

Inexpensive Ways to Enjoy the Holidays

by Naturalist Mel Grosvenor

Are you looking for fun, inexpensive ways to enjoy the holidays this year? Stay close to home and check out your Greene County Parks. Here are a few activities you and your family can enjoy free of charge.

Visit one of the Greene County Parks for a relaxing winter hike. If you need a quick break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays and want a nice short hike, try Glen Thompson Reserve. Following the Little Miami River and then curving into the woods is an easy loop trail that is about a half mile long. Glen Thompson Reserve is located off State Route 35 where it meets Trebein Road.

If you want a longer hike, try the Narrows Reserve in Beavercreek. Nearly 5 miles of trails take you past the Little Miami River and into peaceful woodlands. You can also bring the whole family to the nature center at the Narrows Reserve and see snakes, turtles, a red-tailed hawk and other Ohio wildlife. The center is open Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the winter months. It is a good idea to call first (937-429-9590), as the naturalists are often out of the office for programs and the center is closed in their absence. The Narrows Reserve is located at 2575 Indian Ripple Road, near Factory Road.

One of the most spectacular sights in the area is Cedar Cliff Falls at Indian Mound Reserve off State Route 42 North outside of Cedarville. This 30 foot waterfall is not to be missed when it is decorated with snow and icicles in the wintertime. The waterfall is conveniently located right at the parking lot so it can be enjoyed by anyone. If you are a hiker, the whole park is worth checking out. You'll see a breathtaking gorge, Hopewell earthworks, a 30 foot tall Adena Mound and much more by exploring Indian Mound Reserve.

After a decent snowfall, you may want to do some cross-country skiing. But where can you do that in Greene County? The bike paths! Greene County has over 60 miles of bike paths and these areas will not be plowed after it snows. So get out there and enjoy them!

All in all there are many great ways to enjoy the season, entertain visiting relatives and work off holiday meals in Greene County. For information about upcoming programs, call Greene County Parks at 937-562-7440 or visit www.co.greene.oh.us/parks.