

PARK EXPLORER

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE



Central section of
The Maple Highlands Trail
Photo by Grace Rybak

SUMMER 2026

4 Taking on the high ropes course at Claridon Woodlands

6 Seeking trails shaded from the sun for cool summer walks?

20 Last call to enjoy the *On the Wing* Community Art Show

21 Announcing the winners of our 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.



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 join this celebration, Geauga Park District is offering special programs and events this year with ties to American and Ohio pride. Watch for the **250** icon that identifies them!

Nights Out in the Parks

A great way to spend a summer evening!

Music Concerts at Big Creek Park's Amphitheater at 7 PM
Bent String 7/25
Big North Band 8/8

Outdoor Movie Night at Observatory Park with pre-show activities at 6 PM & movie at 7 PM
Superman (PG-13) 7/11



at Observatory Park
Wednesday, August 12, 9 PM – Thursday, August 13, 6 AM
 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, as only 200 people can attend!



THE GREAT GEAUGA COUNTY FAIR

Thursday, September 3 – Monday, September 7 • 11 AM – 7 PM
 Our celebration of America 250 continues in our fair building this year, found in the Natural Resources Area, also featuring Geauga Park District's famous Monarch Butterflies and the latest news on your parks.
 Daily Monarch program/taggings at 3:30 PM as butterflies are available

SAVE THE DATE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

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 8-17*

- 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.



Gaugua 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 a new Geauga County summer! As the season warms up, we hope you’re looking forward to spending more time outdoors in your Geauga Park District. The opportunities available to you and your family are wide-ranging and depend on what you enjoy and how you choose to make the most of your summer days.

Some of our most popular seasonal recreation has already returned, including archery at Chickagami Park, boat borrowing at Headwaters Park, and the high ropes course at Claridon Woodlands — all free to Geauga County residents. Find details on pages 17 and 20.

Nights Out in the Parks are patriotic in celebration of America 250 and Ohio Goes to the Movies, featuring American music and movies with Ohio ties. Those celebrating our nation’s 250th birthday can also stop by our building at The Great Geauga County Fair to meet our Monarchs and discover how present-day Geauga looked when America was founded.

If you’ve wondered how much fun is had during our annual summer camps, look no further than this year’s registration, which filled quickly and now has waitlists. We are deeply grateful for the continued support of these camps as we help children and teenagers enjoy memorable summers while building lifelong connections to the Great Outdoors.

Another summer memory might be made during our late-night lunar eclipse viewing between August 27 and 28, when the moon will appear 93 percent eclipsed. Or it could begin with a simple walk, run or ride through your favorite park close to home. Experience new improvements at Beartown Lakes Reservation’s new Nature-based playground along the lake, or at Tupelo Pond, where a new pondside shelter and fishing platforms pair nicely with hiking a lesser-seen portion of Big Creek Park.

Gauga County’s incredible parks truly are Our Everyday Getaway for you and your family, providing ways to recharge, reconnect, seek adventure or simply enjoy the outdoors close to home. Thank you, Geauga County residents. We look forward to seeing you this summer!

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



Photo by Haley Jonovich

A Summer Milestone: Taking on the High Ropes

By Haley & Elsie Jonovich

As Hambden Township residents, our family often frequents Claridon Woodlands.

Every summer, we would marvel at the high ropes course as we passed by on our bikes or by foot. Our kids were still too young to participate, so we patiently waited for a double-digit birthday and the opportunity to give it a try.

Finally, last summer, our oldest daughter, Elsie, had turned 10 and hit all the requirements for participation. As soon as registration opened, she had us on the Park District website signing up for a session in June. Registration was easy (and free for residents!) and in no time, we had our spot booked.

We were excited and nervous as we headed to the park after work on a Monday evening. Upon arrival, we were greeted by Anne and two other young ladies who were happy to go over everything and get us started on our adventure.

After checking us in and signing waivers, we were fitted with harnesses and helmets. They reviewed all the safety instructions with us, and we learned how to properly



clip our carabiners on and off the practice line by the base of the course.

In Elsie's own words, "I felt the ropes course was completely safe. There is a harness with many fitting adjustments that the guides test and check. There is also a spot to practice moving around in your harness."

Next, it was go time! Anne was our guide for the experience, and she climbed up first. Then it was Elsie's turn, climbing 32 feet to the course's first platform. What a spectacular view amongst the tree tops!

Our guide gave us options on how to navigate the course, and we took turns traversing each obstacle one at a time. These obstacles vary, and each poses its own "challenge" for crossing, such as swinging logs, cable line, and varying hand holds.

In Elsie's own words, "My opinion is that it was fun and thrilling, but maybe not for those who are afraid of heights. It is also adventurous and a way to try something new. It made me feel strong and brave.

"It was so fun trying different ways to make it across different obstacles and find out which is your favorite. My favorite was definitely the Xs and Os. They are slanted and swingy, which makes it more challenging and exciting."

We felt safe at all times and appreciated the skill and expertise of our guide. When our hour came to a close, it was time to move to the final platform, where we clipped in for a 100-foot-long zipline ride



back to the ground. It was the perfect rush of adrenaline to end our experience.

We encourage anyone interested to give the high ropes course a try. It was fun, easy to schedule, and a great bonding experience. In fact, we enjoyed our time so much that we signed up and participated again in August.

If you are a thrill-seeker looking for a way to spice up your summer, Claridon Woodlands is the place to be! 🌲



NEW @ THE ROPES

Climb once to get a Frequent Climber Card, and two more times this season to earn an exclusive carabiner fidget spinner!

Park Spotlight

With its lush greenery and often-comfortable temperatures, summer is a wonderful time to wander park trails and connect with Nature. But the summer sun can also make some days especially hot and draining. That's where mature forest trails offer a refreshing escape. Many of our parks offer shady, wooded options where mature trees create a cool canopy overhead, turning a simple walk into a comfortable and inviting retreat from the heat. Try these shaded hikes this season, hand-picked by our knowledgeable naturalists.

Best Parks for Shaded Summer Walks

Whitlam Woods—Chardon

Hemlock trees provide year-round greenery in ravines, and a mature beech-maple forest cloaks most of this park. It can feel magical to hike in a forest with very tall trees, and the **SUGARBUSH TRAIL** offers just that. Just short of a mile, this trail provides rolling hills and shaded, wooded views. Some stair climbing will also get your heart rate up, providing beneficial exercise as you enjoy.

Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park—Chester

Enter through an opening in the leaves on either side of the Nature-based playground to find this park's mature beech-maple forest. The surprise difference will be whether you ascend the long set of stairs on the way in or descend it on the way out. The **SUMMIT TRAIL** is a primitive trail loop just over half a mile that is challenging even for avid hikers, climbing uphill to the summit of a sandstone knoll 140 feet above Griswold Creek. Your reward will be a step onto the overlook deck to catch your breath and take in the view of the forest. Then the rest is, of course, downhill, still in the shade of the trees overhead.

Sunnybrook Preserve—Chester

Situated within a healthy mature forest, the **WOODLAND TRAIL** here leads hikers through nearly a mile of rolling hills and ravines shaped long ago by glacial deposits. Follow the trail under the pergola to get started, and consider extending your experience once you're out there by following the signs for **JUMPING MOUSE TRAIL** to add an extra half-mile.

Swine Creek Reservation—Middlefield

For an easier trail that's under the shade of a variety of trees, try the **WAGON TRAIL**. It is nestled within a mature forest that covers most of this park, measuring just under a mile — a fairly level, gravel trail with gently rolling hills.

Big Creek Park—Chardon

This park's popular **HEMLOCK TRAIL** offers a peaceful and scenic escape into Nature. A mile-long loop, it winds through a mature beech-maple forest where towering trees provide shade and relief from the hot summer sun. With great views of deep woods, this trail traverses rolling hills and ravines, all the while providing a satisfying workout with its varied terrain. Where the valley of Big Creek narrows, watch for beautiful hemlock trees lining the cool, steep slopes.

What to know about... Cuyahoga River Reforestation

AT VETERANS LEGACY WOODS



In the spring of 2025, Geauga Park District completed a larger-scale reforestation project at Veterans Legacy Woods which included the planting of nearly 1,900 native trees and shrubs on more than 13 acres of former golf course fairway. This and ongoing reforestation at this park will help maintain cold temperatures in the headwater streams of the West Branch of the Cuyahoga River; facilitate the long-term recovery of (and return to) a large, mature, native forest ecosystem; and improve this park's overall biodiversity.

WHY A FOREST HABITAT?

Forested habitats and riparian (or streamside) corridors are important for maintaining clean water and protecting high-quality streams and wetlands. They naturally stabilize streambanks and prevent pollution from entering waterways.

Forested habitats also provide food, cover and homes for wildlife, while riparian tree canopies shade streams to keep them cool for sensitive aquatic species.

Reforesting Veterans Legacy Woods will help reduce erosion, keep stormwater runoff from flowing into the Cuyahoga River, restore vital streamside habitat for wildlife, improve biodiversity and air quality, and build local resilience to climate change. We are proud to steward this special property and invite you to follow along for updates on its transformation and ways you can get involved.

PLANTINGS AT A GLANCE



BLACK GUM
Nyssa sylvatica

A medium-sized tree that has multiple wildlife benefits along with beautiful red fall foliage.



SHAGBARK HICKORY
Carya ovata

A slow-growing tree with uniquely shaggy bark and large, sweet nuts that squirrels enjoy.



ELDERBERRY
Sambucus canadensis

A great native shrub for wildlife, with dark purple berries that appear in late summer to fall.



WHITE OAK
Quercus alba

An important wildlife tree with a wide-spreading canopy, beautifully colored leaves in the fall, and relatively large and abundant acorns.



AMERICAN SYCAMORE
Platanus occidentalis

A massive tree that has distinct white bark in the winter after its gray-brown bark has peeled off mid-summer.



BUTTONBUSH
Cephalanthus occidentalis

A shrub primarily found in wet areas with conspicuous white, spherical flowers that have needle-like projections and are great for pollinators.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Forest Service fully funded this project, completed in partnership with Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc., by awarding a grant to Geauga Park District in the amount of \$149,860 through its Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.



Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

2 Sunrise Hike

Thursday, July 2, 7-8 AM
Veterans Legacy Woods

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



5 Family Pond Exploration

Sunday, July 5, 1-3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

A family program dipping into a pond to discover wildlife such as dragonfly nymphs, tadpoles, water scorpions, giant water bugs and Red-spotted Newts. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear shoes that can get wet and muddy. **Registration required.**

9 Union Chapel Bat Count

Thursday, July 9, 8:30-9:30 PM
Offsite, Newbury Union Chapel on State Route 44

Union Chapel is home to Geauga Park District's "Bat Condo," a nursery roost for Big Brown Bats, Little Brown Bats and their offspring. Help a naturalist with our annual bat survey by counting bats as they exit their daytime roost and head out to feed for the evening. We'll use click counters to keep track of their numbers as they exit. Directions to site will be sent before program. **Registration required.**

11 Nature Break: Women's Retreat

Saturday, July 11, 8:30 AM-1 PM
Bass Lake Preserve, Lodge

Fee: \$8 Geauga residents, \$10 out-of-county
Take a break and relax in the park! Activities include yoga, kayaking and a canvas art project inspired by Nature. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Bring a mat or beach towel for yoga, and dress in layers with comfortable clothes for being outside and yoga. **Registration required** for all attending.

11 Bring In Your Telescope

Saturday, July 11, 4-5 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Do you have a telescope that you're unsure how to use? "Drop in" for a quick consultation with an experienced astronomer.



11 250 Movie Night: Superman

(Rated PG-13)
Saturday, July 11, 6-10 PM,
Observatory Park

Join us to celebrate America 250 and Ohio Goes to the Movies as we watch our favorite local superhero...SUPERMAN! This 2025 feature was filmed in Cleveland and around our state. Pre-show activities at 6 PM, movie at 7 PM. Bring your own blankets, lawn chairs and refreshments. Movie shown indoors if inclement weather.



12 Hound Hike

Sunday, July 12, 8-9 AM
Whitlam Woods

Dogs and your humans, let's take a 1.5-mile hike! This one includes a staircase along the medium-level Bridge and Sugarbush Trails. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share helpful tips and tricks to practice during our 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. **Registration required.**



12 Hidden Gems Hike: Whitlam Woods

Sunday, July 12, 10-11:30 AM
Whitlam Woods

Hike this hidden gem with a naturalist to discover natural wonders along its beautiful trails. Must be able to hike 1.5 miles over hilly terrain. Hike includes stairs. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear footwear that can get wet and muddy.

13 250 Monday FUN-Day: Big Games in the Park

Monday, July 13, 6-8 PM
Frohning Meadows

Pack a picnic and celebrate the July theme for America 250, "Ohio Gathers," by playing giant games like Jenga, 4-in-a-row, yard dice, dominoes and more!

14 Teen Cuyahoga Kayak Challenge

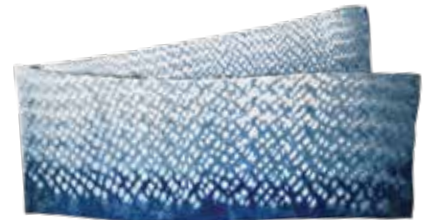
(Teens entering grades 8-10)
Tuesday, July 14, 9 AM-3 PM
Eldon Russell Park, Boat Launch Area

The wilds of the Upper Cuyahoga River are home to a wondrous variety of birds and beasts. Teens, join a naturalist on this adventure as we paddle to discover plants and wildlife in and along the river. Bring a lunch and water bottle in a waterproof bag, as well as sunscreen and insect repellent that can be applied onsite if needed. Completed waiver required. **Registration required.**

14 "Yarn Over" in the Park

Tuesday, July 14, 1-2:30 PM & 6-7:30 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

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



15 Indigo Shibori Dyeing

Wednesday, July 15, 6-8:30 PM
The West Woods, Deer Run Shelter

Fee: \$45 Geauga residents, \$50 out-of-county
Join artist Deb Berkebile to learn Shibori dyeing techniques — how to mix your own vat of indigo dyes, as well as folding, twisting and clamping techniques otherwise known as Itajime Shibori. Class includes a scarf and 1 yard of cotton fabric to work with. Dress for mess. Ages 13+, no younger children, please. **Registration required.**

16 Elderberries: Paddling in the Park

Thursday, July 16, 9 AM-Noon
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

Seniors, enjoy a morning at Headwaters Park, choosing from activities including kayaking, biking, hiking and crafting. If you plan to bike, please bring your own bicycle. Breakfast will be provided and is sponsored by Ohman Family Living at Blossom. A collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

18 Paracord Snake Craft

Saturday, July 18,
10:30 AM-Noon & 2-3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$5 Geauga residents, \$8 out-of-county
Choose 2 awesome paracord colors and learn how to tie your own unique snake paracord craft by using a snake knot (of course), learning about our amazing native snakes along the way. **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

18 Streamlife Exploration for Families

Saturday, July 18, 1–3 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

A family program venturing into a forested stream to discover wildlife such as crayfish, salamanders and crane fly larvae. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear shoes or boots for wading in a rocky stream (no sandals). **Registration required** for all participants.

18 Kelso Sunset Kayak

(Ages 12+ w/adult)
Saturday, July 18, 8:30–10 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Watch the sun set over the tranquil waters of beautiful Lake Kelso while searching for signs of wildlife activity in and around the lake. Basic kayaking skills required. Ages 12+ w/adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** beginning July 10.

19 Buckeye Trail Highlight Hike

Sunday, July 19, 10 AM–12:30 PM
Troy Cemetery, 13707 Main Market Rd.

The Buckeye Trail winds nearly 1,444 miles around Ohio. Let's visit a Geauga County area that follows the Blue Blazes! Participants start at Troy Cemetery and must be able to hike about 2.5 miles on uneven trail surfaces. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly, bring water and a snack, and wear boots with good traction. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required**.

19 Basic Learn to Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Sunday, July 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. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** beginning July 10 at 10 AM.



Photo by Paige Orvis

21 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer

(Ages 1-2 w/adult)
Tuesday, July 21,
9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon
Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park

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.

22 Grandparents in the Park: Summer Fun

Wednesday, July 22, 10–11:30 AM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Grandparents and grandchildren, enjoy a morning of all-ages fun including an orchard-themed play area! Mostly outdoors, so dress accordingly. Snacks and beverages provided. **Registration required**.

23 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, July 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 Dragonfly Van Trip: Triangle Bog

Saturday, July 25, 9:30–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join us for a van trip to Portage County to visit unique bog habitats, which often yield unique plant/animal life. We'll visit Triangle Bog State Nature Preserve and Kent Bog in search of dragonflies, damselflies and interesting plants. Long pants and sturdy hiking boots recommended. **Registration required**.



Photo by Jim Marquardt

25 Prairie Blooms Hike

Saturday, July 25, 10–11:30 AM
Orchard Hills Park

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.

25 Stream Walk

Saturday, July 25, 3–4:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Valley Parking

From salamanders to minnows to crayfish, there's so much life to discover in our streams — and getting into the water also helps us beat the summer heat, of course! Bring your creek-walking shoes, we'll bring the nets, and let's hike down to the stream together. Ages 7+ with an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all attending.

25 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, July 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.

25 250 Nights Out in the Parks: Bent String Band

Saturday, July 25, 7–8:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Amphitheater

Celebrate America 250 at our summer amphitheater concerts featuring American music! This month, the Bent String Band performs a mix of early American roots music, including early jazz, acoustic blues, and original music, all with the feel of jazz-age swing! Held indoors in the Cherry Room if inclement weather.

25 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, July 25, 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.

26 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

Sunday, July 26, 9:30 AM–Noon
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. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear sturdy shoes with good traction that can get wet. Yaktrax or similar cleats may also be advisable based on slippery conditions. Bring a walking stick. Ages 10+ with an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all attending.

26 10 Essentials Hike

Sunday, July 26, 2–4 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

Hiking can be a fun adventure, but if things don't go as planned and you aren't prepared, it can turn into a misadventure real quick. Let's hike about 3 miles over rolling hills and learn about the 10 essentials for hiking. Come prepared for variable trail conditions. Limited parking, so carpooling is highly recommended. **Registration required**.

26 250 Celebrate 250: Geauga in Early Pioneer Times

Sunday, July 26, 2–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

In honor of our nation's 250th anniversary, learn about what Ohio was like when settlers first arrived in the area to become Geauga County, including the conditions they faced and what wildlife and habitats existed at that time.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

26 Moth Madness

Sunday, July 26, 10:30 PM–12:30 AM
The West Woods, Deer Run Shelter
Drop in anytime during program hours with your curiosity to see what insect species have been attracted to the lights — an awesome opportunity to capture images of night-flying insects! Flashlights and cameras recommended. Be prepared for mosquitoes.



Photo by Sonny Williams

29 Monarch Egg-Collecting Hike


Wednesday, July 29,
10 AM–Noon & 1:30–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge
Hike with a naturalist to collect Monarch eggs from milkweed plants. Eggs will be reared and eventually displayed as adult butterflies at The Great Geauga County Fair. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly. We'll travel up to 2 miles on rolling terrain and stay mostly on-trail but occasionally delve off-trail in search of eggs in the milkweed patches, so long pants are also recommended. Per park rules and regulations, harvesting of Monarch eggs and caterpillars for personal use is not permitted. **Registration required.**



29 Full Moon Hike: The Green Corn Moon

Wednesday, July 29, 9–10 PM
Observatory Park
Join us to explore during one of the latest sunsets of the year, traveling about 1.5 miles over level terrain, then watch the full moon rise using park telescopes, weather permitting. No registration required.

31 Astrotots: "3-2-1 BLAST-OFF!"



(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Friday, July 31, 9:30–10:30 AM,
11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Come SEE a rocket, come BE a rocket, and come put together a rocket fueled by your own imagination — then, to top it off, come help us do the final countdown for an onsite, air pressure-powered rocket launch! Also offered August 1. **Registration required** for just the children. 

RECURRING PROGRAMS


5 6 7 Timbertots: Camp Day

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Sunday, July 5,
10–11:30 AM & 1–2:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove
Monday, July 6, 10–11:30 AM &
Tuesday, July 7, 10–11:30 AM
Chickagami Park, Overlook Shelter
A preschool version of "big kid camp" complete with activities, crafts and s'more! Program outdoors, weather permitting, so dress accordingly. **Registration required** for all attending.

10 24 American History in the Sky

Friday, July 10, 7–8 PM 
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Friday, July 24, 7–8 PM  (Virtual)
Explore America's history through 10 astronomy items! Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. July 24 is a virtual program. Sign up and we will email you a link a few days before the program. Please ensure we have your correct email address on file. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

10 11 24 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, July 10, 8–11 PM
Saturday, July 11, 8–11 PM
Friday, July 24, 8–11 PM
Observatory Park
If skies are clear, observe the night sky through the Oberle telescope and other telescopes spaced out around the plaza. Planetarium presentation if cloudy. 



12 13 Nature Journaling: Cicadas

Sunday, July 12, 1–3:30 PM
Monday, July 13, 9:30 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
Fee: \$25 Geauga residents, \$30 out-of-county
A monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. Cicadas will be our inspiration this month. 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.



Photo by Sonny Williams

12 22 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Sunday, July 12, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve
Wednesday, July 22,
9:30–10:30 AM & 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Our parks are beautiful, but can be a challenge for people with limited mobility. Thankfully, cart tours are also a great way to explore the parks! We'll ride along, stopping to discuss interesting natural and cultural features we discover in Nature. All participants must be able to enter and exit a 6-seat golf cart. Please limit registration to yourself and one guest. **Registration required.**


14 28 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
July 14, Whitlam Woods
July 28, Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge Parking Lot
Join other active seniors on weekly hikes of approximately 2 miles. Naturalists lead hikes within Geauga Park District; other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.


1 Native American Sites of Northeast Ohio Van Tour

Saturday, August 1, 9 AM–4 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center, Fee: \$3
Join us as we travel around Geauga and Lake Counties to visit different Native American sites, including a visit to the Indian Museum of Lake County. Must be able to hike 2 miles on hilly terrain. Dress for the weather and bring a sack lunch. Fee covers museum admission. **Registration required.**

1 Astrotots: "3-2-1 BLAST-OFF!" (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Saturday, August 1, 9:30–10:30 AM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Come SEE a rocket, come BE a rocket, and come put together a rocket fueled by your own imagination — then, to top it off, come help us do the final countdown for an onsite, air pressure-powered rocket launch! **Registration required for just the children.** 

1 Astrotots XL: READY FOR LAUNCH! (Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, August 1, 11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Come learn the basics of rocket science, craft a way-cool (going nowhere) rocket, and assist in the launch of a real air-pressure powered rocket, guaranteed to be a blast! **Registration required for just the children.** 

1 Monarch Egg-Collecting Hike

Saturday, August 1, 1:30–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Pondside Shelter
Hike with a naturalist to collect Monarch eggs from milkweed plants. Eggs will be reared and eventually displayed as adult butterflies at The Great Geauga County Fair. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly. We'll travel up to 2 miles on rolling terrain and stay mostly on-trail but occasionally delve off-trail in search of eggs in the milkweed patches, so long pants are also recommended. Per park rules and regulations, harvesting of Monarch eggs and caterpillars for personal use is not permitted. **Registration required.**

1 Discovery Hike

Saturday, August 1, 3–4:30 PM
Chickagami Park
Join a naturalist for a leisurely walk along wooded trails of approximately 1.25 miles.

1 Family Night Campfire & Fun

Saturday, August 1, 7–8:30 PM
Chickagami Park, Overlook Shelter
Enjoy an evening of family fun with Nature activities followed by a campfire for s'more fun! **Registration required.**

2 Cuyahoga Kayak (Ages 12+)

Sunday, August 2, 9–11 AM
Eldon Russell Park, Boat Launch Area
Enjoy a beautiful summer morning paddle on the Upper Cuyahoga River, experiencing some of its rich natural wonders along the way. Kayaking experience required. Held rain or shine except in the event of severe weather. **Registration required beginning July 24 at 10 AM.**


2 Spears to Arrows

(Ages 9+ w/adult)
Sunday, August 2, 1–4 PM
Chickagami Park, Pine Grove Shelter & Archery Range
Learn how the technology of projectiles changed from a simple spear to the compound bow, see how far you can throw replica spears with an atlatl, and then get the opportunity to shoot recurve and compound bows during this hands-on program. Must be at least 9 years old with an adult, and 50" tall with close-toe shoes, to participate; no younger children, please. **Registration required for all attending.**


2 Naturalist Linda's Homegrown Park Tour

Sunday, August 2, 2:30–4 PM, Offsite
This program is a follow-up to Naturalist Linda's Homegrown Park virtual program, which explored the diversity of plant and animal life on her own property. Come and see for yourself! Maybe we'll even discover something new there. **Registration required.**

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

Thursday, August 6, 9:30–10:30 AM & 11 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove
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.** 

7 Meet the Artists

Friday, August 7, 6–8 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Join us for the opening of our newest art exhibition featuring the works of artists Sharon Fedor and Maria Perme. 


8 Basic Learn to Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Saturday, August 8, 8–10 AM
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. Ages 10+ with adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required beginning July 17 at 10 AM.**


8 Nature Trek Fitness Hike

Saturday, August 8, 1–2:30 PM
Observatory Park, Cygnus Shelter
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 4 miles on various trail conditions. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.


8 ASM Minerals Garden & Dome Tour

Saturday, August 8, 4–5 PM
Offsite, ASM Minerals Garden
Join us for an outdoor tour of the minerals garden at ASM International's geodesic dome. Learn the history of the site's iconic geodesic dome, then explore the fascinating science behind the minerals garden. Directions provided after registration. **Registration required.** 

8 Nights Out in the Parks: The Big North Band

Saturday, August 8, 7–8:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Amphitheater
Celebrate America 250 at our summer amphitheater concerts featuring American music! This month, we enjoy a truly American art form as The Big North Band entertains us with their love and respect of traditional country music. This group of talented musicians is dedicated to helping preserve the heritage of the classic country sound, a terrific way to conclude our summer series. Held indoors in the Cherry Room if inclement weather. 


9 Coffee with the Birds

Sunday, August 9, 9–10 AM & 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center Lobby
Join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird viewing and identification of summer birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required for just one session,** please. 

9 Family Stream Adventure

Sunday, August 9, 1–3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
A family program venturing into a forested stream to discover wildlife such as crayfish, salamanders and crane fly larva. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear shoes or boots for wading in a rocky stream (no sandals). **Registration required.**

9 Celebrating National S'more Day

Sunday, August 9, 6:30–9 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge
Roast a marshmallow and build a delicious treat for National S'more Day! We'll also share s'more history about how this campfire treat became so popular. **Registration required for all attending.** 

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

11 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Tuesday, August 11, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Observatory Park

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

12 & 13 Moths & Meteors Overnight Event

Wednesday, August 12, 9 PM – Thursday, August 13, 6 AM, Observatory Park

Registration is required for this once-a-year opportunity to pitch your tent and spend the night at Observatory Park! Participants will also enjoy the Perseid Meteor Shower (weather permitting, best viewing 1–3 AM) as well as the variety of night-flying moths and other nocturnal insects that have been attracted to our black light and mercury vapor lamps. A naturalist will be onsite from sunset to sunrise. Camping Guidelines: Tents only. Set up August 12 after 4 PM and depart August 13 by 9 AM. No campers, trailers, alcoholic beverages, grills or open fires. Pets must be leashed at all times. Cancelled in case of inclement weather. **Registration required for all participants (up to 6 people per reservation); proof of registration will be required for entry.**

13 Homeschool Days: Family Learning Fair!

Thursday, August 13, 9:30 AM–1 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Homeschoolers and your families, register to drop in anytime during program hours and participate in fun activities and information-gathering from Geauga County organizations that offer educational opportunities for homeschool students. Allow at least an hour to explore. A listing of participating organizations will be shared on Facebook when it is available. Partially outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending, including adults and siblings. ♿

15 Nature Explorers: Lake Kelso Canoe (Ages 6-11 w/adult)

Saturday, August 15, 10 AM–Noon
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Nature Explorers, bring two adults to join our naturalists for a paddle exploring Lake Kelso in search of wildlife, dragonflies, birds, aquatic plants and other Nature! All Explorers must have two registered adults in their canoes, ideally with some canoe experience. Canoes and life jackets will be provided. Bring sunscreen, bug spray and a water bottle, and wear shoes that can get wet. **Registration required** beginning July 31 at 10 AM by phone only.

16 Hound Hike

Sunday, August 16, 8–9 AM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Dogs and your humans, join us for an easy 1.5-mile hike. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share helpful tips and tricks to practice during our 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.

16 Lake Kelso Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)
Sunday, August 16, 10–11:30 AM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Spend the morning on the tranquil waters of Lake Kelso, enjoying the wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Basic kayaking skills required, as instruction is not given. Life vests provided. Held rain or shine, except in event of thunderstorm, so dress accordingly, wear shoes to get wet or muddy, and bring a water bottle, sunscreen and a change of clothes in case of capsizing. No private boats, please. **Registration required** beginning August 7 at 10 AM.

20 Elderberries: Ansel's Cave Hike

Thursday, August 20, Noon–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Seniors, hike with a naturalist to Ansel's Cave to discover its history written in rock — a rare opportunity to go into this restricted area! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear. Hike is 2 miles over hilly terrain, a stream crossing and steps. Lunch will be provided and is sponsored by Eliza at Chagrin Falls. A collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

20 Nature Journaling for Families: Beavers

Thursday, August 20, 6–7:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands,
Judge Lester Taylor Lodge

Bring your own journal and supplies to build on your family's Nature journaling skills using prompts provided during instruction. Our inspiration this evening will be beavers. Content for ages 9+. **Registration required** for all attending.

22 Big Tree Hike

Saturday, August 22, 2–4 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House

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

22 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, August 22, 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. ♿


22 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, August 22, 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. ♿

23 Singing Insects Evening Hike

Sunday, August 23, 7:45–9:30 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

The summer insect ensemble resounds on warm August nights, but how can we learn who's singing in the dark? We'll talk about 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. 

25 Sunrise Hike

Tuesday, August 25, 7–8 AM
Russell Uplands Preserve

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

26 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration for Families

Wednesday, August 26, 6:30–8 PM
Welton's Gorge

A strenuous off-trail hike for families 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, downed trees, steep slopes and stream crossings. Ages 8+ with an adult; no younger children, please. Held rain or shine, so dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes with good traction even in wet conditions. Bring a walking stick or one will be provided. Long pants recommended. **Registration required.**

27 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, August 27, 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. ♿

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

27 Full Moon Hike: The Sturgeon Moon

Thursday, August 27, 8–9 PM
Observatory Park

Join us for a hike to look for signs of Nature at sunset, then, watch the full moon rise using park telescopes, weather permitting.

27 Partial Lunar Eclipse

Thursday, August 27, 10:30 PM – Friday, August 28, 2 AM, Observatory Park

Join us for a nearly total lunar eclipse! Earth's shadow will sweep across the moon from Thursday night into early Friday morning. At its peak around midnight, 93% of the moon will be eclipsed, before it fully emerges from the shadow by 2 AM.

28 250 Nature Night Lecture Series: 250 Years of Eagles & Turkeys

Friday, August 28, 7–8:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

As of July 4, our country is 250! Let's learn more about our national bird, the Bald Eagle, and the Wild Turkey, which is often cited as Benjamin Franklin's suggestion for our national bird. This sit-down presentation will go over the natural history, population status, and lore behind both of these truly American birds.



29 Trail Horse Nature Challenge

Saturday, August 29, 10 AM–3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

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 Swine Creek Woods Edge shelter parking lot. Participants will be assigned departure times in order of registration. Ride out individually or in pairs at a leisurely pace. Course can be completed in 1-2 hours; 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.**

29 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Saturday, August 29, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Chickagami Park

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

9 10 Nature Journaling: Page Layouts

Sunday, August 9, 1–3:30 PM
Monday, August 10, 9:30 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

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 build on our skills by taking a look at different page layouts. 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.**

11 25 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
August 11, Sunnybrook Preserve
August 25, Claridon Woodlands

Join other active seniors on weekly hikes of approximately 2 miles. Naturalists lead hikes within Geauga Park District; other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

30 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Sunday, August 30, 9:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Turkey Ridge

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

31 The Bird Tornado Strikes Again!

Monday, August 31, 7:15–8:30 PM
Offsite, Burton Square Gazebo

We're teaming up with Schoolyard Studio for this annual program! Park at the Burton Square gazebo and walk as a group to the parking lot of Schoolyard Studio (formerly Berkshire High School), then join Naturalist Linda for some Chimney Swift natural history and witness a cyclone of swifts swirling, then plummeting into an old chimney — a migratory motel — along their journey to South America. Bring a chair to help you enjoy this unforgettable spectacle! **Registration required.**

16 17 Basket Weaving: Divide Garden Basket

Sunday, August 16, Noon–6:30 PM
Monday, August 17, 9 AM–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$45 Geauga residents, \$50 out-of-county
Skill Level: Beginner. Weave this divided basket with a wooden handle for your garden or other uses. Due to program preparation expenses, a refund may not be processed if cancellation occurs within 5 days of program. **Registration required.**

23 24 25 Timbertots: Reptiles Rule!

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Sunday, August 23, 10–11 AM & 1–2 PM
Monday, August 24, 10–11 AM
Tuesday, August 25, 10–11 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join Nora the Explorer on a search for snakes and turtles to find out what makes them so cool! **Registration required for all attending.**



RECURRING PROGRAMS

7 21 Meet the Moon

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

Friday, August 21, 7–8 PM (Virtual)
Learn all about the science and mythology of our moon (just in time for the upcoming lunar eclipse of August 27), followed by night sky viewing using park telescopes, weather permitting. August 21 is a virtual program. Sign up and we will email you a link a few days before the program. Please ensure we have your correct email address on file. **Registration required for virtual program only.**

7 8 21 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, August 7, 8–11 PM
Saturday, August 8, 8–11 PM
Friday, August 21, 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.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

5 Bass Lake Kayak

Saturday, September 5, 10 AM–Noon
Bass Lake Preserve

Paddle these tranquil waters, enjoying the wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Basic kayaking skills required, as instruction is not given. Life vests required and provided, but you can 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 August 28 at 10 AM.



Photo by Jim Marquardt

10 Sunrise Hike

Thursday, September 10, 7–8 AM
Observatory Park

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

10 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Thursday, September 10, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Headwaters Park, Main Parking Lot

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

10 The Bird Tornado Strikes Again!

Thursday, September 10, 7–8:30 PM
Offsite, Burton Square Gazebo

We're teaming up with Schoolyard Studio up for this annual program! Park at the Burton Square gazebo and walk as a group to the parking lot of Schoolyard Studio (formerly Berkshire High School), then join Naturalist Linda for some Chimney Swift natural history and witness a cyclone of swifts swirling, then plummeting into an old chimney — a migratory motel — along their journey to South America. Bring a chair to help you enjoy this unforgettable spectacle! **Registration required.**

11 Chagrin River Bird Quest Birding Challenge

Friday, September 11, 4–6 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Calling all bird enthusiasts: a 24-hour birding marathon awaits you! The Chagrin River Bird Quest takes place Friday to Saturday. Assemble a team and get yourselves registered through the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland website, then attend this team check-in and final registration, where you can also pick up maps, checklists and T-shirts and talk strategy with teammates and naturalists. All materials and activities are free. **Registration required** at www.clevelandaudubon.org; click the light blue Bird Quest button on the home page.

12 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

Saturday, September 12, 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. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear sturdy shoes with good traction that can get wet. Yaktrax or similar cleats may also be advisable based on slippery conditions. Bring a walking stick. Ages 10+ with an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all attending.

12 Horseback Riders: Amish Buggy Training & Trail Ride

Saturday, September 12, 9:30 AM–1:30 PM

Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge
Bring your own horse to meet and experience an Amish horse and buggy, both stationary and moving, in a non-threatening way courtesy of Sara Jane Miller. First, you and your horse will learn to safely share the trail with buggies. Then, at 11 AM, you'll 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+ who are able to ride. **Registration required.**

12 In Search of Pawpaws

Saturday, September 12, 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.

12 Chagrin River Bird Quest Celebration

Saturday, September 12, 4–7:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

The 24-hour Chagrin River Bird Quest ends with a celebration! Turn in your bird checklists for judging at The West Woods, then enjoy hearty refreshments, awards and door prizes. Details at www.clevelandaububon.org.



Photo by Bruce Bennett

13 Shorebird Van Trip

Sunday, September 13, Noon–5 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Sandpipers, plovers and terns, oh my! Join us for a unique birding adventure in search of migratory shorebirds and other water birds. We'll head to Northeastern Ohio shorebird hotspots. Wherever the birds are reported, that is where we'll go! Dress for the weather, as we will be on and off the van. We may hike up to 1/2 mile at certain spots, so wear footwear that can get wet or muddy and bring binoculars, a snack and water. Spotting scopes provided; additional scopes welcome. **Registration required.**

15 Toddler Time: Sensing the Summer

(Ages 1-2 w/adult)

Tuesday, September 15, 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. ♿

17 Elderberries: Astronomy Night

Thursday, September 17, 6:30–9:30 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Seniors, there's so much to see in the sky! Join us for this special Elderberries Astronomy Night. We'll have two groups rotating between a planetarium show and an outdoor astronomy activity. Then we'll finish the evening with night sky viewing (weather permitting) to peer deep into the night sky in search of planets, nebula and other celestial features. Dinner will be provided and sponsored by UH Geauga Medical Center. A collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **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.

19 Positive Dog Training in the Real World

Saturday, September 19, 11–12:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

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. Let's train your dog together! Friendly dogs only. Attend and receive a free clicker. Bring the following to class: 4- to 6-foot cloth or leather lead (no Flexi leads allowed), flat collar, head collar or front hook harness (no choke, prong or shock collars or back hook harnesses). Also bring water and bowl, belly bag or other bag for soft, pea-size treats and poop bags to clean up after your dog. Recommended that your dog is treated for ticks. **Registration required.**

19 Scout Day: Brownie Bugs Badge

Saturday, September 19, 1–3:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lake Side

Brownies, join a naturalist to work toward your Brownie Bugs Badge. Held outdoors, so dress accordingly. Badge not provided. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult or leader must also attend.

Photo by Paul Pira



20 Salamander Search

Sunday, September 20, 9–10:30 AM
The West Woods, Affelder House

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

20 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Sunday, September 20, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

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

20 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Sunday, September 20, 1–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Hike with a naturalist to Ansel's Cave to discover its history written in rock — a rare opportunity to go into this restricted area! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear. Hike is 3 miles over hilly terrain with a stream crossing.

22 250 Family Night Campfire & Fun

Tuesday, September 22, 6–8 PM
Claridon Woodlands, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge

Pack an old-fashioned picnic and bring a blanket to enjoy an evening of family fun with Nature activities followed by a campfire for s'more fun! **Registration required.**

23 Art Workshop: Stained Glass

Wednesday, September 23, 6–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$70 Geauga residents, \$75 out-of-county
Discover the beauty of stained glass through this basic introduction class. Participants will learn the copper foil/Tiffany method to assemble and solder a stained-glass Nature-themed project, chosen at time of registration. Hosted by Kaleidoscope Artisan's Guild. Adults only. **Registration required.**

24 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, September 24, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

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

26 Hound Hike

Saturday, September 26, 8–9 AM
Eldon Russell Park, Horwath's Landing

Dogs and your humans, join us for a hike along this park's easy trails. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will also share helpful tips and tricks to practice during our 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.



26 OUSA Masters Nationals 2026 - Day 1

Saturday, September 26, 9 AM–4 PM
The West Woods

Join the Northeastern Ohio Orienteering Club for the first of a two-day National Ranking Event and the 2026 OUSA Masters Nationals. The event will be open to all ages and experience levels, with a full range of advanced and recreational courses available. **Registration required** through the NEOOC at www.neoc.com/upcoming-events. For details, visit www.neoc.com/2026-masters-nationals.

26 Lake Kelso Kayak

(Ages 10+ w/adult)

Saturday, September 26, 10:30 AM–Noon
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Spend the morning on these tranquil waters, enjoying the wildlife and beautiful surroundings. Basic kayaking skills required, as instruction is not given. Life vests provided. No private boats. Held rain or shine, except in event of thunderstorm. Wear shoes to get wet or muddy and bring a water bottle, sunscreen and change of clothes in case of capsizement. Ages 10+ with an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** beginning September 18 at 10 AM.

26 Hammock Hike

Saturday, September 26, 3–5:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Nature doesn't always have to be experienced on the go. After a short hike in the woods, come hang out and discover tips and tricks for hanging a hammock as you relax, read a book, or just nap for an hour and a half amongst the trees. Bring your own hammock and tree-friendly straps. **Registration required.**

26 Scout Day: Tigers in the Wild Adventure

Saturday, September 26, 2:30–4 PM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove

Tiger Cub Scouts (ages 6-8), join us to work on your Tigers in the Wild Adventure. Held outdoors, so dress accordingly. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult or leader must also attend. **Registration required.**

26 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, September 26, 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.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

26 Full Moon Hike: The Pawpaw Moon

Saturday, September 26, 7–8 PM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for a hike to look for signs of Nature at sunset, then watch the full moon rise using park telescopes, weather permitting.

27 Coffee with the Birds

Sunday, September 27,
9–10 AM & 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Lobby

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

27 Backcountry Hike: Park Preserve

Sunday, September 27, 12:30–4 PM
Offsite, Chesterland location. Directions provided prior to program date.

Take a strenuous off-trail autumn hike with a spectacular view across the Chagrin Valley. This hike visits the Mayer Preserve, discovering wildlife and exploring habitat while learning the importance of protected lands to ensure biodiversity. Plan for rugged terrain including steep hills, ravines, obstacles like logs, stream crossings and other challenges. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and wear sturdy shoes that can provide traction but can get wet and muddy. Directions will be sent before program to those who have registered. Adults only. **Registration required.**

27 Spears to Arrows

(Ages 9+ w/adult)
Sunday, September 27, 2–5 PM
Chickagami Park, Pine Grove Shelter & Archery Range

Learn how the technology of projectiles changed from a simple spear to the compound bow, see how far you can throw replica spears with an atlatl, and then get the opportunity to shoot recurve and compound bows during this hands-on program. Must be at least 9 years old with an adult, and 50" tall with close-toed shoes, to participate; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all attending.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

3 4 5 6 7 250 The Great Geauga County Fair

Thursday, September 3 through Monday September 7, 11 AM–7 PM
Gauga County Fairgrounds, Natural Resources Area

Visit our building to celebrate America 250, meet the Monarch Butterflies, and see what's new with Geauga Park District! Daily live Monarch program & tagging at 3:30 PM if butterflies are available. ♿



6 13 Monarchs & Meadow Insects

Sunday, September 6, 12:30–4 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Sunday, September 13, 12:30–4 PM
Frohing Meadows, Katydid Lodge

Drop in 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. 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. No insect collecting for removal from park.

8 22 Geauga Walkers

Tuesdays, 1–2:30 PM
September 8, Observatory Park
September 22, Orchard Hills Park, Lodge
Join other active seniors on weekly hikes of approximately 2 miles. Naturalists lead hikes within Geauga Park District; other hikes held weekly in Geauga County and surrounding areas. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2167.

11 25 Astronomy Community Showcase

Friday, September 11, 7–8 PM ♿
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Friday, September 25, 7–8 PM 📺
(Virtual)

Learn about astronomy topics through a collection of short presentations by volunteers and members of the amateur astronomy community — it's like speed-dating for your brain! — followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. September 25 is a virtual program. Sign up and we will email you a link a few days before the program. Please ensure we have your correct email address on file. **Registration required** for virtual program only.

11 12 25 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, September 11, 8–11 PM
Saturday, September 12, 8–11 PM
Friday, September 25, 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. ♿

13 14 Nature Journaling: Kayak Experience

Sunday, September 13, 9 AM–Noon & 1–4 PM
Monday, September 14, 9:30 AM–12:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

Fee: \$25 Geauga residents, \$30 out-of-county
A monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques and record your Nature observations. This month we'll journal while kayaking. Kayaking experience recommended. 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.

20 22 23 Timbertots: Tree Treasures!

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Sunday, September 20,
10–11 AM & 1–2 PM
Sunnybrook Preserve, Lodge
Tuesday, September 22, 10–11 AM
Wednesday, September 23, 10–11 AM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Join Nora the Explorer on a treasure hunt as we look for all of the amazing things trees give us! Held outdoors, so dress accordingly. **Registration required** for all attending.

26 27 Union Chapel Archaeological Dig

Saturday, September 26,
9–11 AM & 1–3 PM
Sunday, September 27,
9–11 AM & 1–3 PM

South Newbury Union Chapel, 15829
Ravenna Rd, Burton, OH 44021

Learn some of the incredible history of the South Newbury Union Chapel and take part in an archeological dig to discover what lies below! Held outdoors, so dress accordingly; rain gear may also be necessary, and old clothes are a must! All tools provided. No restrooms onsite. **Registration required.**



ARCHERY FOR EVERYONE

All of summer's archery programs are located at Chickagami Park's Outdoor Range. Arrive 15 minutes early to allow for the walk to the range.

Introduction to Archery for Families

Saturday, August 22, 10:30 AM–Noon
 Sunday, August 30, 9:30–11 AM

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.

Archery Practice (Ages 9+)

Saturday, August 22, 1:15–2 PM
 Sunday, August 30, Noon–12:30 PM
 Saturday, September 19, 3:15–4 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, August 22, 2:30–4 PM
 Thursday, September 24, 12:30–2 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.

Archery Games for Kids

Thursday, September 24, 12:30–2 PM

Kids can take the next step in improving their aim through playing archery games. Ages 9+ with an adult; must have completed an Introduction to Archery program to attend. Wear close-toed shoes. Registration required.

Introduction to Archery for Adults

Saturday, September 19, 10:30 AM–Noon
 Thursday, September 24, 2:30–4 PM

Adults, learn the basics of target archery together. Wear closed-toe shoes. Registration required.

Archery Games for Families

Saturday, September 19, 1:30–3 PM

Families can take the next step in improving their aim through playing archery games. Ages 9+ with an adult; all family members must have completed an Introduction to Archery program to attend. Wear close-toed shoes. No younger children, please. Registration required for all attending.



Photo by Sonny Williams



2026 summer camps

Summer camps are full this summer, but waitlists exist in case cancellations occur and spaces become available. Visit our website under Programs & Events for availability.

ADVENTURES in Geocaching

Check out the new summer geocache at Welton's Gorge in Burton Twp.
 13973 Hale Road















N 41° 29.303'
W -081° 06.849'

*This is the place to be if you like geology.
 Can you find glacial erratics and views of a horse paddock?
 Stay safe from the steep ledge by keeping far from the cliff's edge
 And step away from the gorge — there's no new path to forge.
 Just keep on the trail and you'll surely get there.
 It's not hidden real deep, but really close to your feet.
 No problem this time. Enjoy this quick find.*



















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


Park Locations and Amenities

ICONS REPRESENT THE LIST AT RIGHT
IN THE ORDER THEY APPEAR

														
Bass Lake Preserve 11445 Lakeview Road, Munson, 44024 <i>NO TRAILS AVAILABLE; BOATING BY PERMIT ONLY</i>				✓	✓							✓	✓	
Beartown Lakes Reservation 18870 Quinn Road, Auburn/Bainbridge, 44023 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.8</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park 7940 Cedar Road, Chester, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.0</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓						
Big Creek Park 9160 Robinson Road, Chardon, 44024 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.8</i> <i>Facility reservations are available – call or visit website for details</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Big Creek Park – Horse Trail 12000 Woodin Road, Chardon, 44024					✓		✓	✓	✓					
Big Creek Park – Tupelo Pond 9373 Ravenna Road, Chardon, 44024 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.9</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve 15681 Old Rider Road, Burton/Newbury, 44021 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.7</i>	✓				✓		✓	✓						
Chickagami Park 17957 Tavern Road, Parkman, 44021 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.6</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Claridon Woodlands – Access to TMHT 11383 Claridon Troy Road, Claridon, 44033 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.2</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
Eldon Russell Park 16315 Rapids Road, Troy, 44021 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.3</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	
Frohning Meadows 16780 Savage Road, Bainbridge, 44023 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.5</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Headwaters Park – Access to TMHT 13365 Old State Road, Claridon/Huntsburg, 44021 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.3</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Holbrook Hollows 7250 Country Lane, Bainbridge, 44023 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.8</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Franklin Marsh at Holbrook Hollows 16895 Franklin Street, Bainbridge, 44023 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.8</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓						
The Maple Highlands Trail (TMHT) <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 21.1</i> <i>City of Chardon 1.2 and City of Middlefield 0.5</i> <i>Access to trail also from Claridon Woodlands, Headwaters Park & Swine Creek Reservation; horses permitted on south section only</i>	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓				
Mountain Run Station – Access to TMHT 12601 Chardon Windsor Road, Hambden, 44024 <i>MILEAGE OF LINK ACCESSING TMHT: 0.4</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				
Big Creek Spur – Access to TMHT 9280 Ravenna Road, Chardon, 44024 <i>MILEAGE OF LINK ACCESSING TMHT: 0.6</i>	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓				

View the current fee schedule on our website under Reservations. All enclosed lodges, but not all open shelters, are equipped with electricity.

														
Modroo Preserve 15695 Hemlock Road, Russell, 44072 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 0.8</i>							✓	✓						
Observatory Park 10610 Clay Street, Montville, 44064 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.62</i> <i>Facility reservations are available – call or visit website for details</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓					
Nassau Astronomical Station 10350 Clay Street, Montville, 44064														
Orchard Hills Park 11340 Caves Road, Chester, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.6</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
The Rookery 10110 Cedar Road, Munson, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.4</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Russell Uplands Preserve 15200 Russell Road, Russell, 44022 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.0</i>			✓				✓	✓				✓		
Sunnybrook Preserve 12474 Heath Road, Chester, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.7</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓						
Swine Creek Reservation – Access to TMHT 16004 Hayes Road, Middlefield, 44062 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 5.8</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Troy Wetlands 18725 Claridon-Troy Road, Troy, 44234 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 0.4</i>	✓				✓		✓					✓		
Veterans Legacy Woods 14085 Ravenna Road, Newbury/Burton, 44065 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 4.68</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve 11620 Ravenna Road, Munson, 44024 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.6</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓		
Welton’s Gorge 13973 Hale Road, Burton, 44021 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.8</i>			✓		✓		✓							
The West Woods 9465 Kinsman Road, Russell, 44072 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 6.7</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
The West Woods – Affelder House 15139 Chillicothe Road, Russell, 44072 <i>Facility reservations are available – call or visit website for details</i>				✓	✓		✓					✓		
Whitlam Woods 12500 Pearl Road, Hambden, 44024 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.1</i>					✓		✓							
Woodin Road Park 12205 Woodin Road, Chardon, 44024 <i>NO TRAILS AVAILABLE</i>														

 Outdoor water faucets or drinking fountains are available year-round at these parks. If accompanied by a blue asterisk, the water sources are seasonal and open from May 1 through October 31. Locations are found on park maps which can be downloaded from our website.

Boating on Bass Lake requires a permit. Permitted watercraft are kayaks, canoes and electric motors; gasoline engines are permitted only in Eldon Russell Park. Learn more on our website under Activities.

Don't miss your chance to see *On the Wing* Nature that takes flight!

Since it opened in March, this community art show has helped hundreds celebrate local creativity and the wide variety of Nature's flying things. Composed of **296** unique pieces of art, *On the Wing* offers a large collection of artwork created by **185** different local artists of all ages using a wide variety of different media.

Some of the artwork on display is for sale, with pickup after the show comes to a close. But guests hoping to walk away with a keepsake can also shop cash-and-carry art in a special section of our Tree Tops Nature Store, the *On the Wing* Boutique, featuring items submitted by exhibiting artists that each cost \$40 or less.

With a closing date of **July 26**, there is still time to stop into The West Woods Nature Center to see this show, and it's well worth the visit. Whether you come for inspiration, curiosity, or just something different to do, you'll leave having taken a special creative look at the wonder of our airborne natural world!

(The West Woods Nature Center is closed Independence Day, July 4.)



What to Know About

ROPES & BOATS

Visit our website under News & Updates for schedule changes, details & restrictions

Seasons are now underway for the high ropes course at Claridon Woodlands and kayak/canoe borrowing at Headwaters Park.

ROPES CLIMBING Reservations are required. As space is available, same-day reservations can be made online, by phone or onsite. Last minute weather-related closures are posted to our social media, and efforts are made to call all affected registrations. Click the SMS when registering for last minute updates. Admission is FREE for Geauga residents. For details and requirements, visit our website under Activities, then High Ropes Course.

BOAT BORROWING Borrow a canoe or kayak at Headwaters Park (first come, first served) during these hours of operation.

**Saturdays & Sundays 10 AM–5 PM (last boats out at 4 PM)
Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays Noon–7 PM (last boats out at 6 PM)**

Inspired by Nature



Nature Writing Contest Winners

Congratulations to these 28 talented winners of our **31st Annual Nature Writing Contest!**

Child Poetry

1stRauhish Khasnis
2ndAvery Lasky
3rdWalter Ward
HMOlivia Zupancic
HMClara Gloer

Child Prose

1stElizabeth Wang
2ndArjun Agarwal
3rdCaleb Duncan
HMWillow Haney
HMAbigail Grace Schaner

Adolescent Poetry

1stAmelia Windson
2ndSaoirse Niehus
3rdChiroi Niehus
HMGeneva Hippensteele
HMHarlow Zaller

Adolescent Prose

1stChiroi Niehus
2ndKit Weinmann
3rdTzurielle Parrino
HMEnoch Lin
HMHaadi Nouman

Adult Poetry

1stDon Iannone
2ndCourtney Cikach
3rdDorie Schleiden
HMPeggy McCray

Adult Prose

1stBrenda Sawyer
2ndJennifer Niemann
3rdAlyssa Martin
HMCherie Pepe

Thank you



for again sponsoring more substantial cash prizes in 2026!

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

Donations to
Gauga Park District
February through
April 2026

Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors

Larry & Cordell Plant	Unrestricted donation	\$500.00
Cleveland Foundation	Hanes Family Foundation unrestricted donation	\$5,000.00
Cleveland Foundation	Hanes Family Foundation <i>NatureScopes</i> donation	\$500.00
Cleveland Foundation	Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Fund unrestricted donation	\$2,000.00

What Makes a Bug a “True Bug”?



Four-lined Plant Bug



Brown Marmorated Stink Bug



Leaf-Footed Bug



Squash Bug



Large Milkweed Bug



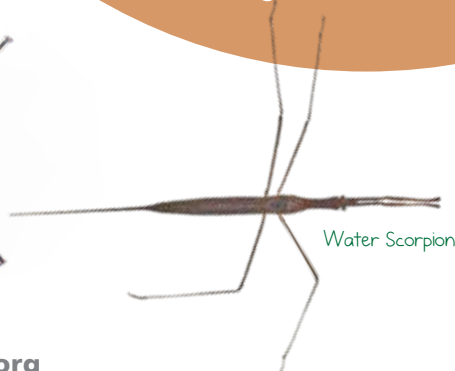
Periodical Cicada

Most of us are familiar with stink bugs, but did you know that not all insects are bugs? In science, the word “bug” has a very specific meaning. **True bugs** belong to a group called *Hemiptera*, defined by their piercing-sucking mouthparts that work like tiny hypodermic needles. Some are fierce predators. Water scorpions, for example, inject a venomous saliva into their prey, paralyzing them and turning their insides into a liquid they can slurp up. Other true bugs are herbivores, using those same mouthparts to siphon sugary juices from plants.

Cicadas are plant-feeding true bugs with a remarkable life cycle. Adults live in treetops, where they feed on sap, mate, and lay eggs in small branches. When the eggs hatch, the young (nymphs) fall to the ground and burrow into the soil. There, they attach to plant roots and feed on sap for years. Once the soil warms enough, mature nymphs emerge, crawl up trees, and molt into winged adults. Some cicadas appear every year (annual or dog-day cicadas), while others emerge only once every 17 years — the famous periodical cicadas. Listen for our annual cicadas in the treetops this summer while visiting your favorite Geauga Park District park!



Annual Cicada



Water Scorpion



Giant Water Bug



Bald Eagle at Headwaters Park – photo by Steve Humpal

Get to Know Our Nation's Bird

The Bald Eagle became America's national symbol in 1782 because our Founding Fathers admired its strength, determination and freedom. With its snowy white head, sharp eyes and powerful wings, the eagle seemed like the perfect bird to represent a new nation striving for independence. Unique to North America, it would serve well as a living representation of the American spirit.



The Bald Eagle is featured in the center of our country's Great Seal, shown with an olive branch, symbolizing peace, and arrows, symbolizing war. The eagle faces the olive branches, meaning America favors peace but will defend itself if necessary. In its mouth, the Latin phrase *E pluribus unum* means *out of many, one*. The shield on its chest features 13 stripes representing the original 13 colonies and a blue "chief," or top section, representing Congress.



Why is it called a "Bald" Eagle?

The head of the Bald Eagle is covered in bright white feathers, so no, it's not bald at all. Rather, its name comes from the Old English word *balde*, meaning white or shining. Only over time did the meaning of the word change to mean hairless.

A symbol of resilience

In the late 1700s, there were anywhere from 25,000 to 75,000 Bald Eagles in the United States. But by the 1960s, that number had fallen to under 1,000. Hunting, the loss of forests and wetlands, and the use of harmful chemicals caused their numbers to drop so low that they were close to extinction. Ultimately, Congress recognized their decline and passed a law in 1940 that made it illegal to capture or kill a Bald Eagle.

In 1972 they banned the use of the pesticide DDT. Thanks to the efforts of people protecting nests and preserving habitats for years, the Bald Eagle has made an amazing comeback and is now one of America's greatest conservation success stories!

There are currently 13 known nests in Geauga County, and three of them are in our parks. Bald Eagles prefer building nests high in tall trees near lakes and other bodies of water where food is plentiful and disturbance is limited. Headwaters Park and Bass Lake Preserve provide excellent habitat, supporting the continued success of eagles in Northeast Ohio.

Below are 13 words describing some of the traits of a Bald Eagle that most likely convinced our Founding Fathers to choose it as a symbol of America. Can you find them all in the word search? Good Luck!

FIERCE	C	A	B	E	A	U	T	I	F	U	L	Q	R	W	F	G
DETERMINED	I	S	C	G	H	K	M	P	S	V	X	E	Y	B	E	I
STRONG	T	J	L	M	O	W	Z	A	C	E	S	H	C	D	J	N
COURAGEOUS	S	O	H	Z	G	P	B	L	N	I	T	E	O	N	O	F
FREE	E	P	O	W	J	A	U	K	L	S	N	M	U	T	Y	G
POWERFUL	J	X	F	S	L	F	M	I	Y	D	A	Q	R	L	V	B
POWERFUL	A	S	H	X	R	K	E	R	S	U	T	Y	A	H	J	D
BEAUTIFUL	M	T	Q	E	H	N	A	K	Z	H	I	O	G	C	L	E
MAJESTIC	O	R	W	I	T	G	E	R	N	G	V	Z	E	F	D	N
NATIVE	E	O	J	N	R	E	V	I	T	C	E	T	O	R	P	I
RESILIENT	P	N	D	A	W	C	U	J	G	B	L	G	U	F	K	M
PROTECTIVE	M	G	W	M	I	R	M	I	L	Z	E	Y	S	I	Q	R
BOLD	B	P	D	R	P	E	C	U	A	C	S	E	S	T	B	E
REGAL	V	O	N	K	U	I	Q	A	G	P	J	V	R	U	E	T
	L	C	L	T	R	F	Z	X	E	P	V	C	D	F	C	E
	A	Q	O	D	I	B	V	W	R	T	D	Y	X	A	F	D

Answers to the word search are on the back cover.



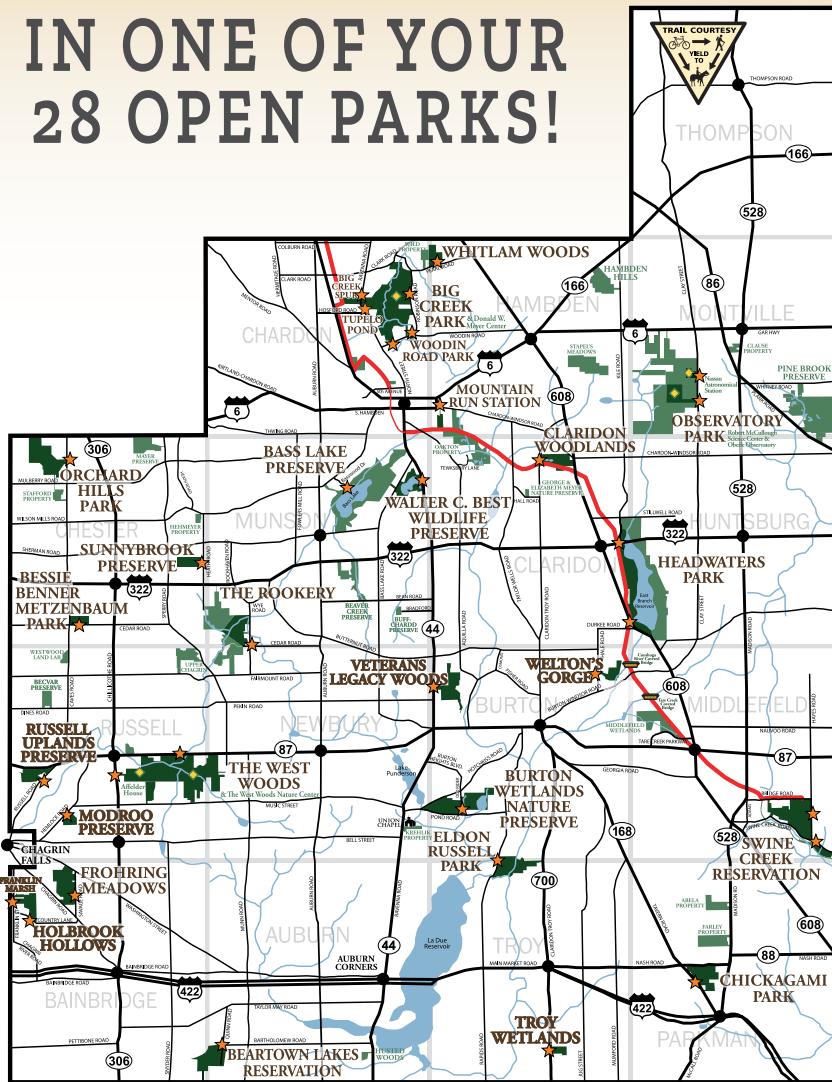
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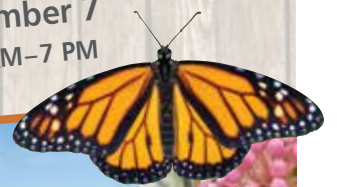


Come see us in the
Natural Resources
Area of The Great
Geauga County Fair...

...to discover what
present-day Geauga
County was like 250
years ago as we celebrate
America's birthday!



Thursday, September 3, through
Monday September 7
Building open 11 AM-7 PM



Plus, meet the
Monarch Butterfly and discover
all Geauga Park District has
to offer you!

Find other programs & events we're hosting to
celebrate America 250 by finding
this symbol throughout this issue.



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www.geaugaparkdistrict.org

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Answers to the Fun Page word search