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Metroparks officials give preview of new Austinburg location

BY BRIAN HAYTCHER

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AUSTINBURG TOWNSHIP — A group of visitors got a sneak peak of a nearly completed Metropark on Cork Cold Springs Road on Monday night.

Upper Grand Metropark, located off Route 45, will hopefully open some time in July, if the weather cooperates, Metroparks Operations Manager Brett Bellas told a group of more than 20 people who attended a preview event.

Work is still ongoing on a kayak and canoe ramp at the park, which will open once those efforts are completed, according to Bellas.

The camp was previously a Camp Fire Girls campground, and was operated by a group of Lutheran churches out of Cleveland.

The property was first established as a camp in the 1940s.

"It has a lot of camping history," Bellas said.

Work has been taking place on the property for a few years. The Metroparks have been working with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy on the property. There are conservation easements on portions of the property.

In addition to the ramp, the park will have primitive campsites, a pavilion, and a number of trails.

The park cannot be opened until work is finished on the ramp for insurance reasons, Bellas said.

The ramp was designed to minimize maintenance costs and make it last as long as possible.

"We had to pull off for a little bit because of the rainfall and whatnot," Bellas said.

A shelter near the parking lot will be available for reservation once the park opens, and there will be portable restrooms at the park once it opens.

The Metroparks are seeking a grant to install a more permanent restroom at the park.

A basketball court near the parking lot was resurfaced as part of the work on the property.

Trails at the park will be improved as time allows.

Bellas said agreements with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy would dictate what substances could be used to improve the trails.

A sign will be installed, along with an information board and trail markers, will be installed as the opening of the park approaches.



Metroparks Operations Manager Brett Bellas, right, spoke to members of the public touring a new Ashtabula County Metropark, which is tentatively scheduled to open later this summer.

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