

Metro Parks E-Newsletter

Columbus & Franklin County



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May 15, 2008



If you have a question about some aspect of nature or about a Metro Park, the naturalists at Blendon Woods Metro Park can help. Email your question to enaturalist@metroparks.net.

Most questions will be answered by the end of the next business day.

National Missing and Exploited Children's Day

Once again, Metro Parks rangers will be encouraging parents, guardians and other trusted-adult role models to spend time talking to kids and teaching them ways to be safer as part of National Missing and Exploited Children's Day. Stop by Blendon Woods on Saturday May 17 from 1 to 3 p.m. or Blacklick Woods on Sunday May 18 from 1 to 3 p.m. and meet our rangers, local fire fighters, police officers and McGruff the Crime Dog. Your child can get fingerprinted and receive a free identification kit. There will also be plenty of free nature activities to enjoy.

More on your Metro Parks

website: www.metroparks.net

Infoline: 614.508.8000

Telephone: 614.891.0700

From the Executive Director

Great day of birding

I had the pleasure of spending an entire day birdwatching as part of Audubon's annual Birdathon event. The idea is to see how many species of birds your group can find in a 24 hour period. ([more](#))



Restoring habitat to protect grassland birds

Chrissy Pheiffer, Naturalist Glacier Ridge

Restored grasslands are attracting many of the disappearing grassland birds to your Metro Parks and can be heard singing... ([more](#))

Enjoy your Metro Parks by tram

Explore your Metro Parks as you ride through a park on our 42-passenger open-air tram this summer. The tram will travel to different parks throughout the summer and fall. ([more](#))

Beaver Lake opens for fishing

The fish are biting at the new Beaver Lake Area at Prairie Oaks Metro Park. You can catch bluegill, catfish, crappie and bass at the 15-acre lake ([more](#))

Safety tips

Metro Parks are safe and enjoyable places to visit any time of the year. However, remember to practice the same personal safety routines you would anywhere else. ([more](#))

Summer teacher workshops at your Metro Parks

Metro Parks will offer four teacher training workshops in June and July ([more](#))

Metro Parks & the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

Metro Parks has partnered with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation to offer Land and Living: A Workshop for Teachers ([more](#))

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Great day of birding

I had the pleasure of spending an entire day birdwatching as part of Audubon's annual Birdathon event. The idea is to see how many species of birds your group can find in a 24 hour period. It's a fun way to raise money for Audubon activities. The funds raised by the Columbus Audubon chapter are used to support the new Grange Insurance Audubon Center that will soon be built in Scioto Audubon Metro Park on the Whittier Peninsula.

Real serious birders actually spend the entire 24 hours seeking birds to add to their list. We spent about 12 hours actively looking for birds to add to our list. I am part of a team that calls ourselves the Stellar Jays. Jim, Joe, John and I (yes, all of our names begin with a jay) spent much of the day in Clear Creek and Pickerington Ponds Metro Parks. We also visited Lake Logan and Greenlawn Cemetery. We were able to find 111 bird species, which we considered a very successful day.

Going birding during spring migration is a great way to experience the joys of nature here in the Metro Parks. The birds have their most beautiful colors and many are singing their courtship songs. Add that to the fresh air and sunshine and you have all the makings of a great day. I hope that everyone can get out and enjoy the spring season in your Metro Parks.

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Restoring habitat to protect grassland birds

Chrissy Pheiffer, Naturalist Glacier Ridge

Less than 50 years ago, small farms dotted Ohio's landscape. These farms provided not only vital food for humans, but important breeding habitat for grassland birds. The bubbly whistle of the black and white bobolink could be heard calling from fence posts. Instead of using trees to nest, grassland birds build their nests on the ground relying on the camouflage of the tall grasses to conceal their nests.

Prior to European settlement into Ohio, most of our landscape was forest, wetland and patches of prairies. In the early 1900s many of Ohio's prairies were plowed under for small scale farms. Due to the adaptability of the grassland birds, the new farms created new habitat for the birds to spread their wings.

Our use of the land has changed over the last 40 years. Since 1967, many of the once abundant grassland birds have declined in large numbers. The bright yellow throat of the eastern meadowlark was once a common sight on farms. However, since the late 1960s the meadowlark population has declined by 75 percent. Most of these declines are due to converting grasslands into suburban habitats, small-scale farms becoming large one-crop farm fields and old farm land reverting to forests.

Taking an active role, Metro Parks has restored grasslands at both Battelle Darby Creek and Prairie Oaks. These parks are part of the once vast Darby Plains, which covered Madison and Union counties. At Glacier Ridge, more than 160 acres of former agricultural land have been converted to cool-season grasses, covering the northern part of the park. Because of these large grasslands, many of the disappearing grassland birds can be heard singing at your Metro Parks.

Join Glacier Ridge for their grassland bird program on Sunday, June 1 at 8 a.m.

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Enjoy your Metro Parks by tram

Explore your Metro Parks as you ride through a park on our 42-passenger open-air tram this summer. The tram will travel to different parks throughout the summer and fall.

Experienced naturalists will enhance your adventure with an informative glimpse into both natural and cultural history. They'll help you spot wildlife most visitors would never see.

Tram schedule

May 20- June 1 Three Creeks Park

June 3- June 15 Highbanks Metro Park

June 17-June 29 Slate Run Metro Park

July 1- July 13 Sharon Woods Metro Park

July 15- August 24 Three Creeks Park

August 26- September 7 Glacier Ridge Metro Park

September 9- September 21 Blendon Woods Metro Park

September 23- October 12 Blacklick Woods Metro Park

October 14- October 26 Slate Run Metro Park

October 28- November 16 Three Creeks Park

Special programs with naturalists have been scheduled while the tram is at the various parks. Go to <http://reservations.metroparks.net/programs/> for information about those programs. You can also schedule a free tram program for your group by calling 614.508.8000.

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Beaver Lake opens for fishing

The fish are biting at the new Beaver Lake Area at Prairie Oaks Metro Park. You can catch bluegill, catfish, crappie and bass at the 15-acre lake located at 8921 Lucas Road in Plain City. The 40-foot reclaimed quarry is open daily from 6:30 a.m. to dark. Canoes and non-motorized boats are allowed on the lake and leashed pets can be walked in the area and on the short loop trail. A park pamphlet with fishing, boating and pet regulations is available at the site.

The Upper Darby Canoe Access at 4275 Amity Road in Hilliard has also been opened. This is a great place to launch your canoe or kayak and see the wonders of Big Darby Creek.

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Safety tips

Metro Parks are safe and enjoyable places to visit any time of the year. However, remember to practice the same personal safety routines you would anywhere else.

Personal safety tips

- Be aware of nearby people and vehicles
- If using headphones, let them hang around your neck. It's important to hear what's around you
- If it becomes necessary to call for help, be able to give an exact location by knowing the nearest park area, road intersection or landmark
- Carry a loud whistle to make a loud noise if in an emergency
- Always be observant, particularly of a suspicious person or group of people. If someone becomes a victim of crime, a good description will assist in identifying the suspect
- If you become a victim of a crime, yell or scream. Do not risk injury by chasing or fighting with an attacker

Child safety

- Young children should never be allowed to wander off by themselves
- Keep close visual contact with children at all times, especially around roadways and bodies of water
- Teach children not to talk to strangers and never accept invitations to go anywhere with someone they don't know
- Educate children about rangers and police officers. Explain that they are there to help and it's okay to ask for help
- Teach children how to contact help in the event of an emergency
- Teach children that if they become lost in the park to stay put and wait for help to arrive

Vehicle safety

- Lock car doors and close windows after checking to make sure keys are removed from the vehicle
- Have your keys ready when returning to your vehicle
- Lock valuables (purse, wallet, cell phone, camera's, etc.) in the trunk
- If you find that your vehicle has been broken into, try to touch as little as possible and call a ranger

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Summer teacher workshops at your Metro Parks

Metro Parks will offer four teacher training workshops in June and July. Workshops target academic content standards and process skills for several age groups. Workshops are conducted by various state and local agencies and school district representatives and are presented at a Metro Park or other Central Ohio agency site. Teachers work mostly in an outdoor setting to find ways to develop meaningful field trips and classroom and hands-on activities with little or no classroom funding.

Workshops and dates:

1. Technology for a Green Tomorrow	June 23–26, 2008	\$50
2. Analyzing Human Impact on Water	July 8 & 10, 2008	\$50
3. Physical Education in an Outdoor Setting	July 15 & 16	\$50
4. Nature's Weird and Wonderful	July 22 & 23, 2008	\$50

You may register for these workshops online at www.metroparks.net. You may only register online using a credit card.

If you must use another type of payment method, please mail it along with a completed registration form to Metro Parks, 1069 W. Main St., Westerville, OH 43081. Registration forms can be downloaded at www.metroparks.net.

One semester hour of credit will be offered through Ashland University for each 2-day workshop completed. Registration for credit is separate and can be done at the workshop.

For more information contact Susan Boggs at 614.895.6211 or sboggs@metroparks.net

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Metro Parks & the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation workshops

Metro Parks has partnered with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation to offer Land and Living: A Workshop for Teachers. This workshop is divided into two, 2-day sessions.

- **Session I:**

A two-day tour of livestock farms and a Metro Park

July 28 & 29, 2008

\$150

[Registration fee for Session I includes 1-night hotel accommodation, transportation and registration]

- **Session II:**

One-day visit to the Ohio State Fair, one day visit to The OSU College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

August 7 & 8, 2008

\$50

One semester hour of credit will be offered through Ashland University for each 2-day Session completed. Registration for credit is separate and can be done at the workshop.

For more information, contact summerworkshop@ofbf.org or call Judy Roush at 614.246.8243.