

BLACK RIVER CELEBRATION

This Summer, Celebrate the River with the Lorain County Metro Parks

Lorain County Metro Parks'
Black River Celebration
Summer Program Schedule
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CALLING ALL ARTISTS

COLORING CONTEST

PAGE 13



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Reasons to celebrate

Jannah Wilson, outdoor experiences manager for the Metro Parks, outlined at least six areas of significance for the Black River.

The 15-mile river provides connections among local communities, Wilson said. Lorain and Elyria are two obvious ones, but the river runs through other communities.

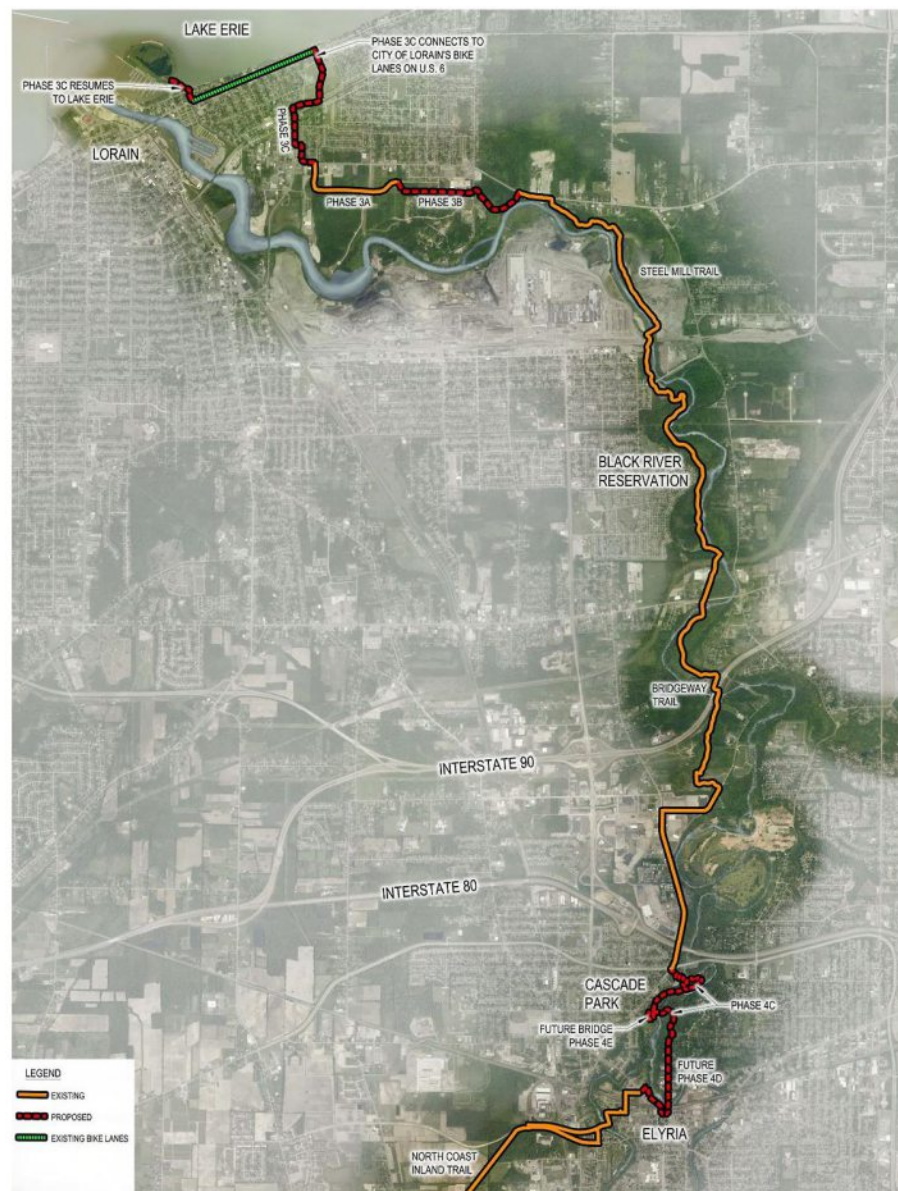
For example, the East Branch runs through Grafton, and Grafton-Mid-

view Public Library staff members Miranda Jenkins and Tami Mullins said they hope to get that community involved with the celebration.

Ziemnik and Wilson hinted at plans for a new connection between the Indian Hollow Reservation and Royal Oaks park, and the village of Grafton.

In recent years, the city of Lorain has scored \$35 million in federal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



This map from Lorain County Metro Parks shows the trail developing on Lorain's east side and how it connects to the existing Bridgeway Trail that runs north-south through Sheffield Village and into Elyria. The trail growth is part of the Black River Celebration, a continuing public awareness campaign and series of events for local residents to get reacquainted with Lorain County's major waterway.

This summer, discover the river with the Lorain County Metro Parks

The Black River winds its way through Lorain County, playing a significant role in the historical development of this land and the establishment of our communities. From the southern parts of the east and west branches to Lake Erie's shores, the Black River supplies the watershed with a vital life source of freshwater. This summer, join the Lorain County Metro Parks and our community partners as we celebrate the Black River.

The Black River Watershed is home to nearly 300,000 residents, of which 40 percent call Lorain and Elyria home. The watershed spans 466 miles through Ashland, Cuyahoga, Huron, Lorain, and Medina counties. Through the efforts of many, this significant waterway continues to enhance life within its surrounding communities. It continues to supply clean drinking water, contribute to the local economy, provide valuable wildlife habitats, and deliver a vast array of recreational opportunities.

The Black River has an incredible past of industrial, agricultural, and urban uses—all of which have an environmental impact. However, through various projects completed within the Black River Area of Concern (AOC), this river has made a tremendous comeback. Through the Black River Clean Up, more than 110 tons of waste have been removed from the river. Over \$35 million have been invested in the river, and according to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, \$1 invested in the river = \$3.35 investment into the regional economy. Thanks to these efforts, the river continues to be an economic driver in travel and tourism.

This summer, celebrate the river with the Lorain County Metro Parks by taking part in a wide variety of outdoor experiences. Participate in tram rides, hikes, paddling trips, and cycling trips on and along the river. This vital waterway is more than a natural resource. It is a flowing life-line to all living things here in Lorain County and beyond.



CELEBRATE FROM PAGE 2

money for ecological restoration efforts along the Black River. Every \$1 invested turns over to create \$3.35 spending in the local economy.

The Black River has become habitat for 40 species of fish and 200 species of birds. Wilson said she found a historic reference that mink had not been seen at Elyria's Cascade Park since 1918, but those aquatic mammals, including mink and beavers, are

returning.

There are more than five miles of hiking and biking trails along the river.

Boaters, anglers and paddlers get on the water, making it a prime source of recreation. Riverfront communities have historic ties to industry, agriculture and urban uses.

Now, the river is becoming an economic driver for travel and tourism.

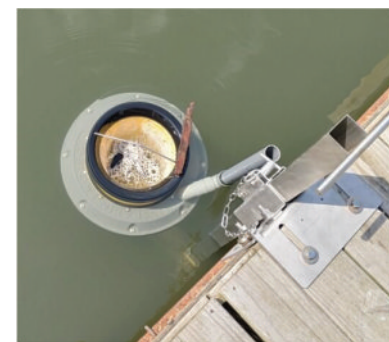
HAPPY EARTH DAY!

Facts about Earth Day

- ◆ Gaylord Nelson, a senator from Wisconsin, founded Earth Day in 1970 to raise public consciousness about environmental concerns such as pollution, oil spills and vanishing wildlife. He tapped into the energy of the anti-war movement, framing Earth Day as a “national teach-in on the environment.”
- ◆ The first Earth Day pushed environmental concerns onto the national agenda. That same year, Congress authorized the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- ◆ The first Earth Day in 1970 inspired the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts, according to the EPA.

What We Are Doing Locally

- ◆ The Lorain Harbor Boat Club has the first SeaBin collection filter system in our area to remove micro plastics, plastic fibers, oil and more!
- ◆ The SeaBin is capable of filtering 6,604 gallons of water per-hour 24/7.
- ◆ It was designed to help reduce the impact of marine trash in our oceans.
- ◆ Locally, it is the just a starting point to improve the water quality for our local marine life while capturing plastics and other items from Lake Erie and our waterways.



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LCMP Conservation Update

Conservation work during the summer months is centered on efforts to control a variety of alien, invasive plant species. By aggressively spreading and displacing native vegetation, invasives destroy habitats, reduce diversity, and leave monotonous landscapes of limited value to wildlife in their wake.

Battles with invasives are rarely completely won—but with a timely and consistent effort, the most valuable and sensitive habitats can usually be protected. The Metro Parks hires a seasonal crew each year to perform much of this work.

The list of invasives on Metro Parks' land is significant. Those receiving a great



PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

deal of attention in the summer months include reed canary grass, Phragmites, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, poison hemlock, cut-leaved teasel, and spotted knapweed.

Also, a variety of woody species including Autumn olive, buckthorn, privet, callery pear, barberry, burning bush, multiflora rose, and tree of heaven. You may recognize several common home landscape plants on this list. Mechanical (digging, pulling, mowing, whacking), chemical, and bio-control methods are employed (sometimes in combination) against the various species.

Non-native plants now comprise nearly ¼ of the species growing in Ohio's natural areas. One of the most important aspects of conservation these days involves identifying those which pose the greatest threat to habitats and developing plans to keep them in check.



Cascade Park, Confluence on the east branch and west branch of the Black River



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The LoCo 'Yaks and Lorain Port & Finance Authority are proud to bring you a new **FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ADA-compliant kayak/canoe launch** at Riverside Park in downtown Lorain!

Thanks to a grant through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Waterways Safety Fund, Black River & Lake Erie paddlers now have inclusive access to Lorain Harbor.

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French Creek Kayak Launch Opens Early

By Kevin Martin
kmartin@morningjournal.com

The Lorain County Metro Parks opened its new kayak launch on French Creek April 8 giving the green light to Lorain County's paddling community to hit the water on the Black River.

The kayak launch typically opens May 1 each year, but with better than expected weather and increased usage due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, the Metro Parks decided to open it early.

The kayak launch is located on Old Colorado Avenue in Sheffield Village just off Lake Breeze Road. It is open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset.



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The Black River Winds Through Many Lorain County Metro Parks

The Lorain County Metro Park District is fortunate to feature the Black River at many of our parks. Through these public spaces, the residents and visitors of Lorain County can see firsthand the benefits of this vital waterway.

The mouth of the river greets Lake Erie between the beaches of **Lakeview and Century Parks** in Lorain. Lakeview Park was the first lakeside park in the district. This park features 20 acres and is known for its historic fountain and rose garden. The fountain was a marvel in its time with color-changing lights. At the same time, the rose garden draws visitors from all over with its 2,500 roses. Lakeview Park hosts various recreational opportunities, including swimming, sunbathing, lawn bowling, beach volleyball, kayaking, paddle boarding, and more!

One of the district's latest additions, Century Park, provides yet another resource for visitors to enjoy the water. Its 320 ft. sand beach serves as Lake Erie fishing access and a great spot to enjoy a view of the lake. With a timeline that stretches back into the early 1900s, Century Park holds a place in history as well as a significant public access point for Lorain County residents and visitors. Century Park is also a part of the Lorain County Metro Parks' Black River Bikeway and the Back Roads and Beaches Bike Trail.

The French Creek Reservation highlights the confluence of the French Creek and the

Black River. This reservation features 450 acres of wooded landscape, three creeks, 4.5 miles of trails, and a Nature Center. This reservation's kayak launch is a hotbed of activity as the weather warms and visitors look for ways to cool off and enjoy the water. Plus, situated along East River Road southeast of the Black River and French Creek confluence is French Creek Reservation's Burrell Homestead. Fertile soils, abundant wildlife, access to streams, and proximity to Lake Erie made this "Big Bottom" floodplain attractive not just to five Burrell generations but to the Archaic Indians who used it some 4000 years earlier. Since the passing of Eleanor Burrell in 2001, the parks' have maintained this site for historical and cultural education and research.

The Black River Reservation is most recognizable when discussing its namesake. This reservation runs along the Black River between Lorain and Elyria and continues to grow in acreage with recent extensions in both directions. Much of the native woodland west of the river was cleared for farming in the early 1800s by the James Day Family, who constructed a dam to harness the river's power for saw and grist milling. A transition to industrial use occurred in 1894 as Johnson Steel Street Rail Company emerged north of the dam site. A century later, abandoned lands were preserved as a park, which offers a blended experience of industry and nature along the Steel Mill and Bridgeway Trails.

As the river winds its way south into Elyria, visitors can find its most notable features. The river can be seen and enjoyed from the newly installed 440-foot long Cascade Bridge. Also, it is at **Cascade Park**, where the river splits into its east and west branches with a fanfare of not one but two breathtaking waterfalls. The West Falls are one of the most impressive falls in Northeast Ohio, with a height of 35 ft and crest of 50 ft. The West Falls can be seen from an up-close observation deck located just a short hike away from the park's main entrance. The East Falls include a manmade spillway 10 ft above the natural falls composed of Berea sandstone. The East Falls has a height of 30 ft and a crest of 50 ft which can be seen from an observation deck near the Elyria police station.

The park district also offers two golf courses which each highlight the Black River in unique ways. Kopf Family Golf Course at Cherry Ridge

sits in one of the river's oxbows in the heart of Elyria. This recent addition to the park system features 9-holes, each with a spectacular view of the Black. On the south side of Elyria Township, the Forest Hills Golf Course highlights the Black River comes into play on six holes. At this 18-hole course, beginners and experienced golfers can enjoy the challenge added to the game by the river, several ponds, bunkers, and hills.

In Grafton, the east branch of the Black River flows through the **Indian Hollow Reservation**. On the north side of Parsons Road, visitors to the Sheldon Woods Park will see the east branch wind throughout 180 acres. Fishing for smallmouth bass in the river attracts anglers along the sandstone river edges. The sandstone was quarried for 60 years, and remnants of the quarry operation are still found on the Windfall Quarry Trail. Across the street Royal Oaks, a former golf course, now offers visitors a fitness trail, ponds, and scenic views of the river instead of tees and putting greens.

When looking for ways to enjoy the Black River, Lorain County Residents can find several access points, picturesque views, and recreational opportunities throughout the Lorain County Metro Park District. From Lake Erie's shores to the southern tips of the county, the Black River watershed is a true benefit to our communities and surrounding wildlife. We hope that you will join us throughout the Black River Celebration this summer.



Black River Reservation Overlook

BLACK RIVER CELEBRATION

Lorain County Metro Parks' Black River Celebration Summer Program Schedule

This summer, celebrate the river by taking part in a wide variety of outdoor experiences. Participate in tram rides, hikes, paddling trips, and cycling trips on the river and at park locations within the river corridor. Bikes will be provided for cycling programs, and paddling equipment provided for kayaking programs. Hikes, cycling trips, and tram rides are FREE. Paddling trips are \$10 per person. Preregistration is required for all programs, and masks are required for all staff and participants.

Preregister online at www.loraincountymetroparks.com/ programs or by calling (440) 458-5121. Registration for all Black River Celebration programs is now open!

Also, plan to check out self-guided educational opportunities, including an environmental art piece at Lakeview Park and a Black River map display at French Creek Nature Center!

JUNE: INDIAN HOLLOW RESERVATION AND CARLISLE RESERVATION

Explore the west branch of the Black River along with its tributaries!

- Saturday, June 5, 11 a.m.-Noon or 1-2 p.m. – Indian Hollow Nature Hike
- Tuesday, June 8, 9-11 a.m. – Indian Hollow Cycling Trip
- Wednesday, June 23, 1:30-2:30 p.m. – Carlisle Southern Loop Trail Hike
- Saturday, June 26, 11 a.m.-Noon or 1-2 p.m. – Indian Hollow Tram Ride

JULY: CASCADE PARK

Check out the confluence of the east and west branches of the Black River, traverse the new bridge connecting the park areas, and view the West Falls.

- Saturday, July 3, 9-11 a.m. – Cascade Cycling Trip
- Saturday, July 10, 11 a.m.-Noon, and 1-2 p.m. – Cascade Nature Hike
- Saturday, July 17, 11 a.m.-Noon, and 1-2 p.m. – Cascade Tram Ride

AUGUST: BLACK RIVER RESERVATION

Experience the river's natural beauty throughout the extensive trail system that runs through the Black River Reservation.

- Saturday, August 7, 9-11 a.m. – Black River Cycling Trip
- Saturday, August 14, 11 a.m.-Noon, and 1-2 p.m. – Black River Nature Hike
- Saturday, August 21, 11 a.m.-Noon, and 1-2 p.m. – Black River Tram Ride

SEPTEMBER: FRENCH CREEK RESERVATION

Explore this expansive park and its three Black River tributaries – French Creek, Sugar Creek, and Fish Creek.

- Saturday, September 4, 9-11 a.m. – French Creek Cycling Trip
- Saturday, September 11, 11 a.m.-Noon, and 1-2 p.m. – French Creek Nature Hike
- Saturday, September 18, 11 a.m.-Noon, and 1-2 p.m. – French Creek Tram Ride

BLACK RIVER CELEBRATION PADDLING TRIPS:

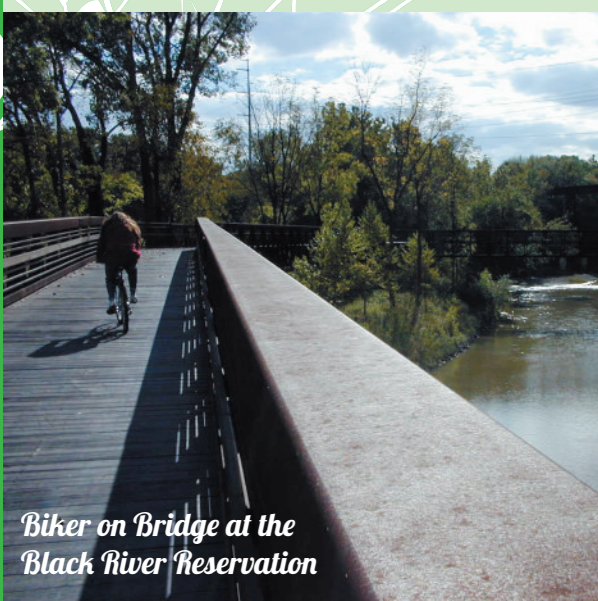
Explore three different sections of the Black River via kayak! Participants must be at least 16 years of age, 16-17, with a participating adult. The cost is \$10 per person, includes all paddling equipment.

- July 28, 5-7 p.m. – French Creek and Black River south
- August 25, 5-7 p.m. – French Creek and Black River north
- September 29, 4-6 p.m. – Lighthouse Paddle

SUNSET BEACH FEST:

Try out various types of paddle craft on the beach. Also, enjoy music, food, and beverages! Stay to experience a Lake Erie sunset and campfire. Paddle craft try-its will require preregistration (registration will open on June 18).

- Saturday, August 14, 5-8:30 p.m. – Lakeview Park



Biker on Bridge at the Black River Reservation

LCMP iNaturalist Projects

Throughout 2020 Lorain County Metro Parks launched several citizen science projects in our parks through the online platform iNaturalist. Through iNaturalist, participants were able to add observations to various park projects. The collected data is used to track flora and fauna diversity and abundance throughout the park system. The projects opened in 2020 and continue to be available for observers to join!

iNaturalist



Get involved by downloading the free iNaturalist app, sign up and start making observations. To share your observations, snap a picture of a plant or animal you have found, share it with the iNaturalist community, and then have others help you identify what you have found. To join our Lorain County Metro Parks projects, find our profile, click "Projects," and join!

2020 STATS:

Park with the Most Observations: Sandy Ridge Reservation (1,276 observations)

Park with the Most Identifiable Species Found: Vermilion River Reservation (332 Species)

Total Observations Made within LCMP in 2020: 3,937

Total Identifiable Species Found within LCMP in 2020: 998

Total Observers for 2020: 232



Celebrating The Black River

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MAY

- 15 Pride & Service Day
- 27 We Ride: Guided Family Ride at Bur Oak
- 31 Memorial Day Parade & Fountain Ribbon Cutting

JUNE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 We Ride: Bike Ride with Mayor Frank Whitfield | 19 Farmers Market Kickoff |
| 3 Summer Concert: Baker's Basement | 24 Summer Concert: Guy Denillo |
| 10 Summer Concert: Hip To That | 24 We Ride: Guided Family Ride to Days Dam |
| 12 Movie in the Park | 26 Farmers Market |
| 17 Summer Concert: Gems Ensemble | 26 Community Shred Day |
| 17 Third Thursdays Kickoff | 27 Pizza Challenge by Elyria Sunrise Rotary |

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Fishing the Black River

Fishing the black river is one of the popular activities in the Lorain County Metro Parks. There are several access points at the Black River Reservation:

Day's Dam, 2720 East 31st St., Lorain,
Bur Oak, 6150 Ford Rd., Elyria,
High Meadows, 1750 Ford Rd., Elyria, to cast your rod.

The Black River makes its way through this reservation and contains primarily largemouth bass, steelhead, and channel catfish.

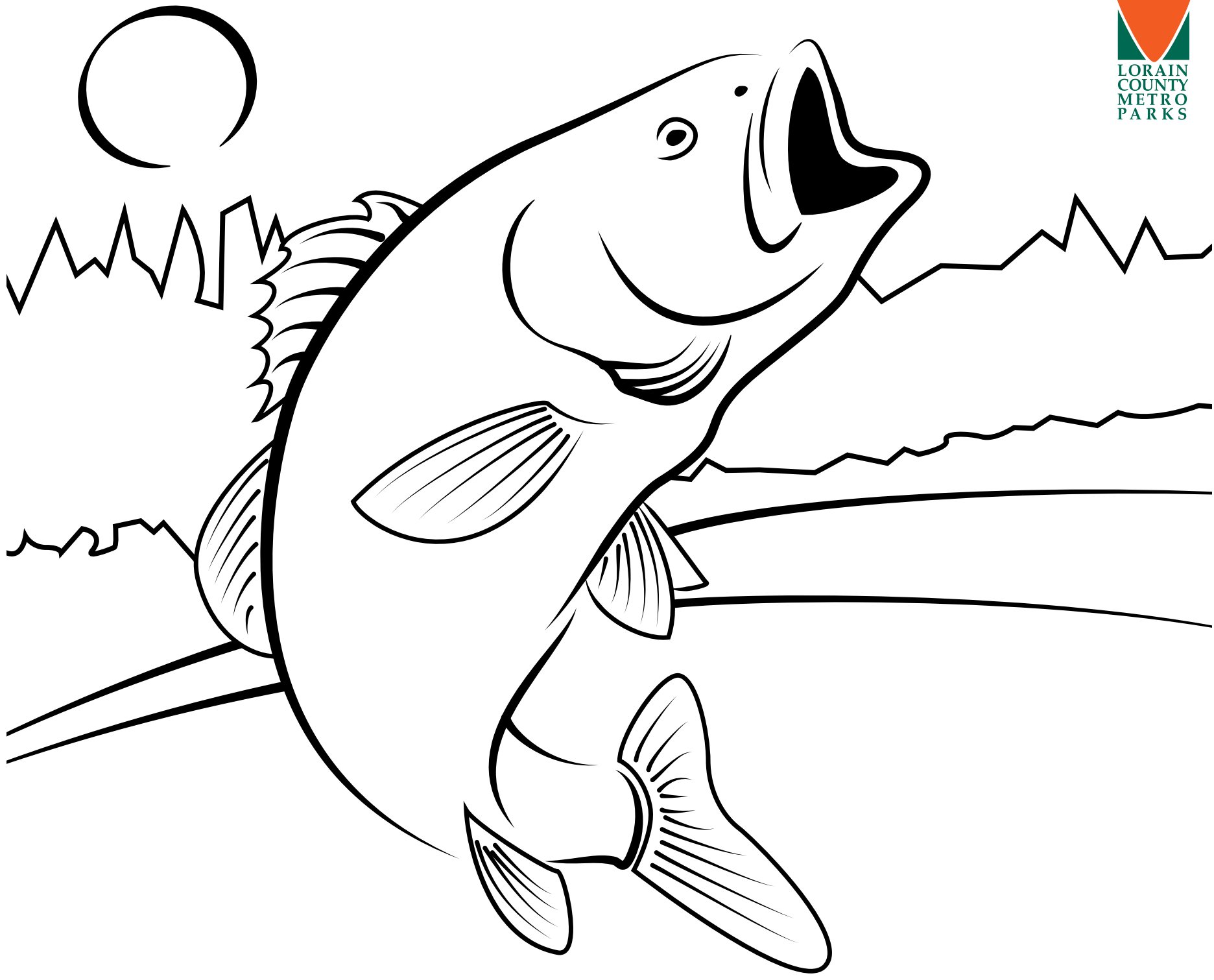
Anglers are reminded that a fishing license is required on all Lorain County Metro Parks waters.

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Coloring Contest Details:

This coloring contest is for children 16 and under. To participate, submit completed artwork to French Creek Nature Center (FCNC) 4530 Colorado Ave., Sheffield Village, OH 44054 or Carlisle Visitor Center 12882 Diagonal Rd., LaGrange, OH 44050 by August 29, 2021. Artwork will be on display at FCNC during the month of September and winners will be selected on September 24.

Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Best Contact Method (Phone # or Email):** _____

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BLACK RIVER LANDING

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Black River Landing, Lorain, OH



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Make memories with us this *summer* on the Black River!