

FALL / WINTER 2020 - 2021

FREE

PARKWAYS

YOUR GUIDE TO FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

HIT THE TRAILS

EXPLORE THE DAYTON REGION'S
HUNDREDS OF MILES OF TRAILS –
WHILE IMPROVING YOUR MENTAL
AND PHYSICAL HEALTH BY
CONNECTING WITH NATURE.

NEW TRAIL LOOPS AT
GERMANTOWN METROPARK
SEE PAGES 10 - 11

VIRTUAL RESOURCES TO
HELP YOU EXPERIENCE
THE OUTDOORS
SEE PAGES 14 - 17

GET ACTIVE BY
WALKING NEW HEART
HEALTHY TRAILS
SEE PAGES 18 - 19

FIVE RIVERS
METROPARKS



TM

COVID-19 OUTDOOR GUIDELINES



**WEAR FACE COVERINGS
IN PUBLIC.**
Wash your hands and
bring sanitizer.

**VISIT SOLO OR WITH
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS.**
Explore less frequently
used parks and trails.



**DO NOT TOUCH
OR USE COMMUNAL
SURFACES**



**DO YOUR PART:
STAY 6 FEET APART**
Alert others and step
aside to pass.



**CARRY OUT
TRASH,
INCLUDING
DOG WASTE**



NOTE:
Parking may be limited.

Some restrooms and
water fountains may
be closed.

**HELP KEEP YOUR
PARKS & TRAILS
OPEN**



ALERTS AND CLOSURES

Weather conditions and construction can affect hiking trails, bikeways and access to certain park entrances. All construction information, including detours, and any weather-related notices, are posted online at metroparks.org/alerts.



LOST ITEMS

If you lost something valuable in a MetroPark, contact the Rangers to identify and retrieve your belongings. Contact Alan Starnes at (937) 567-4265 for details.



HOW TO CONTACT A RANGER

Inform the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office dispatcher you are in a MetroParks facility. A MetroParks law enforcement Ranger will be notified and respond to the situation as soon as possible.
EMERGENCY CONTACT: 9-1-1
NON-EMERGENCY: (937) 535-2580

EXPLAINING THIS ISSUE OF PARKWAYS

Nearly everything about 2020 is different than the year before – and the same is true with your *ParkWays* magazine.

The biggest difference is this issue does not include program and event listings. While a 2019 survey showed this is the most-read portion of *ParkWays*, there are a number of reasons why these are not included. Some are internal and logistical, but most have to do with your safety. For example:

- At the time this magazine was sent to the printer in late August, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, the Ohio Department of Health and the CDC continued to recommend everyone follow social distancing, limit group gatherings and wear face coverings – and indicated such recommendations would remain in place for some time. They also indicated that one of the last things to resume would be large gatherings, such as the Wagner Subaru Outdoor Experience.
- Staff and volunteers cannot effectively host many MetroParks programs while maintaining safe social distancing. Many others require the use of shared equipment that is not easily sanitized between uses.

Every decision your Five Rivers MetroParks has made in response to COVID-19 has been made with the health and safety of visitors, volunteers and employees top of mind. With the uncertainty of what will be safe to do this fall and winter, it simply didn't make sense to publish a list of programs and events that might end up being canceled.

Yet that doesn't mean there isn't plenty to do in your MetroParks this season. This issue of *ParkWays* provides an overview of the numerous activities and amenities your Five Rivers MetroParks offers – from the trails you can hike and bike, to activities you can do on your own schedule. It also includes information about new virtual programming. Ohio has seen a dramatic increase in park visitation since the onset of COVID-19 precautions as more and more people recognize the dramatic ways in which time spent in nature improves mental and physical health.

Yes, this year is unlike any other. This presents an opportunity to discover a new way to explore the outdoors. It's also been an opportunity for MetroParks staff to find new ways to serve the community by providing virtual resources that help you and your family connect with nature. Follow MetroParks on social media and visit metroparks.org/natureisopen to learn more.



Facebook: facebook.com/fiveriversmetroparks
Twitter: twitter.com/metroparkstweet
Instagram @metroparks
YouTube: youtube.com/FiveRiversMetroParks



Becky Benná
Executive Director

DEAR METROPARKS FRIENDS,

Autumn can be a spectacular time of change in the nature that surrounds us. As summer wanes and the trees, soils and animals ready for winter, we can feel the pull to slow down ourselves. With COVID-19, that gentle tug feels a bit stronger this year.

Five Rivers MetroParks, along with parks and recreation professionals across the country, have been working hard to keep nature open to us all. We are grateful to see you and your families out in your parks. More and more people are discovering our region's parks and trail systems as they seek opportunities to care for their mental and physical health and connect with nature.

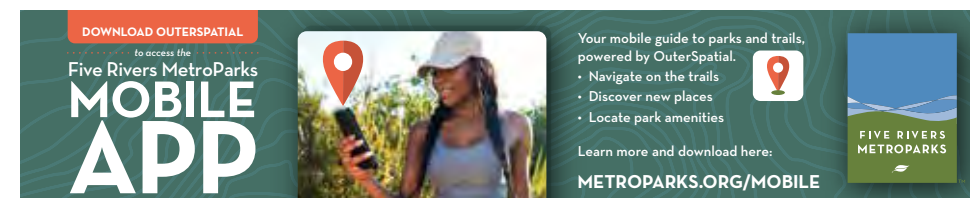
This fall, your Five Rivers MetroParks is hoping you continue to hit the trails to deepen your connection to the region's natural heritage and to strengthen your personal connection to nature. Thousands of you have already downloaded our new, free mobile app and are using it to discover hidden gems in the parks and safely navigate the region's hundreds of miles of trails.

In this issue of *ParkWays*, we go in-depth on your trail system. Walking, biking, hiking, horseback riding, blading, paddling – there's a trail for everyone. See how your MetroParks is creating new ways for you to connect with staff – and nature – virtually (see pages 14-17), read about the best trails for all sorts of activities throughout the publication, and brush up on how to safely and respectfully use the trails (see page 9).

Thank you for continuing to do your part to keep your parks a place of refuge, a place to maintain health, a place to spend quality time with family and experience the wonder that is autumn.

Best Regards,

Becky Benná



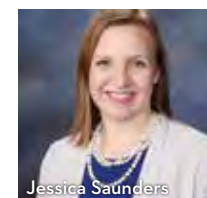
OUR MISSION

Five Rivers MetroParks is dedicated to protecting the region's natural heritage and providing outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature.

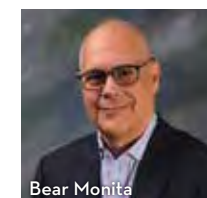
METROPARKS COMMISSIONERS



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Jessica Saunders



Bear Morita



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park agency.



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RIVERS METROPARKS

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Hikers will experience a variety of habitat on new trails great for beginners and enthusiasts alike.

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A new MetroParks initiative helps improve physical and mental health outdoors.

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GIVING BACK IN THE
GREAT OUTDOORS

Meet volunteer Ed Stevenson and learn how you can join him in supporting Five Rivers MetroParks' mission.

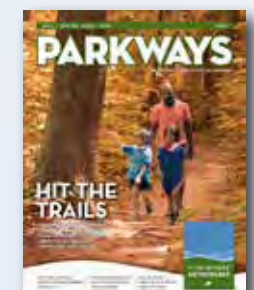
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HONORING TRAIL MEMORIES

Learn about tribute options or leaving a legacy gift to the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation.

ON THE COVER

With cooler temps and vibrant colors, fall is the perfect time to explore Sugarcreek MetroPark and your other 18 clean, safe parks.



FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

ACTIVITIES & AMENITIES BY PARK

	Aullwood Garden	Carriage Hill	Cox Arboretum	Deeds Point	Eastwood	Englewood	Germantown	Hills & Dales	Huffman	Possum Creek	Island	RiverScape	Sugarcreek	Sunrise	Taylorville	Twin Creek	Wegerzyn Gardens	Wesleyan
Hiking/Walking	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cycling				•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
Mountain Biking								•										
Paddling	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		
Whitewater				•							•							
Horseback Riding*		•			•			•				•				•		
Disc Golf					•													
Fishing*	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Nature Play					•		•		•			•					•	•
Playground*				•			•			•								•
Camping*					•	•			•							•		
Sledding					•	•								•				
Boating [∞]				•	•													
Fossil Hunting	•	•			•	•		•				•		•	•	•	•	•
Ice Rink*											•							
Community Garden Plots									•								•	
Shelters*		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•
Picnic Areas*	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•

- + An Ohio fishing license is not needed at the following MetroParks locations:

 - Carriage Hill MetroPark: Cedar Lake and North Woods Pond
 - Possum Creek MetroPark: Argonne Lake and Fishing Pond
 - Germantown MetroPark: Sunfish Pond
 - Eastwood MetroPark: Lagoon and Blue Lake
 - Twin Creek MetroPark: Lake George
- Eastwood MetroPark Lake:

∞ Power boats are permitted on even-numbered days. Sailboats, personal watercraft (jet skis) and fishing boats at idle speeds are permitted on odd-numbered days. Kayaks and canoes are permitted every day.

• Englewood North Park: electric motors only.

* These activities and amenities are closed to the public or have limited access through Dec. 31, 2020, or until further notice due to precautions related to COVID-19. For updates and a list of the most current closures, visit metroparks.org/covid.

- TRAILS FOR ALL USERS**

Your Five Rivers MetroParks includes:

 - 78 miles of hiking trails and a 22-mile backpacking trail
 - 25 miles of equestrian trails
- 9-plus miles of mountain biking trails
 - trails accessible to those with mobility challenges

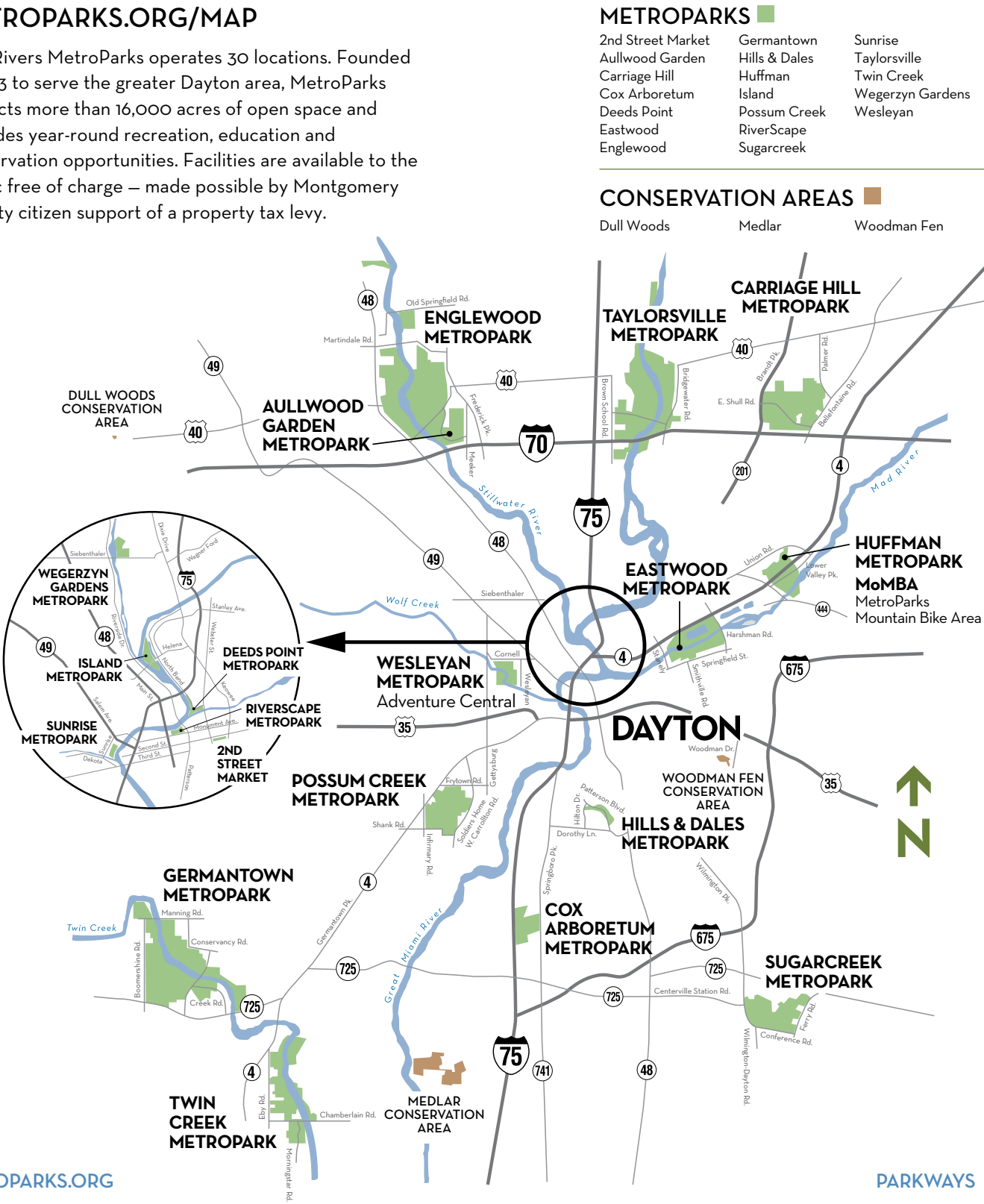
The Dayton region also is home to 270 miles of water trails and the nation's largest paved trail network, where you can experience more than 340 miles of connected trails.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

PARK SYSTEM MAP

METROPARKS.ORG/MAP

Five Rivers MetroParks operates 30 locations. Founded in 1963 to serve the greater Dayton area, MetroParks protects more than 16,000 acres of open space and provides year-round recreation, education and conservation opportunities. Facilities are available to the public free of charge – made possible by Montgomery County citizen support of a property tax levy.





HIT *the* TRAILS

Explore the Dayton region's hundreds of miles of trails – while improving your mental and physical health by connecting with nature.

The outdoors is a place to be active, decompress, spend time with family and simply take in the wonder of nature. Whatever your motivation is for getting outside, trails are a great place to find what you need while outdoors, whether you are new to being outside or are a seasoned adventurer.

Your Five Rivers MetroParks locations are home to 160 miles of managed trails for hiking, biking, mountain biking and horseback riding. And the greater Dayton region is home to more than 340 miles of paved trails – the nation's largest paved trail network – and 270 miles of river corridor. With such a diverse and extensive variety of trails, there are myriad experiences waiting for you outside.

Trails also are great places to make memories with your entire family, from little ones to grandparents.

"As long as you are mobile, you can experience nature on the trails," said Angie Sheldon, MetroParks outdoor recreation program coordinator. "Adventures on the trails can be so customizable – longer 27-mile loops with elevation, shorter half-mile loops that are more level, even waterways with beautiful views. There's something so different and special for everyone."

Need inspiration? Meet some local families who make getting outside a priority.

MOM AND ME ADVENTURERS

Stacie Koogler and her son, River Ruh, have spent time in all 18 MetroParks – in fact, River was "hiking" MetroParks' trails before he could walk. Koogler would put him in a carrier and take short adventures with the group Hike it Baby. Now, River, 4, is at home in the outdoors. Koogler also believes time spent outdoors has helped River grow developmentally.

"He's a risk taker – he's very good at thinking outside the box and problem solving," Koogler said. "I love watching him experience things for the first time."

A working single mom, Koogler also spends time in nature to decompress.

"Sometimes I need a muddy creek under my feet," Koogler said. "I have to be creative to find ways to involve River so I can do the things I want to do, and I'm able to take him along on so many adventures because he likes being outdoors, too."



Stacie Koogler and her son, River Ruh

Stacie and River's top MetroParks picks:

• **Favorite MetroParks:** Koogler loves Cox Arboretum MetroPark, in addition to parks with ample hiking opportunities, such as Germantown, Twin Creek and Taylorsville MetroParks. River is fond of Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark. They agree the best opportunity for playing in a creek is at Wesleyan MetroPark. Koogler considers Wesleyan a hidden gem, along with Possum Creek MetroPark.

• **Favorite activities:** Koogler loves kayaking, hiking, and relaxing by rivers and creeks. River loves the farm animals at Possum Creek and Carriage Hill MetroParks.

ONE BIG FAMILY OUTSIDE

To say Lisa and Sarvani Prada-Nicolosi are busy is an understatement. Both moms are lawyers and parents to Kavi, 10; Anya, 7; and Ramona, 4. However, the family still takes time to unplug and enjoy time outside.

Having spent most of their lives in southwest Ohio, Lisa, 39, and Sarvani, 38, are familiar with the greenspace in the region. In fact, as a child, it was difficult to get Lisa to come inside.

"My sister and I never, ever got tired of being out in the open air," Lisa said. "We built a club house in the backyard, biked, walked a mile to the local YMCA to swim, dug holes, made potions, danced in sprinklers. But our favorite thing to do was explore the fields, thickets and winding creek behind our house."

Lisa became familiar with Five Rivers MetroParks as a child through the Girl Scouts. She and Sarvani view outdoor experiences, such as hiking and camping, as opportunities to spend quality family time, get moving and decompress.

The busy family of five makes a point to get outside daily before the kids go to bed – even if it's just walking around their neighborhood pond.

"It's imperative to spend time outside," said Lisa. "We adults need it just as much as our children – to refocus, ground ourselves and balance out the stressors of everyday life."

"Honestly, my favorite memories are when things go wrong," said Lisa. "Getting lost on the trails as night is falling, tripping off a steppingstone and submerging shoes miles from the car, having a tent literally disintegrate two states from home in the middle of a very wet weeklong adventure. In the moment, they might not be my favorite plot twists, but the moments are unforgettable, and we laugh about them now."

The moms also believe that immersing children in natural experiences now will create a life-long appreciation of the natural world.

"Kids have a lot of options now other than doing anything outside, and it's easy to avoid entirely," said Lisa. "Our

environment is facing such increasing pressures and stressors. We need to foster an appreciation for involvement in nature. We need people to interact with their planet so they care about it.”



Lisa and Sarvani Prada-Nicolosi with their children Kavi, 10; Anya, 7; and Ramona, 4

The Prada-Nicolosi family's top MetroParks picks

• **Favorite MetroParks:** The Prada-Nicolosi bunch love hiking, and their favorite parks to take to the trails are Sugarcreek and Hills & Dales MetroParks. However, Kavi says if it was up to the kids, the family would spend most of their time at Carriage Hill MetroPark.

• **Favorite activities:** In addition to hiking, the Prada-Nicolosi family are fans of camping – even if it's just in their back yard. They love building fires, cooking outdoors, preparing campsites and sleeping outside.

GENERATIONS OF OUTDOOR FUN

Paul Sheidler, a Bellbrook resident, has enjoyed visiting Sugarcreek Reserve (now Sugarcreek MetroPark) since 1974. Now a grandfather, he ensures his two youngest grandchildren unplug and spend time outside.

Sheidler grew up in Miamisburg, where large fields met the woods. He and his friends would chase each other, climb trees, play games and explore – something kids might not necessarily experience today, as children spend most of the day indoors.

“They’re so preoccupied with electronic devices,” Sheidler said.

Sheidler, who volunteered to coach for his daughter, Amanda’s, sports teams, also ensures his grandchildren have enriching experiences outdoors. Olivia Stewart, 11, and her brother Gabriel, 9, have been visiting the parks since they were toddlers. They have been to every MetroPark and have participated in a variety of programs, from catching tadpoles at Sugarcreek MetroPark to listening for owls at Hills & Dales MetroPark.

Like their peers, Olivia and Gabriel are interested in all things technology, but their mom and Sheidler keep them engaged in both organized sports and outdoor adventures in MetroParks.

“I’d make them get out,” Sheidler said. “I’d say, ‘There’s something we can do outside.’”

Now, the family has fond memories of spending time outdoors that will last forever.



Paul Sheidler and his grandson, Gabriel, when he was 3 years old

The Sheidler and Stewart family's top MetroParks picks:

• **Favorite MetroPark:** Carriage Hill MetroPark is a stand-out for the family, and they especially love the animals at the Carriage Hill Historical Farm.

• **Favorite activity:** The Sheidler and Stewart crew are big on Possum Creek MetroPark. They have enjoyed myriad activities there, and perhaps an all-time family favorite is visiting the barn to see what animals are around.

A GUIDE TO HITTING *the* TRAILS

MetroParks makes it easy for you to enjoy your time on the trails by providing kiosks, trail shrine maps, color-coded trail markers, interpretive signage and more. Most of MetroParks’ trails are loops, and trailheads are near parking. Maps are available at kiosks, online at metroparks.org, and via Google Maps and the new Five Rivers MetroParks app, powered by OuterSpatial.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- While it’s important to stick to the trails, it’s also important to maintain safe social distancing. If you must step off the trail, try to do so on durable surfaces such as rocks.
- Leave what you find (leave only footprints, take only pictures).
- Dispose of debris and pet waste in trash and recycling cans or pack it out with you after your visit.
- Pass on the left and announce when passing. Uphill hikers have the right of way (keep right).
- Keep pets under control; dogs must be on a leash no longer than eight feet at all times.

USING THE TRAILS WITH KIDS

- Generally speaking, with young kids, you can plan on a pace of 1.5 to 2 miles-per-hour. Focus on the journey rather than the distance, and set mini-destinations to get your kids moving. For example, ask your kids if they can make it to an interesting tree, rock or trail marker before taking a break.
- Keep kids comfortable while on the trails. Be prepared with clothing layers, water and snacks.
- When planning your hike, look at the map as a family.

Encourage children to find a fun destination, such as a creek or waterfall, they want to see. Stop at trail intersections and ask your kids to help figure out the location. See who can find the biggest leaf, the most colorful bird and more.

SAFETY FIRST

- Dress for the weather, often in layers, and wear sunscreen.
- Bring water and snacks to keep you hydrated and give you energy.
- Let people know where you’re going and bring a map or smart phone to access Five Rivers MetroParks’ mobile app, powered by OuterSpatial.
- Always wear a lifejacket when on or near the water.
- Use MetroParks’ emergency access point signs as reference if you need to call first responders for assistance.
- For ranger assistance in non-emergency situations, call 937-275-HELP. To reach first responders in case of an emergency, call 911.

SAFETY TIPS FOR CYCLISTS

- Obey all traffic laws, and ride with traffic.
- Try to make eye contact with motorists in your path.
- Wear a properly fitted helmet during all rides.
- Keep your bike in working order.
- Use proper hand signals for turning and stopping.
- Ride in single file.
- Wear bright clothing.
- Use a bicycle headlight and taillight after dark.

Always follow the CDC’s recommendations, such as social distancing and wearing face coverings, when spending time outdoors. For more on MetroParks’ response to COVID-19, visit metroparks.org/covid.

Trail Building

Experience a variety of habitat on new trails great for beginners and seasoned hikers alike.

Germantown MetroPark's extensive hiking system has become even more robust with the opening of new trails.

A number of trails have been improved or expanded in recent years as part of MetroParks' strategic trail initiative, a conservation effort that improves habitat and decreases erosion. However, the trails at Germantown are the first new ones in a MetroPark in several years.

The new trails are on wide natural surface people of all ages can trek. It includes three loops: the 2-mile purple trail loop and the 0.7-mile brown loop. The trails also connect to a new, 2.3-mile section of Germantown MetroParks' existing orange trail. Trailheads are accessed from the sled hill/Twin Valley Trail parking lot, 6206 Boomershire Rd., and at a new gravel lot just down the street.

The trails traverse through several habitats – including a pollinator prairie,

wetland and woodlands – allowing hikers to experience our region's rich biodiversity. Five Rivers MetroParks acquired the land on which the new trails were built with Clean Ohio Grant funds four years ago. The 107-acre site was primarily farmland at that time.

Since then, MetroParks staff and volunteers have transformed this greenspace. Efforts include:

- Planting native seeds from MetroParks' prairie seed nursery, also located at Germantown MetroPark
- Building a new wetland
- Designing the trail
- Building the new parking lot

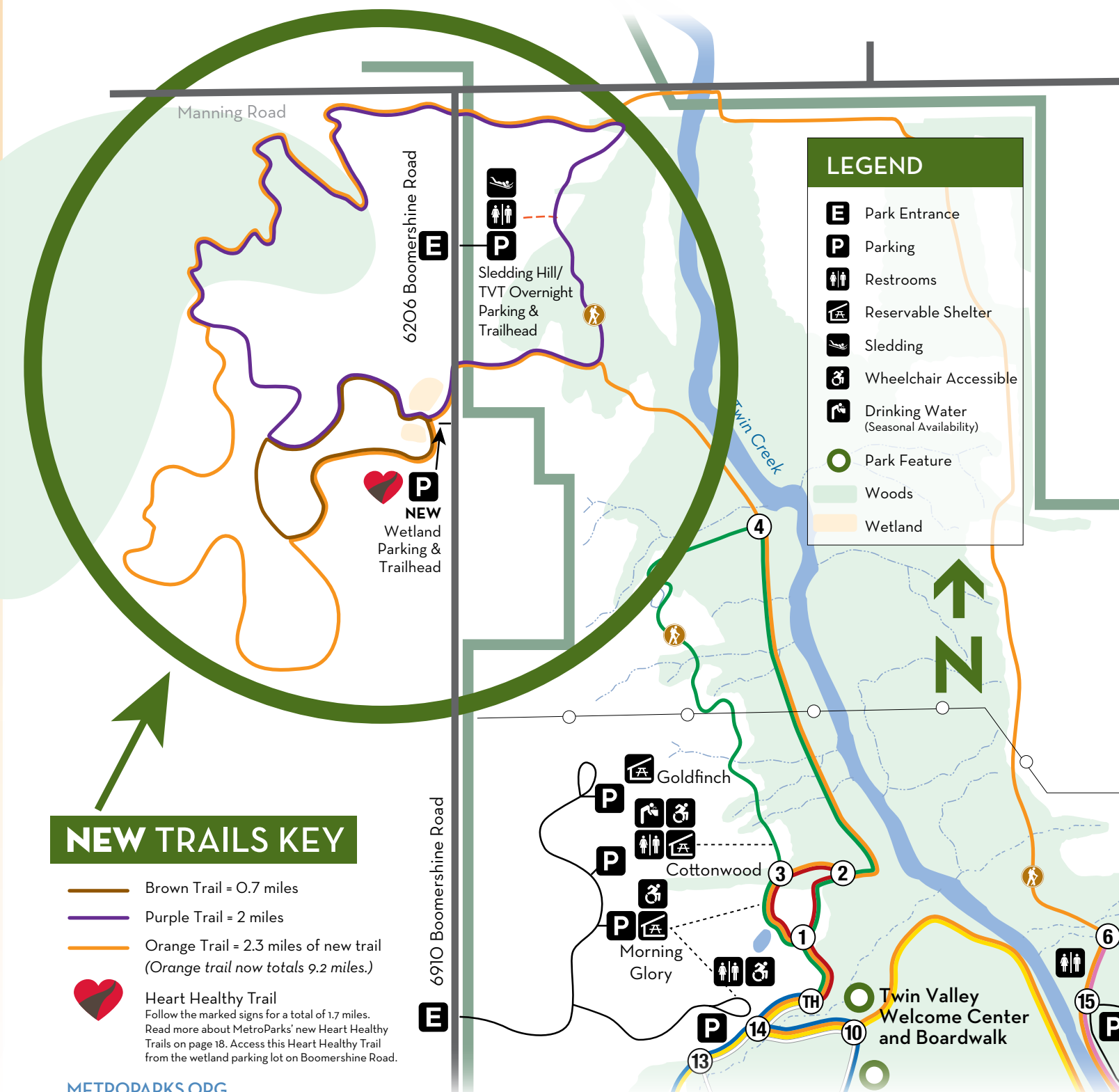
Construction of the trail began in 2019, led by MetroParks trail specialists Mark Allen and Michael Cooper with help from numerous volunteers. Building a brand-new trail is no easy task. Ecological protection, physical management and community needs must be balanced. That includes:

- Assessing the site, which includes examining topography and boundaries
- Conducting plant surveys for a year to inventory plant species
- Mapping the final trail – then starting the challenging physical work of building it

"The public values trails as one of the most used and appreciated amenities of a park system," regional park manager Mike Osborne said. "Most of the hard work of designing a sustainable trail is done before the shovels hit the ground. But the effort up front results in greatly improved eco-health, a decrease in maintenance costs and staff time, and with increased patron use and satisfaction."

"The new trail at Germantown MetroPark has been designed to protect special natural areas and inspire a personal connection with nature for generations to come."

GERMANTOWN METROPARK'S NEW TRAILS EXPANSION MAP



- **Aullwood Garden MetroPark:** Garden path (0.6 mile)
 - **Carriage Hill MetroPark:** Orange trail (3.4 miles)
 - **Cox Arboretum MetroPark:** Red trail (0.6 mile)
 - **Englewood MetroPark:** Green trail (3.8 miles)
 - **Possum Creek MetroPark:** Orange trail (3.5 miles)
 - **Sugarcreek MetroPark:** Green trail (3.1 miles)
 - **Taylorville MetroPark:** Orange trail (3.2 miles)
 - **Twin Creek MetroPark:** Yellow trail (2.9 miles)
 - **Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark:** ADA-accessible paths
- Details in the new mobile app: metroparks.org/mobile.*



DOWNLOAD OUTERSPATIAL

to access the
Five Rivers MetroParks

MOBILE APP



MetroParks visitors now have a new, easy way to access information about parks and trails from their mobile devices. Using the OuterSpatial platform, MetroParks' new mobile application is free and available for both iPhone and Android devices. The app includes offline mapping and navigation – and access continues even without a cell phone signal.

- Discover new places
- Navigate on the trails
- Locate park amenities



Learn more and download here:
METROPARKS.ORG/MOBILE

Nature Is Open

Visit Five Rivers MetroParks' blog for articles, ideas and resources that will help you and your family safely explore the outdoors.

metroparks.org/natureisopen

Subscribe to MetroParks' YouTube channel for videos about nature-based crafts, outdoor recreation, activities and more.

[Youtube.com/FiveRiversMetroParks](https://www.youtube.com/FiveRiversMetroParks)



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH METROPARKS' TRAIL PROS

SAFE, SUSTAINABLE TRAILS DON'T CREATE THEMSELVES. IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION AND PLANNING. MEET METROPARKS' TRAIL SPECIALISTS, MARK ALLEN AND MICHAEL COOPER, WHO WORK WITH METROPARKS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN THE TRAILS.

Q What are some unique and interesting ways people can use the trails?

A An obvious benefit of hitting the trails is getting your body moving. Most Americans struggle with getting the 150 minutes of weekly, moderate-intensity physical activity the American Heart Association recommends. However, Cooper and Allen both agree the mental benefits of being out on the trails also are significant.

"While hiking on our trails, you can exercise your body and at the same time relax your mind," Cooper said.

Allen also views the trails as a place to grow memories with family and friends.

"Some people use our trails to disconnect from the stresses of everyday life and reconnect with nature for peace and solitude through physical exercise and meditation, while others use the trails to connect with family and friends through rides and hikes."

Q What are your most memorable moments on the trails?

A Proving that big-life moments are made on MetroParks' trails, Allen recounts a moment when he saw a young girl graduate from a small balance bike to a bike with pedals.

"Seeing younger generations have positive moments on our trails helps me to know that what I do provides outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature," Allen said.

Cooper witnessed a transformative experience for a young family that had suffered a recent loss. He was about to start trail inspections at Germantown MetroPark when he happened upon the family, who had just started their adventure. Later, he ran into them again, but noticed a marked difference in their moods. The children were playing, and their parents were laughing.

"It seemed that the time they

spent on the trails provided them an escape from the loss of their loved one and sadness they were experiencing," Cooper said. "This is a memorable experience for me because it proves the healing power that trails provide by connecting people with nature."

Q What fun stories can you share from your time working on the trails?

A Allen and Cooper believe that there are too many fun times had on the trails to pick just one. They said their diverse group of dedicated volunteers and MetroParks co-workers make the days entertaining. The groups trade stories about adventures, travels and life experiences. They agree there's never a dull moment on MetroParks' trails.



As COVID-19 continues to keep us apart in person, Five Rivers MetroParks has created new ways for you to connect with staff experts – and nature – virtually.

Nature offers adventure and relaxation, and spending time outdoors improves your mental and physical health – which is perhaps needed now more than ever.

However, in light of precautions in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, Five Rivers MetroParks is now offering a number of virtual resources to help you explore the outdoors and connect with nature. These resources will teach you a new skill, guide you through an outdoor activity you can do on your own time, help children discover the wonders of nature and much more. New content is being added on a regular basis so check back for new offerings throughout fall and winter.

NATURE IS OPEN BLOG metroparks.org/natureisopen

Learn how you can stay safe and have fun while improving your physical and mental health outdoors. Read about kid-

friendly trails, reasons to opt for outdoor workouts, gardening tips and much more. Look for seasonal outdoor activities, such as a prairie scavenger hunt and back yard Bingo.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS YOUTUBE CHANNEL youtube.com/user/FiveRiversMetroParks

MetroParks' staff experts are creating a variety of informational and inspirational videos now available on YouTube. Browse playlists for such content as:

- Connect to Nature at Home – Find fun, educational activities that help you connect with nature in your own back yard, such as making a bird feeder with found items and creating a fairy mud garden.
- Food: Earth to Table – Eating local reduces your carbon footprint, keeps money in our community and has a positive impact on the environment. Five Rivers MetroParks supports the local food movement as part of its conservation mission. Learn to grow, source and use local food using Earth-friendly practices. Find videos on such topics as pruning tomatoes, harvesting and preparing horseradish, and homemade yeast.

- MetroParks Moment – Take a minute or even 20 seconds to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature on those days when you can't get outdoors or when you just need a dose of natural nourishment.
- Get Out & Live – Learn a variety of outdoor recreation skills from staff experts, such as building a campfire and setting up camp, fixing a flat tire on the trail, and selecting the best bike for you.

In addition, you can watch videos featuring all of the treks included in the MetroParks Trails Challenge and rides featured during National Bike Month. While the Trails Challenge officially ends Oct. 4 and Bike Month is in May, you can still explore these trails on your own time and at your own pace year round.



TAKE-HOME PROGRAM KITS metroparks.org/kits

These new kits let families experience nature on their own time, as well as learn new things and develop new skills at home. Kits include self-guided activities with nature, outdoor recreation, gardening and historical farming themes. A variety of kits will be offered monthly to provide new and seasonal options. These kits sell out quickly – follow Five Rivers MetroParks on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the inside scoop on when they're available.

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT RENTALS metroparks.org/equipment

This fall, Five Rivers MetroParks will begin renting equipment to help you explore the outdoors. Rentals will be made online in much the same way you might rent a campsite or shelter. The rental period will be Friday through the following Monday, with specific times and locations for contactless pick-up and drop off. Equipment rentals include such resources as a tutorial video on how to set up the tent and links to videos covering common bicycle maintenance issues.

- The following equipment will be available for rental in the initial launch:
1. Backyard Camping (tent only)
 2. Backyard Camping (tent, sleeping bags and sleeping pads)
 3. Bicycle Maintenance (repair stand, floor pump, tool kit)

THINK TV'S NATURE CAT FEATURING METROPARKS STAFF metroparks.org/PBSscamp



Five Rivers MetroParks and local PBS Station, ThinkTV, co-presented a virtual Explore the Outdoors Summer Camp with PBS Kids show Nature Cat. MetroParks educators, national parks experts and characters

from Nature Cat took kids on educational outdoor adventures through the forests, creeks, a city and elsewhere during this free, six-episode virtual camp.

Summer may be over, but you can still view the episodes online. The content is applicable year round and geared for children ages 3 through 8. Each Explore the Outdoors episode features a DIY craft, a nature-based education session featuring MetroParks educators, a tour of a National Park and much more.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS MOBILE APP metroparks.org/mobile



MetroParks now has a mobile field guide: The new app, powered by OuterSpatial, makes it easier to explore the outdoors at your MetroParks. The app is free and available for both iPhone and Android devices. It includes offline mapping and navigation – and access continues even without a cell phone signal. It's a one-stop tool for accurate, up-to-date information on trails and recreation information throughout MetroParks, the regional paved trail network and river access points. The app also includes outings that allow you to take self-guided tours of the Possum Creek Farm, Carriage Hill Historical Farm and Dayton Inventors River Walk, with new content being added regularly.

EMAIL NEWSLETTERS metroparks.org/newsletter

Five Rivers MetroParks sends email newsletters on a variety of topics, including outdoor recreation, gardening, volunteerism and much more. Sign up to be one of the first in the know about MetroParks' news and ways you can explore the outdoors and connect with nature.

FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS
LANDMARK
BINGO

Your Five Rivers MetroParks are home to a number of special places that help tell the story of our region's cultural history. Indeed, the preservation and interpretation of Montgomery County's natural heritage is part of MetroParks' mission. When we protect our land, we also protect important remnants of our human journey, from Native Americans to the development of cities and suburbs. Use this landmark Bingo game to discover some of the historical sites in your MetroParks – and perhaps discover something new!



Adirondack-style shelter at Hills & Dales MetroPark

HOW TO PLAY: Use the Bingo card below, download and print your Bingo card, or transfer it to paper or another surface if you don't have a printer. Check off boxes while visiting your MetroParks. Some of these landmarks can be found in multiple MetroParks, while others are unique to a specific MetroPark. Once you can create a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line by checking boxes, you win! **BONUS:** See who can check off all the boxes on their card!

Always follow the CDC's recommendations, particularly for social distancing and wearing face coverings, when spending time outdoors.

NOT SURE WHERE A LANDMARK IS LOCATED?

Visit metroparks.org/natureisopen for details about the items below, including locations. Look for the landmark Bingo blog post.



Find a Stone Bridge	Three C Shelter (Taylorsville)	Osage Orange Tree Tunnel (Sugarcreek)	Rose Garden Arbor (Wegerzyn Gardens)	Find a Boardwalk
River Run Whitewater Features	Find a Waterfall	Adirondack-Style Shelter (Hills & Dales)	Historical Boy Scout Camp (Twin Creek)	Farm Animals
Dayton Invention Station (RiverScape)	Remains of Tadmor Village (Taylorsville)	FREE SPACE	Memorial to Park's Founder (Hills & Dales)	Amazing view of Downtown Dayton
Railroad Bridge Over Wolf Creek (Wesleyan)	Dam Built After 1913 Flood	Bandshell (Island)	Wright Brothers Sculpture (Deeds Point)	Find a Prairie
1800s Farm Home (Carriage Hill)	Monet Bridge (Cox Arboretum)	Aull House (Aullwood Garden)	Fort Carlisle (Twin Creek)	Argonne Forest (Possum Creek)



Resources
for Educators

METROPARKS.ORG/TEACHERS

Five Rivers MetroParks is dedicated to supporting teachers and their students through these challenging times. While MetroParks' educators can't offer in-person field trips or outreach programming this fall, they've been hard at work creating virtual resources educators can use in socially distant or virtual classrooms.

- Virtual School Field Trips – Using videos that can be accessed any time, it's easy for educators to fit these programs into their curriculum. Classroom teachers can schedule 45 to 60 minute live Q&A sessions to enhance some of the programs, which can easily be incorporated into a Google Classroom or other virtual environment. The virtual field trips use Flipgrid, and educator resources are provided on Padlet. Four units, with lessons designed for multiple grades, are available: geology and fossils; habitats and ecology; gardening, homesteading and sustainability; and life in the 1880s.
- Five Rivers MetroParks' Teacher Community Facebook group – Connect with fellow educators, find resources and helpful articles, ask questions and more. To join, you'll be asked where you teach and the grade level you teach to verify members are local teachers. Once a member, you can start discussions in the group, ask questions and share ideas. MetroParks educators share resources as well.
- Virtual Teachers Night Out Series – Join local like-minded educators for a virtual evening just for teachers! Explore new ways to connect your lessons with nature and learn about community resources.



- **RiverScape MetroPark:** Dayton Inventors River Walk (0.3 miles)
- **Huffman Prairie State Natural Landmark:** Natural surface trail (0.2 mile)
- **Possum Creek MetroPark:** Violet trail (1.4 miles)
- **Carriage Hill MetroPark:** Historical Farm self-guided tour, available in mobile app (1.1 miles)
- **Taylorsville MetroPark:** Great Miami River paved rec trail (northern section)

Details in the new mobile app: metroparks.org/mobile.

HEART HEALTHY TRAILS



MetroParks has designated three Heart Healthy Trails and plans to add additional trails in the coming months. Some are on the paved recreation trails, accessible to those with mobility challenges. Look for signage with a map and more info at the start of each Heart Healthy Trail.

“Being out in nature is good for mental and physical health,” said Beth Burke, MetroParks interpretation coordinator. “Especially now, it can be better to get your physical activity outdoors rather than in an enclosed space. Plus, you can enjoy the scenery and sounds of nature.”

[METROPARKS.ORG/HEART-HEALTHY](https://metroparks.org/heart-healthy)

MetroParks Heart Healthy Trails



WOLF CREEK TRAIL

This trail starts in Trotwood at the Olde Town Depot, located at the intersection of Wolf Creek Pike/Main Street and Broadway. This paved recreation trail is marked every quarter mile, so you know when to turn around to get the distance you desire. If you continue along the trail, it will take you to Sycamore State Park.



ISLAND METROPARK

This trail is a paved 0.65-mile loop around the perimeter of the park. Enjoy walking by beautifully landscaped beds while taking in views of the Stillwater River. You can also check out “Ashzilla,” one of the biggest trees in MetroParks, a large white ash tree close to the parking lot. You may need to walk the loop two or three times to get the recommended 30 minutes of exercise.



GERMANTOWN METROPARK

This Heart Healthy Trail is on new natural surface trails at the park. It includes portions of the purple, brown and orange trail loops for a total of 1.7 miles. You can connect to Germantown’s extensive trail system via the orange trail. Access the Heart Healthy Trail from Boomershine Road. (See page 10 for more info on the Germantown MetroPark trails.)

A new MetroParks initiative helps improve physical and mental health outdoors.

If you’re looking for a fun way to get in shape, take your workout outdoors. In fact, exercising outdoors provides benefits the traditional gym workout does not – and just 30 to 40 minutes of exercise a few times a week will improve your heart health, according to the American Heart Association.

To make it easy for you to exercise outdoors, Five Rivers MetroParks has launched a Heart Healthy Trails initiative. These trails are:

- Easy to moderate
- 1 to 2.5 miles long
- Walkable at a brisk pace
- Marked every quarter mile to help you track your pace

“These are easy, entry-level trails on paved or flat surfaces without a lot of elevation change,” said Angie Sheldon, MetroParks outdoor recreation coordinator. “Signage on the trails also will help people start walking outdoors as part of a heart-healthy lifestyle. Each trail will be a little different, depending on the location and length, so people can try them all or pick a favorite.”

The American Heart Association recommends walking at a brisk pace of 24 minutes per mile and work toward walking at least 2.5 miles per hour. Signage located every quarter mile on the Heart Healthy Trails allows you to calculate your pace.



HEART HEALTHY TRAILS IN METROPARKS MOBILE APP

These newly designated trails are featured outings in Five Rivers MetroParks’ new mobile app, powered by OuterSpatial. See page 12 for more info about the app.

BENEFITS of EXERCISING OUTDOORS



1. A DOSE OF VITAMIN D: Also known as the “sunshine vitamin,” vitamin D is essential for immune functions, bone strength and enhanced mood.

2. MORE BODY BENEFITS: Exercising outdoors can improve focus and boost your mood, giving you more energy.

3. MENTAL WELLNESS: Time spent in nature can reduce depression, stress and anxiety. These benefits can improve your physical health, such as reduced blood pressure, better sleep and lower cortisol levels.

4. BUDGET FRIENDLY: Being active in your back yard, on your favorite trail or in your MetroParks is free. All you need to start walking on the Heart Healthy Trails are a sturdy pair of sneakers, water and sunscreen.

Before starting any exercise program, be sure to check with your doctor.



- | | |
|---|---|
| • Carriage Hill MetroPark:
Yellow trail (1.8 miles) | • Sugarcreek MetroPark:
Green trail (3.1 miles) |
| • Englewood MetroPark:
Yellow trail (1 mile) | • Taylorville MetroPark:
Yellow trail (1.2 miles) |
| • Germantown MetroPark:
Silver trail (1.6 miles) | • Twin Creek MetroPark:
Pink trail (2.2 miles) |

Details in the new mobile app: metroparks.org/mobile.



Giving Back in the Great Outdoors

Volunteers learn new skills, make new friends and stay active – while helping MetroParks protect the region’s natural heritage.

It was difficult for Ed Stevenson to trade New Hampshire’s mountains, beaches and lighthouses for a home closer to his grandchildren, but time spent on MetroParks’ trails has made the transition easier.

After Stevenson, 70, and his wife moved to Dayton about five years ago, he was looking for interesting opportunities to get involved in the community. A call for volunteers in this magazine caught his eye. Stevenson started as a conservation caretaker at Medlar Conservation Area but fell in love with walking the trails after volunteering during a trail workday.

“I like being out on the trails and on my feet,” Stevenson said. “You can learn about the trails and help maintain them – it’s a win-win.”

Since 2015, Stevenson has volunteered with MetroParks in numerous capacities, learning new skills and working closely with MetroParks professionals. Stevenson participates in prairie burns and patrols the shores of MetroParks’ lakes and ponds for discarded fishing line as part of Pond Patrol. As a member of MetroParks Volunteer Patrol (MVP), Stevenson monitors the trails to report safety hazards and helps visitors explore the parks.

While Stevenson spends most of his volunteer time patrolling the Twin Valley Trail and Sugarcreek MetroPark, he often walks his dog at Hills & Dales MetroPark.

“You can go to the gym and stare at a wall for half an hour or can you get out and hike the trails,” Stevenson said. “You can look around and see pretty plants and wildlife. You leave the world behind; it’s kind of meditative.”



BECOME A METROPARKS VOLUNTEER

Learn new skills, care for the environment and make new friends – while providing an important community service. Working side-by-side with staff, Five Rivers MetroParks volunteers extend the agency’s resources and help MetroParks accomplish its mission.

NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

People of all ages and abilities are MetroParks volunteers. All you need is enthusiasm for our region’s natural or

cultural history, a willingness to learn and a desire to share with others. MetroParks has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities so everyone can find something that meets their passion – and schedule.

FUN AND REWARDING

Volunteers enjoy the following benefits:

- Using your skills and learning new ones
- Sharing your interests with people of all ages
- Improving the quality of life for Montgomery County residents
- Professional training on a variety of topics
- Learning more about the natural world
- Making new friendships while connecting with nature
- Interacting with park visitors
- Exercise and improved mental and physical health

EASY TO GET STARTED

Volunteer activities have been impacted due to precautions related to COVID-19, but it’s always a good time to learn more about volunteering at your MetroParks.

To learn more, contact:

- volunteer.services@metroparks.org
- 937-275-PARK (7275)

[METROPARKS.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://metroparks.org/volunteer)



• **Cox Arboretum MetroPark:**
Paved paths

• **Island MetroPark:**
Walking loop (0.65 mile)

• **Medlar Conservation Area:**
Great-Little Trail (2.25 miles)

• **RiverScape MetroPark:**
Paved recreation trails

• **Sugarcreek MetroPark:**
Paved prairie loop (0.3 mile)

• **Woodman Fen Conservation Area:**
ADA-accessible 1,800-foot boardwalk

Charitable Giving TO YOUR FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS



When you support the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation, you support MetroParks’ mission to protect our region’s natural heritage and provide outdoor experiences that inspire a personal connection with nature. With so many ways to give, supporting the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation has never been easier.

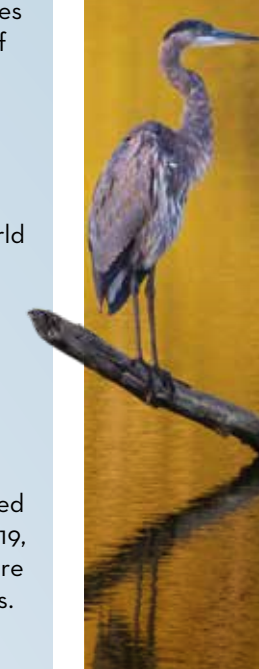
• **CHAMPIONS PROGRAM:**
The easiest way to contribute is by making a monthly recurring gift.

• **TRIBUTE PROGRAM:**
Honor a special person with a named bench, tree and more at their favorite MetroPark.

• **PLANNED GIVING:**
Leave a lasting legacy with a planned gift in your will or estate plan to ensure future generations enjoy great parks.

• **SHOP FOR A CAUSE:** Support MetroParks via Amazon Smile and at Kroger and Dorothy Lane Market.

[METROPARKS.ORG/DONATE](https://metroparks.org/donate)



PHILANTHROPY

HONORING MEMORIES MADE ON THE TRAILS

Coda at Sugarcreek MetroPark

Dogs are affectionately referred to as “man’s best friend,” and Coda, Jason Branden’s German shepherd, was no exception.

For almost 11 years, the duo was inseparable – moving to new homes across the country and exploring the outdoors. Now, Coda’s trail-loving spirit lives on at Sugarcreek MetroPark, where a trail is dedicated in his memory.

Branden was living in Kansas when he adopted Coda, who came from an adventurous litter: At six weeks old, all the pups wandered out one evening to explore the surrounding farmland. The next morning, their mother corralled them all back during Branden’s first visit. The biggest pup plopped down next to him, and Branden knew that was the dog for him.

After moving to Mason, Ohio, in 2013, Branden was heartened by the state’s extensive parks systems. When he moved to Dayton in 2016, he took full advantage. While the duo enjoyed walking in their Wright Dunbar neighborhood, Branden wanted Coda to get more exercise and learned about Five Rivers MetroParks’ trails.

“It’s nice to have a variety of trail lengths and to see different sights,” Branden said. “It’s good to visit on a rotating basis to see how each park changes with the seasons.”

The hiking team visited many parks, but Sugarcreek and Possum Creek MetroParks were their favorites.

Sadly, Coda passed away in January 2019 after doctors discovered his cancer had spread. Branden knew he wanted to honor his time with Coda in a special way and decided to dedicate a MetroParks trail in his memory.

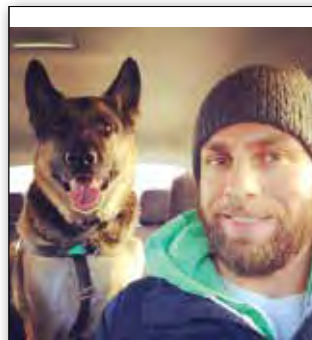
SUPPORT FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

Learn more about giving to the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation; The James M. Cox, Jr. Arboretum Foundation; and the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation: Visit metroparks.org/donate.

Branden contacted the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation, then held a Facebook fundraiser to help cover the cost. He felt strongly about supporting MetroParks because he and Coda enjoyed and used the parks so frequently.

Branden still walks the trails with his other German shepherd, Cadence, and fondly remembers Coda, especially when in Sugarcreek MetroPark.

“Cadence and I were alone on the tallgrass prairie portion of the yellow trail, looping back toward the car before sundown,” Branden said. “We happened to walk into a dragonfly swarm, and what seemed like 100 dragonflies were darting up and down the trail and back and forth over the tallgrass. With the colors of the approaching sunset and quiet around us, it was very serene and peaceful. I couldn’t help but feel Coda’s presence.”



A photo from 2016 of Jason Branden and his German Shepherd, Coda

To learn more about tribute options or leaving a legacy gift to the Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation, visit metroparks.org/foundation or call Beth Redden, chief of philanthropy, at 937-277-4396.



- **Englewood MetroPark:** South park loop trail (1 to 2.5+ miles)
- **Germantown MetroPark:** Yellow trail (1.9 miles)
- **Sugarcreek MetroPark:** Blue trail (1 mile)
- **Possum Creek MetroPark:** Yellow trail (1.3 miles)

Details in the new mobile app: metroparks.org/mobile.

**Note: For the safety and enjoyment of all, pets must be on a leash no longer than 8 feet at all times in MetroParks.*

SKATE

IN A NEW WAY

AT THE METROPARKS ICE RINK THIS WINTER

RiverScape MetroPark, 237 E. Monument Ave.

Plans are in place to open the ice rink so you can skate under the pavilion alongside downtown Dayton’s riverfront!

\$8 includes admission and skate rental
Free for those ages 3 and younger

2020-2021 SCHEDULE Nov. 27 through Feb. 28

Nov. 27 through Jan. 3
Saturdays – 11 AM to 8 PM
Sundays – 11 AM to 5:30 PM

Jan. 4 through Feb. 28
Saturdays – 11 AM to 8 PM
Sundays – 1 to 5 PM

Extended holiday skating will be available Monday through Sunday from Dec. 21 through Jan. 3 and select holidays through Feb 28. For updates, please visit METROPARKS.ORG/ICERINK

PLAN AHEAD

Visitors will need to prepare for a skating experience that’s very different from previous winters at the rink. Additional safety measures may be required beyond those listed:

- A limited number of people will be allowed to skate at a time.
- Visitors must register online for a specific time and pay in advance for 90 minutes on the ice.
- Admission is a flat fee of \$8, including for those with their own skates.
- Season passes are not available.
- The RiverScape Café will be open with a limited menu that will include hot chocolate.
- Skate Helpers will be available for those learning to skate and sanitized between uses.
- Ice skates will be sanitized between uses.
- Lessons and rentals will be available, with a limited number of participants.
- Stay warm in the MSD Warming Zone.



This information was accurate when this publication was printed in late August but is subject to change due to precautions related to COVID-19. Visit METROPARKS.ORG or call 937-275-PARK (7275) for the most up-to-date information.



2ND STREET MARKET UPDATE

600 E. Second St., downtown Dayton

The outdoor farmers market will be open Saturdays through mid to late October, weather depending. The 2nd Street Market will temporarily close for the season afterward, but you can still shop fresh and local from many of your favorite vendors online. For more information and updates:

- Visit METROPARKS.ORG/LOCALFOOD
- Follow facebook.com/2ndStreetMarket
- Sign up for 2nd Street Market emails at metroparks.org/newsletters



CARRIAGE HILL RIDING CENTER

For updates on available activities and programs visit

METROPARKS.ORG/RIDINGCENTER





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HOLD ON TO YOUR PARKWAYS!

This issue does not include program listings due to COVID-19 precautions. See page 2 for more information. View this *ParkWays* publication online at metroparks.org/parkways.



PLEASE RECYCLE

COVID-19 OUTDOOR GUIDELINES

FIVE RIVERS
METROPARKS

HELP KEEP YOUR PARKS & TRAILS OPEN

De-stress, stay active, and improve your mental and physical health by connecting with nature – whether in your favorite green space or back yard. Here's your guide for safely using your MetroParks' outdoor spaces. [#natureisopen](https://metroparks.org/natureisopen)

CARRY OUT
TRASH, INCLUDING
DOG WASTE

DO NOT TOUCH
OR USE COMMUNAL
SURFACES

PARKING
MAY BE
LIMITED

WEAR FACE COVERINGS IN
PUBLIC. WASH YOUR HANDS
AND BRING HAND SANITIZER

DO YOUR PART: STAY 6 FEET APART
ALERT OTHERS AND STEP ASIDE TO PASS

EXPLORE LESS FREQUENTLY
USED PARKS AND TRAILS.
VISIT SOLO OR WITH
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

PREPARE FOR CLOSED
RESTROOMS AND
WATER FOUNTAINS

[METROPARKS.ORG/NATUREISOPEN](https://metroparks.org/natureisopen)

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