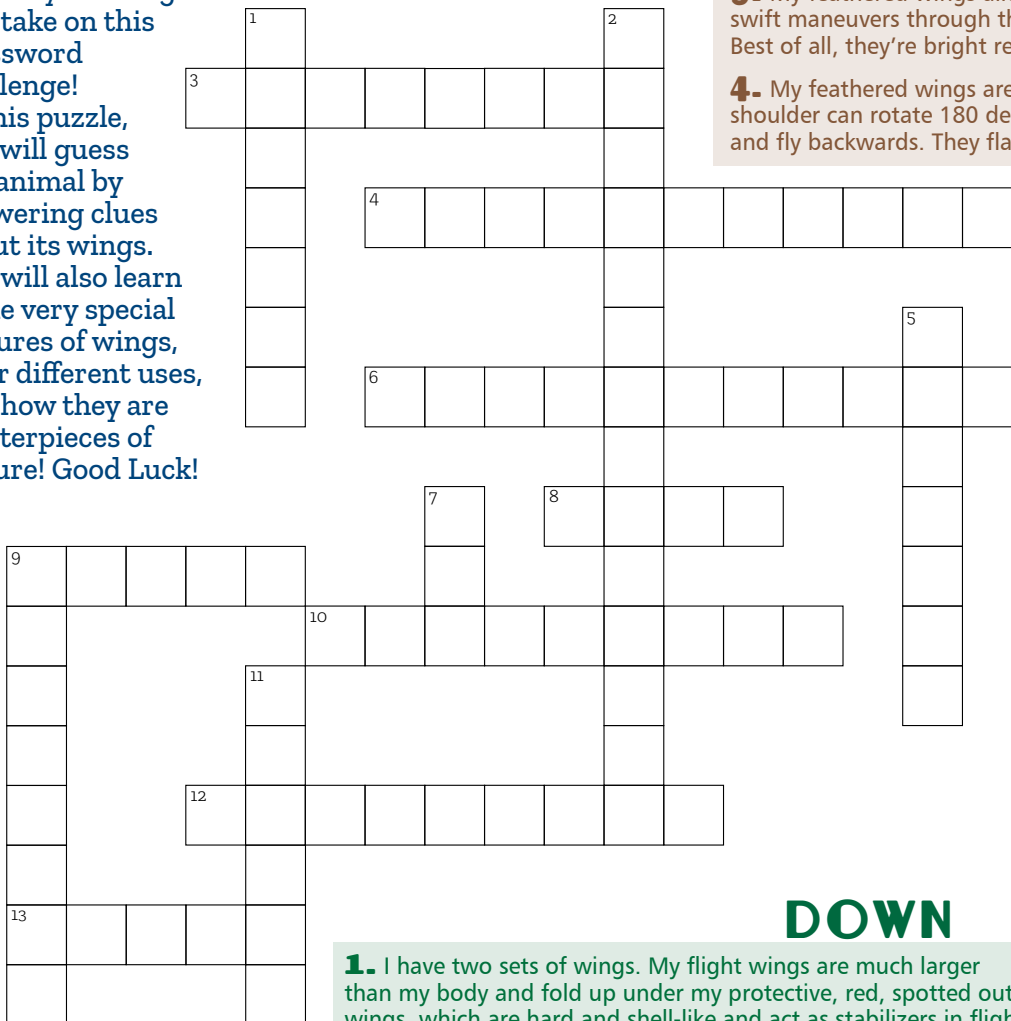
How cool is it to have jewelry made by an insect?! Caddisflies are amazing insect artisans!





THINGS WITH WINGS

Spread your wings and take on this crossword challenge! In this puzzle, you will guess the animal by answering clues about its wings. You will also learn some very special features of wings, their different uses, and how they are masterpieces of Nature! Good Luck!



ACROSS

- 3.** My feathered wings allow me to be agile so that I can make swift maneuvers through the trees and land on your birdfeeder. Best of all, they're bright red, just like the rest of me!
- 4.** My feathered wings are long and slender on my little body. My shoulder can rotate 180 degrees, allowing me to hover at a feeder and fly backwards. They flap very fast, about 80 times per second!

6. Most people think I just hop, but I do have wings that grow as I become an adult. I have strong legs to jump, and my wings help me stay in the air to glide short distances.

8. I use my feathered wings for flying, but as a diver, I can also move them in such a way to help me swim underwater.

9. My feathered wings are designed for slow, stable flight. My wingspan is large compared to my body. When I fly, my neck forms an S shape, and my long legs are outstretched behind me. I nest in a colony called a rookery.

10. The surfaces of my thin wings are covered in thousands of tiny scales that make up the colors and patterns you see on them when I land on flowers.

12. My wings are long and narrow, with a pattern of veins that makes them strong. My wings can also move independent of each other, giving me the ability to fly like a helicopter.

13. My feathered wings are very strong and powerful. They are long and broad and allow me to soar high in the sky while I carry prey in my talons. My wingspan can be more than 6 feet wide!

DOWN

- 1.** I have two sets of wings. My flight wings are much larger than my body and fold up under my protective, red, spotted outer wings, which are hard and shell-like and act as stabilizers in flight.
- 2.** I really don't have wings, but my furred skin that stretches between my outstretched arms and legs allows me to glide through the air. *(Hint: my name has two words.)*

5. I don't live in Ohio, but instead where it's cold year-round. My wings have very short, dense feathers to keep me warm but don't allow me to fly. Rather, they are like paddles and make me a fantastic swimmer.

7. My wings are made of a thin membrane of skin stretched over and between elongated finger bones. They allow for excellent maneuverability when hunting for insects or flying through caves.

9. My wings are thin and transparent with small veins. I use my wings to fly, to communicate, and also to help control the temperature in the hive.

11. My feathered wings are designed for short bursts of fast flight, so I can't fly long distances and spend much of my time walking on the ground. When I do spread my wings, my wingspan can be 5 feet wide.

If you can draw these shapes, then you can draw these birds!



Northern Cardinal



Black-capped Chickadee



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

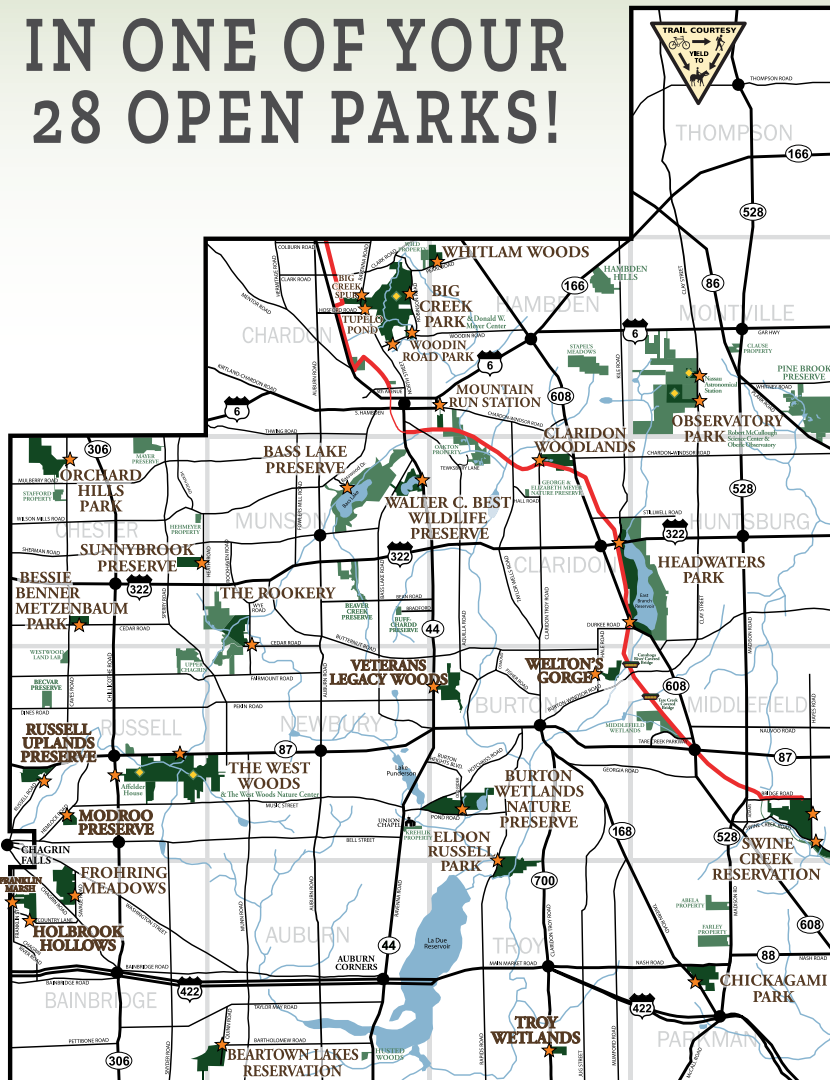




Geauga Park District
 9160 Robinson Road
 Chardon, OH 44024-9148

FIND YOUR ADVENTURE

IN ONE OF YOUR
 28 OPEN PARKS!



Nature that takes flight!

Let's celebrate the dynamic beauty of our airborne natural world!

Come enjoy drawings, paintings, photography and sculpture by regional artists of all ages featuring Nature's most magnificent flyers.

Opens March 28

On display through July 26
 Daily 10 AM - 4 PM
 The West Woods Nature Center

Printed on paper using 10% post-consumer waste

www.geaugaparkdistrict.org

440-286-9516    

Answers to crossword puzzle — ACROSS: 3-cardinal, 4-hummingbird, 6-grasshopper, 8-duck, 9-heron, 10-butterfly, 12-dragonfly, 13-eagle DOWN: 1-ladybug, 2-flyingsquirrel, 5-penguin, 7-bat, 9-honeybee, 11-turkey