

LAKE COUNTY OHIO,
LAKE ERIE EAST'S COASTAL GETAWAY OASIS

Lake County is on the east side of Lake Erie and often confused with western areas of Lake Erie.

Lake County is east of Cleveland off Interstate 90, offering a wide ranging array of Lake Erie beaches and nature preserves, county and metropolitan attractions, niche venues, boutique and renovated or new hotels and renowned special events.

Lake County is the quiet, relaxed destination. Lake Metroparks annually provides nearly three million visitors with countless recreational and educational experiences at diverse facilities including an agriculturally themed park, a nature center, a state-of-the-art education and wildlife rehabilitation center, two golf courses, five parks on Lake Erie's shoreline and a cross-country ski center. Lake Metroparks maintains currently more than 43 miles of trails throughout Lake County, including a 4.8 bike/hike trail.

Fresh air awaits visitors along Lake Metroparks trails! Explore hemlock ravines, open meadows, mature forests, and the Lake Erie shoreline. Most trails are gravel-surfaced; some are hard-surfaced and suitable for strollers and wheelchairs; and some include steps and inclines that challenge any hiker. Horses and bicycles are permitted on specially designated trails, and dogs on a leash are welcome at most parks. Hiking trails are open every day of the year and specific hours are posted.

Think you might like to try bicycling off-road? Enjoy the scenery of Lake Metroparks as visitors explore a variety of terrain including paved, gravel and dirt trails.

On the waterfront at Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park, visitors enjoy kayaking, canoeing, sailing, and boating. Lake Metroparks offers a wide variety of boating programs year-round for all ages and abilities. Their fleet of over 60 boats includes canoes, sea kayaks, single and double sit-on-top kayaks, Jon boats, mono-hull and Hobie-Cat sailboats, and personal watercraft or PWCs (wave runners). Lake Metroparks offers all levels of instruction with every type of boat in its fleet, from the never-ever boater to avid boat owners who wish to improve their boating skills. Kayak rentals are also available. Call (440) 639-9972 for availability.

During the winter months, the lake-effect snows of Northeast Ohio transform Lake Metroparks into a winter wonderland; the beauty of the fresh-fallen snows along the trails is such a beautiful sight to see. Recreational opportunities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and sledding.

Approximately six miles of terrain challenges every ability, from Novice to Intermediate. The Pine Lodge Ski Center is opened and staffed when weather, snow accumulation, and conditions warrant opening (four inches of snow needed to ski on).

Before visiting the center, call the Winter Sports Hotline for daily ski conditions and snow accumulation reports and to confirm the center is open for the day at (440) 954 4178 or follow daily updates on Facebook and Twitter.

The trails at Chapin Forest Reservation are groomed regularly. Approximately one mile of lighted trail will be lit nightly to accommodate the skiing public, weather permitting. The lights stay on until 9 pm when the when the ski conditions are good for skiing.

Snowshoes and cross-country skis are available for rent on a first-come, first-served basis. Lake Metroparks offers cross-country ski rental equipment and lessons, groomed ski trails, snowshoe rentals, fireplace, accessible restrooms and concessions. The ski center is open during the winter months; weather permitting, from approximately November 15 to March 15.

The Holden Arboretum is a living museum of woody plants, one of the largest arboreta in the USA with 3,600 acres. Holden's gardens and collections comprise about 600 acres, while diverse natural areas and ecologically sensitive habitats make up the remainder. A Main Feature of the overall landscape design is the integration of the natural areas and the collections in a process known as site-bending, which gives Holden its unique character.

Holden, designated an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society in 2004, features over 20 miles of hiking trails through forests, meadows' gardens, ponds and lakes.

With over 20,000 accessioned plants, Holden's collection is extensive. Collections of note are the conifer, Magnolia, Crabapple, Nut Tree, Lilac and Viburnums. Hours are 9am-5pm daily.

The Lake County region is the largest winery district in Ohio, attracting increasing visitors who appreciate Lake County's New England/Napa Valley ambience.

The Lake County Wine and Vines Trails attracts about 10,000 leisure travelers every week during the heights of the tourist season. All year now is winery season, with monthly activities and themed dine-arounds.

Two new wineries in Lake County, Bene Vino Urban Winery in Perry and St. Joseph's Vineyards in Madison join five wineries plus about a dozen more in the surrounding Lake County region.

Lake County has Ohio's largest estate winery, Chalet Debonnè Vineyards, with 130 acres of vines, growing 600 tons of grapes for 26 different varieties.

Just next door in Geneva is Ferrante's Winery and Ristorante and South River Winery, a boutique winery housed in a church, moved piece by piece from Shalersville, Ohio.

Lake County hosts the Vintage Ohio Wine Festival, August 5-6, 2011, at Lake Metroparks Farmpark. Over 20 Wineries offer samples attracting 30,000 visitors from across the tri-state region and beyond.

The Grand River Valley in the Lake County region is a little piece of viticultural heaven-on-earth formed thousands of years ago when glaciers carved out the Great Lakes and deposited a ridge of fertile soil ideal for the cultivation of vineyards.

Like the Mossel, Bordeaux and the Sonoma/Russian River Valley, the gently rolling landscape of the Grand River Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA) benefits from a climate

moderated by the thermal effects of a large body of water, in this case, Lake Erie to the north.

New to Lake County is the Western Reserve Model Railroad Museum in the City of Mentor. The museum has 19,000 square feet of interactive operating trains, with 16 different scales, the largest in the world.

The train museum has the largest American Flyer operating display in the world, plus the largest O gauge layout on public display.

The Lake County Speedway just became Northeast Ohio's only NASCAR sanctioned racetrack.

Lake County believes it has the closest restaurant to Lake Erie, the first patio gets splashed. That's how close Sunset Bar & Grill is to Lake Erie

Pickle Bills is evolving into one of the largest waterfront restaurants. Located on the Grand River, Pickle Bills often serves 3,000 meals on a busy summer weekend.

Lake County has Ohio longest beach, Headlands State Beach Park, one mile long, voted "Best Beach Sunset" by Ohio Magazine several years ago.

Nearby is 450-acre Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve, with a small beach and miles of forested walking and waterfront paths.

Birding is major league in Lake County, along the shoreline or at preserves and parks. Headlands State Beach Park is one of the more reliable sites. At the sixth Annual Conference of the Ohio Ornithological Society in Lake County, keynote speaker Larry Rosche, one of Ohio's premiere birders, said, "No where else have more species of birds been seen in the state than in the county located along the Lake Erie shorelines."

Transitioning from major leagues, to championship minor league, the Lake County Captains, a Cleveland Indians Class A affiliate won the 2010 Midwest League Championship. 2.8 million fans, have attended in eights years, with over three million total expected in 2011.

Fishing is tops in Lake County, especially for steelhead trout. Painesville's section of the Grand River was named as the site of the best steelhead trout fishing in the region by the 2010 "Best of Cleveland" article in Cleveland Magazine.

Lake County's deeper Lake Erie central basin water is where the big walleye migrate in the warmer months, plus jumbo perch and bass fishing.

Unique to the region and perhaps the USA is Little Thunder Golf Course. Little Thunder, in Madison, is probably the only 18 hole, regulation golf course for youth and beginners. Families, young and senior golfers, can golf at a slower pace, without the pressure of more proficient golfer and marshals, rushing play.

Lake County has one of the largest numbers of championship, designer golf courses, including Quail Hollow Country Club, with two courses, and Little Mountain Country Club,

rated "Five Stars" by Golf Digest Magazine (only 17 courses in North America carry the five star rating).

Top players can challenge the 6,800 yard Thunderhill Golf Course, named one of the hardest courses to play public or private by Golf Digest Magazine.

Lake County features many public courses, operated by Lake Metroparks, or Lake County cities like Mentor's Black Brook Golf Course.

Lake County has two lighthouses, the Fairport Harbor Marine Museum and Lighthouse, allow physically able visitors, to walk circular 77 steps to the top for a great view of Lake Erie. The 132 year old lighthouse has been called "a great destination for true lighthouse buff," by Lighthouse Digest.

Lake County is graced by several historic landmarks including the James A Garfield National Historic Site in the City of Mentor. Home of the 20th U.S. President, purchased in 1876, and renovated several times, the latest for \$17 million, Garfield's home has the largest original artifacts of any Presidential site.

The Lake County History Center Museum & Village recently moved to a 30,000 square foot former County Home with exhibit areas and galleries, filled with items like music boxes.

Lake County has an Indian Museum in Willoughby, featuring prehistoric Indians of the Ohio area, 10,000 BC- 1650 AD, plus today's Indians 1800 to present.

Six hundred nativity crèches can be viewed at Historic Kirtland in December. "The Wise Men Still Seek Him" display is free and was just named a "2011 Top 100 American Bus Association Event."

The Kirtland Temple is a designated National Historic Landmark, built by Joseph K. Smith and his followers. A recently built 12,000 square foot visitors center with a movie theater depicts the history and sudden departure of the Mormons (Latter Day Saints).

Lake County's agricultural base is large, from nurseries to orchards to bee hives.

Fresh, un-pasteurized honey is available at about six farmers markets in Lake County by the Ohio Honey Company based in Kirtland. The nutrient enriched honey can also be ordered on line.

Major unique events in Lake County include:

The Lake County PerchFest™
September 9-11, 2011
Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park

Vintage Ohio Wine Festival
August 5-6, 2011
Lake Metroparks Farmpark

The Great Civil War Encampment & Re-enactment Week
June 18-25, 2011
Lake County History Center

Gathering of Eagles Air Show
July 8-10, 2011
Lost Nation Airport

Wise Men Shall Seek Him
600 Nativity Crèches Exhibit
December, 2011
Historic Kirtland

Lake County's Beef Jerky is now famous. Continental/United Airlines are selling "Wild Ride Cowboy Strips" beef jerky 50,000 packages are expected to be shipped to Continental monthly. Weaver Meats, in Painesville, Ohio, distributes beef jerky to numerous outlets, including Gander Mountain and Cabella's