

Lake Metroparks Environmental Learning Center

The Lake Metroparks Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a state-of-the-art educational facility that connects people with nature. It features educational exhibits, fully equipped high-tech classrooms, an astronomical observatory, a biology/biotechnology lab and a weather station. Students, educators and residents of Northeast Ohio will benefit from the unique partnerships, programs and projects that are and will continue to be developed at the Lake Metroparks Environmental Learning Center.

New Home to The Porter Program

A partnership with the Lake County Educational Service Center relocated the award-winning Porter Program for Science and Mathematics from Auburn Career Center to the Environmental Learning Center. The Porter Program staff will conduct science programs for approximately 15,000 third, fourth and fifth grade students from Lake and Geauga Counties in the first year of operation.

Future ELC enhancements will include additional trails and unique learning opportunities. Future partnerships will continue to expand to include grades pre-K through 12 along with college level classes, internships and professional development for educators.

Location

The Environmental Learning Center is in the center of Lake County in Concord Township. It is approximately 250 acres of beautiful and ecologically diverse open space rich in both cultural and natural history.

Big Creek and Jordan Creek are protected on this property. At one time, the energy from both of these streams powered several mills and production facilities. There is a 19th century structure on the property that was used as a boarding house for mill workers and also was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Building & Exhibits

The building was originally constructed as the main dormitory and cafeteria for a residential church camp. Many considerations were given to make the building as energy efficient as possible and to incorporate green technologies into the renovation project beginning with the recycling of the existing structure, utilization of recycled material in the furniture and fixtures, incorporation of geothermal heating and cooling and advanced insulating systems.

The resulting structure has office and work space, a large multipurpose room, two classrooms, a biology laboratory, a greenhouse and an observatory.

The multipurpose room houses a series of custom-developed educational exhibits that focus on the major earth systems. These primary exhibits about water, energy and geologic systems are augmented by two smaller display units on plants and rocks and soil. The displays incorporate local elements to foster awareness of our relationship to the world around us, emphasizing a sense of place ("you are here").



Educational exhibits focus on major earth systems.

The facility was developed with current and future communication technologies in mind. It is connected via fiber optic cable to the Lake Geauga Computer Association. This will enable the ELC to be directly accessed by school districts across Ohio. Each exhibit can be used as an independent teaching station or they can be used together for multi-media presentations.



Natural resources on the property combined with state-of-the-art technologies in the renovated building make the Lake Metroparks Environmental Learning Center a unique facility designed to maximize local resources for educational purposes.

Staffing

The Porter Program staff is funded by the Lake County Educational Service Center through support from the Ohio Board of Regents, contributions from local businesses, grants and other donations. The staff currently includes licensed teachers, one administrator and several part-time contract positions. Also housed at the Environmental Learning Center is the Lake County Educational Service Center's Science Specialist who assists in the development of the science curricula for school systems across the county. Lake Metroparks provides an on-site facility coordinator and will expand public program offerings in the future.

For More Information

The Environmental Learning Center is open for scheduled classes, pre-registered programs or by appointment only. Please call 440-354-0894 for more information.