How we become closer to our natural world when hand-feeding a bird

A great way to get out on snowy trails this winter

Let our new trekking series inspire you to hit those hikes in 2020

Thanks for your support of our November ballot issue!
Trekking Series Kickoff!
Saturday, January 11 • 10-11:30 AM
The West Woods in Russell Twp.

This information session for 2020’s new trekking series will cover all the details of this year-long adventure, including number of hikes, hiking opportunities, how to register and incentives for completion. Plus, take a naturalist-led hike to complete your first requirement! Details on page 14.

Sunday, January 19 • 11 AM - 4 PM
The West Woods in Russell Twp.

Overflow parking at ASM International & Teague Plaza.

• Face painting • Crafts • Ice sculptures • Bird in the Hand
• Snowshoe borrowing • Sled dog meet-n-greets • Refreshments
• Live music • Guest appearances by a famous winter snowman, a reindeer herder, ice princesses and live reindeer!

Friday, February 14
8 - 10 AM at Swine Creek Reservation’s Lodge
Friday, Saturday & Sunday, February 14, 15 & 16
11 AM - 4 PM at The West Woods Nature Center

Become an official Citizen Scientist when you stop in anytime during listed hours to identify and count birds at the feeding station during this worldwide bird count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

Welcome the signs of spring with maple sugaring fun!
Sundays, March 1, 8 & 15 • Noon - 4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation in Middlefield Twp.

• Visit the sugarhouse & sample the syrup
• Gather sap with a horse-drawn sap sled • Costumed interpreters
• Live music & maple treats in the lodge

WINTER PROGRAMS on pages 8-13

• Registration is required in advance for limited enrollment programs on a first come, first served basis. Registration can be completed online or at 440-286-9516.
• Programs may be cancelled in the event of severe weather or a storm warning.
• Programs are generally free of charge; those with fees are noted. Payment of fees must be made at the time of registration with a credit/debit card.
• Registration fees are refundable up to five days prior to the event, or if the Park District cancels the program.
• If you or a member of your family has special needs, please call the Park District regarding available accessibility accommodations.

Geauga Gems Trekking Series Program
Fulfills one of the naturalist-led requirements toward your Trekking Series award
Nature’s Not To Be Missed - Program focused on unique encounters with Nature
Fully Wheelchair/Stroller Accessible
Nature Scopes - Program recommended for our fifth-grade Nature Scopes students

UPCOMING EVENTS Mark your calendars!
Dear Park Friends and Geauga County Neighbors,

Preserved and protected under a blanket of winter snow, Geauga County’s wonderful parks are always a good place to go.

I hope you will take some time to enjoy the winter majesty through a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities available at Geauga County’s 10,000+ acres of amazing Parks.

Experience nature’s beauty as you walk along a park trail, learn to snowshoe or cross-country ski, ride a sled, or enjoy the warmth of a crackling fire in one of the Park’s many pavilions. For the hearty, you can camp in one of the lean-to camp sites at Headwaters Park (reservation and nominal fee required).

The sixth year of the highly successful Frozen Fest will be held on January 19, 2020, at the West Woods in Russell Township. Fun for families and friends, this free program provides a great opportunity for Geauga seniors, singles and families to enjoy the best winter experience in Geauga County.

This winter, I hope you and your family will take some time to enjoy your amazing Geauga County Parks.

Hope to see you this winter at our Geauga County Parks!

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Grendell
Geauga County Probate/Juvenile Court Judge
Have you ever hand-fed wild birds? From October till April, head to The West Woods to give it a try. In optimal conditions, volunteers have reported as many as 60 chickadees in 20 minutes! To get all the guidelines you’ll need to try your hand, visit our website under Activities, then Birdwatching.

“A Bird in the Hand is worth Two in the Bush”

Brian Kovach, seasonal naturalist

The Bird in the Hand feeding station is an incredible place to take family, friends and loved ones. I’ve seen many children’s – and even adult – faces light up the first time a chickadee lands in their hands. I will never forget the feeling of having a wild bird land in my hand for the first time. I was probably more excited than some kids! And these incredible birds definitely come out of their shells as the year progresses. At the beginning of the season, they’re very shy and timid. But once the leaves are gone and the cold and snow move in, their extremely social personalities begin to flourish. Chickadees are cheerful little birds and barely hesitate to land in your hand. If you’re really lucky, one bird may take two seeds in one stop! One person even told me of a White-breasted Nuthatch that landed for them! Bird in the Hand allows everyone to get in touch with Nature, which can lead to a lifetime of wonder and joy in local parks, backyards, and hopefully in life.

Jeanette Ryman, visitor

My family and I arrived at The West Woods Nature Center for our first Bird in the Hand experience on a surprisingly comfortable, sunny day in mid-November. Once we retrieved the pill bottle filled with sunflower seeds from the front desk staff, the three of us adventured onto the snow-packed trail, marching like penguins, following the signs directing us to the feeding station. Once there, we quietly (and impatiently) waited for the first bird to land on our hands. As I held my arm out, my hand full of seeds, I silently said a prayer asking God to please send birds to us. At first, it seemed the birds were too afraid to come. But then, all of a sudden, the cutest little Black-capped Chickadee flew toward me and her tiny feet grasped my fingertips. The How one special woodland feeding station brings us even closer to Nature
Chickadee dashed in for a seed and quickly flew off to crack it open. Thus, began the feeding frenzy! We all had birds landing in our hands every few seconds. We couldn’t stop smiling; it was such a joyful time. I want to thank Geauga Park District for such a lovely experience, and I’m looking forward to coming back often.

**Grace Hickox, visitor services at The West Woods Nature Center**

As part of the front desk staff, I have been fortunate to witness, and share in, the excitement produced by Bird in the Hand. Many repeat visitors have that “mission” written on their faces. As they bound up to the desk to get their supply of “the good stuff” (as birds might tweet), I’m already reaching for the seed.

The “regulars” know the drill, and it’s apparent by their expressions that the excitement never wears off. I’ve given directions to guests of all ages from all over, and each time, as their excitement grows, mine does, too! Happy visitors often return to report back on their success. Little ones eagerly boast the total amount of landings they’ve had. Some identify what kind of birds landed. It’s always an extra delight when a bird species lands other than a common, chickadee. Regardless, each landing is completely riveting; some say, breathtaking. And as visitors share their stories, I am reminded of just one more reason Nature is so amazing – experiencing it connects us all! 🌿

**My husband loves doing this. He feeds the birds, I walk the dog. It’s a win-win for us both! Well worth the drive (for us).**

-Sherry Champlin

This is one of my favorite activities in our area!

-Luke Rosenberger

Highly recommend doing this! Totally brings you closer to nature!

-Robin Pfeifer
There’s something about being near water, people say, that brings them tranquility. If that’s true, Beartown Lakes Reservation in Auburn and Bainbridge townships is truly a haven. Seventy acres of wooded splendor surround three interconnecting lakes and a small pond. That’s more than 22 acres of open water.

When Bainbridge was first settled in 1811, bear, deer, elk and wolf were plentiful. It was told that one of the original settlers killed five bears in one day, prompting the Beartown nickname.

Upper Bear Lake, near the entrance, is habitat for frogs, turtles, water snakes and other aquatic life. Middle Bear Lake has many dead snags for cavity-nesting birds, while Lower Bear Lake is larger and deeper, supporting healthy populations of bass, Northern Pike and Bluegill. Visit this winter and you may even see folks ice fishing!

To stretch your legs, trails span 2.8 miles and wander through mature beech-maple forest. One of these trails is also horse-friendly. Come springtime, these woods will be carpeted with wildflowers. And as it gets warmer still, two reservable open-air shelters and a quaint first-come, first-served pavilion can set your scene for a perfect picnic, party or simple, quiet reflection.

Field Notes:
A tributary of the Aurora branch of the Chagrin River, called Spring Creek, flows along this park’s NW edge.
These Shoes Were Made for Walkin’

The West Woods’ popular snowshoe borrowing is back! What to know before you come out:

Two-hour snowshoe borrowing is FREE for Geauga County residents. Out-of-county residents pay $5 via credit card.

At least a few inches of snow are needed to use snowshoes, and the more snow the better! Come dressed for the weather with waterproof boots.

Snowshoes are distributed first come, first served daily 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. No reservations are taken, but you may call 440-297-0880 to check availability.

Borrowers 18+ must leave a drivers license as a security deposit. Anyone younger (40 lb+) must be accompanied by an adult. Signed waivers required.

**NEW in 2020!** Watch our social media to learn when snowshoes become available for ages 3 through 6 (<40 lb).

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**Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors**

Donations to Geauga Park District August through October 2019

Tara Lineweaver  
Donation in memory of Lee Schiemann  
100.00

John & Meta Dennis Trust  
Unrestricted donation  
147,080.90

Chardon United Methodist Church  
Honorarium for naturalist programs  
50.00

John & Meta Dennis Trust  
Unrestricted donation  
843.76

Cleveland Foundation  
Lewis & Ruth Affelder Fund  
470.75

Iris & Peter Pistell  
Engraved paver at The West Woods  
375.00

John & Meta Dennis Trust  
Unrestricted donation  
5,558.97

Larry Plant  
Unrestricted donation  
50.00

Joseph Kickel  
Unrestricted donation  
25.00

Don Burton  
Unrestricted donation  
25.00

Estate of Thelma G. Payne  
Unrestricted donation  
2,000.00

Cheryl Christy  
Unrestricted donation  
25.00

John & Meta Dennis Trust  
Unrestricted donation  
21,407.85

Susan Lavine  
K9 donation  
50.00
2 Grandparents in the Park: Nature Detectives
Thursday, January 2, 1:30-3 PM
The West Woods
Attention all super-sleuths, grandparents and grandkids: test your detective skills by helping solve nature clues in an interactive way! Program indoors. Please bring a snack to share; beverages provided. Registration required.

4 Burton Christmas Bird Count
Saturday, January 4, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM, The West Woods
Come to the warm, cozy West Woods lobby and help park staff/volunteers count birds at the feeders. Our count will be included in the results of volunteers throughout the Americas who help Audubon and other organizations collect data in this long-running census to assess the health of bird populations, and to help guide conservation action.

5 Learn to Cross Country Ski
Sunday, January 5, 1-3 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge
Learn the basics including proper clothing, equipment and technique. Indoor presentation followed by outdoor instruction. Ski rental available in advance from Geiger’s, 50 Shopping Plaza, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022, 440-247-4900. A special rental rate for this program applies: $17 for pick up on Friday and return on Monday during business hours. Registration required.

5 Travelogue: Alaska—Can’t Wait to Go Back!
Sunday, January 5, 2-3 PM
The West Woods
Join the Sauder family as they share their dream trip to Alaska! Travel with them through the inside passage, national forests, tidal shorelines and highest peaks and, after 12 days, felt they barely saw any of this incredible state!

6 Geauga Skywatchers: Exploring Our Solar System
Monday, January 6, 6:30-7:30 PM
Burton Public Library
Take a tour of our solar system from the sun, through the major and minor planets, to the farthest reaches of the solar neighborhood. Also learn about the library’s new telescope lending program and some basics on how to use a telescope to view the moons of Jupiter and rings of Saturn! Registration required at https://geaugalibrary.libcal.com. Prospective members may login to Meetup.com to find dates and times of future lectures and activities.

7 Geauga Walkers
Tuesday, January 7, 1-2:30 PM
Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park
Hikes for active seniors 1 to 1½ miles long. Naturalist led. If temperature is below 20°F, call the park to see if hike will still be held. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule, 440-279-2126. Also January 21.

10 Full Moon: The Wolf Moon
Friday, January 10, 7-8 PM
Observatory Park
Learn all about wolves, then take a look at January’s full moon using the park’s telescopes. Followed by night-sky viewing until 11 PM if weather conditions permit.

11 Scout Day: Webelos—Into the Woods
Saturday, January 11, 9-11 AM
Sunnybrook Preserve, Lodge
Complete your requirements for the Into the Woods Elective Adventure! Outdoors, so dress for the weather. Registration required by phone only at 440-279-0880. Please register only participating Webelos.

11 Geauga Gems Trekking Series Kickoff!
Saturday, January 11, 10-11:30 AM
The West Woods
Join us as we launch our new trekking series, designed to get you out on the awesome trails at Geauga Park District. This information session will cover all the details of this year-long adventure, including number of hikes, hiking opportunities, how to register and incentives for completion – then take a naturalist-led hike that completes your first required hike!

11 Scout Day: Senior & Ambassador Girl Scouts—Snow Shoe Adventure
Saturday, January 11, 1:30-3:30 PM
The West Woods
Discover winter in a whole new way...on snowshoes! A great warm-up for your Snow Climbing Adventure Badge! Wear snow boots to fit into snowshoes. Registration required by phone only at 440-279-0880. Please register only participating Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts.

11 Timbertots: Searching for Squirrels
(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Saturday, January 11, 1-2 PM
Claridon Woodlands, Lodge
Join Nora the Explorer for fun activities to learn all about these furry friends. Program indoors and outdoors, weather permitting. Registration required. Also January 14.

11 Nassau Night Sky Viewing
Saturday, January 11, 7-11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station
Observe the wonders of the night sky using this facility’s giant research-grade telescope! If weather prevents sky viewing, join us for a planetarium presentation in the McCullough Science Center instead. Also January 25.

12 Travelogue: Tasmania—The Island Down Under
Sunday, January 12, 2-3 PM
The West Woods

12 Plant Your Own Meadow!
Sunday, January 12, 3:30-5 PM
The West Woods
Sick of mowing all that extra lawn? Join Geauga Park District staff to learn how you can start your own meadow that will look amazing and benefit wildlife including pollinators. Free meadow seed samples will be distributed. This is the first program in a series to feature meadows and prairies in Geauga parks throughout the seasons.

14 Timbertots: Searching for Squirrels
(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Tuesday, January 14, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM, The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
See description for January 11. Registration required.

16 Elderberries: American Kestrel Nest Box Project
Thursday, January 16, 1-2:30 PM
The West Woods
Seniors, learn about the American Kestrel, the smallest falcon in North America and a species in peril. We’ll review the progress of the Park District’s nest box project of 2019. Refreshments served. A collaboration with Geauga Dept. on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. Registration required.

18 Learn to Snowshoe
Saturday, January 18, 9-11 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Learn the basics including proper clothing, technique and types of equipment. Indoor presentation followed by outdoor instruction and a snowshoe hike. Borrow a pair of ours or bring your own! Ages 8+. Registration required.
23 Maple Town Tune Traders
Thursday, January 23, 7-10 PM
The West Woods
Come to play, sing or simply enjoy as audience. Musicians of all levels, genres and instruments are welcome. Short performances followed by sharing of songs and tunes in the round. Snacks to share welcome.

25 Astrotots: There’s No Place Like Home
(Ages 3-5 w/adult) Friday, January 24, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM, Observatory Park
There’s no place in space that is as “people perfect” as our planet. We’ll rotate, orbit and monkey around with Commander Melvin to discover what makes Earth so special! Registration required. Also January 25.

25 Coffee with the Birds
Saturday, January 25, 8-11 AM
The West Woods
Swing by anytime during the hours listed to grab a hot beverage and settle in by the big windows for some close-up viewing, joining Naturalist Tami Gingrich as she identifies winter birds at the feeder.

25 Backyard Bird Feeding Basics
Saturday, January 25, 9:30-10:30 AM, The West Woods
Join Cristin Smith from Nature’s Way Bird Products as she presents tips on feeding wild birds, types of feeders and what seed to use. Also learn quick and easy squirrel-proofing and enter a raffle to win a free bird feeder.

25 Nature Trek Fitness Hike
Saturday, January 25, 10 AM-Noon
Headwaters Park, The Maple Highlands Trail Parking Lot, Rt. 608
Burn off those calories on this fitness hike, learning some cool Nature facts along the way. Should have the ability to hike at least three miles. Dress for the weather and bring water.

25 Whatever-the-Weather Venture
Saturday, January 25, 2-3:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands, Lodge
We’re hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are right, snowshoeing is what we’ll do. If not, we’ll take a cold-weather hike. Whatever the weather, let’s get outside! Borrow a pair of our snowshoes or bring your own. Ages 8+. Registration required.
1 Maple 101 Workshop
Saturday, February 1, 9 AM-Noon
The West Woods
Producers wishing to hone sugaring skills will learn tree biology and identification, tapping, collecting methods, sugar bush management, canning, packaging and more. Co-presented with the Geauga County OSU Extension Office. Registration required through the OSU Extension Office at 440-834-4656.

2 Winter Hawk Watch Van Trip
Sunday, February 2, 10 AM-Noon & 1-3 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge
Adventure into Amish farmland seeking raptors including Rough-legged Hawks, Harriers and Kestrels as well as Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs and other winter birds of open country. Bring binoculars. Registration required.

3 Geauga Skywatchers: Hubble at 28
Monday, February 3, 6:30-7:30 PM
Geauga County Public Library, Middlefield Branch
Examine the accomplishments of 28 years of the Hubble Space Telescope. Contemplate the science of Hubble’s unexpected discoveries and the beauty of the many detailed photographs. Also learn about the library’s new telescope lending program and some basics on how to use a telescope to view the moons of Jupiter and rings of Saturn! Registration required at https://geaugallibrary.libcal.com. Prospective members may join in Meetup.com to find the dates and times of future lectures and activities.

4 Geauga Walkers
Tuesday, February 4, 1-2:30 PM
Beartown Lakes Reservation, North Point
Hikes for active seniors 1 to 1½ miles long. Naturalist led. If temperature is below 20°F, call the park to see if hike will still be held. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule, 440-279-2126. Also February 18.

5 Pluto (and Friends)
Friday, February 7, 7-8 PM
Observatory Park
When is a planet not a planet? Join us to celebrate Pluto’s 90th birthday! Followed by night-sky viewing until 11 PM, if weather conditions permit. Also February 21.

6 Nature Break: Women’s Retreat
Saturday, February 8, 9 AM-12:30 PM, The West Woods
Fee: $8 Geauga residents, $10 non-Geauga residents
Retreat to the park to re-energize and relax. Activities include snowshoeing or walking, light aerobics, and a Nature-themed craft and lesson. Includes light breakfast and a soup and salad lunch. Dress in comfortable layers for both indoor and outdoor activities. Registration required.

7 Nature Explorers: Ice & Snow (Ages 6-7 & 8-11)
Sunday, February 9, 10 AM-Noon
Nassau Night Sky Viewing
Saturday, February 8, 7-11 PM
Nassau Astronomical Station
Observe the wonders of the night sky using this facility’s giant research-grade telescope! If weather prevents sky viewing, join us for a planetarium presentation in the McCullough Science Center instead. Also February 22.

8 Lake Erie Winter Van Trip
Saturday, February 8, 12-4:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Explore the frozen shores of our beautiful Lake Erie! Discover things such as ice formations, snow and hardly winter birds. Must be able to hike a couple miles in potential cold conditions. Locations determined by weather and bird activity. Possible locations: Mentor Headlands, Fairport Harbor, Edgewater Park, Neff Road Park. Prepare for the cold and bring a snack and water. Registration required.

9 Travelogue: Parks of Southern Utah
Saturday, February 8, 10 AM-Noon
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Off-trail adventure exploring seldom-visited portions of this park in search of signs of wildlife. Rugged terrain; must be physically capable of several miles of off-trail challenges with some steep hills. Hike includes stream crossings. Registration required.

10 Poetry in Nature
Sunday, February 9, 3:30-4:30 PM
The West Woods
Experience memories of warmer seasons from a different perspective and in a unique way – a duet of naturalists presenting a program of poems for two voices, told from an insect point of view! A unique way of learning about the natural history of insects.
16 Travelogue: Return to Guyana
Sunday, February 16, 2-3 PM
The West Woods
Join photographers and travelers Bruce and Susan Bennett on their travels through Guyana, which was voted the world’s best ecotourism destination by The Green Destinations Foundation. Exploration on horseback in southern Guyana as well as a visit to The Rewa Eco Lodge for fishing and wildlife photography.

18 Geauga Walkers
Tuesday, February 18, 1-2:30 PM
Eldon Russell Park
See description for February 4.

21 Timbertots: Wonderful Woodpeckers (Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Friday, February 21, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Join Nora the Explorer indoors and out to discover all the wonderful things about woodpeckers! Registration required. Also February 22.

21 Whatever-the-Weather Venture
Friday, February 21, 6:30-8 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
We’re hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are right, snowshoeing is what we’ll do. If not, we’ll take a cold-weather hike. Whatever the weather, let’s get outside! Borrow a pair of our snowshoes or bring your own. Ages 8+. Registration required.

21 Pluto (and Friends)
Friday, February 21, 7-8 PM
Observatory Park
See description for February 7.

22 Timbertots: Wonderful Woodpeckers (Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Saturday, February 22, 10-11 AM
Sunnybrook Preserve
See description for February 21. Registration required.

22 Winter Tree ID Hike
Saturday, February 22, 2:30-4:30 PM
Sunnybrook Preserve, Lodge
Discover the diversity of trees at Sunnybrook Preserve and learn to identify them by their bark and buds. Hike approximately 1.5 miles over hilly terrain. Participants should be prepared for the variable winter weather. Registration required.

22 Nassau Night Sky Viewing
Saturday, February 22, 7-11 PM
Nassau Astronomical Station
See description for February 8.

23 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show
Sunday, February 23, 2-3 PM
Observatory Park
Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. Building open house 1-4 PM. Also view the sun using our safe solar-viewing equipment, weather permitting.

23 Maple Town Tune Traders
Thursday, February 27, 7-10 PM
The West Woods
Come to play, sing or simply enjoy as audience. Musicians of all levels, genres and instruments are welcome. Short performances followed by sharing of songs and tunes in the round. Snacks to share welcome.

29 The Rookery Through the Seasons Hike: Winter
Saturday, February 29, 10-11:30 AM, The Rookery
From winter weed and tree ID to spring wildflowers, summer wetland flora to colorful fall colors and berries, discover the changing flora in this series of easy walks along the Interurban Trail. Attend any or all hikes as your time allows. In collaboration with the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio.
1 **Sap’s-a-Risin’!**
Sunday, March 1, 12-4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
Get a sweet taste of how maple sugaring methods have evolved from the Native American tradition to modern methods! Help gather sap in the sugarbush with a horse-drawn sap sled, experience the tapping, gathering and boiling methods used throughout history, see sap boiling in the sugar house and taste some maple syrup, then warm up with live music by The Real Deal String Band and maple treats in the lodge. Also March 8 and 15.

2 **Geauga Skywatchers: Geocentrism**
Monday, March 2, 6:30-7:30 PM
Geauga County Public Library, Chardon Branch
Learn the deep historical foundations of astronomy leading up to heliocentrism. Marvel at the accuracy of ancient astronomers. Also learn about the library’s new telescope lending program and some basics on how to use a telescope to view the moons of Jupiter and rings of Saturn! Registration required at https://geaugalibrary.libcal.com. Prospective members may login to Meetup.com to find the dates and times of future lectures and activities.

3 **Geauga Walkers**
Tuesday, March 3, 1-2:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge Shelter
Hikes for active seniors 1 to 1 1⁄2 miles long. Naturalist led. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule, 440-279-2126. Also March 17 and 31.

4 **Invasive Insect Pests**
Saturday, March 7, 10 AM- Noon
The West Woods
What have six legs, are not native, and cause harm to the environment, humans or health? Invasive insect pests! Join Amy Stone of the OSU Extension office of Lucas County to learn about which invasive insects are making Ohio home. We’ll discuss the identifiable characteristics, their hosts, what damage they cause, how they arrived, and what you can do to help through monitoring, reporting and management. A collaboration with the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio.

5 **Timbertots: Maple Sugar Time!** (Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Saturday, March 7, 10 AM- Noon
Swine Creek Reservation
Explore outdoors and enjoy hands-on activities to discover where and how we get real maple syrup! Entirely outdoors, so dress for the weather. Also March 9. Registration required.

6 **Veterans Hire: Maple Sugaring**
Saturday, March 7, 1-2 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
Veterans, join us for an inside look at a sugarbush and a trail walk to discover the history of maple sugaring. Samples included!

7 **Maple Driving Tour**
Sunday, March 8, 10 AM-5 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
A featured stop on the statewide Maple Madness Tour and the local Northeast Ohio Maple Tour. Stop in any time during listed hours; sap collecting from 1-4 PM. Also March 15. Visit www.ohiomaple.org for more information about the statewide tour and www.mpneoh.com for a complete list of sugar houses open for the local tour.

8 **Sap’s-a-Risin’!**
Sunday, March 8, Noon-4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
See description for March 1. Warm up with live music by Mr. Haney String Band and maple treats in the lodge. Also March 15.

9 **Timbertots: Maple Sugar Time!** (Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Monday, March 9, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM, Swine Creek Reservation
See description for March 7. Registration required.

10 **Full Moon Program: The Worm Moon**
Monday, March 9, 7:30-8:30 PM
Observatory Park
The full moon in March is known as “The Worm Moon.” Come learn earthworm anatomy and behavior, then watch the full moon rise using park telescopes!

11 **Black Holes**
Friday, March 13, 7-8 PM
Observatory Park
Discover the latest black-hole research and the fascinating mysteries that hold the key to understanding the rest of the universe! Followed by night-sky viewing using the park telescopes until 11 PM, if weather conditions permit. Also March 27.

12 **Become a Better Bluebird Landlord**
Saturday, March 14, 10-11 AM
The West Woods
Naturalist Tami Gingrich, gives an overview of the natural history of the Eastern Bluebirds and answer questions on how to become a better bluebird landlord. Beginner or experienced, there is always something new to be learned!

13 **Geauga Skywatchers: Geocentrism**
Monday, March 2, 6:30-7:30 PM
Geauga County Public Library, Chardon Branch
Learn the deep historical foundations of astronomy leading up to heliocentrism. Marvel at the accuracy of ancient astronomers. Also learn about the library’s new telescope lending program and some basics on how to use a telescope to view the moons of Jupiter and rings of Saturn! Registration required at https://geaugalibrary.libcal.com. Prospective members may login to Meetup.com to find the dates and times of future lectures and activities.

14 **Make a Bluebird House**
Saturday, March 14, 12-3 PM
The Rookery, Lodge
Fee: $10 Geauga residents, $12 non-Geauga residents
Build and take home a house that any bluebird would be proud to call home! Get pointers on where and when to place your birdhouse to attract bluebirds. Fee covers supplies; participants should register “by the birdhouse” rather than “by the person.” Registration required.

15 **Nassau Night Sky Viewing**
Saturday, March 14, 7-11 PM
Nassau Astronomical Station
Observe the wonders of the night sky using this facility’s giant research-grade telescope! If weather prevents sky viewing, join us for a planetarium presentation in the McCullough Science Center instead. Also March 28.

16 **Maple Driving Tour**
Sunday, March 15, 10 AM-5 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Sugar House

17 **Sap’s-a-Risin’!**
Sunday, March 15, Noon - 4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
See description for March 1. Warm up with live music by The Woodpeckers and maple treats in the lodge. Also March 8.

18 **Geauga Walkers**
Tuesday, March 17, 1-2:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Sunnybrook Preserve
See description for March 3. Also March 31.

19 **Blackbrook Audubon: Trail Cam Treasures**
Tuesday, March 17, 7-9 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Discover how using trail cameras can open up a whole new window to wildlife. Naturalist Tami Gingrich will cover the basics about trail cameras. Then view some of the cool captures she has obtained throughout her survey work in Geauga Park District over the years. In conjunction with Blackbrook Audubon Society.
19 Elderberries: The Buzz About Native Pollinators
Thursday, March 19, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Deep Woods Lodge
Learn about our remarkable native pollinators and their importance in our lives. Light lunch served. A collaboration with Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. Registration required.

20 Campfire Cooking: Pie Irons
Friday, March 20, 6-7:30 PM
Holbrook Hollows, Lodge
Learn a new skill and get inspired for your next camping adventure! Together we’ll create tiny personal pizzas over a campfire using pie irons. Registration required.

21 Salamander Saunter
Saturday, March 21, 9-10:30 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Begin inside with a short program about the amazing amphibian migration into woodland vernal pools, then accompany Naturalist Tami Gingrich outside as she visits the Meyer Center’s pools to check for giant mole salamanders and other aquatic critters.

22 Hidden Gems Hike: Explore Observatory Park
Sunday, March 22, 1-3 PM
Observatory Park
Join a naturalist exploring Observatory Park trails, discovering Nature in the early springtime landscape of forest and meadow. Hike will be up to 2.5 miles. Dress for the weather. Registration required.

24 Grandparents in the Park: Spring Break
Tuesday, March 24, 1:30-3 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Grandparents and their grandchildren are invited out for a day of fun indoor and outdoor Nature activities for all ages. Please bring a snack to share! Partially outdoors, so dress for the weather. Registration required.

24 Maple Leaf Wind Chime Workshop
Tuesday, March 24, 6:30-8:30 PM
The West Woods
Fee: $30 Geauga residents, $34 non-Geauga residents
Celebrate sugaring season by joining Brigitte Fiorille from the Fairmount Center for the Arts to create a maple leaf wind chime utilizing ceramic leaves, beads and acrylic painting techniques. Ages 12+. Refreshments served. Dress for mess and bring an old shirt/smock. Registration required.

26 Maple Town Tune Traders
Thursday, March 26, 7-10 PM
The West Woods
Come to play, sing or simply enjoy as audience. Musicians of all levels, genres and instruments are welcome. Short performances followed by sharing of songs and tunes in the round. Snacks to share welcome.

27 Black Holes
Friday, March 27, 7-8 PM
Observatory Park
See description for March 14.

28 Ice-off Waterfowl Van Trip: Mosquito Lake
Saturday, March 28, 7:30 AM-12:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge
March and April are good times to see spring migratory waterfowl. Join us for a trip to some of Trumbull County’s birding hotspots, Mosquito Lake and surrounding areas. We’ll provide transportation and a naturalist to assist with bird identification; bring your own binoculars or scope, camera, water and snack. Registration required.

28 Backcountry Heron Hike
Saturday, March 28, 1-3 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve
Venture off trail to the site of a heron nesting colony with possible views of returning Great Blue Herons and a Bald Eagle nest. Approximately two-mile round trip hike with wet, muddy conditions. Registration required.

28 Nassau Night Sky Viewing
Saturday, March 28, 7-11 PM
Nassau Astronomical Station
See description for March 14.

29 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show
Sunday, March 29, 2-3 PM
Observatory Park
Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. Building open house 1-4 PM. Also view the sun using our safe solar-viewing equipment, weather permitting.

29 Claridon Woodlands Nature Hike
Sunday, March 29, 2-3:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands
Enjoy an early spring hike on the Tree Tapper and Drake trails of one of Geauga Park District’s gems.

29 Geauga Walkers
Tuesday, March 31, 1-2:30 PM
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve, Sunset Shelter
See description for March 3. Also March 17.
Are you setting a New Year’s resolution to explore Nature more? To discover new places, or get more exercise? Or maybe all three?

Geauga Park District has a brand new program for you! Participants will get the chance to complete 30 hikes on any combination of the 70+ miles of trails in these 25 open parks by the end of the year. Of 30 hikes, 24 are treks you’ll plan and take on your own, then you’ll also need to complete six qualifying naturalist-led hikes, which will be identifiable by this logo next to program listings on pages 8-13.

Upon registration — either online or in person at The West Woods Nature Center or Big Creek Park’s Meyer Center — you’ll receive a Geauga Gems Trekking Card to track your progress. Keep the card with you to mark the self-guided treks you take, and bring your card to the naturalist-led hikes to be marked. We encourage you to spread your hikes throughout the year to discover new trails and parks in different seasons!

Finally, at year’s end, those who complete the series will receive a collapsible trekking pole and inaugural Geauga Gems 2020 hiking medallion sticker to be provided at an event in January 2021.

Interested? Join us this January 11 for our kickoff event (details on page 8), where you can register for the series and check off the first of your six naturalist-led hikes! Simply visit our Hiking webpage, under Activities on our website, for series updates.

Why not make the Geauga Gems Trekking Series your 2020 resolution? We’ll see you on the trail!
On November 5, the voters of Geauga County expressed their overwhelming support for Geauga Park District. Issue 23 was passed by 66% of voters in the county. Since our inception in 1961, this is our highest level of voter support ever. On behalf of myself, staff, the Board of Park Commissioners and Judge Grendell, we would like to thank you, our voters and residents of Geauga County, for supporting Geauga Park District at the polls.

We attribute our success in recent years to our goal to make your park lands and the natural wonders of this great county more accessible to you, our residents. Our leadership has ensured a commitment to our mission to preserve, conserve and protect high quality natural areas. With your help, we have protected some of the most important plant and animal species in our area. We have successfully dovetailed these conservation initiatives with providing new and innovative parks, trails, lodges and recreational amenities. Our naturalist programs and special events are reaching every age and every ability with exciting new offerings.

We couldn’t be more proud to serve you. As a 25-year employee now celebrating 25 parks that are accessible to our residents, I couldn’t be more proud to call myself a resident of Geauga County. We appreciate everything you do to make Geauga Park District successful. Your vote tells us we are doing a good job. We look forward to serving you in the future.

Get out and enjoy your parks, they are here for you. Thank you for your vote of confidence!

John Oros
Executive Director
Get on these lists for some cool winter programs at The West Woods! Register your name online or by calling 440-279-0880.

### Icicle Hike Call List
**January-February 1-4 PM**
When conditions are right, join a naturalist to find the best locations on and off trail to view beautiful ice formations. Dress for the weather with waterproof boots that have good traction.

### Bird Banding Hotline
**January-March 8 AM - Noon**
Get a call when we decide to throw up a mist net to do some banding at the feeders — a great opportunity to get an up-close view of birds as they get banded! Bring a camera. Entirely indoors.

### Amphibian Awakening Call List
**March-April 8 AM - Noon**
Witness the natural phenomenon of spring breeding behavior of Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers and possibly salamanders. Call will come the day of the program. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight.

### Park Locations and Amenities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Trail Mileage</th>
<th>Access Points</th>
<th>Horseback Riding</th>
<th>Picnicking</th>
<th>Restrooms</th>
<th>Pet Policy</th>
<th>Water Access</th>
<th>Restrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bass Lake Preserve</td>
<td>11445 Lakeview Road, Munson, 44024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beartown Lakes Reservation</td>
<td>18870 Quinn Road, Auburn/Bainbridge, 44023</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.8</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<td>Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park</td>
<td>7940 Cedar Road, Chester, 44026</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Creek Park</td>
<td>9160 Robinson Road, Chardon, 44024</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.5</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Creek Park - Horse Trail</td>
<td>12000 Woodin Road, Chardon, 44024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Creek Park - Tupelo Pond</td>
<td>9373 Ravenna Road, Chardon, 44024</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.9</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve</td>
<td>15681 Old Rider Road, Burton/Newbury, 44021</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.7</td>
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<td>Chickagami Park</td>
<td>17957 Tavern Road, Parkman, 44021</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.6</td>
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<td>Claridon Woodlands</td>
<td>11383 Claridon Troy Road, Claridon, 44033</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.2</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<td>Eldon Russell Park</td>
<td>16315 Rapids Road, Troy, 44021</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.3</td>
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<td>Frohring Meadows</td>
<td>16780 Savage Road, Bainbridge, 44023</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headwaters Park</td>
<td>13365 Old State Road, Claridon/Huntsburg, 44021</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holbrook Hollows</td>
<td>7250 Country Lane, Bainbridge, 44023</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.8</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Maple Highlands Trail (TMHT)</td>
<td>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 21.1</td>
<td>City of Chardon: 1.2 and City of Middlefield: 0.5 Access to trail also from Claridon Woodlands, Headwaters Park &amp; Swine Creek Reservation; horses permitted on south section only</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mountain Run Station - Access to TMHT</td>
<td>12601 Chardon Windsor Road, Hambden, 44024</td>
<td>MILEAGE OF LINK ACCESSING TMHT: 0.4</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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ICONS LISTED AT RIGHT IN THE ORDER THEY APPEAR

- Handicap Accessible
- Pet Friendly
- Pets on Leash Required
- Pets on Leash Permitted
- Picnic Areas
- Restrooms
- Horseback Riding
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Boating
Check out this new cache at
The West Woods
Expires January 1, 2021
Details on our website under Activities

There are a few options for this cache, as you can start from various parking areas within The West Woods. Take the Affelder Link Trail or Pioneer Bridle Trail toward the interior of the park. There is a bridge crossing before the cache on both trails, unless approaching from the south on the bridle trail. Once you get to the Affelder and bridle trail connection, head northwest down a slope. You’ll need to be closer to Silver Creek than the trails to find this cache, so if there’s enough snow, consider borrowing a pair of snowshoes to help you reach it!

ACCESSIBLE TRAILS • PAVED TRAILS • OPEN SHELTERS • ENCLOSED LODGES • RESTROOMS • PLAYGROUNDS • HIKING
X-COUNTRY SKIING • HORSES • BICYCLES • CAMPING • FISHING • BOATING • SLED HILL

Big Creek Spur - Access to TMHT
9280 Ravenna Road, Chardon, 44024
MILEAGE OF LINK ACCESSING TMHT: 0.6

Observatory Park
10610 Clay Street, Montville, 44064
Nassau Astronomical Station
10350 Clay Street, Montville, 44064
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.62
Facility reservations are available - call or visit website for details

Orchard Hills Park
11340 Caves Road, Chester, 44026
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.6

Russell Uplands Preserve
15200 Russell Road, Russell, 44022
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.0

Sunnybrook Preserve
12474 Heath Road, Chester, 44026
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.7

Swine Creek Reservation
16004 Hayes Road, Middlefield, 44062
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 5.8

The Rookery
10110 Cedar Road, Munson, 44026
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.4

Veterans Legacy Woods
14085 Ravenna Road, Newbury/Burton, 44065
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 4.5

The West Woods
9465 Kinsman Road, Russell, 44072
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 6.7

The West Woods - Affelder House
15139 Chillicothe Road, Russell, 44072
Facility reservations are available - call or visit website for details

Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve
11620 Ravenna Road, Munson, 44024
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.6

Whitlam Woods
12500 Pearl Road, Hambden, 44024
TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.1

Woodin Road Park
12205 Woodin Road, Chardon, 44024
NO TRAILS AVAILABLE

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

GREAT HORNED OWL

The largest resident owl in Ohio, the Great Horned Owl is a bird of prey known to nest in Geauga County. Its mixture of gray, brown and black feathers feature a reddish brown face and a neat white patch on its throat.

Large eyes make for excellent night vision, but did you know that owl eyes do not move in their sockets? Rather, this bird has the ability to turn its head 180 degrees in both directions — wow!

Two prominent tufts on top of the Great Horned Owl’s head are just feathers and have nothing to do with its ears, which are on the sides of its head in line with its eyes. These tufts are instead for display and communication. They are also thought to be a trait of camouflage.

Great Horned Owls find homes in semi-open habitats and adapt to a variety of places such as wetlands, woods, grasslands and many of our backyards. They may use abandoned nests from other large birds, or tree dens and cavities. Three to four eggs hatch after about 30 days between late February and early April and yield baby owls known as owlets.

Considered to exist at the top of the food chain, with fear of no other animals, only humans, this proficient hunter can take down and eat birds and mammals larger than itself: rodents, skunks, beavers, birds, geese, turkeys, pheasants, grouse, muskrats, snakes, rabbits and squirrels. Great Horned Owl talons are very strong and use a deadly grip to sever the spines of large prey.

Fully grown, the Great Horned Owl averages about 22 inches in height with a wingspan of about 48 inches, weighs about 3.5 pounds, and lives between 20 and 30 years in the wild.

Watch for these amazing birds at dusk this winter while the trees are bare, resting at the edges of open areas or flying across roads, and listen for their series of four to five deep hoots!
Can a Small Furry Rodent Really Predict the Weather?

**Groundhog’s Day**, February 2, is exactly halfway between winter and spring. Folklore says that if the sun is shining when the groundhog comes out of its burrow and sees its shadow, it will go back in and we will have winter weather for six more weeks. However, if it is cloudy and no shadow is seen, spring will come early that year.

No, groundhogs can’t really predict weather. The day is mostly for fun and has stuck around because of its history. Besides, we all know that after February 2, especially in Geauga County, six more weeks of winter is almost a sure thing!

Unscramble the missing words to complete the poem.

**Is It True?**

*by Margaret Hillert*

The groundhog plays a little game.  
— _ _ _ _ _ _ — (CKWOCHDOU) is his other name.

If he finds no shadow here,  
— _ _ _ _ _ _ — (RGSNPI) is very, very near.

But if he sees his shadow small,  
— _ _ _ _ _ _ — (NRWEIT) isn’t done at all,

And back into his hole he’ll creep  
For six _ _ _ _ _ _ (RMEO) weeks of winter _ _ _ _ _ ! (EPSEL)

---

**So What’s a Woodchuck?**

The groundhog, *Marmota monax*, also known as a woodchuck, is a rodent of the family Sciuridae, belonging to the group of large ground squirrels known as marmots.

From October through breeding season in March, groundhogs hibernate in burrows underground. During this time, their heart rates can drop significantly, from 75 to only four beats per minute!

---

**WINTERTIME RIDDLE**

To answer this question, find the corresponding letters hidden in the poem above.

I was known to Greek philosophers 1,000 years ago, my numbers are all in a line, and I’ll tell you if rain will turn to snow. What am I?

---

Spot eight differences between the two drawings, then color your favorite version!
Celebrate Winter at The West Woods!

FROZEN FEST.

SUNDAY, JAN. 19
11 AM - 4 PM

FREE Activities & Fun for the Whole Family!