

# AKRON ZOO



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Akron Zoo, Metro Parks and Cuyahoga Valley National Park to partner to celebrate the Year of the Bat**

AKRON, Ohio - The Akron Zoo, Metro Parks, serving Summit County and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park will partner this summer to celebrate the Year of the Bat. The goal of the partnership is to educate the community about the significance of bats and what we can do to help their declining numbers. Each organization will host several events and the zoo will kick-off their summer long events with a Bat for Beginners, April 16, 2010 from 6:30 – 9 p.m. at the zoo.

Ohio has over 13 species of bats including the Indiana bat, which is on the federal endangered species list. Ohio's most abundant bat, the little brown bat, is showing a significant decline in the number of their species. The main reasons for the bat's decline include disturbance of colonies by human beings, pesticide use and loss of summer habitat resulting from the clearing of forest cover. The fear of the "white nose syndrome" that has affected millions of bats, although yet none in Ohio, was another reason for the partnership.

"Bats are one of the most misunderstood, most important animals in the world. All Ohio bats are insect eaters and without them we would be pressed to control the insect population," commented the zoo's Director of Education, Autumn Russell. "This great partnership allows us to reach thousands of people in our community to educate them on this crisis and hopefully move people to help."

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The zoo will host five events plus ongoing activities at their Discovery Cart throughout the summer and a special bat treat station at their annual Boo at the Zoo in October. The zoo's first event will be held April 16, 2010. Bats for Beginners is an opportunity for the zoo to introduce bats to visitors. The event runs 6:30 – 9 p.m. and participants will be able to look for bats at the zoo and create a bat house.

Each participating partner will also have a bat passport available for people to keep all summer. If visitors get them stamped at events held by all of the three organizations they will be eligible for a prize at the end of the year.

Reservations for Bats for Beginners can be made by calling (330) 375-2550 ext 8973. Prices for participants are \$20 for Akron Zoo members and \$25 for non-members. Spectators are \$5.

The Akron Zoo, which is home to over 700 animals from around the world, is open 361 days a year. Winter hours are 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily. Admission is \$6.00 per person and parking is \$2.00.

The Akron Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Look for the logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats.

Metro Parks, Serving Summit County, manages 10,000 acres, including 13 developed parks, six conservation areas and more than 120 miles of trails, with 18 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 4.5 million visitors.

CVNP encompasses 33,000 acres along the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron. Managed by the National Park Service, CVNP combines cultural, historical, recreational, and natural activities in one setting. For more information about the park, visit [www.nps.gov/cuva/](http://www.nps.gov/cuva/) or [www.dayinthevalley.com/](http://www.dayinthevalley.com/) or call (216) 524-1497 or (800) 445-9667.

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