

Big Creek Park Mountain Bike Trail



- Mountain bike trail (2.05 mi)
- **Cost:** \$10,000
- **Funding Sources:** Park District Land Improvement Fund
- **Date:** Summer 2019 – Fall 2019
- **Project Leaders:** Matthew McCue, Director of Planning; Daniel McConnaughy, Park Planner; Michael Ryba, Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association

County: Geauga
Gauga Park District



Northeast Ohio's newest mountain bike trail is now open in Geauga Park District's Big Creek Park – and it's one that'll be fun for experienced mountain bikers and first-timers alike!

Geauga County's first single-track mountain bike trail was added to this park in September 2020 thanks to a partnership with the Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA), which developed and laid out the trail with the help of the Park District's in-house construction crew.

The trail itself is 2.05 miles, with hikers sharing the space for just over a half a mile. Direction of travel changes daily to foster even wear of the trail; riders must consult signage for guidance when they arrive. The trail map published at www.geaugaparkdistrict.org/park/big-creek-park leads riders to the marked entrance of the mountain bike trail and shows them the lay of the land.

REQUIRED: Provide contact information in case we need to contact you about this project.

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Big Creek Park Mountain Bike Trail



The Good Stuff

- Features trailheads, vehicular parking, restrooms
- Shares only 0.55 mile with hikers
- Awesome local partnership with CAMBA, resulting in 244 volunteered hours of work by those who love these trails the most

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CAMBA’s mission is to create, preserve, promote, protect and enhance diverse and enjoyable trail experiences for mountain bikers throughout Northeast Ohio. Learn more at <https://camba.us/wp>.

CAMBA Treasurer Mike Ryba said his team surveyed the land multiple times, identifying points that were the most attractive and those that needed to be avoided.

“Then you are trying to ‘connect the dots’ while avoiding wet and flat areas,” he said. “Natural surface trails are sensitive to compaction and erosion, so we try to stay high and dry, all the while creating a trail that’s fun to ride at both slow and faster speeds in either direction.”

That’s a lot of variables to consider, he acknowledged, but he said it was a pleasure to work with Park District staff – even on the hottest days of the summer.

“Big Creek’s new trail would be considered a ‘traditional’ trail with some modern touches,” Ryba said, “meaning there is minimal disruption of the natural resources, so the rider gets to see the best Nature can offer. Difficulty-wise, it would be considered on the easy side of intermediate.”

“We’re really excited to work in cooperation with CAMBA, and really appreciated all the time and expertise they volunteered,” said Director of Planning & Operations Matt McCue said. “They did a great job with some of their members helping.”

According to Ryba, total hours put in by CAMBA volunteers to date are as follows: 85 hours for 2020, 159 hours for 2021 as of 4/28/21.

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Unique!

- First designated mountain bike trail in Chardon, second in Geauga County (behind 2,025-foot-long track at the Park District's Claridon Woodlands)
- **Environmental enhancement:** Cooperative planning/development for trail creation/maintenance to be synchronous with the Park District's goal to protect sensitive natural areas

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Geauga County now has a destination for mountain bikers that its residents can be proud of, one that will continue to grow to accommodate enthusiasts of varying skill levels, including beginners. Comments left on Facebook indicate it has gotten substantial use for a new trail, with many more eager to explore it this year once the wet spring weather subsides. A post introducing the trail in September 2020 received 137 likes, 22 comments and an impressive 38 shares. Note this article in Geauga County's weekly newspaper, the Geauga County Maple Leaf, for evidence of community enthusiasm: <https://www.geugamapleleaf.com/news/big-creek-opens-countys-1st-public-mountain-biking-trail/>

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Buzz on the Street

- “This is a great beginner trail, and one of the only trails in the area. Definitely worth checking out. ... A real special thanks to the Geauga park system for...bringing this trail to a wider audience and to an area that needed it so much.”
–The Dirty Reviewer, <https://youtu.be/sQp1rXGwvY> (shown at left)

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- “We have rode it and love having something closer to home in Novelty. Hope to see more developed in the future. Thank you!” –Kelly Katusin Hoffman on Facebook 9/18/20
- Pictured at left, volunteer building through CAMBA by Boy Scout Troop 223 from Twinsburg, OH

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Geauga Park District had received many requests over the years for mountain bike trails in this rural county, even offering to help maintain the trails in return. A partnership with the Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association has provided the ability to do just that while furthering the Park District’s goal of providing something for everyone.

In the future, the Park District and CAMBA will continue working together to expand the total offerings here to exceed 3.5 miles of single track trail, with additions leaning more toward intermediate difficulty.