



Photo credit: Brad Bolton



Portage Park District

November 2019 Newsletter

In the parks

Rare Reptile Alert

Author: Jennifer White, Education Program Coordinator

Caution: excessive use of exclamation points ahead due to extreme science geek out!

We had an extra dose of excitement in the parks last month! A Kent State University class was on a field trip walking along the Portage Hike & Bike Trail when one student spotted a Smooth Greensnake!! Another one was spotted last year along the Headwaters Trail by a Park District staff member. Those familiar with this beautiful reptile understand what a fantastic find it is! If you are not yet acquainted with the Smooth Greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*), allow me to introduce you!



According to the Ohio Division of Wildlife, the Smooth Greensnake has only been documented in 11 Ohio counties since 1976. It is listed as a

state endangered species. The small and slender snake is only 10-20" in length. It is bright green in color with a yellowish underbody and is considered by many to be one of the most attractive snakes in the state. Greensnakes are small, secretive, and blend into their

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Trail news

Trails aren't just a part of our community, they're the heart of our community! The Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition celebrates our trail communities and all that they have to offer.

Check out [Trail Trips](#) on the Industrial Heartland Coalition website

Upcoming programs

Owlbert's Birthday Hike

Nov. 6, 4-5 p.m.

Fitness Hike

Nov. 9, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

surroundings. This combination results in only occasional encounters with this rare reptile.

The Smooth Greensnake can be found in small shrubs, grapevines, ditches, open meadows and marshy grasses. Most sightings are simply a rapid glimpse of bright green moving through the vegetation, understandably earning them the nickname of "grass snake". Their diet consists of spiders and insects - primarily crickets, grasshoppers, butterflies, ants, and caterpillars.

Perhaps no group of animals have suffered more from misunderstanding and superstition than snakes. It is unfortunate since most of our native snakes are docile and all are a beneficial part of the ecosystem. If you're leery of snakes, I encourage you to take a closer look at the adorable face of the Smooth Greensnake and learn more about this snake's role in our environment. You may just become a fan and be as super excited as we are about the next sighting!

Program news

Programs do more than educate - they help us connect

Author: Andrea Metzler, Public Engagement Coordinator

We have several wonderful programs welcoming park patrons to hike together and learn more about the environment in November and will be releasing our winter calendar soon. Our Park Rx program is also still going strong working toward helping you become connected with our community and nature - taking strides to a healthier YOU! Beyond simply enjoying the natural world around us, connecting with others feeds our overall health. It is now being said that loneliness and isolation can be as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Read more about the loneliness epidemic [here](#)). Connecting with others is key to helping battle loneliness, our programs can help you do that while enjoying the beautiful scenery that Portage County has to offer.



Check out our [Things to Do page](#) for information on guided hikes and other programs. And just in case you were wondering - yes we go out in the cold!

Tell us what you think

The wonderful Jen White has been creating amazing programs since her first day on the job in May. We'd like

History of the Hopewell Mound
Nov. 12, 4-5 p.m.

Group Nature Hike
Nov. 14, 4-5 p.m.

Geocaching Fun!
Nov. 19, 4-5 p.m.

Group Nature Hike
Nov. 20, 4-5 p.m.

Headwaters & History
Nov. 23, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Nature for Families
Nov. 24, 2-3 p.m.

Homeschool Hike
Nov. 25, 10-11 a.m.

Turkey Trot
Nov. 26, 4-5 p.m.

Nature Crafting
Nov. 27, 4 p.m.

Visit our [Things to Do](#) page for more information and registration.

Click the image below to visit our website to download a program flyer.

Fall Program Guide			
Date	Time	Location	Program Title
11/12	4-5 p.m.	Portageville Park	History of the Hopewell Mound
11/14	4-5 p.m.	Portageville Park	Group Nature Hike
11/19	4-5 p.m.	Portageville Park	Geocaching Fun!
11/20	4-5 p.m.	Portageville Park	Group Nature Hike
11/23	11 a.m.-12 p.m.	Portageville Park	Headwaters & History
11/24	2-3 p.m.	Portageville Park	Nature for Families
11/25	10-11 a.m.	Portageville Park	Homeschool Hike
11/26	4-5 p.m.	Portageville Park	Turkey Trot
11/27	4 p.m.	Portageville Park	Nature Crafting

A little Halloween fun with our staff



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your input as we continue to create programming. Share your experience with us, or tell us what you would like to see on our schedule in the future. [Take our survey here.](#)



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Wild Hikes Challenge 2019 - Year of the Pollinators

This year, we celebrate pollinators for the essential role they play in supporting life, and recognize the need to promote pollinator health across the landscape.



To participate, just walk, hike, skip, jog, run or stroll on 8 of the following trails before December 31st to earn a hiking staff (1st year) and/or a 2019 Wild Hikes medallion. Forms can be downloaded [here](#).

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Visit our website | portageparkdistrict.org

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