

WINTER 2007 - 2008

# NATURALLY SPEAKING

LAKE METROPARKS

## Turning 50: Naturally!

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As the cold temperatures set in and visitors enjoy the parks in all their winter splendor, it is the perfect time to reflect on the history of Lake Metroparks and look forward to its bright future.

It is hard to believe, but fifty years ago the Lake County Metropolitan Park District was created. At that time, concerned citizens had a vision for the preservation of open space and for the protection of special plant and animal communities throughout our county. They had a vision of setting aside 15,000 acres of open space guaranteeing that their children and grandchildren would forever be able to enjoy the rich natural heritage of Lake County.

Today, Lake Metroparks serves millions of visitors annually. Many come to walk trails, bird watch, golf, fish, attend a special event, visit wild animals or learn how to tie a fly. The opportunities available today are seemingly endless and varied.

The education of our children relative to preserving our natural resources is paramount to maintaining and improving biological diversity and to become a less consumptive society. Next year we will dedicate two new facilities that will be targeted to accomplish this mission. Lake Metroparks will open the Environmental Learning Center in Concord Township. The Porter Program for Science and Mathematics, administered by the Lake County Educational Service Center, will be relocated to this facility and will be open for the 2007-08 school year. Additionally, the Outdoor Skills Center and Hidden Lake Lodge in Leroy Township will become fully operational and will feature many programs and activities dedicated to teaching outdoor recreational pursuits.

In the past 50 years, Lake Metroparks has developed into one of the top-rated park districts in the United States. We are proud of what we, as a community, have built. Yes, it started as an idea, but it took root and grew only when the citizens of Lake County embraced the concept and committed to its excellence.

It is Lake Metroparks' dedication and forward thinking that will determine what tomorrow will be. Today and throughout 2008, we will take the time to celebrate this milestone in our history, while we look forward to creating tomorrow's landmarks.

Turn to page NS-8 to discover 50 ways to celebrate 50 years of Lake Metroparks. Be sure to look for more information and articles celebrating Lake Metroparks 50th anniversary in 2008!

