

PARKEXPLORER

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE



*Hidden Gems Hike
at Observatory Park
Photo by Tom Malinchak*

FALL 2026

4 Let a smartphone lead you to new places through geocaching

6 Best fall foliage? Naturalists share their favorite spots

7 Attend our job fair in December to plan ahead for summer '27

13 Holly Days Artisan Boutique is a one-stop shop for great local goods

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.



This July 4 commemorated the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, making 2026 a time to pause and reflect on our nation's past and to honor the contributions of all Americans. Join Geauga Park District to celebrate through special programs and events with ties to American and Ohio pride! Watch for the 250 icon identifying them in this issue.



Try Something That's Out of This World!

Saturday, October 3, at Observatory Park, 4-6 PM

Each lap of the Planetary Trail equals celestial travel. Limited space; T-shirts for the first 250 registrants, medals & ribbons for all. Registration link on page 8.



Sundays, October 4, 11 & 18

1-5 PM at Swine Creek Reservation

Enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride through the woods, gradually bursting with the colors of fall! First-come, first-served boarding. Rides generally last 20-30 minutes. Last ride leaves at 4:30 PM.



Shop this unique Nature-themed juried craft show at The West Woods Nature Center

Friday, November 6, 5-8 PM & Saturday, November 7, 10 AM-4 PM

Spend a Friday evening or Saturday visiting vendors indoors and out as you shop handmade items for everyone on your list!



Saturday, December 5, at The West Woods Nature Center

11 AM-Noon, Noon-1 PM, 1-2 PM or 2-3 PM

Brighten a senior's holiday season with your thoughtful creation through this make-and-GIVE event! Evergreen decorations that you create will accompany home-delivered meals for seniors by the Geauga County Department on Aging.

Registration required; please choose only one session. All supplies provided.



Celebrate the Longest Night of the Year

Monday, December 21, 7-10 PM, at The West Woods

Explore the roots of our modern holiday celebrations indoors and out through treats, music, a craft and a magical candlelit walk through the forest highlighting various solstice traditions with costumed interpreters.

FALL 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.



Gaugu 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 the latest edition of your *Park Explorer*, hitting your mailbox just as Geauga County once again enters the striking season of fall. Cooler temperatures, vibrant foliage and crisp air always make autumn a refreshing and exciting time to get outside and enjoy your parks. Whether you're returning to a favorite trail or setting out to discover a new one, we invite you to embrace the season in all its grandeur throughout your Geauga parks.

If it's been a while since your last visit to The West Woods, I encourage you to explore the recently improved Trout Lily and Discovery Trails. Kudos to our construction crew for building a new, broader boardwalk, a beautiful, larger seating area along the wetland and an updated, more gently graded aggregate trail. These enhancements make it easier and more enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities to appreciate one of our most treasured parks, and also demonstrate our commitment to caring for your parks' existing amenities into the future.

Within these pages, you'll find a wide variety of programs and special events to help you make this season memorable. Observatory Park's 5th annual Space Race is coming up first on Saturday, October 3 — an event that's so much fun, it usually sells out. On three Sundays in October, families, couples and friends are welcome at Swine Creek Reservation to enjoy the charm of horse-drawn wagon rides, all first-come, first-served and guided by a knowledgeable naturalist. The unique experience of shopping handmade, Nature-themed items during Holly Days Artisan Boutique & Mistletoe Market is worth marking your calendars for November 6 and 7. Then we'll once again be welcoming the return of longer days at our longstanding Winter Solstice Celebration on Monday, December 21.

This season, set your sights on finding a new program aligned with your interests, getting your heart rate up on a trail, checking out another playground with the kids or simply slipping away for a quiet walk among the falling leaves. Our staff is proud to provide so many opportunities to connect with the Great Outdoors, and we look forward to seeing you in your Geauga Park District this fall.

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.

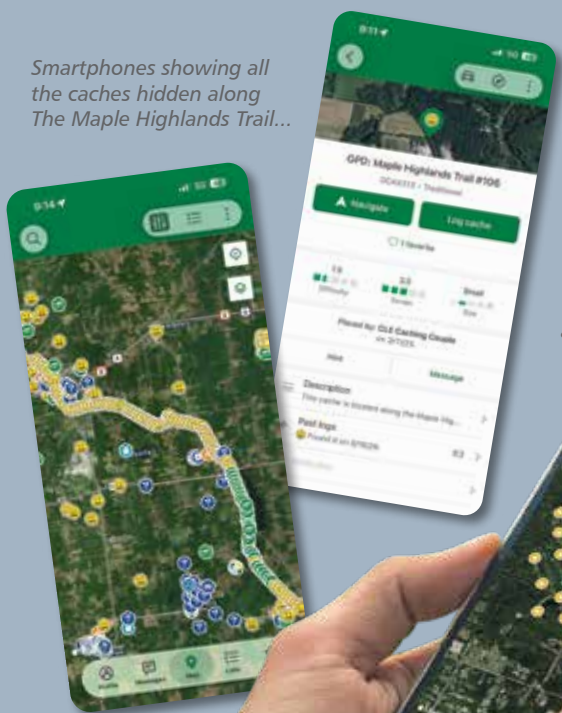
FEATURING PARK FRIENDS

HIDDEN ADVENTURES

How smartphones lead to new places and memorable hunts through geocaching

By upanddowntheriver "Jay & Jane"

Smartphones showing all the caches hidden along The Maple Highlands Trail...



...and those hidden at Orchard Hills Park



Today was a perfect day of geocaching!

We began in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and walked 3.4 miles, finding two regular caches, one EarthCache and seven Adventure Lab caches as we learned about the city and enjoyed all there was to see. On our trip home, we stopped at the Mighty Mac Park that is located near the north end of the Mackinac Bridge. There, we found another Adventure Lab with five stages. Late in the afternoon, we stopped in Birch Run and attended a meet-and-greet at a local restaurant. It was nice to talk with others who also enjoy geocaching.

Geocaching is fun for people of all ages. It is about using a GPS device or smartphone to search for a specific location. A regular cache is a hidden container with a paper log inside of it. Simply locate the container, sign the paper log with your geocaching username, then record your find in the app.

The rules are simple: Don't disturb the cache, and return it exactly as you found it so the next person can enjoy the same experience. Hidden caches, or hides, are rated from one to five stars for both difficulty and terrain, and are also assigned a size.



Hides are created by other geocachers, who become the owners (or C/O) of the cache. As the C/O, it is your responsibility to maintain the cache. It would be advisable for new geocachers to focus on finding caches before trying to create one themselves.

For an EarthCache, there is no hide. Rather, you visit a given geological location, learn about it from the cache page, and then message the C/O with answers to their provided questions about the location.

Adventure Lab caches are similar to EarthCaches, except that most consist of five stages, each counting as a separate find. To open up the questions to be answered, you must be close enough to the landmark. Once you answer a question correctly, you immediately get credit for a find. In Sault Ste. Marie, we completed seven stages from several Adventure Lab caches, while at Mighty Mac Park we completed all five stages of a single Adventure Lab.

To become a basic geocaching member, you can download the app for free at geocaching.com (<http://geocaching.com/>), open an account and create a caching name. Think about a short, simple name that is easy to sign onto the logs. (For us, it's upanddowntheriver.) Explore the app to learn



Examples of hidden caches

more about geocaching or attend meetings with other friendly, helpful geocachers. For a small annual fee, you can also upgrade to Premium Membership, revealing even more caches and other features.

In Geauga County, there are 17 hides in Orchard Hills Park. Along the Maple Highlands Trail, there are more than 200 hides. And new caches are hidden by Geauga Park District every season that can be found for a full calendar year. (See page 17 for the one hidden this fall.)

Geocaching is a great way to get outside and see new places. 🍁

Park Spotlight

Fall is the perfect time of year to take in the beauty of Nature at the Geauga Parks! While enjoying a simple hike through the woods is a wonderful autumn activity in itself, overlooks provide the perfect opportunity to admire the brilliant hues of the changing autumn leaves. Visit a few (or all) of these parks this fall, carefully selected by our naturalists to recognize the Top 5 stunning foliage views.

Our Top 5 Fall Foliage Overlooks

1. Veterans Legacy Woods

This park has one of the best views of fall foliage in Geauga County. Stand at the top of the walkway stairs, sit at a table in the non-reservable shelter or, if the lodge is available, relax at one of the bistro tables to take in the vibrant colors.

2. Orchard Hills Park

A short uphill climb on the fully paved **Sedge Trail** leads to the top of this park's sledding hill, a great place to see the surrounding beech-maple forest in all its autumn glory. Also hit the apple orchard-themed playground for additional fall fun while you're around.

3. Headwaters Park

Head down to the Boathouse beach and look out across the East Branch Reservoir to view beautiful foliage on the opposite shore. If you have a boat, now's also the time to take it out and enjoy peaceful observation from the water.

4. Troy Wetlands

After a brief walk along the **Marsh Overlook Trail**, climb the stairs to the elevated Marsh Overlook Platform. Here you will find a vast array of Nature's colors: green marsh, golden brush and, of course, those vibrant leaves.

5. Beartown Lakes Reservation

Follow the looped **Lake Trail** and take some time to admire the way the colorful leaves reflect in Lower Bear Lake. This paved trail provides an accessible, picturesque view and wonderful opportunity for autumn photography.

Honorary Mention: Frohring Meadows

Check out the Pollinator Play Garden, where the wooden deck is an excellent place to gaze across the reclaimed prairie at some colorful foliage. The adjacent Nature-themed play area also keeps little hands busy, making it the perfect place to enjoy time with the whole family.

Honorary Mention: Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Lake Kelso, a glacier-formed kettle lake, is an impressive natural feature at any time of year, but in autumn its trees come alive with color early to create a most special sight as you look across the water. For the best view, take a hike down **Glacier Trail** and relax on the observation deck.





This December, celebrate our community and the magic of the holiday season as you walk through an indoor forest of decorated trees!

Come one, come all, to The West Woods Nature Center for a display of holiday trees to be decorated by community organizations showcasing their incredible work in our county!

Would your nonprofit or not-for-profit organization like to display a tree? Applications are being accepted now. You'll provide your own tree and decorations befitting of your mission; we'll provide the space, audience and promotions. Don't wait, space is limited. To find more information and to apply, visit <https://bit.ly/gpdtrees2026>

Geauga Park District's Festival of Trees will be open daily December 7 through January 4 from 10 AM–4 PM except during holiday building closures December 25 and January 1.

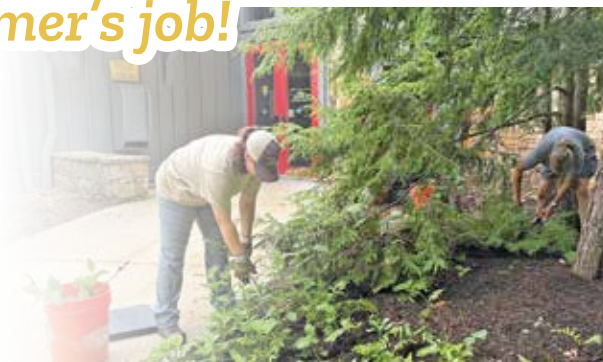


Get ahead of finding next summer's job!

SUMMER JOB OPEN HOUSE

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 9 AM–NOON
AT BIG CREEK PARK'S MEYER CENTER**

Enjoy the Great Outdoors *and* looking for seasonal employment next summer? Come meet some of our team and fill out an application if you're interested. Positions that become available seasonally typically include boat borrowing attendants, high ropes course guides, maintenance technicians, Natural Resource Management and summer camp naturalists. Watch our website under About GPD, then Careers, for additional details as they are announced.



Donations to
Geauga Park District
May through
July 2026

Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors

Blackbrook Audubon Society
Cleveland Foundation

Bird education programs
Lewis and Ruth Affelder Fund

\$200.00
\$2,152.00

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

1 Sunrise Hike

Thursday, October 1, 7:30–8:30 AM
Orchard Hills Park

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

2 Howling with Coyotes

Friday, October 2, 7–9:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park

Learn amazing facts about coyotes, then hike out to two survey locations to broadcast real coyote recordings into the night with hopes of hearing return calls! **Registration required** for all attending.



3 Fall Color Kayak

(Ages 12+ w/adult)

Saturday, October 3, 10–11:30 AM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Paddle along the peaceful shores of this ancient glacial lake, enjoying the autumn color of the shoreline forest and wetlands as well as the wildlife that call Lake Kelso home. Kayaking ability/experience expected of participants. Dress for weather. Held rain or shine, except in the event of a thunderstorm. Please bring change of clothes in a waterproof bag. **Registration required** beginning September 25 at 10 AM.

3 The SPACE RACE!

Saturday, October 3, 4–6 PM
Observatory Park

Fee: \$20

As the sun goes down on October 3, run, jog or walk as many course laps as you can in our two-hour race time frame. Each completed lap will equate to some amount of travel through our solar system. For example, one 0.85-mile lap takes you to Mercury, 4 laps and you've arrived on Mars, 10 laps gets you to Pluto, and so on. In this way, you will actually be racing YOURSELF to see how far "out of this world" you can go! All who complete at least one lap will earn a Space Race medal, and you'll receive a ribbon when you "land" (finish) recognizing how far you went and which planet you reached. Awards go to the top three male and female finishers. **Registration** is open now at <https://bit.ly/spacerace2026>, \$20 for each participant. Space is limited, with race T-shirts for the first 250 participants only. Get ready for a race like no other! **Registration required.**

4 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Gorge Exploration

(Ages 10+ w/adult)

Sunday, October 4, 1–3:30 PM
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. Ages 10+ with an adult; no younger children, please. **Registration required** for all attending.

5 Odds & Ends Baskets

Monday, October 5,
Noon–4 PM & 5–9 PM
Big Creek Park, Deep Woods

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

Use your creativity! A basic pattern will be provided, and then you will design and weave your basket. Some experience recommended. **Registration required.**

7 250 The Great Lakes In 6 More Pies

Wednesday, October 7, 7–8 PM
The West Woods

In a follow-up to our previous 'The Great Lakes In 6 Pies' program, we'll share 6 MORE recipes for pies from the Great Lakes region. Get a taste for history and Nature by learning how to make great American pies like Lake Erie fish pie, Shaker lemon pie, Hoosier pie and more. History never tasted so good!



9 Inclusive Fall Wagon Ride

Friday, October 9, 10–10:45 AM,
11–11:45 AM & Noon–12:45 PM
Swine Creek Reservation

A special program for adults in the developmental disability community. Please join us for a horse-drawn wagon ride through the woods to enjoy the wonders unique to autumn. Dress for unpredictable October weather. Wagon has a ramp and potential wheelchair seating. Let us know if the participant is in a wheelchair. Picnic shelter available for participants who wish to stay and utilize the shelter. **Registration required** for all attending.

10 ASM Minerals Garden & Dome Tour

Saturday, October 10, 4–5 PM
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 of the minerals garden. Directions provided after registration. No restrooms at this location. **Registration required.**



11 Hound Hike

Sunday, October 11, 10–11 AM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge

Dogs (and their humans), join us for a hike at Swine Creek Reservation. We will take a 1.2-mile hike along the medium-level Gray Fox Trail. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will share some helpful tips and tricks that we will be able to practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, a 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. Walkers without dogs are welcome, too!

13 "Yarn Over" in the Park

Tuesday, October 13, 1–2:30 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods, Freedom Hall
Join us to crochet or knit in the parks! This quarter, we'll enjoy the spectacular fall views from Veterans Legacy Woods. 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.** ♿



Photos on this page by Sonny Williams

15 Elderberries: Horse-Drawn Wagon Ride

Thursday, October 15, 11:30 AM–1:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge
Seniors, come along on a naturalist-led horse-drawn wagon ride to enjoy natural wonders unique to autumn. The wagon has stairs leading up to bench seating. Lunch will be sponsored by University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. Elderberries is a collaboration with The Department on Aging, UH Geauga Medical Center and Geauga Park District. **Registration required.**

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

Saturday, October 17, 9:30–10:30 AM
Beartown Lakes Reservation
Daisy Girl Scouts, join us to work on the Eco Learner badge! Eco Learner badge not included. Dress for the weather, as the entire program will be held outdoors. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult or leader must also attend.

17 Scout Day: Wolf Cub Scout "Paws on the Path" Adventure

Saturday, October 17, 1–2:30 PM
Beartown Lakes Reservation
Wolf Cub Scouts, join us as we work on the Paws on the Path Adventure! Dress for the weather. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult or leader must also attend.

17 Accessible Nature Cart Tours

Saturday, October 17, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
Froehring Meadows
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 will 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.**

17 Spectacular Spiders: Eight-Legged Fun!

Saturday, October 17, 1–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Join Nora the Explorer for some eight-legged-themed fun for all ages featuring spider games, a spider craft, a spider-themed indoor scavenger hunt and time observing live examples of Geauga's resident arachnids! ♿

18 Hidden Gems Hike: Holbrook Hollows

Sunday, October 18, 9–10:30 AM
Holbrook Hollows, Franklin Marsh entrance
Hike this hidden gem with a naturalist to discover natural wonders along its beautiful trails. Must be able to hike 2.5 miles over hilly terrain. Held rain or shine.



18 Autumn Wanderings

Sunday, October 18, 2–3:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park
Autumn is a beautiful time to hike in Geauga County. Let's take a general Nature hike to see what we can discover while appreciating the seasonal colors! ♿

18 Nature Journaling: The Moon

Sunday, October 18, 6–9 PM
Orchard Hills Park
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 the Moon. 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.

19 Nature Journaling for Families: Coyotes

Monday, October 19, 6–7:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park
Build on your Nature journaling skills. Bring your own journal and supplies and journal using prompts provided during instruction. Our inspiration will be coyotes. Content is for ages 9+. **Registration required** for all attending.

20 Coffee with the Birds

Tuesday, October 20, 9–10 AM & 10:30–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center Lobby
Join Naturalist Renell for some close-up viewing and identification of fall birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. Please choose just one session. **Registration required.** ♿



22 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, October 22, 7–9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Singers and musicians take turns presenting tunes as others join in. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing or simply enjoy as an audience member. ♿

24 Campfire Cooking: Pie Irons - Fall Flavors Pies

Saturday, October 24, 4–6 PM
Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park
Fee: \$4 Geauga residents, \$6 out-of-county
Learn a new outdoor skill and get inspired for your next camping adventure! Together we'll practice making pie iron fruit pie with a few signature pies to try: Apple Cranberry, Concord Grape and Black Walnut. Hopefully we'll inspire some great ideas for your next outdoor adventure. **Registration required** for all attending.

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

24 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, October 24, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park

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



25 Big Tree Hike!

Sunday, October 25, 10 AM–Noon
The West Woods, Affelder House
Parking Lot

Hike our newest trail, the Tulip Trail, to discover our state record tulip tree, which is one of the tallest trees in the state of Ohio! Hike is approximately 3 miles over rolling hills. Limited parking. Carpooling highly recommended. **Registration required.**



Photo by Tom Malinchak

25 Cross-County Fall Colors Van Trip

Sunday, October 25, 10 AM–3 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Join a naturalist on this van trip to visit areas around the county with spectacular views of fall colors. We'll start at this park and head to amazing sites, including the beautiful overlooks of Troy Wetlands and Century Village Museum. Bring a packed lunch. Includes a stop at a surprise location to purchase a snack or treat. Participants will be driven back to starting location to end the program. Adults only please. **Registration required.**

25 Blackbrook Monthly Bird Walk

Sunday, October 25, 8–10 AM
The Rookery

Join Blackbrook Audubon Society on their Monthly Bird Walks on the fourth Sunday of each month. Good for beginners and experienced birders, group birding is a fun way to learn more bird identification tips firsthand. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. For more info, visit blackbrookaudubon.org.

25 Headwaters Horse Ride

Sunday, October 25, 3–5 PM
Headwaters Park, Crystal Lake Picnic Area

Bring your own horse for this leisurely ride on the Buckeye and Maple Bridle trails for a total of approximately 4 miles out and back, enjoying autumn color, views of the reservoir and Nature lore. Expect gravel, bridge crossings, possibly bikes and/or Amish buggies. Helmets encouraged. Bring a shovel to clean up after your horse in the parking lot. **Registration required.**

RECURRING PROGRAMS

4 11 18 Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides

Sundays, October 4, 11 & 18, 1–5 PM
Swine Creek Reservation

Enjoy the sights, sounds and scents of fall with a horse-drawn wagon ride! First-come, first-served boarding. Limited seating. No pets. Rides last about a half hour and are cancelled by bad weather. Last ride leaves at 4:30 PM.

6 20 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, October 6, 1–2:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Route 608 Entrance
Tuesday, October 20, 1–2:30 PM
Eldon Russell Park

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.

9 23 Ohio's Ancient Skywatchers

Friday, October 9, 7–8 PM
Observatory Park

Friday, October 23, 7–8 PM (Virtual)
Learn about the fascinating astronomical connections at some of Ohio's ancient sites and get some tips on visiting them. October 9 followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. October 23 is a virtual program; we'll email the link a few days before the program, so please ensure we have your correct email address on file. **Registration required for October 23 only.**

9 23 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, October 9 & 23, 8–11 PM
Observatory Park

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

25 Sunset/Moonrise Horseback Ride

Sunday, October 25, 6–8 PM
Headwaters Park, Crystal Lake
Picnic Area

Bring your own horse for this leisurely naturalist-led ride to experience the sights and sounds of autumn as the sun sets and the moon rises over the East Branch Reservoir, a 4-mile out and back ride on the Buckeye and Maple Bridle trails. Expect hills, gravel, bridges and stream crossings. Helmets encouraged. Bring a shovel to clean up after your horse in the parking lot. **Registration required.**

26 Full Moon Hike: The Harvest Moon

Monday, October 26, 7–8 PM
Observatory Park

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



Photo by Sarah Rose

10 13 14 Timbertots: Spider Explorers

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Saturday, October 10,
10–11 AM & 1–2 PM
Beartown Lakes Reservation

Tuesday, October 13, 10–11 AM
Wednesday, October 14, 10–11 AM
Veterans Legacy Woods

Discover spiders and all of the amazing things about them with indoor and outdoor activities. Dress for the weather. **Registration required for all attending.** October 13 & 14 are partially wheelchair/stroller accessible.

10 24 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, October 10, 7–11 PM
Saturday, October 24, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station

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

NOVEMBER

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



Photo by Stacey Rauch

1 Coffee with the Birds

Sunday, November 1, 9–10 AM,
10:30–11:30 AM & 12:30–1:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center Lobby
Join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird
viewing and identification of fall birds at
the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage.
Please choose just one session. **Registration
required.** 

2 Sunrise Hike

Monday, November 2, 7–8 AM
Frohning Meadows
Start your day with an up-paced hike just
after the sun rises, traveling 1.5–2 miles.
Registration recommended to receive
reminders and updates.

5 Homeschool Days: Weather Wonders

(Ages 5–7 & 8–12)
Thursday, November 5, 10–11:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Experience the wonders of the weather
with a fun lesson and hands-on activities
to learn about meteorology and types of
weather. Some activities will be outdoors.
Please dress for the weather. Children must
be accompanied by an adult. **Registration
required** for all attending.

7 Astrotots XL: The Right Stuff

(Ages 6–11 w/adult)
Saturday, November 7,
11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM
Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center
Do you love space? Are you interested in
exploration? Are you ready for an exciting
adventure? Come discover how to begin now
to train your body and brain so that you'll
be ready for a space-related career someday.
Engage in out-of-this-world challenges and
learn about some of America's most famous
astronauts! **Registration required** for
children only. 

8 Take Me to the Migration Van Trip

Sunday, November 8, 8 AM–4 PM
The West Woods
November in Ohio means waterfowl migration!
We will point the van in the direction of the
best local bird reports, migrant traps and
any rare bird that shows up in our local area.
Please bring a sack lunch and binoculars, and
dress warm in case we end up along Lake Erie.
Adults only please. **Registration required.**

8 Backcountry Hike

Sunday, November 8, 1–3:30 PM
The Rookery
Explore The Rookery for evidence of wetland
wildlife like beavers, otters and herons. Be
prepared for on and off trail conditions
like muddy hiking, stepping over logs and
crossing streams as we venture backcountry
for a distance of more than 2 miles. Held
rain or shine, so dress for the weather. Ages
7+ with adult; no younger children, please.
Registration required.

8 Research in Our Parks: Survey Results

Sunday, November 8, 2:30–3:30 PM
Virtual
Learn about cool discoveries made in Geauga
parks from butterfly, dragonfly and bird surveys
conducted during the past spring to fall. This
is a virtual program; we'll email the link a few
days before the program, so please ensure
we have your correct email address on file.
Registration required.

13 Nature Night Lecture Series: The Bigger Fish

Friday, November 13, 7–8:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Gauga County is blessed with a number of
rivers, natural lakes, reservoirs and farm ponds
which are loaded with fish. We will focus on
the larger species found in the county. 

14 Scout Day: Junior Girl Scout "Outdoor Art Explorer" Badge

Saturday, November 14, 10 AM–Noon
Headwaters Park, Boathouse
Junior Girl Scouts, join us to work on the
Outdoor Art Explorer badge and explore
Nature through art! Dress for the weather, as
the program includes a hike and time spent
outdoors. **Registration required** for scouts
only, but adult or leader must also attend.

14 Scout Day: Bear Cub Scout Habitat Adventure

Saturday, November 14, 1–3 PM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse
Bear Cub Scouts, join us for this required
adventure as we learn all about habitats.
Program will be indoors and outdoors, so
please dress for the weather. **Registration
required** for scouts only, but adult or leader
must also attend.

14 Bring In Your Telescope

Saturday, November 14, 4–5 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station
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. 



Photo by Chris Parker

14 Marsh Mammal Viewing

Saturday, November 14, 4:30–6 PM
The Rookery
Beavers, muskrats, otters and mink all swim in
our local wetlands. We will learn a bit about
these amazing creatures before setting up an
evening stake-out to see what species might
appear.

15 Backcountry Hike

Sunday, November 15, 1–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Turkey Ridge
Join a naturalist for an off-trail hike exploring
the ravines and ledges hidden throughout
The West Woods. Hikers must be capable of
traveling several miles through rocky, uneven
terrain with some steep slopes, creek crossings
and logs to step over. Dress for the weather
with sturdy footwear that can provide traction
in muddy, wet conditions. Walking sticks
recommended. **Registration required.**

19 Elderberries: Weather Folklore Forecasting

Thursday, November 19, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center
Seniors, join us for a lighthearted and
informative presentation featuring an array
of age-old natural techniques once used to
predict the weather. This fast-paced journey
will take you through the history of weather
forecasting, focusing on the times long before
the inventions of high-tech equipment and
complicated explanations. Refreshments served
will be sponsored by Ohman Family Living at
Home. This is a collaboration with the Geauga
Department on Aging and University Hospitals
Gauga Medical Center. **Registration
required.** 

Photo by Sonny Williams



Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

19 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, November 19, 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. Program will be cancelled in the event of snow. Check park website the day of program for updates. ♿

21 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Saturday, November 21, 10 AM–Noon
The West Woods

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



21 Fascinating Fungi

Saturday, November 21, 2:30–3:30 PM
Virtual

There's a fungus among us. It's not a plant; it's not an animal. It has characteristics of both! Learn more about these amazing organisms and their importance in a healthy ecosystem. This is a virtual program; we'll email the link a few days before the program, so please ensure we have your correct email address on file. **Registration required.** ♿

22 Hound Hike

Sunday, November 22, 9:30–10:30 AM
The West Woods, Turkey Ridge

Dogs (and their humans), join us for a 2-mile medium-level hike to Ansel's Cave. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will meet us to share some helpful tips and tricks to practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, a 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. Walkers without dogs are welcome, too!



22 Nature's Ornaments: Make It Yourself!

Sunday, November 22, 12:30–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

From evergreens to icicles, the beauty of the holiday season can be seen in Nature. Try your hand at making some of your own unique ornaments from natural items. Register for the program and drop in at any time during program hours to make one or all of the ornaments. **Registration required** for all attending; children must be accompanied by an adult. ♿

22 250 Veterans Tribute: An Afternoon with George Washington

Sunday, November 22, 2–4 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods, Freedom Hall

Join us for an afternoon with George Washington as he reflects on the birth of our nation, our first veterans and his vision for the future of America. Music with Mr. Haney String Band begins at 1:30. Pie reception with more music follows presentation. All are invited as we celebrate America 250-Ohio Serves: Remembering Veterans, First Responders and Front Line Heroes. **Registration required.** ♿



22 Headwaters Park Waterfowl Watch

Sunday, November 22, 3–5 PM
Headwaters Park, Route 608 entrance

As the day comes to an end, hike along the beautiful East Branch Reservoir as we scan the lake for migratory ducks, loons, grebes, swans and bald eagles during prime migration time. Spotting scopes provided. Bring binoculars. 🦋



24 Full Moon Hike: The Beaver Moon

Tuesday, November 24, 6:30–7:30 PM
Observatory Park

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

28 Wildlife Detective Bingo

Saturday, November 28, 2:30–4 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Grab your family and friends for a fun Nature twist on traditional BINGO! Animal clues like tracks, feathers and more will be shown, and the first one who makes a BINGO with the correct animals wins! Nature-themed prizes will be awarded. Snacks provided. **Registration required.** ♿

28 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Saturday, November 28, 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. ♿

29 Buckeye Trail Highlight Hike

Sunday, November 29, 2–3:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove Parking Lot

The Buckeye Trail winds nearly 1,444 miles around Ohio. Without hiking the entire trail, let's visit one of the 8 Geauga Park District parks that can access the Blue Blazes. Participants should have the ability to hike 2 to 4 miles on various terrain. Held rain or shine, so dress accordingly and bring water.

RECURRING PROGRAMS

Photo by Jim Marquardt



3 17 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, November 3, 1–2:30 PM
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve, Sunset Shelter South Entrance

Tuesday, November 17, 1–2:30 PM
The Rookery

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.

6 7 Astrotots: So You Want to be an Astronaut?

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Friday, November 6, 9:30–10:30 AM,
11 AM–Noon & 1–2 PM

Saturday, November 7, 9:30–10:30 AM
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Calling all astronaut-wannabes: Come discover what you can start doing now to have a chance at becoming an astronaut when you grow up! Interview an astronaut and listen to Commander Melvin explain how and why he trained to become an astrochimp.

Registration required for children only. ♿

6 7 Holly Days Artisan Boutique & Mistletoe Market

Friday, November 6, 5–8 PM

Saturday, November 7, 10 AM–4 PM
The West Woods

Browse a premier selection of Nature-themed holiday decor and gifts for sale by regional artisans — the perfect opportunity to find unique, handmade items for everyone on your list! Join us on Friday evening as well as Saturday to enjoy indoor AND outdoor vendors. Our Mistletoe Market features handmade gifts created by young artisans. ♿

7 29 Fire-Building Techniques

Saturday, November 7, 2–4 PM

Sunday, November 29, 10 AM–Noon

Bass Lake Preserve, Lodge

With cold weather on the way, it may be good to practice some fire-building skills. We'll begin with fire basics, then we will see modern and practical ways of fire building. You'll gather your own supplies to see if your fire can burn long enough to roast a marshmallow or two.

Registration required. ♿

11 12 15 Timbertots: Squirrels!

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Wednesday, November 11, 10–11 AM

Thursday, November 12, 10–11 AM

Claridon Woodlands, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge

Sunday, November 15,
10–11 AM & 1–2 PM

The West Woods, Nature Center

Let's get squirrely! Join Nora the Explorer for fun squirrel activities and forest exploration. Program partially outdoors; please dress for the weather. Registration required for all attending.

13 27 Meet Mercury!

Friday, November 13, 7–8 PM

Observatory Park

Friday, November 27, 7–8 PM (Virtual)

Find out all about planet Mercury, including the latest news from the BepiColombo space probe! November 13 followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting. November 27 is a virtual program; we'll email the link a few days before the program, so please ensure we have your correct email address on file. Registration required for November 27 only. ♿

13 27 Night Sky Viewing

Fridays, November 13 & 27, 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. ♿

14 28 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, November 14, 7–11 PM

Saturday, November 28, 7–11 PM

Observatory Park, Nassau Astronomical Station

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

15 16 Nature Journaling: Nature Writing

Sunday, November 15, 1–3:30 PM

Monday, November 16, 9:30 AM–Noon
Holbrook Hollows, Lodge

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

Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques to record your Nature observations. This month we'll use the fall season to inspire us while doing Nature writing exercises. 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 at 440-286-9516.



Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

4 Scout Day: Cadette Scouts "Night Owl" Badge

Friday, December 4, 6–8 PM
Observatory Park

Join us at Observatory Park as we work towards the Cadette Night Owl badge. **Registration required** for scouts only, but adult or leader must also attend.

5 Hound Hike

Saturday, December 5, 10–11 AM
Observatory Park

Dogs (and their humans), join us for a hike at Observatory Park. We will take an easy 3-mile hike along the Nassau Connector Trail and Woodland Loop. Cold Nose Companions Dog Training will meet us to share some helpful tips and tricks to practice during the hike. Bring dog towels, water, a water bowl, a 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. Walkers without dogs are welcome, too!



5 Greens for Giving

Saturday, December 5, 11 AM–Noon,
Noon–1 PM, 1–2 PM & 2–3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join Geauga Park District for this make-and-GIVE event to create 300+ evergreen decorations to be given to seniors along with Geauga County Department on Aging's home-delivered meals and the Geauga Veterans Foodbank. All supplies provided. Brighten a senior's holiday season with your thoughtful creation! Please choose just one session. **Registration required.**

5 Scout Day: Webelos Walkabout Adventure

Saturday, December 5, 1:30–3:30 PM
Observatory Park

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

6 Wings of Winter Bird Walk

Sunday, December 6, 9–10:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Aspen Grove Parking Lot

Join us as we search for our resident winter birds along the trails of Big Creek Park.

6 Coffee with the Birds

Sunday, December 6, 9–10 AM,
10:30–11:30 AM & 12:30–1:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center Lobby

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

6 Holiday Plant Hike

Sunday, December 6, 2–3:30 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

Forests and fields have mostly gone dormant in the winter, but many of the plants we can still find have a holiday or seasonal connection. Join us on this walk through winter woodland and meadow to discover a variety of these plants.

7 Art Workshop: Wood Carving (2-Night Class)

Monday, December 7, 3–5 PM & 6–8 PM
Holbrook Hollows, Lodge

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

Award-winning wood carver Robert Stadtlander leads this two-night workshop to carve a small pine tree. Second session is December 14. One-time fee covers both nights' instruction and materials, including a basswood block to carve. Supplies and tools provided or bring your own tools if you have them. Tools and additional carving blocks will also be available for purchase. Adults only please. **Registration required;** please choose just one time slot for both nights.



Photo by Holly Sauder

9 Inclusive Experience: Evergreen Creation

Wednesday, December 9, 10–11:30 AM
The West Woods, Nature Center

A special program for adults in the developmental disability community! Join us to create an easy but impressive evergreen centerpiece to take home. Caregivers should plan on assisting. **Registration required** by phone only at 440-286-9516.

10 Sunrise Hike

Thursday, December 10, 7:30–8:30 AM
Welton's Gorge

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

11 Meteors & Meteorites

Friday, December 11, 7–8 PM
Observatory Park

Become an expert on meteors, shooting stars and meteorites! We'll share the best times to watch for meteor showers and how to test whether a rock you've found might be a meteorite (bring in your might-be-meteorites for a check!). Followed by night sky viewing, weather permitting.



Photo by Jim Marquardt

11 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, December 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 Hike The West Creek Addition

Saturday, December 12, 3–4 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station

Take an off-trail hike at the newest addition to Observatory Park. We'll explore the meadows and woods of this restored site, formerly tended by the West Creek Conservancy. Please dress for the day's weather and be prepared for an off-trail ramble! **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.

DECEMBER

Fully Accessible

Nature Scopes

12 Nassau Night Sky Viewing

Saturday, December 12, 7–11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station

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



Photo by Susan Bennett

13 The Big Hike at The West Woods

Sunday, December 13, 8 AM–Noon
The West Woods, Nature Center

Are you ready to hike 6-9 miles with some big hills? If you answered yes, then this is the perfect hike for you! We are going to hike as many trails at The West Woods as possible while also stopping for Nature observation. **Registration required.**

13 Research In Our Parks: Survey Results

Sunday, December 13, 2:30–3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Learn about cool discoveries made in Geauga parks from butterfly, dragonfly and bird surveys conducted during the past spring to fall. 

17 Elderberries: Arm Chair Birding

Thursday, December 17, 1–2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Seniors, join us for an indoor presentation about our winter birds that you can see right from your armchair at home! Refreshments served and sponsored by Home Instead. This is a collaboration with the Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.** 



Photo by Jim Marquardt

17 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, December 17, 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. Program will be cancelled in the event of snow. Check park website the day of program for updates. 

19 Paracord Holiday Ornament

Saturday, December 19,
1–3 PM & 4–6 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$10 Geauga residents, \$14 out-of-county
Choose 2 holiday-inspired paracord colors and learn how to weave a Solomon's Dragon knot to create a charming wreath ornament. This is an intermediate decorative knot we'll work through step by step. Adults only please. **Registration required.**



21 Winter Solstice Celebration

Monday, December 21, 7–10 PM
The West Woods

Celebrate the longest night of the year as we explore the roots of our modern holiday celebrations indoors and out. Enjoy treats, hot beverages and music; create a solstice-themed craft; stroll the self-guided Solstice Traditions Trail, a magical, candlelit route through the forest; and watch interactive skits highlighting solstice traditions of various civilizations with costumed interpreters. Please dress for the weather, as much of the program is outside. No dogs, please. Program is open-house format. Shuttles from ASM will run from 6:30-10:30 PM.

27 Blackbrook Monthly Bird Walk

Sunday, December 27, 8–10 AM
The Rookery

Join Blackbrook Audubon Society on their Monthly Bird Walks on the fourth Sunday of each month. Good for beginners and experienced birders, group birding is a fun way to learn more bird identification tips firsthand. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. For more info, visit blackbrookaudubon.org.



27 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Sunday, December 27, 1:30–3:30 PM
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 and wear sturdy foot gear. Hike is 3 miles over hilly terrain with a stream crossing.

29 Nature Explorers: Winter Night Adventure

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)
Tuesday, December 29, 6:30–8:30 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Nature Explorers and their adults experience the sights and sounds of a winter night. The sounds of nocturnal wildlife, tree silhouettes, tracks and constellations could all be possibilities! Program will be held whatever the weather; boots and clothing should keep participants warm and dry. **Registration required** for all participants; children must be accompanied by an adult.

31 New Year's Eve Nature Celebration

Thursday, December 31, 11 AM–1 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Celebrate New Year's Eve with fun activities for all ages! There will even be a "toast" at NOON! Pizza and beverages provided. Program mostly indoors but may be partially outdoors if weather permits. **Registration required** for all attending beginning December 1 at 10 AM for Geauga County residents, December 8 at 10 AM for out-of-county residents. 

RECURRING PROGRAMS

1 15 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, December 1, 1–2:30 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve

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.

Hike & Holiday Lunch

Tuesday, December 15, Noon–2:45 PM
Veterans Legacy Woods

This is the annual holiday potluck luncheon, so please bring a dish to share. A naturalist-led hike (approximately 2 miles) at noon, lunch at 1 PM, then an indoor presentation.

Photo by Jer Jeromin



4 5 Holiday Greens Workshop

Friday, December 4, 1–4 PM

Saturday, December 5,
9 AM–Noon & 1–4 PM

Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

Fee: \$33 Geauga residents, \$36 out-of-county

Decorate for the holidays by making a beautiful arrangement from fresh evergreens. Select from three options: 1) outdoor wreath, 2) table arrangement or 3) outdoor door swag. Visit our website under News & Updates for photos resembling each project and more specific project descriptions. A variety of ribbon, evergreens and pinecones will be provided. Bring hand pruners, any accents you may wish to add and a plastic bag to protect your car seat from water. **Registration required.** ♿

6 7 8 Timbertots: Evergreen Artists!

(Ages 3–5 w/adult)

Sunday, December 6,
10–11:30 AM & 1–2:30 PM

Monday, December 7, 10–11:30 AM

Tuesday, December 8, 10–11:30 AM

Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge

Discover through fun activities all the reasons evergreens are excellent, in Nature and at home! We'll use real greens to make a centerpiece to take home, bows and small decorations provided. Bring any additional small decorations you would like to use. Partially outdoors; please dress for the weather. Please note: Supplies may not be available for older or younger children as this program is for ages 3–5. **Registration required for all attending.**

9 10 Basket Weaving: Ornaments

Wednesday, December 9, 6–9 PM

Thursday, December 10, 9 AM–Noon

Veterans Legacy Woods

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

Skill Level: Beginner to Intermediate. Weave ornaments for the holiday season. Due to program preparation expenses, a refund may not be processed if cancellation occurs within 5 days of program. **Registration required.**



11 12 Ho Ho Ho Hiking with Santa & Buddy the Elf

Friday, December 11, 10–11:30 AM

Saturday, December 12, 10–11:30 AM &
1–2:30 PM

The West Woods, Nature Center

Discover the wonders of the season on a magical hike with Santa, Mrs. Claus and Buddy the Elf! Santa will also be available after the hike for photos and wish lists. **Registration required for all attending.**



13 14 Nature Journaling: Animal Abodes

Sunday, December 13, 1–3:30 PM

Monday, December 14, 9:30 AM–Noon
Big Creek Park, Deep Woods

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 animal abodes. 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.**

17 20 Winter Evergreens

Thursday, December 17, 6–7 PM

Virtual

Sunday, December 20, 1–2:30 PM

The West Woods, Nature Center

Learn interesting facts about some of the common evergreen trees in our area and tips on how to make a delightful evergreen decoration for the holidays. Hot beverages provided on December 20. December 17 is a virtual program; we'll email the link a few days before the program, so please ensure we have your correct email address on file. **Registration required.** ♿

27 28 Drop-in Nature Craft: Fuse Bead Snowflake

Sunday, December 27, 10–11:30 AM

Monday, December 28, 10–11:30 AM

The West Woods, Nature Center

Drop in during program hours to create a fuse bead snowflake, available while supplies last. Children must be accompanied by an adult. ♿



ARCHERY FOR EVERYONE

Introduction to Archery for Families (Ages 9+ w/adult)

Saturday, October 3, 10:30 AM–Noon
Sunday, October 25, 2–3:30 PM
Chickagami Park

Sunday, December 27, 1–2:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Families with children ages 9+ learn the basics of target archery together. Participants must be 50" or taller and wear closed-toe shoes. Ages 9+ with an adult; no younger children, please. Registration required for all attending.

Archery Games for Adults

Saturday, October 3, 1:30–3 PM
Chickagami Park
Sunday, December 27, 3–4:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Take the next step in improving your aim through playing archery games. You must have participated in an Introduction to Archery program to attend. Wear closed-toe shoes. Registration required.

Archery Practice

(Ages 9+)
Saturday, October 3, 3:30–4 PM
Saturday, October 17, 11–11:30 AM
Chickagami Park
These 30-minute sessions are for you to take the next step in improving your aim through practice. You must have participated in an Introduction to Archery program to attend. Wear closed-toe shoes. Registration required for child only, but adult must also attend.

For OCTOBER archery programs at Chickagami Park, please arrive 15 minutes early to allow for the walk to the range.

DECEMBER programs are held at The Rookery's Great Blue Heron Lodge.

Introduction to Archery for Kids

(Ages 9-16)
Saturday, October 17, 9–10:30 AM
Chickagami Park
Learn the basics of target archery. Participants must be age 9-16, at least 50" tall and wear closed-toe shoes. Registration required for child only, but adult must also attend.

Archery Games for Families

(Ages 9+ w/adult)
Saturday, October 17, 12:30–2 PM
Chickagami Park
Sunday, December 20, 6–7:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Take the next step in improving your aim by playing archery games. You must have participated in an Introduction to Archery program to attend. Families with children ages 9+ accompanied by an adult; no younger children, please. Participants must be at least 50" tall and wear closed-toe shoes. Registration required for all participants.

Introduction to Archery for Adults

Sunday, October 25, 4–5:30 PM
Chickagami Park
Adults will learn the basics of target archery together. Please wear close-toed shoes. Registration required.

Archery Games for Kids

(Ages 9-16)
Sunday, December 20, 4–5:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Take the next step in improving your aim by playing archery games. You must have participated in an Introduction to Archery program to attend. Participants must be age 9-16 and at least 50" tall. Wear closed-toe shoes. Registration required for child only, but adult must also attend.

Archery Camp for Kids

(Ages 9-11)
Monday, December 28,
9 AM–Noon, 1–4 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Does your kid already enjoy or want to learn the sport of target archery? If so, sign them up for this 3-hour drop-off Archery Camp. We'll go over safety, how to use the equipment, and practice techniques. We'll work on our aim by playing a few games and even take a Nature walk as part of our morning. Registration required.



Check out the new fall geocache
at Bessie Benner Metzenbaum
Park in Chester Twp.
7940 Cedar Road

N 41° 30.524'
W -081° 21.593'

*This short little trail may be a bit tough,
but it's just the right place to find geocache stuff.*

*Now head for the summit,
with no heights you can plummet.*

*Once a steep hike to get to the top, this trail's been
rerouted, no need for stops.*

Some plants aren't so nice, so you'd better look twice.

Stinging nettles can be found all over the ground.

When I put this cache out, I avoided an ouch.

Leaves and decay are where this cache lays.

Expires January 1, 2028. Find details on our website under Activities.

Carved by Time

Discovering Geauga's Ledges & Caves

For generations, striking geologic formations known locally as ledges or caves have drawn visitors with their beauty and mystery. They were formed when braided streams flowed eastward and deposited coarse sand and quartz pebbles that had eroded from ancient mountains. Over time, erosion and weathering transformed those sediments into Sharon Conglomerate, the sedimentary rock that shapes these geologic features today.

Layered rock, deep crevices and cool, filtered springs create habitat for uncommon plants and animals. Polypody ferns, hemlock trees, Northern Red and Long-tailed Salamanders, several bat species, Louisiana Waterthrush, Dark-eyed Junco and Camel Crickets all thrive here.

Photographs, names carved in the rock and other carvings, some dating back to the 1800s, show that people have long been drawn to the shelter of these overhangs. Cool summer temperatures and dramatic winter ice formations make them memorable destinations.

Once used by settlers, natural springs form where porous Sharon Conglomerate comes into contact with underlying layers of shale. Because rainwater cannot pass through the shale as easily, it emerges at the surface as a spring. Fresh and cool, these springs help lower the temperature of local streams with their constant flow and sometimes create scenic waterfalls.

Sharon Conglomerate has traditionally been quarried for foundation and building stone. Today, its ancient sands and gravels are still quarried, crushed and prized for many uses. The beauty of these formations remains a lasting part of Geauga's natural heritage.

Rock outcropping
at Welton's Gorge

Geauga
Park District
offers naturalist-led
visits to Ansel's Cave
at The West Woods and
Welton's Gorge, giving visitors
the opportunity to explore
these remarkable places
for themselves. Find fall
opportunities on pages
8, 12 & 15.



Ansel's Cave at The West Woods



Photo by Linda Gilbert



FUNGI FUN



Fall is the perfect time to look for mushrooms. Cooler temperatures and damp air create the perfect environment for these fungi to grow and reproduce. During this time, mushrooms send out spores, which function similarly to seeds. These fungi are an important part of the environment, contributing to a healthy forest by breaking down fallen leaves to return nutrients to the soil. In fact, fungi are often called nature's recyclers. Check out a few mushrooms you can find right here in Geauga County!

PUFFBALL



COMMON COLORS: White, turning brown over time

SHAPE: Round and puffy

FUN FACT: These can reach the size of a basketball and release a puff of spores when crushed.

TURKEY TAIL



COMMON COLORS: Rings of brown, orange, white and black

SHAPE: Flat and round

FUN FACT: Their name comes from the fact that these look like turkey tails.

CORAL FUNGI



COMMON COLORS: White, orange, yellow and purple

SHAPE: Many skinny branches, like underwater coral

FUN FACT: Unlike many other mushrooms, these have no gills or caps.

MAKE YOUR OWN MUSHROOMS

Create this fun fall craft to decorate for the season!



1. Go on a Nature walk to collect your materials: twigs, acorn caps, small rocks and a piece of tree bark. You will also need glue.

2. Pick out one twig and one acorn cap. Using glue, attach the end of the stick to the inside of the cap. You've created your first mushroom! Repeat for as many mushrooms as you would like.



3. Glue your rocks to the bark, leaving space for your mushrooms. Once your mushrooms are dry, glue them to the bark as well.

You're done!



All mushrooms are fungi, but not all fungi are mushrooms. Mushrooms are the visible parts of fungi, called the "fruit." The rest is hidden away underneath.

DID YOU KNOW?



The iconic red mushroom with white spots featured in many video games and movies is called fly agaric. Don't touch it in real life, though — they're highly poisonous!

You can find mushrooms in your own backyard!

FUNGI-FINDING TIPS

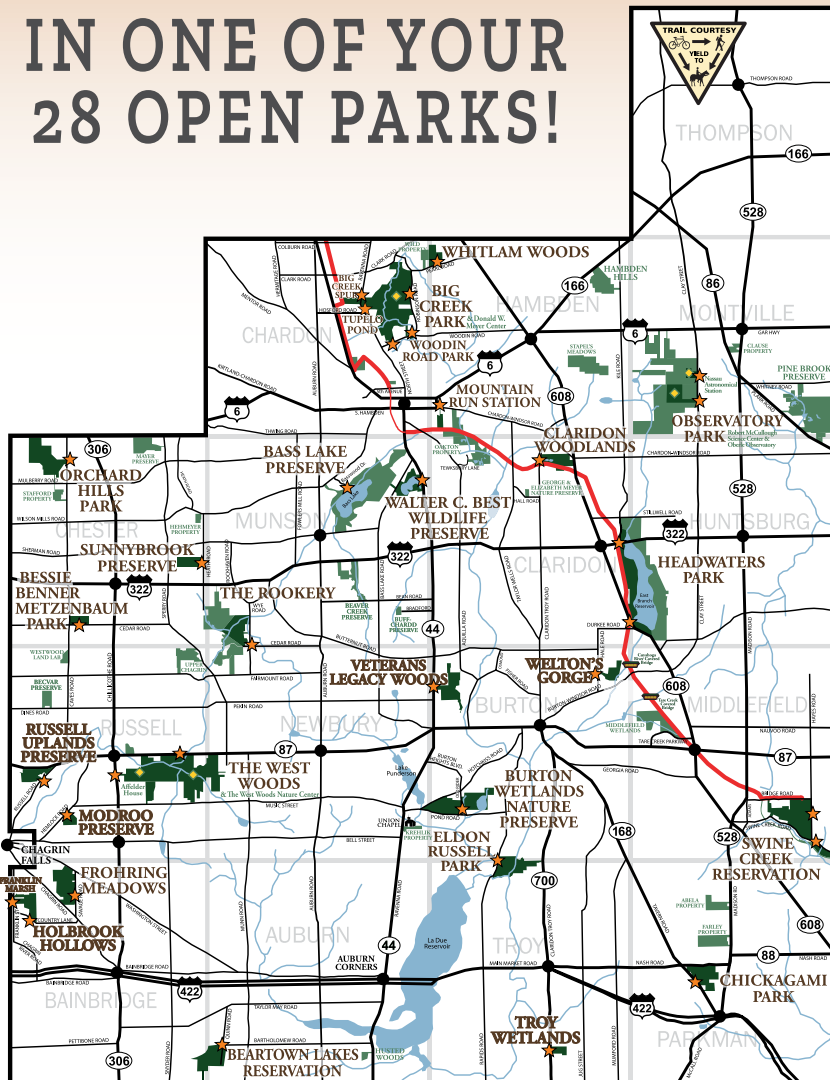
- 1. Walk after the rain.**
Mushrooms love moisture!
- 2. Look carefully.**
Check logs, trees, fallen leaves and other places they could be growing.
- 3. Leave them be.**
You should always leave what you find at the parks, but especially fungi! They can be harmful to humans (and pets) and are best admired in place.



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