

*In summer, many of us take advantage of the state parks maintained by our tax dollars. Each summer I like to publish this reminder of the assets we have closer to home.*

It's summer time! Summer is a time of year we all feel healthier. Likely the opportunity for recreation and the abundant availability of fresh produce fuels a healthier lifestyle, not to mention the fact that just being outside gives us a sense of energy. As a school district we value your support. So this week, I wanted to share information about some facilities that you, the community, have provided for our students that can also be used by you and your family this summer for recreation.

Each of our elementary schools have very nice playgrounds. If you are looking for something to do with your children or grandchildren, a trip to the playground is always fun. We would only ask that children are always supervised when using the equipment.

On the high school/middle school campus, there are a number of options. Our all-weather track offers a more forgiving surface for walking or running than concrete or asphalt. This can be especially helpful if you are a person with "mature joints," perhaps even having received some news ones from your local surgeon! One lap around the track is a quarter mile so you don't even need a fancy electronic gadget to keep track.

Play tennis! We have eight courts often used by the community.

If you are able to handle a short hike up a relatively steep hill, go east of the stadium, across the old softball field to the tree line at the edge of the woods. There are two openings that will lead to a path that runs north and south inside the tree line. If you follow that path north, you will find markers that note what trees you will be observing. They are wooden posts with a wooden cover that slides to reveal the information. This is a great opportunity for you to share with your younger children a little biology lesson while enjoying the great outdoors. The path takes you to a bridge over the creek and then to a small amphitheater. At the amphitheater, you can get in touch with your "inner thespian" and recite whatever it is you had to memorize in high school and still remember. (I can still do the first three lines of Canterbury Tales in Old English!)

If you follow that trail further north from the Amphitheater, you will find more of the flora identified and eventually come out at the northeast corner of the parking lot behind the high school. You can also start your trail hike at this spot as a trellis marks the opening.

This nature trail, bridge and amphitheater were conceived and built by students who were part of a program we called Experience Academy. If you look closely, the bridge and amphitheater have plaques with their names on it.

That same trail that runs north and south also connects to a loop that is part of our cross country trail. If you follow that path east across a larger bridge, you can take a lovely stroll through the woods and end up back where you started. Continue south on that main path and you will come into an open meadow which has a mowed path you can use if you prefer walking in the sunshine rather than the shade of the trees.

If climbing the hill is not your cup of tea, there are some opportunities at the northeast corner of the parking lot behind the high school (northwest corner of stadium). Students from Experience Academy built a "tailgate station" there that includes two picnic tables and a grill. They've also built a permanent Cornhole station. Bring your own bags and you can practice to win the Cornhole match at the annual family reunion. This area also includes an arena for a game they fondly remember from Camp Fitch. (Sorry, I can't remember the name of the game, despite remembering Canterbury Tales!)

The Edinboro Lake Watershed Association received a grant from the DEP to model some "best management practices" for handling rain water run-off. Walk through and enjoy the rain

garden behind the Education Center or enjoy the vegetated swale along General McLane Drive. This year, the rain garden has two benches and a beautiful metal sculpture welded by 2018 graduate, Patrick Caccione.

We have beautiful campuses with ample opportunities to get some exercise and even learn a few things while doing it. So get out there and enjoy the sunshine!