



The Portage Path Collaborative



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Akron, Ohio. August 21, 2024) The Portage Path, Akron’s tribute to the Native people that first occupied the land here, will be celebrated in a series of events October 6–13, 2024. The Portage Path was created by Indigenous people who populated the area for millennia before the first Europeans arrived and is one of the oldest, most visible landmarks on the North American continent, an 8-mile trail crossing the watershed divide between the Cuyahoga River and Tuscarawas River. The Portage Path was marked by the Summit County Historical Society in 1999, when for the first time, monumental sculptures at each terminus were connected by fifty markers in the shape of Indian broad blades over the 8-mile trail.

Sunday, October 6, 10:30-12:00 pm History of the Portage Path and Artist Talk

Towpath Trail/Big Bend Parking Area

Join us for a walk from Big Bend to the northernmost point of the Portage Path. You’ll learn about the history of this vital link between North American waterways as we walk, then enjoy a talk at the northern terminus by artist Peter Jones (Seneca/Onondaga). Jones created the statues of the portaging Indigenous person which can be seen at both the northern and southern termini of the Portage Path. This program is presented in coordination with the Portage Path Collaborative as part of a series of events in honor of North American First People’s Day. More information about events in the Akron area honoring North American First People’s Day can be found at <https://walkportagepath.com>.

Sunday October 6, 1:30p.m-3 p.m Portage Path Walk.

The ninth annual Portage Path Walk will take place on Sunday October 6, 2024. A one-kilometer walk will start at the vacant lot directly across the street from the Portage Path CLC, where informational graphics and an informational table about the historical context of the path. The walk will be led by members of the Northern Cheyenne nation who will be drumming and dressed in regalia and end at the John Brown House, 514 Diagonal Road. There will be a program at 2:00p.m. that will include drumming and singing. The Society’s Museum will be available for walk-through tours.

September 1-November 30 Summit Metro Parks Fall Hiking Spree

The 61st Summit Metro Parks Fall Hiking Spree runs September 1 through November 30. This year’s Fall Hiking Spree theme is Honoring Indigenous Culture. The park district will explore stories, past and present, of the Indigenous Peoples who are part of the living landscape of the parks. For information about the Fall Hiking Spree, including trails and locations, visit hikingspree.summitmetroparks.org.

Thursday, October 10, 6:00-8:00p.m Teacher Workshop Akron Art Museum Native Ledger Art

Join us for a day of hands-on Native Arts Education. Participants will learn about the tradition of ledger art with Northern Cheyenne Artist Instructor, Alaina Buffalo Spirit. Registration for the workshop is \$15 and includes gallery admission, supplies, and light refreshments. Professional development paperwork to submit to their LPDCs upon request.

Saturday, October 12, 6-8:00 p.m. Akron Art Museum Native Film Screening: Smoke Signals (1998)

Come enjoy the critically acclaimed indie darling, Smoke Signals on the big screen here in the Museum Lobby. Art activities and light refreshments are available for purchase before the film. Registration requested. FREE.

October 1-31, 2024 Akron Summit County Library Community Read and Poetry Workshops

Community Read: Barbara Kingslover's book The Bean Trees will be discussed at various branches.

Poetry: A teaching artist from KSU's Wick Poetry Center leads participants through an expressive writing workshop on the themes of home and creating a sense of belonging.

BACKGROUND

Akron City Council in 2018 declared the first Monday in October as "North American First People's Day," a day to honor Indian history, life and culture. It was extended to the entire county in April 2019 by Summit County Council. The initiative was prompted by students at The Lippman School of Akron, which has a longstanding exchange relationship with the Northern Cheyenne Nation of Montana.

- Students from Lippman, Portage Path CLC and the Cheyenne Nation joined together in 2016 to create a web-based mobile app that provides extensive information about the Indian trail, including its history and the natural world that it traverses. The app can be accessed at www.walkportagepath.org.
- The Portage Path Collaborative includes The Summit County Historical Society, The Lippman School, Summit Metro Parks, Akron Public Schools, the Akron-Summit County Public Library, Stewards for Historic Preservation and The University of Akron Institute for Human Science and Culture/ Cummings Center for the History of Psychology. Two individuals, La Donna Blue Eye, a member of the Choctaw Nation and Akron artist Chuck Ayers are also members of the group.
- A brochure outlining the historic trail and the history of Native peoples who used the Portage Path has been published and is free and available at the Historical Society and at Metro Parks' F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm.
- The sculpture of a Native American portaging a canoe was designed and sculpted by Peter Jones who resides and works on the Alleghany Indian Reservation near Salamanca, New York. He graduated from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe in 1965 and has been honored with national awards recognizing his lifetime commitment to perpetuating Haudenosaunee traditions and to restore and pass on ancestral knowledge and traditions, connecting Native peoples to their greatest assets.

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