

PARK EXPLORER

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT ACTIVITY GUIDE

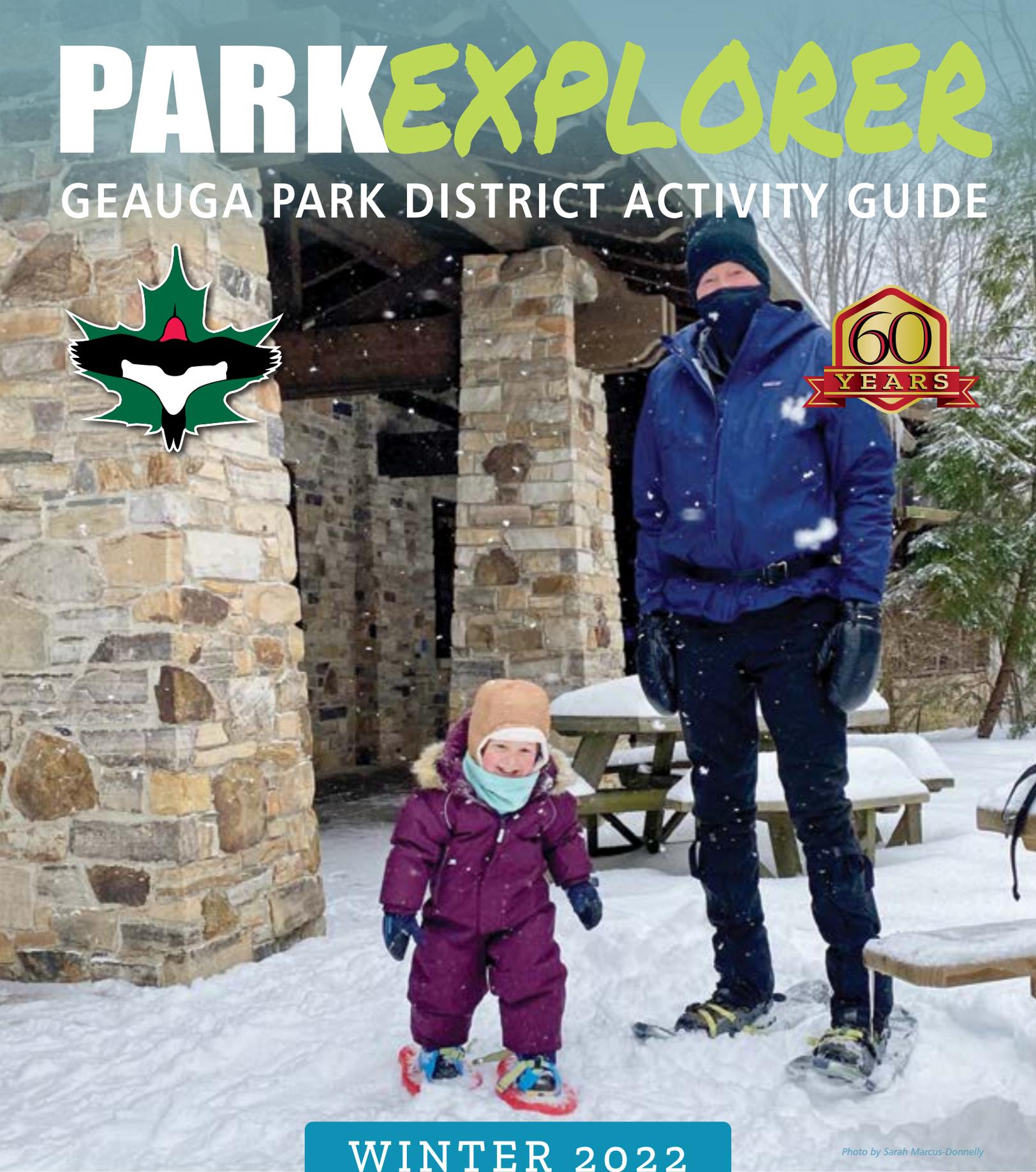


Photo by Sarah Marcus-Donnelly

WINTER 2022

4 What's so special about Geauga forests in the wintertime?

7 Visit a community art exhibition of upcycled sap buckets

14 Bust free of cabin fever by reserving a lodge

18 Appreciating our county's generous sugar maple trees

UPCOMING EVENTS *Mark your calendars!*



All public programs and special events are subject to change or be cancelled. Geauga Park District will continue to follow current state guidelines for COVID-19 safety. Please check our website for updates before heading out.



**On display January 28 through April 28
at The West Woods Nature Center**

See old sap buckets, once used in Geauga Park District's sugarbush, that have been transformed into works of art!



Great Backyard Bird Count

**Friday, Saturday & Sunday, February 18, 19 & 20
11 AM - 4 PM at The West Woods Nature Center**

Join us at the big windows to help identify and count birds, and become an official Citizen Scientist during this worldwide bird count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Drop in anytime during designated hours.



Welcome the signs of spring with maple sugaring fun!

**Sundays, March 6, 13 & 20 • Noon - 4 PM
at Swine Creek Reservation in Middlefield Twp.**

Get a sweet taste of how maple sugaring methods have evolved throughout history, help gather sap in the sugarbush, see sap boil in the sugar house, and visit the all-new Swine Creek Lodge!

National Take a Walk in the Park Day

March 30, 2022

Thousands across the country will take a walk in their local parks on this day, which was founded to help people reconnect with the wilder spaces in our civilized world. Will you be one of them?

To celebrate this special day, Geauga Park District has scheduled five naturalist-led hikes at different times, featuring different parks with varied levels of difficulty. (They also count for the 2022 Geauga Gems Trekking Series!) Registration is required. See page 13 for details.

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 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 2nd & 4th Fridays & Saturdays of each month 6 - 11 PM and every other Sunday of each month 1 - 4 PM

The Maple Highlands Trail is open daily dawn till dusk

Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve is open daily 6 AM - 9 PM

For more information on your parks, programs or events
 Phone: 440-286-9516,
 Fax: 440-286-1285

www.geaugaparkdistrict.org
info@geaugaparkdistrict.com

From the Desk of THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Executive Director
 John Oros

Dear Geauga County Friends & Neighbors,

As I write this greeting, the late-hanging fall leaves are finally making way for winter. It’s early November, and we are preparing for the new season at Geauga Park District. This time each year, I also reflect on November 11, Veterans Day, which holds a special place in my heart. As a veteran myself, I am honored and humbled to be recognized alongside those military brothers and sisters I served with, and all those who serve past, present and future.

Veteran’s Day 2021 has me reflecting on Geauga Park District’s newest park, Veterans Legacy Woods. Located just north of Newbury and south of Chardon off state Route 44 near the center of our county, this 200-acre property, formerly Wicked Woods Golf Course, is our first park to honor armed services veterans. Our goal was to create a special place of honor, distinction and opportunities to find tranquility in Nature. We also want Veterans Legacy Woods to be a place where veterans of all ages can come to reflect on their service, make happy memories on a leisurely stroll with family, or simply enjoy a sunny day sitting on a park bench. We can all benefit from the solitude that Nature provides.

The new and improved Veterans Legacy Woods is slated to open this January. Watch for updates including a new open-air picnic shelter, restrooms with running water, a veterans walkway and tribute plaza, a freshly paved parking lot and entrance drive, and a Nature-based playground featuring some veteran and military-themed play structures. The existing lodge, previously the clubhouse banquet facility, has also been upgraded with a new deck. We hope to reopen that building for reservations in the first quarter of 2022.

Our new year will also bring the opening of a new lodge at Swine Creek Reservation and a new boat launch at Eldon Russell Park. Be sure to visit www.geaugaparkdistrict.org periodically for details on new parks, programs and more. There’s always something good to report!

Wishing you many visits to your Geauga Park District this winter,

John Oros

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS



Howard Bates Pat Preston Dennis Ibold Mario Innocenzi

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

The Joys of Winter in Geauga's Forests

By Charles Fletcher

Winter sweeps the last of the leaves off the deciduous trees, and the land begins to sleep to prepare for another growing season. But that doesn't mean the forest is dead. Look closely and you'll see every tree is covered in buds waiting to pop open in spring. Watch out for the long, sharp beech tree buds; you don't want to get poked in the eye!

In summer, the wall of green obstructs the view from the trail, and I wonder what's beyond. But in winter, bare trees reveal the mystery. The hills, streams and evergreen groves reveal themselves amid the stark beauty of the snow-covered wilderness.

I love to ski and occasionally take advantage of Geauga Park District's snowshoe borrowing program to access the trails when the snow is deep. Skiing requires a bit of skill and practice, but snowshoeing is a little easier and you can learn on the job. Don't hesitate to take advantage – it's free to residents!

Among my favorite trees are the hemlocks of Big Creek and Whitlam Woods. Cruising through the groves, I spy the occasional Barred Owl. I imagine myself sheltering from a storm under their tent-like branches. In the short story "To Build a Fire," a man falls through the ice. Soaked and freezing, he uses all his matches to start a fire under an evergreen, only to trigger an avalanche of snow from the branches to bury it, sentencing him to death!



Whitlam Woods photo by Jim Marquardt

But this isn't a Jack London story – for me, safety is at the end of a well-tended trail to the parking lot. Unfortunately the hemlocks aren't so lucky: the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid from Asia has killed millions of them in North Carolina and West Virginia. These insects are carried by migrating birds in jumps of hundreds of miles. They showed up in nearby Holden Arboretum, but early detection and quick treatment have corralled them, and the Park District is monitoring and treating preventively.

From there, it's off to Swine Creek Reservation. Loping along the easy, wide Wagon Trail is fun. But I like dropping down into the more challenging Valley Trail. While filled with some of the most beautiful flowers in the spring, a white cloak hides the ruggedness of its rocky creek, so be careful crossing! Water will soak into the snow on your skis or shoes and freeze. I always carry a metal and plastic scraper to clean the ice off when that happens. You don't need to lug around an extra pound or two on each foot!

However, the real winter beauty here is found in the towering sycamores. They constantly shed bark, leaving their trunks mottled in various hues of gray, brown and green. These trees love sheltered creek valleys and floodplains. They root deeply and hold the soil in place. Now we know why the flowers grow back every spring!



Swine Creek Reservation photo by Tom Elesh Jr.

Too many people think the forest is a sterile place in winter, but it's not! Dress in layers, fill a thermos with hot chocolate, and whatever you do, don't miss the opportunity to experience it! 🌿

About the Author

After more than 30 years working in factories, Chuck was laid off and shifted gears to pursue invasive plant management. Trained as a volunteer for the Nature Conservancy, he landed a summer job with that organization for a few years, then moved on to several summers with Cleveland Metroparks. Chuck is a Burton Township resident and currently works for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.



Spend Some Time at Swine Creek Reservation

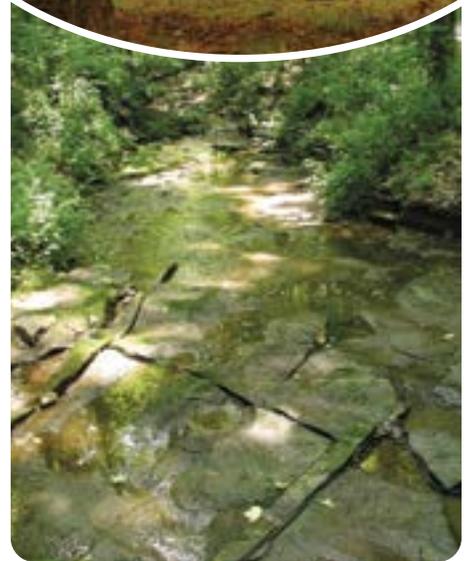


Swine Creek Reservation is a 412-acre park situated in the countryside among Amish farms that offers access to the south section of The Maple Highlands Trail as well as a playground, activity field backstop, sand volleyball, horseshoe pits, tetherball, fishing holes and more. Eleven trails total 6.1 miles, varying from easy, level and paved to difficult, steep and primitive.

This time of year, park staff are proud to manage 32 acres as an operating sugarbush where you can learn about the maple sugaring process throughout history, collect sap yourself, observe the boiling and sample what's being produced as it happens. See page 13 for details.

But don't be fooled — while maple trees tend to be the star, forests of many types of trees are abundant here, covering much of the expansive property. Along Swine Creek, walnut, sycamore and cottonwood trees shade lush growths of wildflowers in the spring. Teeming with aquatic life, the creek invites streamside exploration by all ages. Visitors often see migrating and nesting songbirds in the valley, as well as Great Blue Herons and Kingfishers by the water. Small streams also divide the woods into upland and lowland, providing habitat for a rich variety of wild plants and animals that can be enjoyed year-round.

Last but not least, Swine Creek Reservation's new lodge will be open for reservation later this winter for the making of all kinds of new memories. Situated in the same location as the previous lodge, this 1,400-square-foot facility boasts a classic stone fireplace, a covered patio, and exterior picnic tables to enjoy the scenic pondside views. Stop by on your next hike to check it out!



FIELD NOTES:

GET A GREAT FEEL FOR THIS OLD FOREST AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY ON THE SILTSTONE TRAIL (MEDIUM DIFFICULTY) AND VALLEY TRAIL (PRIMITIVE WITH STEEP GRADES). STREAM CROSSINGS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR TRUE CONNECTION WITH NATURE, BUT WATCH OUT FOR ICE!



Maple SugART

Encounter an exhibition where galvanized steel buckets, all historical sap vessels, are converted into artwork!

Geauga Park District has updated Swine Creek Reservation’s sugaring operation to use tubing for most of its sap collection in the sugarbush, diverting the sap into reservoirs until it can be processed into pure Geauga Gold.

So, what to do with all those extra buckets? Our magnificent special events coordinator, Teresa Runion, had just the answer — give them to local and regional artists to produce artwork for a seasonal display!

So, starting January 28, Geauga Park District and Geauga Arts Council will present Maple SugART at The West Woods Nature Center. This will be a special show of “upcycled” galvanized steel buckets that once endured some of our coldest nights to collect sweet stuff for our stirs and pancakes.

Maple SugART promises a unique opportunity to honor this cherished tradition in Geauga County while recognizing the magic that can happen with recycling and creativity combined. Guidelines specified that buckets could be painted or embellished in their current form, or deconstructed for materials. Before seeing what the artists actually produce, what we can guarantee is that no two will be alike!

And for anyone who loves the tradition of venturing into the sugarbush with a naturalist and a horse-drawn sap sled during Sap’s-a-Risin’! — don’t worry, we’ll still have some buckets hanging in the sugarbush for you.



Artwork will be on display
January 28 through April 28
daily 10 AM to 4 PM
at The West Woods Nature Center

Adventure/Discovery Arts Astronomy Kids Seniors

2 Burton Christmas Bird Count Hike

Sunday, January 2, 8-10 AM
Welton's Gorge

Hike this park's trails to discover winter bird diversity. Results will be shared for the annual Burton Christmas Bird Count. Thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave winter conditions to take part from late December to early January. Data is used to assess the health of bird populations, and to help guide conservation action. **Registration required.**

4 Sunrise Hike

Tuesday, January 4, 8-9 AM
Eldon Russell Park

Start your day with a crisp walk in the park. Join Naturalist Renell for a hike to look for winter animal signs at sunrise. **Registration required.**

8 Minute to Win It Nature Games

Saturday, January 8, 2-3:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Grab your family to play some fun, quick, Minute to Win It-style games like "Woolly Aphid Wiggle" and "Move Your Midden," learning fun Nature facts while competing against other groups! **Registration required.**

9 Coffee with the Birds

Sunday, January 9, 9-10 AM,
10:30-11:30 AM & 1-2 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Register for a time slot to join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird viewing and identification of winter birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required**; please choose just one session.  

9 Learn to Cross Country Ski

Sunday, January 9, 1-3 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Learn the basics of cross-country skiing, including proper clothing, equipment and proper technique. Indoor presentation will be followed by outdoor instruction. Ski rental available in advance from Geiger's*. Special rental rate for this program: \$17 for pick-up Friday and return on Monday during business hours. **Registration required.**

10 Geauga Skywatchers: Saturn

Monday, January 10, 6:30-7:30 PM
Gauga County Public Library,
Middlefield Branch

Join veteran astronomer Marty Mullet of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society to learn all about observing Saturn! Designed for grades 6-12 but anyone can join. **Registration required** at www.geaugalibrary.net. Presented in cooperation with the Geauga County Public Library. 

11 Nature's Chisels

Tuesday, January 11, 7-8 PM, Claridon Woodlands, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge

Join Naturalist Renell to learn about the woodpeckers of Geauga County. **Registration required.** 



14 Homeschool Days: Counting on Birds!

(Ages 5-7 & 8-12)
Friday, January 14, 1:30-3 PM,
The West Woods, Nature Center

Homeschoolers, learn about birds and take part in scientific research as we count the birds at the feeders for Project Feederwatch. Data will be turned in to the national database. Adults may attend or drop off child with a waiver. Some outdoors activities; dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending including adults and siblings.

14 Moonlight Ski or Hike

Friday, January 14, 6:30-8:30 PM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse

Ski The Maple Highlands Trail and possibly the Buckeye Trail by the light of the moon. Becomes a hike if no snow. Call after 2 PM on program day to check conditions. Ski rental available in advance from Geiger's*. A special rental rate for this program applies: \$17 for pick up on Friday and return on Monday during business hours. **Registration required.**

15 High School Scout Snowshoe Day

Saturday, January 15, 9-10:30 AM &
11 AM-12:30 PM, The West Woods

Calling all scouts in grades 9-12...join us for a snowshoe adventure just for you! Discover a new way to enjoy the winter season. We'll cover basic use of snowshoes, which may meet some requirements for Girl Scouts' Snow Adventure or Boy Scouts' Snow Sports badges. Scouts can register individually for the program. **Registration required** by phone only. Max 4 scouts per registration.

15 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock

Saturday, January 15, 10 AM-Noon
The West Woods

Hike with a naturalist two miles round trip to Ansel's Cave to discover its history written in rock – a rare winter opportunity to go into this restricted area! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear that may get wet crossing stream. **Registration required.**

16 Winter Warm-up Hike

Sunday, January 16, 1-2 PM & 3-4 PM
Sunnybrook Preserve, Lodge

Grab your coat and boots and head outdoors to explore on a winter day. Terrain partially hilly. Approximately 1 mile. **Registration required.**

17 X-TREME Winter Fun Day!

(Grades 5-10)
Monday, January 17, 1-4 PM
Orchard Hills Park, Lodge

Spend the afternoon having an "X-TREME" amount of winter fun outside with friends! Try snowshoes, bring your sled for some fun downhill rides, learn about winter wildlife, and warm up by a fire with hot cocoa and s'mores. Outdoors, so dress for the weather. This is a drop-off program; all participants must have a signed waiver. **Registration required.**

17 Full Moon Hike: The Bear Moon

Monday, January 17, 6-7:30 PM
Observatory Park

Join us for a night hike to experience Nature at night. Along the way, we'll also learn a bit about the amazing winter transformations of Black Bears. Then, weather permitting, we'll observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. **Registration required.** 

RECURRING PROGRAMS

6 8 Geauga Gems Awards & 2022 Kickoff

Thursday, January 6, 5-8 PM
Saturday, January 8, 9 AM-Noon
The West Woods, Nature Center

Drop by to register for the 2022 Trekking Series! Participants who completed the 2021 series can collect their hiking stick and hiking medallion sticker at this time. This is a drop-in, open-house; visit any time over the two sessions. 

11 25 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, January 11, 1-2:30 PM
Beartown Lakes Reservation,
North Point Shelter

Tuesday, January 25, 1-2:30 PM
The Rookery

Hikes for active seniors 1 to 1½ miles long. Naturalist led. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2126. **Registration required.**

14 28 Asteroid Explorers

Friday, January 14, 7-8 PM, 
Observatory Park

Friday, January 28, 7-8 PM, 
Virtual Program

An armada of asteroid-exploring space probes are set to launch in 2022. From Dart to Lucy to Psyche, we'll explore 'em all. Weather permitting, we'll finish with night-sky viewing using park telescopes until 11 PM. January 28 is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required** for both sessions.

* Geiger's - 50 Shopping Plaza, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022, 440-247-4900.

20 Elderberries: All About Woodpeckers

Thursday, January 20, 1-2:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Seniors, learn about the variety of woodpeckers that call Geauga Park District home, including our park mascot, Tapper! Refreshments served. A collaboration with Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.**

21 Citizen Science: Introduction to iNaturalist

Friday, January 21, 7-8:30 PM

Calling all citizen scientists or anybody interested in making nature sightings available to actual scientists...here's your chance to get acquainted with the naturalist community platform iNaturalist. Learn how to make an account, add sightings and what it can do for you and the scientific community. Online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**

22 Learn to Snowshoe

Saturday, January 22, 9-11 AM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center

Learn the basics of snowshoeing including proper clothing, equipment and proper technique. Indoor presentation followed by outdoor instruction and a snowshoe hike. Borrow a pair of ours or bring your own! Ages 8+. **Registration required.**

14 15 28 29 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, January 14, 8-11 PM
Saturday, January 15, 7-11 PM
Friday, January 28, 8-11 PM
Saturday, January 29, 7-11 PM
Observatory Park

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

16 17 Nature Journaling: An Introduction

Sunday, January 16, 1-3:30 PM
Monday, January 17, 9:30 AM-Noon
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$20 Geauga residents, \$24 out-of-county residents
Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques and record your Nature observations. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. A one-time registration fee includes a journal, pen and pencil. **Registration required** by phone only.

27 29 Timbertots: Sensing Nature (Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Thursday, January 27, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM, Claridon Woodlands, Judge Lester Taylor Lodge
Saturday, January 29, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM, The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Experience how our senses can help us learn and have fun as we see, smell and touch things found in Nature! **Registration required** for all attending including adults and siblings.

22 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, January 22, 7-11 PM
Observatory Park, Nassau
Astronomical Station

Stop in to discover this awesome facility and join members of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society to take in the wonders of the night sky using our restored telescope! Limited number of people permitted inside building at a time; may result in a wait to enter. Cancelled if cloudy.

23 Whatever-the-Weather Venture

Sunday, January 23, 9:30-11:30 AM
Observatory Park

It may be optimistic, but we're hoping for snow. If conditions are just right for snowshoeing, that 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.**

23 Travelogue: Pennsylvania Elk Adventure!

Sunday, January 23, 2-3 PM

Join naturalists Denise Wolfe and John Kolar as they share stories from their trips to Benzetette, Pennsylvania, in search of wild elk herds! This presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**



23 Comeback Critters: Home Again in Ohio

Sunday, January 23, 3:30-4:30 PM
Virtual Program

Learn how otters, bears, eagles, osprey, Sandhill Cranes and other wildlife have reclaimed Ohio homelands including Geauga County. What may reappear in coming years? This presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**

26 All About Maple Syrup

Wednesday, January 26, 6-7:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Did you know there are different classes of maple syrup that reflect color and taste? If not, this program is perfect for you! Learn the history of maple syrup, how maple syrup is made at Geauga Park District, and why the different color classes exist. **Registration required.**

27 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, January 27, 7-9:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Singers and musicians, present short performances followed by a jam session. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing, or simply enjoy as audience. **Registration required.**

28 Meet the Artists: Maple SugART Sap Bucket Invitational

Friday, January 28, 7-9 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Join dozens of artists in celebrating pieces created for this community exhibition featuring creative works of art transformed from recycled vintage sap buckets. Refreshments served. Exhibit on display January 28 through April 28.

29 Turn of the Century Trappers

Saturday, January 29, 1-2 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Fur trapping might be different than you imaged in the early 1900s. During this indoor presentation, meet a costumed naturalist to discover the hardships trappers faced to earn a living and how the Ohio landscape has changed 1803 to the present. **Registration required.**

30 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Sunday, January 30, 2-2:45 PM & 3-3:45 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. Sessions are 45 minutes each; please register for only one. **Registration required.**

30 Garden Tools & Tips

Sunday, January 30, 2-4 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Have a garden tool that needs cleaned, oiled, sharpened or spruced up? Bring it in for a little winter maintenance! While we work, we'll share some tips on incorporating native plants into your spring gardening plans. **Registration required.**

30 Travelogue: Thailand, The Elephant Kingdom

Sunday, January 30, 2-3 PM

Photographer Tom Sampliner presents his trip to Thailand, long known as the elephant kingdom based upon its rich historical connection. A primary reason for his visit was to see Asian elephants in an ethical preserve, as well as famous Buddhist temples, rich flora, insect, bird and animal heritage. A collaboration with the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio. Online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**

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

2 Winter in the Woods Indoor Fun

(Ages 2-5 w/adult)
 Wednesday, February 2,
 10-10:45 AM & 1-1:45 PM
 The West Woods, Nature Center

Let's indoors and explore wildlife in winter through a puppet show and indoor scavenger hunt! **Registration required** for all attending including adults and siblings. 

5 Nature Break: Women's Retreat

Saturday, February 5, 8:30 AM-Noon
 The West Woods, Nature Center

Fee: \$4 Geauga residents, \$6 out-of-county residents
 Retreat to the park to re-energize and relax. Activities include snowshoeing or walking, light aerobics, and a Nature-themed craft and lesson. Also enjoy light refreshments. Dress in comfortable layers for both indoor and outdoor activities. **Registration required.**



6 Ansel's Cave Hike: History Written in Rock



Sunday, February 6, 10 AM-Noon
 The West Woods

Hike with a naturalist two miles to Ansel's Cave to discover its history written in rock – a rare winter opportunity to go into this restricted area! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy foot gear. **Registration required.**

6 Wildlife Tracking Hike

Sunday, February 6, 11 AM-12:30 PM & 1:30-3 PM, Sunnybrook Preserve

Hike through the winter woods in search of various clues that reveal animal presence and activity such as tracks, droppings and nests. Approximately 1.5 miles over hilly terrain. Be prepared for the weather conditions. **Registration required.**



6 Thompson Ledges Backcountry Hike



Sunday, February 6, 1-3 PM
 Thompson Ledges Township Park, 16755 Thompson Rd, Thompson 44086

Explore the magnificent Thompson Ledges on primitive trails through oak and hemlock forests with the possibility of icicles in the ledges. Hikers must be capable of traveling several miles through rocky, uneven terrain with some steep slopes. Dress for the weather with sturdy footwear. Walking sticks and traction enhancers like Yaktrax recommended. **Registration required.**

6 Hound Hike

Sunday, February 6, 2-3 PM, Beartown Lakes Reservation, North Point shelter
 Dogs (and their humans), let's take a short walk along Lake Trail to enjoy the sights and sounds of winter! Don't forget to bring dog supplies (water and poop clean-up). One dog per handler, must be able to fully control dog on leash at all times (8 ft. max). Aggressive behavior toward people or other dogs, or excessive barking, will result in participants being asked to leave. **Registration required.**

6 Travelogue: Think Outside, No Box Required Exploring Our National Parks

Sunday, February 6, 2-3 PM 
 Virtual Program

Sara Shininger and Bill Burton discuss their experiences and share photos from their travels to America's National Parks. This presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**

7 Geauga Skywatchers: "Godspeed, John Glenn"

Monday, February 7, 6:30-7:30 PM
 Geauga County Public Library, Bainbridge Branch

Did you know that this traditional "blast-off blessing" was never heard by John Glenn prior to his 1962 launch? Join us for a fun and fact-filled, in-depth review of one of this country's greatest heroes as we honor this incredible man and celebrate the 60th anniversary of America's first orbital space flight. These programs are designed for grades 6-12 but anyone can join. **Registration required** at www.geaugalibrary.net Presented in cooperation with the Geauga County Public Library. **Registration required.** 

12 Scout Day: Junior Girl Scouts - Geocacher Badge

Saturday, February 12, 9:30-11:30 AM
 The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Join us for a morning of high-tech hide & seek. Bring your own GPS unit or enabled device or use ours. **Registration required** by phone only. Max 4 scouts per registration. Please register only participating scouts.

12 Welton's Gorge Winter Trail Hike



Saturday, February 12, 10-11:30 AM & 12:30-2 PM, Welton's Gorge

Hike with a naturalist along the trails of Welton's Gorge to discover signs of the winter season. Must be able to hike at least 2 miles. Held rain, snow or shine, so dress for the weather. This trail hike will not go down into the gorge, rather enjoying views of the gorge from above while on trail. **Registration required.**

12 Scout Day: Webelos Walkabout

Saturday, February 12, 12:30-3 PM
 The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge

Join us to complete requirements 1, 2, 3 4 (partial) & 5, starting indoors for a brief opening program, then proceeding outside for a hike. Dress for the weather. **Registration required** by phone only. Max 4 scouts per registration. Please register only participating scouts.

13 Ohio's Owls & Owl Pellet Dissection!

Sunday, February 13,
 Noon-1:30 PM & 2:30-4 PM
 The West Woods, Nature Center

Discover fascinating facts about Ohio's owls, plus dissect an owl pellet to discover what's inside! **Registration required.** 

13 Nature Explorers: Signs of Spring - Wildlife On the Move!

(Ages 6-11 w/adult)
 Sunday, February 13, 1:30-3:30 PM
 Big Creek Park, Cherry Room

Search for signs of wildlife on the move as lengthening days inspire animals to go in search of their "Valentine" and begin courtship behavior on some of the coldest days of winter. Dress for winter weather with boots for wet, snowy and muddy conditions. Adult must register and attend with child. **Registration required.**

13 Geauga Gems Valentine's Hike



Sunday, February 13, 2-3:30 PM
 Eldon Russell Park

Enjoy a hike with a Valentine's Day twist! Dress for the weather and wear boots. **Registration required.**

16 Full Moon Hike: The Crow Moon

Wednesday, February 16, 7-8 PM
 Observatory Park

Even during winter, Nature is still active at night. Join us on a hike to see what's left its tracks! Then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. **Registration required.** 

17 Elderberries: Welton's Gorge

Thursday, February 17, 1-2:30 PM
 The West Woods, Nature Center

Seniors, discover the cultural and natural history, and geology of Welton's Gorge through pictures and stories. Refreshments served. A collaboration with Geauga Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center. **Registration required.** 

19 Nature Trek Fitness Hike

Saturday, February 19, 1-3 PM
 Holbrook Hollows



Let's move it, people! Burn off those calories on this fitness hike, learning Nature facts along the way. Must be able to hike at least three miles. Held rain, snow or shine; dress accordingly and bring water. **Registration required.**

19 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, February 19, 7-11 PM
Observatory Park,
Nassau Astronomical Station

Stop in to discover this awesome facility and join members of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society taking in the wonders of the night sky using our newly restored telescope! A limited number of people will be permitted inside the building at a time, which may result in a wait to enter. Canceled if cloudy.

20 Whatever-the-Weather Venture

Sunday, February 20, 1-3 PM
Frohring Meadows

It may be a bit optimistic, but we're hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are just right for snowshoeing, that 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.**

20 How to Be a Successful Birdhouse Landlord

Sunday, February 20, 2-3 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Bluebirds, tree swallows, wrens and chickadees are cavity-nesting birds we enjoy watching raise young in nest boxes. Join a naturalist for tips to successfully attract and monitor birdhouses to increase the abundance of these beautiful and beneficial native birds, plus enter a birdhouse raffle thanks to Nature's Way Bird Products. **Registration required.**

24 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, February 24, 7-9:30 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Singers and musicians, present short performances followed by a jam session. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing or simply enjoy as audience. **Registration required.**

25 Coffee with the Birds

Friday, February 25, 9-10 AM,
10:30-11:30 AM & 1-2 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Register for a time slot to join Naturalist Renell for some close-up bird viewing and identification of winter birds at the feeders while enjoying a hot beverage. **Registration required; please choose just one session.**



26 Buckeye Trail Highlight Hike



Saturday, February 26, 10-11:30 AM
& 1-2:30 PM, Big Creek Park

The Buckeye Trail winds nearly 1,444 miles around Ohio. Let's visit a Geauga Park District park that follows the Blue Blazes. Should have the ability to hike around four miles. Held rain or shine; dress accordingly and bring water. **Registration required.**

27 History Written in Stone: Hidden Cemeteries of Geauga

Sunday, February 27, 2-3 PM

Enjoy a virtual tour of some of Geauga County's lesser-known cemeteries, learning about history, art and Nature on these hallowed grounds. Presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**

RECURRING PROGRAMS

4 5 Astrotots: Constellation Celebration

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Friday, February 4, 9:30-10:30 AM,
11 AM-Noon & 1-2 PM

Saturday, February 5, 9:30-10:30 AM,
11 AM-Noon & 1-2 PM

Observatory Park, Robert McCullough
Science Center

Meet the magical creatures that hang overhead in the night sky! Look at Leo the Lion and see Cygnus the Swan through a simple make-and-take telescope. **Registration required for all attending including adults and siblings.**

8 22 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, February 8, 1-2:30 PM
Claridon Woodlands

Tuesday, February 22, 1-2:30 PM
Eldon Russell Park

Hikes for active seniors 1 to 1½ miles long. Naturalist led. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2126. **Registration required.**

11 25 Dark Matter Discoveries

Friday, February 11, 7-8 PM
Observatory Park

Friday, February 25, 7-8 PM
Virtual Program

Learn the latest about dark matter, the mysterious "stuff" that seems to bind the galaxy together. Finish with night-sky viewing using park telescopes until 11 PM. February 25 presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required for both sessions.**

27 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Sunday, February 27, 2-2:45 PM &
3-3:45 PM, Observatory Park, Robert
McCullough Science Center

Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. Sessions are 45 minutes each; please register for only one. **Registration required.**

11 12 25 26

Night Sky Viewing

Friday, February 11, 8-11 PM
Saturday, February 12, 7-11 PM
Friday, February 25, 8-11 PM
Saturday, February 26, 7-11 PM
Observatory Park

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

18 19 20 Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday, February 18, 11 AM-4 PM
Saturday, February 19, 11 AM-4 PM
Sunday, February 20, 11 AM-4 PM
The West Woods, Nature Center

Stop by anytime during listed hours to identify and count birds seen at the big windows, becoming an official Citizen Scientist during this worldwide bird count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

22 26 Timbertots: Nature Creativity

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)

Tuesday, February 22, 10-11 AM & 1-2 PM
Saturday, February 26, 10-11 AM
& 1-2 PM, The West Woods

Join Nora the Explorer to see how Nature makes its own art and explore outdoors and inside the nature center's Maple SugART exhibit! **Registration required for all attending including adults and siblings.**

27 28 Nature Journaling: Winter Waters

Sunday, February 27, 1-3:30 PM
Monday, February 28, 9:30 AM-Noon
The West Woods, Affelder House

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

Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques and record your Nature observations. Our inspiration this month will be winter waters: snow, ice, river and pond. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. A one-time registration fee includes a journal, pen and pencil. **Registration required by phone only.**

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

5 Welton's Gorge Backcountry Ravine Exploration



Saturday, March 5, 9-11:30 AM & 1-3:30 PM, Welton's Gorge
 Venture off-trail into the rocky woodland ravine to discover deep rock ledges, cool streams, salamanders and other stream life. Must be able to walk without assistance on rugged off-trail terrain including slippery stream bottoms, steep grades and obstacles like downed trees. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes with good traction that can also get wet. Long pants recommended. Held rain or shine. **Registration required.**



5 Whatever-the-Weather Venture

Saturday, March 5, 9:30-11:30 AM
 The Rookery
 It may be a bit optimistic, but we're hoping for snow for this one. If conditions are just right for snowshoeing, that 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.**

7 Geauga Skywatchers: Make a Star Pointer

Monday, March 7, 6:30-7:30 PM
 Geauga County Public Library, Branch TBD
 "Star pointers" were the Steam-Age equivalent of smartphone astronomy apps. In this make-and-take program, you'll create your own star-finding tool. These programs are designed for grades 6-12 but anyone can join. **Registration required** at <https://geagalibrary.libcal.com/event/8380072>. Presented in cooperation with the Geauga County Public Library.

10 Maple Syrup Jug Lamp

Thursday, March 10, 6-8 PM
 The West Woods, Nature Center
 Fee: \$35 Geauga resident, \$38 out-of-county resident
 Join our crafty naturalist and create a fun accent lamp out of a maple syrup jug. Ages 14+ with adult. **Registration required.**

11 Homeschool Days: Maple Sugaring

(Ages 5-8 & 9-12)
 Friday, March 11, 1-2:30 PM
 Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge
 Homeschoolers, explore the history of maple sugaring in Geauga County, including a chance to gather sap and learn how it's boiled to make syrup. Adults may attend or drop off children with waivers. Entirely outdoors, so dress for the weather. **Registration required** for all attending including adults and siblings.

12 Scout Day: Bear Cub Scouts - Fur, Feathers & Ferns

Saturday, March 12, 9:30-11:30 AM
 Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge
 Join us to work on requirements 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 to fully complete it. **Registration required** by phone only. Max 4 scouts per registration. Please register only participating scouts.

12 Scout Day: Cadette Girl Scouts - Trees Badge

Saturday, March 12, 1-3 PM
 Swine Creek Reservation, Woods Edge
 Join us in the sugarbush to learn about trees as part of the Trees Legacy Badge. We'll cover requirements 1, 2, 4 & 5. **Registration required** by phone only.

15 Geauga Gems Spring Morning Hike



Tuesday, March 15, 8-9 AM
 Chickagami Park
 Take a spring hike along the Hickory Trail to discover what this season has to offer. **Registration required.**

17 Elderberries: Maple Sugaring!

Thursday, March 17, 11:30 AM-2:30 PM
 Swine Creek Reservation, Lodge
 Seniors, discover the secrets of pure Geauga Gold...maple syrup! Join the Geauga County Department on Aging and University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center for lunch in the lodge, followed by a hands-on program in the sugarbush and sugar house learning about the maple sugaring process. **Registration required.**

18 Full Moon Hike: The Worm Moon

Friday, March 18, 7-8:30 PM
 Observatory Park
 Worms (and the birds that hunt them) are getting more active this month. Join us for a night hike searching for worms, woodcock and more. Then, weather permitting, observe the rising full moon using park telescopes. **Registration required.**

19 Sunset Nature Stroll

Saturday, March 19, 5:30-7 PM
 Frohring Meadows



Celebrate the arrive of spring with a beautiful stroll through the park at sunset. We'll keep our eyes and ears open for wildlife as some are settling down for the night while others are just getting up. **Registration required.**

19 Nassau Astronomy Night with CVAS

Saturday, March 19, 8-11 PM
 Observatory Park, Nassau
 Astronomical Station

Stop in to discover this awesome facility and join members of the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society taking in the wonders of the night sky using our restored telescope! A limited number of people will be permitted inside the building at a time, which may result in a wait to enter. Cancelled if cloudy.



20 Hike The West Woods: Cabin Fever Cure

Sunday, March 20, 1-3 PM
 The West Woods



Join a naturalist to explore The West Woods in search of early indicators that spring is on the way. Weather is variable and trails include hills, so please dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes that can get wet. **Registration required.**

21 Water Gardening 101

Monday, March 21, 7:30-8:30 PM

Water – one of the most important natural resources. From birdbaths to ponds, find out how to use water to attract wildlife to your backyard habitat. We'll discuss the basics behind building and maintaining a simple water garden, then enjoy the results. "If you build it, they will come!" This presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required.**

24 Maple Town Tune Traders

Thursday, March 24, 7-9:30 PM
 The West Woods, Nature Center

Singers and musicians, present short performances followed by a jam session. All musical genres, instruments and musicianship levels welcome. Come to play, sing or simply enjoy as audience. **Registration required.**

Fully Accessible Nature Scopes

RECURRING PROGRAMS

11 25 Find Your Way By The Stars

Friday, March 11, 7-8 PM,
Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Friday, March 25, 7-8 PM

Learn the basics of using the sky to find your position on Earth, and the fascinating history behind surveying and navigation! Weather permitting, we'll finish with night-sky viewing using park telescopes until 11 PM. March 25 presentation is online via Zoom; register for the program and we will send you the link to join in. **Registration required for both sessions.**

11 12 25 26 Night Sky Viewing

Friday, March 11, 8-11 PM
Saturday, March 12, 7-11 PM
Friday, March 25, 8-11 PM
Saturday, March 26, 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.

16 19 Timbertots: Maple Sugar Time!

(Ages 3-5 w/adult)
Wednesday, March 16,
10-11 AM & 1-2 PM
Saturday, March 19,
10-11 AM & 1-2 PM
Swine Creek Reservation,
Woods Edge Parking Area

Explore outdoors and enjoy hands-on activities to discover where and how we get real maple syrup! Entirely outdoors, so dress for the weather. Snow boots are encouraged. **Registration required for all attending including adults and siblings.** Strollers may be hard to use in certain areas of the trail.

20 21 Nature Journaling: Vernal Pools

Sunday, March 20, 1-3:30 PM
Monday, March 21, 9:30 AM-Noon
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
Fee: \$20 Geauga residents,
\$24 out-of-county residents

Attend this monthly series to learn basic journaling techniques and record your Nature observations. Our inspiration this month will be vernal pools and the critters in them. Partially outdoors. Taking photos is optional. A one-time registration fee includes a journal, pen and pencil. **Registration required by phone only.**

26 Campfire Cooking: Forks & Foil

Saturday, March 26, 4:30-6:30 PM
Big Creek Park, Maple Grove Shelter
Learn a new skill and get inspired for your next camping adventure! Together we'll create foil meals packed with sausage, onions, peppers and other veggies. Hot dogs on standby for picky eaters. **Registration required.**

27 Backcountry Heron Hike

Sunday, March 27, 1-3 PM
Burton Wetlands Nature Preserve
Venture off trail with binoculars to the site of a heron nesting colony with possible views of returning Great Blue Herons. Hike is approximately two miles round-trip on uneven terrain with wet, muddy conditions. **Registration required.**

27 The Sky Tonight Planetarium Show

Sunday, March 27, 2-2:45 PM
& 3-3:45 PM, Observatory Park, Robert McCullough Science Center
Join us for a planetarium presentation about what to watch for in the night sky this week. Sessions are 45 minutes each; please register for only one. **Registration required.**

29 Dabble in Ducks

Tuesday, March 29, 8:30-11 AM
Headwaters Park, Boathouse
Start in the boathouse for a short duck identification presentation before going outside to view migrating waterfowl on the tranquil waters of this beautiful lake. Bring binoculars. **Registration required.**



30 National Take a Walk in a Park Day

Wednesday, March 30
8:30-9:30 AM, Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve
10:30-11:30 AM, Big Creek Park, Meyer Center Parking Lot
1-2 PM, Beartown Lakes Reservation
3-4 PM, Frohring Meadows
6-7:30 PM, Orchard Hills Park
To celebrate this special day, let's explore five different parks at five different times of day. Hikes are short walks with a naturalist, just over a mile long, with varied terrain and levels of difficulty; check website for detailed descriptions of individual hikes and for wheelchair accessibility. All held rain or shine, so dress accordingly. **Registration required.**

31 Skydance: Flight of the Woodcock!

Thursday, March 31,
7:30-8:30 PM
The Rookery, Great Blue Heron Lodge
This annual rite of spring returns to The Rookery this year as habitat restoration has made the area along the Woodcock Trail more suitable to our featured species. Get a behind-the-bushes look at the courtship antics of one unique bird, the American Woodcock, highlighted by its amazing "sky dance" with "wing song" and careening descent. **Registration required.**

4 5 Weave a Swing Handle Basket

Friday, March 4, 12:30-5 PM
Saturday, March 5, 12:30-5 PM
Big Creek Park, Meyer Center
Fee: \$25 Geauga residents,
\$28 out-of-county residents
Learn the basic art of basket weaving! You will use rattan reed and twisted paper cord to create your own basket with swing handle. Great for beginners. **Registration required.**

6 13 20 Sap's-a-Risin'!

Sundays, March 6, 13 & 20,
Noon-4 PM
Swine Creek Reservation
Visit Geauga Park District's sugar house and sugarbush for 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 try a taste of pure maple syrup!

8 22 Geauga Walkers

Tuesday, March 8, 1-2:30 PM
Swine Creek Reservation,
Woods Edge
Tuesday, March 22, 1-2:30 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House
Hikes for active seniors 1 to 1½ miles long. Naturalist led. Call Geauga Senior Center for full schedule: 440-279-2126. **Registration required.**

10 12 Hidden Gems Hike: Affelder Exploration

Thursday, March 10, 1-2:30 PM
Saturday, March 12, 1-2:30 PM
The West Woods, Affelder House
Join a naturalist exploring the trails of this beautiful park, discovering forest and stream. Entirely outdoors, so dress for the weather and wet terrain. **Registration required.**



Picture a Fireplace, a Winter View & a Gathering of Your Dear Ones...

Spring, summer and fall are popular times to reserve a shelter or a lodge in Geauga Park District. But a winter gathering can be just as charming, or even more so, in one of our 11 enclosed lodges. Cozy fireplaces and spectacular winter landscapes make a perfect setting for parties, intimate weddings, showers, or special visits with friends or family. These rustic settings include heating, electricity, picnic tables, grills, fireplaces and restrooms. Consider a park facility for your next event! The following list can help you find one or more near you (capacities listed in parenthesis), and the current fee schedule can be found on our website under *Reservations*.

Sunnybrook Lodge



In Chester & Munson

- Orchard Hills Park**
Orchard Hills Lodge (48)
- Sunnybrook Preserve**
Sunnybrook Lodge (48)
- The Rookery**
Great Blue Heron Lodge (132)

Judge Lester Taylor Lodge



In Claridon, Huntsburg & Burton

- Claridon Woodlands**
Judge Lester Taylor Lodge (99)
- Headwaters Park**
Boathouse (Lodge, 48)
- Veterans Legacy Woods**
Banquet Facility (200)
Reopening soon!

In Middlefield

- Swine Creek Reservation**
Swine Creek Lodge (75)
Brand new & opening soon!

Deep Woods Lodge



In Chardon

- Bass Lake Preserve**
Bass Lake Lodge (48 capacity)
- Big Creek Park**
Deep Woods Lodge (71)

Affelder House



In Bainbridge & Russell

- Frohring Meadows**
Katydid Lodge (48)
- Holbrook Hollows**
Holbrook Hollows Lodge (99)
- The West Woods**
Affelder House (40)

Things To Do Outdoors in Your Parks

Snow Fun!



Winter doesn't have to be a time to stay cooped up indoors. On the contrary, getting outside in our colder weather has so many benefits, both physical and mental. Walking, sledding, snowshoeing and feeding the birds from your hand are just a few of the fantastic activities available for Geauga residents in Geauga Park District, all free of charge!

- Find sledding hills at **Orchard Hills Park** in Chesterland and **Beartown Lakes Reservation** in Bainbridge.
- Borrow a pair of snowshoes to use at **The West Woods** (free to Geauga residents with an ID).
- For a special Nature treat, take in the sloping landscape at **The West Woods** and relax as you wait for a Black-capped Chickadee to land in your hand for some seed. Find details on our website under *News & Updates*.



*Thank You
to All of Our
Generous
Donors*

Donations to
Gauga Park District
August through
October 2021

Diane Albright	Unrestricted Donation	\$50.00
Nicole Wise	Memorial Park Bench Plaque - Beartown Lakes Reservation	\$600.00
Kenneth Gibb	K9 Fund Donation	\$100.00
Kinetico	Caveman Crawl Sponsorship	\$125.00
Cleveland Foundation	Lewis & Ruth Affelder Fund	\$489.25
Chardon Methodist Church	Unrestricted Donation	\$50.00
Anonymous	Distribution of Estate Funds	\$2,000.00
Louise Foster	K9 Fund Donation	\$250.00
Marilyn & Rick Hyde	Memorial Engraved Paver at The West Woods	\$187.50
Bonnie & Ron Lawson	Memorial Engraved Paver at The West Woods	\$187.50



Geauga Gems Trekking Series 2022

Geauga Gems Trekking Series kicks off its third year, the year of the ruby, with registration opening January 1 for Geauga residents and January 15 for others. Sign-up is FREE for all Geauga residents, but costs \$10 for out-of-county residents. Mark your calendars for the Geauga Gems Awards & 2022 Kickoff on January 6 or 8; see page 8 for details. For those who completed the 2021 program, trekking pole awards and emerald medallion stickers will be presented. You can also register for the new season.

Park Locations and Amenities

ICONS LISTED AT RIGHT
IN THE ORDER THEY APPEAR

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

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

ADVENTURES in Geocaching



N 41° 29.702
W -81° 21.842

Check out this new geocache
at Frohring Meadows in Bainbridge Twp.

Expires January 1, 2023. Find details on our website under Activities.

Many walk by and some stop to read.
(It's sort of a shame they don't play this type of game.)
The challenge here is to retrieve unseen
this cache in view for all to see.
Then, once you are done, there still is more fun.
This one seems real close, but away in the oaks,
a second cache hides for wondering eyes.

Part A of this cache can be accessed from the
main parking lot near Katydid Lodge.

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 <i>MILEAGE OF LINK ACCESSING TMHT: 0.6</i>	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	
Modroo Preserve 15695 Hemlock Road, Russell, 44072 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 0.8</i>							✓	✓			
Observatory Park 10610 Clay Street, Montville, 44064 Nassau Astronomical Station 10350 Clay Street, Montville, 44064 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.62</i> <i>Facility reservations are available - call or visit website for details</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		
Orchard Hills Park 11340 Caves Road, Chester, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 3.6</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Russell Uplands Preserve 15200 Russell Road, Russell, 44022 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 2.0</i>			✓				✓	✓		✓	
Sunnybrook Preserve 12474 Heath Road, Chester, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.7</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Swine Creek Reservation 16004 Hayes Road, Middlefield, 44062 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 5.8</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
The Rookery 10110 Cedar Road, Munson, 44026 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.4</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Veterans Legacy Woods 14085 Ravenna Road, Newbury/Burton, 44065 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 4.5</i>	VISIT WEBSITE FOR DETAILS ON THE OPENING OF THIS PARK										
Welton's Gorge 13973 Hale Road, Burton, 44021 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.8</i>			✓		✓		✓				
The West Woods 9465 Kinsman Road, Russell, 44072 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 6.7</i> The West Woods - Affelder House 15139 Chillicothe Road, Russell, 44072 <i>Facility reservations are available - call or visit website for details</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve 11620 Ravenna Road, Munson, 44024 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.6</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Whitlam Woods 12500 Pearl Road, Hambden, 44024 <i>TOTAL TRAIL MILEAGE: 1.1</i>					✓		✓				
Woodin Road Park 12205 Woodin Road, Chardon, 44024 <i>NO TRAILS AVAILABLE</i>											

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.



In Nature

The Giving Tree

Maple trees are among the most common tree species found in Ohio. More than 100 species of maple trees exist, but Ohio's prominent three are red, silver and sugar. All three produce sap and maple syrup, and are valued for their wood commercially, but the sugar maple boasts the hardest and most dense wood of the maples. Its slow growth explains its density, and makes it a more expensive timber.

When it comes to maple syrup, the sugar maple is also a favorite because it contains the highest concentration of sugar, producing the best tasting syrup. It can grow to heights of 80 feet and is a perfect shade tree. Beautiful in the fall, the sugar maple contains all three chemicals of pigments that produce anything from yellow to red to all the oranges in between, depending on the proportion of sun to shade the tree receives (yellow in full shade, red in full sun). No wonder this tree is a favorite in Geauga County!

Real, pure maple syrup seems commonplace to many of us here in Geauga County, so unless we are maple producers ourselves, we tend to take for granted the fascinating process of sap production. The quality and quantity of maple syrup a tree produces really depends on weather conditions during the season, when the sap is collected, and how it's processed. That's why flavor can vary from year to year.

Sap inside a tree is needed to keep it alive. It flows through a part of the outer tree trunk known as sapwood, delivering water and nutrients to the tree.

During warm months, the process of photosynthesis creates carbohydrates that get stored in the tree as starch. That starch gets converted to sugar and is dissolved in water (creating what we know as sap), which is used for nutrients. What's not used is then stored for

the winter while the tree doesn't need any food.

Typically in February or March, when we begin to see warmer days and frozen nights, that's when sap collection can begin. That's because a frozen night followed by above-freezing daytime temperatures creates positive pressure, forcing sap through the holes we have made during tree tapping. Then freezing temperatures at night create negative pressure, stopping the sap from flowing out while also pulling water up through the roots to replenish the sap.

In late spring, when temperatures stay warmer, sap flow slows and the growth of leaves starts the process of photosynthesis all over again — creating carbohydrates that turn to starch, then sugar dissolved in water, which is sap to feed the tree.

But collecting sap is only part of the story. Sugar maple sap has only about a 2 percent sugar content, but needs to be concentrated to about 66 percent to make syrup. That's why we need so much sap to make a small amount of syrup. When water boils, it turns from a liquid to a gas (water vapor). Sugar houses are famously depicted with steam flowing out of their cupolas as the bulk of the water evaporates, leaving the sugars, salts and other nutrients, along with some water, to create the perfect combination we can enjoy. Years of experience concentrating the sap is what makes a good quality syrup.

Q: Does drilling holes for tapping damage trees?

A: It does, however, knowing how to properly tap a tree causes only minor wounds that are not damaging. Trees repair these wounds and heal over time, just like the body heals itself after a cut.



Wintertime Crossword

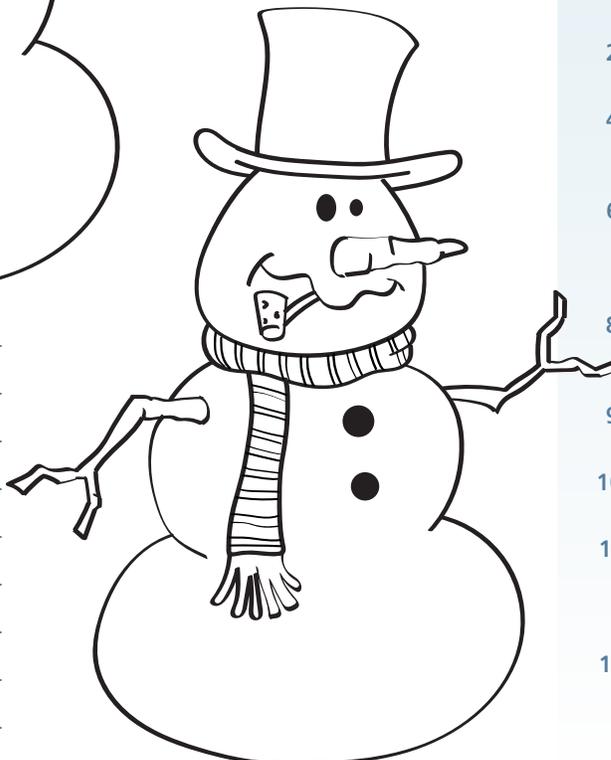
Here are some wintertime facts in a fun crossword puzzle. Some you know, some may surprise you! (Kiddos may need a little extra help on these...)

ACROSS

- 3 Which Jack nips at your nose?
- 5 A type of snow produced when a cold air mass moves across a body of warm water. Water vapor is sucked up by the cold air and freezes, then falls as a lot of snow.
- 7 Snowflakes are hexagons which means they always have this many sides.
- 11 An intense or irrational fear of snow and becoming snowbound or being stranded in snow. (*Hint: the Greek word for snow is chion.*)
- 12 Some animals do this during winter. They move from one region to another according to the seasons.
- 14 Some animals do this during the winter. They burrow in the ground and sleep until their bodies sense spring approaching.



Can your keen eye spot 10 differences between these snowmen? Then color them in!



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

DOWN

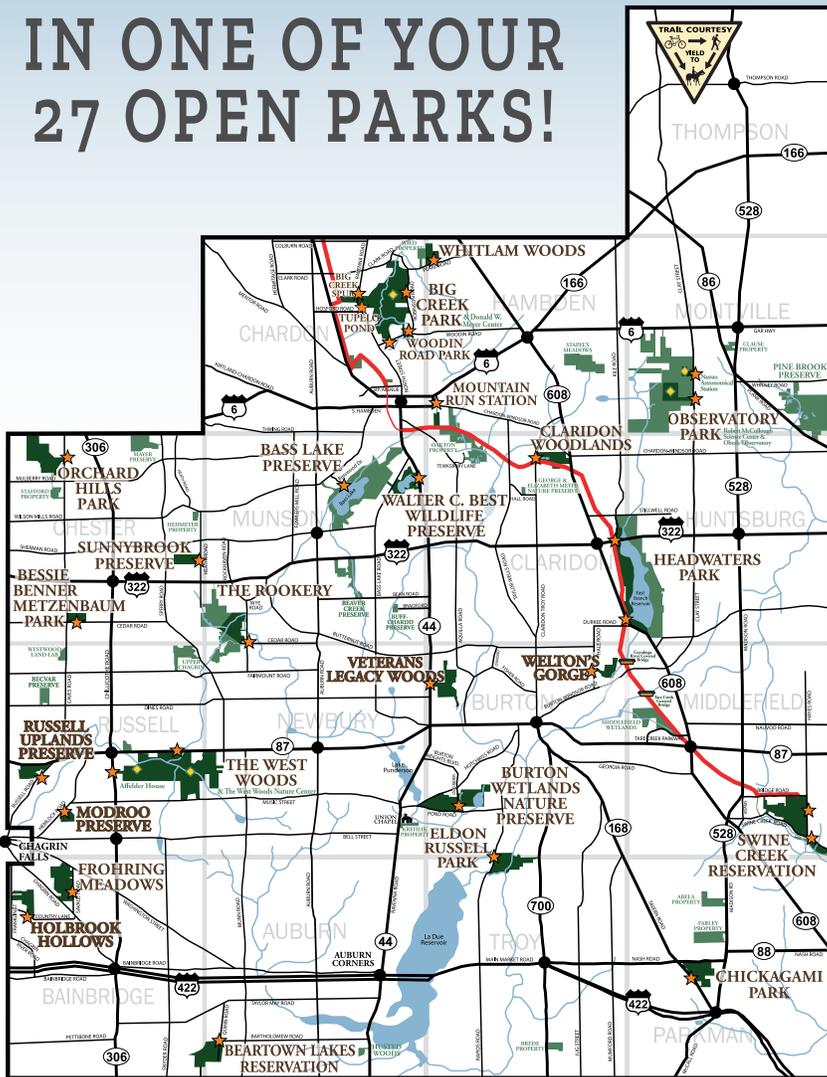
- 1 Light snowfall that results in very little to no accumulation of snow on the ground.
- 2 This butterfly migrates all the way to Mexico for the winter.
- 4 Snow is not white; light reflects off of its ice crystals to make it appear white. It is actually this.
- 6 A severe snowstorm that has sustained winds of at least 35 mph and reduced visibility to less than a quarter of a mile for an extended time.
- 8 A region typically found downward of a large lake, usually off the eastern and southern shores.
- 9 You can borrow these at The West Woods to help you hike in deep snow.
- 10 Are nights longer or shorter in the winter?
- 13 You think winter lasts long in Geauga County? On which planet in our solar system does winter last an equivalent of 21 Earth years?
- 15 Winter officially comes to an end when the days and nights have an equal amount of hours. This will happen on March 20 this year.



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Answers to wintertime crossword: (across) frost, lake effect, six, chionophobia, migrate, hibernate, (down) flurries, Monarch, translucent, blizzard, snowbelt, snowshoes, longer, Uranus, equinox.

Snowmen differences: hat height, band on hat, eyebrows, crooked carrot nose, pipe, knot in scarf, stripes on scarf, extra twig on hand, one arm pointing in opposite direction, number of buttons.