

PARK PROTECTORS PATCH

When you live in a city or suburb, nature can be harder to find; public parks are a resource that lets everyone play in and experience nature. With 18 reservations, the Cleveland Metroparks is a resource for all of Northeast Ohio. By completing the four requirements for this patch, you and your group will gain a greater appreciation for parks large and small. When you're done return the form on the reverse of this page.



Application for Park Protector Patches

Please return this information to Kate McNeece at kem2@clevelandmetroparks.com or by mail:
Rocky River Nature Center, attn: Park Protectors Patch, 24000 Valley Parkway, North Olmsted, OH 44070

Date of park cleanup:

Name and city of park:

Date of picnic:

Name and city of park:

Please attach copies of the posters. We'd love to see what you came up with!

Group affiliation: _____

Troop number: _____

Your name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Age: _____ Number of patches needed: _____



Requirement 1: Stewardship

Background

Trail etiquette is all about respecting the trail and other people who are also using the trail. Do you know what to do if you're walking on a really muddy trail? What about if you meet a horseback rider? Trail etiquette guidelines help decode these situations and others.

You can find more information on trail etiquette at nps.gov/articles/hikingetiquette.htm

The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace are summarized as:

1. Plan ahead & prepare.
2. Travel & camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfire impacts.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Respect other visitors.

Visit nps.gov/articles/leave-no-trace-seven-principles.htm for more information on each principle.

Activity

Discuss the following as a group:

- Why is trail etiquette important?
- Why should we "Leave No Trace"? Which of the Seven Principles do YOU think is most important? Why?
- What kind of things do people want to take from parks? Why should guests be encouraged to leave those things where they were found?



Requirement 2: Volunteering

Background

Litter can be a serious problem in parks. No one wants to visit a forest, meadow or river and see old water bottles or other litter. Most park visitors are careful and respectful, but sometimes people don't dispose of trash properly. Sometimes animals break into trash cans and scatter garbage. This can leave an unsightly mess and make the habitat worse for the animals that live in it.

Activity

A volunteer cleanup is one way you can help take care of public spaces. When you're planning a cleanup, think about the kind of supplies you'll need. You'll need bags to put the trash in, and you might want gloves to protect your hands. Discuss what to do if you find broken glass or other sharp objects. Make sure to contact the manager of the place you plan to clean up. They may be able to provide supplies or suggest certain areas that need a cleanup. Make sure you have received permission to volunteer at your clean-up location. A volunteer clean-up within Cleveland Metroparks properties requires your group to apply using the link below. Make sure to plan ahead and complete the form at least one month in advance of your intended volunteering date.

Apply here: clevelandmetroparks.com/groupvolunteerprojects

In the "Why Volunteer?" section please specify that you're working towards the Park Protectors Patch.

- How many bags of trash did you collect?
- What was the most common kind of trash that you found? What was it made of?



Requirement 3: Advocating

Background

Did you know that nearly 20 million people visited Cleveland Metroparks in 2022?
Across the USA, the National Parks were visited by nearly 312 million people in that same year!
Why are parks so popular?

Activity

Make a poster encouraging people to get outside or highlight your favorite place in your chosen park. Consider if there are benefits to being outdoors, think about what's fun about the outdoors. Are there things you can do outside that you can't do inside? Maybe you want to use your poster to teach about a park, or to show off something beautiful about it. You can design one as a troop or have each member design a smaller one of their own.



Requirement 4: Celebrating

Background

Cleveland Metroparks has picnic sites throughout its 18 reservations that are perfect for large and small gatherings. Some of them require paid reservations, and others are shared use for anyone who shows up.

Many parks have playgrounds, access to streams and rivers, or nearby trails.

Choose your favorite park for a group picnic!

Activity

Plan some fun games and a meal or shared snacks. Dispose of your waste properly, which includes packing it out if you need to. Remember: the park is a shared space, and it takes all of us to keep it clean and healthy!

- What kind of food should you take? You can take anything from snacks to a full meal! If you're going to cook a meal, think about how to pack your food for easy preparation or serving.
- A popular snack is, of course, trail mix. You can buy it premade or mix your own to make sure you get just what you like in yours. A fun activity is a make-your-own trail mix table with options like peanuts, almonds, raisins or other dried fruits, M&Ms, banana or apple chips, and sunflower seeds. Using scoops, each person can add whatever they like to their cup or baggie for a custom snack!
- Meals – some parks have grills at their picnic shelters. Make sure you understand the rules about using their facilities, then plan away! Hot dogs are easy to cook, and different toppings can make them a crowd pleaser. Use the grill responsibly and make sure to watch your fire carefully.
- Trash – remember your trash cleanup? How are you making sure to clean up your area? Are there sustainable items you can use instead of disposables? Don't forget to clean up food waste! While it is biodegradable, it can attract insects and other animals to the picnic site.

