

# DON'T OVERLOOK *the Overlooks*

By Tom Adair, *Natural Resource Manager*

**MANY OF THE PARKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY** have overlook decks and trail overlooks that provide spectacular views of river and stream valleys, lakeshore bluffs and open meadow or forested habitats.

In western Lake County, visitors to Chapin Forest Reservation in Kirtland can hike along the 1.5 mile Lucky Stone Loop Trail and walk along the scenic overlook that provides an unobstructed view seven miles to the north toward Lake Erie and 17 miles to the west toward Cleveland on a clear day. At Kirtland's Penitentiary Glen Reservation, hikers can stop along the .25 mile Halle Home Loop Trail and gaze across the ravine over Stoney Brook. Visitors to Chagrin River Park, straddling the Willoughby/Eastlake border, have an opportunity to stop at four different river overlooks along the 1.6 mile Riverwood Loop Trail.

With more than two miles of trail, Veterans Park in Mentor provides hikers with great access to inland bird habitat. During spring migration, waterfowl and shorebirds use Veterans Park as a stopover site. The .25 mile Lookout Trail leads to an overlook deck with great views to the marsh portion of the nearly 30-acre Granger Pond.

In the east, spectacular springtime trailside views are offered by Hell Hollow Wilderness Area and Hidden Valley Park. Visitors to Hell Hollow can walk along the .5 mile Beechwood Loop Trail with more than half of its length along a cliff above the Paine Creek valley. Hidden Valley Park's north entrance, located .5 mile west of Rt. 528 on River Road in Madison, provides access to the .5 mile Crooked Tree Loop Trail, perched a few hundred feet above the Grand River.

Among the most recent views provided by Lake Metroparks' trail system is the spectacular vista across the Big Creek valley at Girdled Road Reservation's north access on Girdled Road. Visitors need only walk .1 mile from the parking lot to a small gravel spur path off the Buckeye Trail.

Lake Erie enthusiasts can view the lake from Madison's Arcola Creek Park overlook deck. The deck provides views to the east across the estuary marsh and to the north toward Lake Erie. The overlook deck is easily accessible from the parking lot. For more lake views, Lakeshore Reservation in North Perry provides park visitors with an overlook deck perched high above the lakeshore. The deck can be reached by hiking the .2 mile Birdwatchers Trail from the park's western parking lot.

Great views can be found throughout the park system, but few spots can rival the views from above Indian Point Park in Leroy Township. The .8 mile Lookout Ridge Trail offers amazing steep valley viewing at the convergence of Paine Creek and the Grand River. This spring be sure not to overlook the many overlooks throughout Lake Metroparks!



Paul Newman

*A view from Indian Point Park*



Jolene Piliarczyk

*Overlook at Veterans Park*