

THE GREAT Outdoor\$

POOLING YOUR FUNDS

Of course, hopping into the pool is the easiest way to cool off in the summer! But not everyone can get to a pool for free! Some neighborhoods have community pools and splash pads – but even then, they are supported by money that citizens pay each year called TAXES. Some neighborhoods have private pools, but hiring life-guards and paying to clean and maintain the pool is covered by a payment everyone in the neighborhood makes to a group called the Homeowners Association (HOA). Your DUES (money paid regularly) to the HOA go to make the pool available to all who live there. So why not just have your own pool! Now we're talking expensive: the average above ground pool can run \$3,000 on the lower end – and that doesn't include chemicals to clean

and other pool safety equipment. In-ground pools are even more expensive – with smaller ones running at least \$40,000!

PARK YOUR PLANS

Why not just go outside and have fun for free! Sometimes even that isn't possible. For example - camping is a favorite summer activity that can get pricey! On top of gas to travel, new camping equipment, food, and supplies...many camping sites carry a fee! In nearby Cuyahoga Valley National Park a night at a camp site will cost around \$30. Premium campsites at places like Kelleys Island might run as high as \$65 a night.

ACCOUNTING FOR ACTIVITIES

Some outdoor activities don't have a specific place to go or time to do them. Think about hiking or fishing. Getting to a trailhead (the place where hikes



start) means parking a vehicle – which is sometimes pay-to-park! Fishing can happen in plenty of publicly accessible lakes – but you'll need to pay for a fishing license each year!

Want to get together with the neighborhood kids and play a game of baseball? Even that can be pricey! Bats, gloves, balls...and is there a diamond available? Many baseball spaces are reserved for league play during the summer and not available for public use. A travel baseball league can be a lot of fun, but is a surprisingly expensive seasonal activity.

Share With Sparky!

If you could make one summer activity a PUBLIC UTILITY (a service free to everyone) – which one would you pick? Who would enjoy this activity the most? **Write your answer below and mail it with your coloring contest entry or email it to communications@ffcommunity.com**

Summer Fun Facts

1. The most expensive national park to visit in America is Grand Teton – which will run you more than \$400 for a weekend visit.
2. Americans spend a total of \$100 billion dollars on summer travel each year! Maybe just walk to the local playground?
3. The most popular summer activity 100 years ago (1926) was the road trip! Cars were becoming more available and more affordable, encouraging families to travel further on their own wheels.

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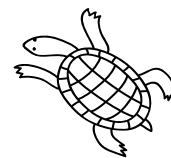
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Smokey's NATURE HUNT

Check off each box when you find an item. Draw or take pictures of your discoveries.



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|---|---|
| ☐ A flower being visited by an insect.
Be patient! Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators are at work. | ☐ A dandelion.
Don't forget to make a wish! |
| ☐ A plant that is taller than you are.
Trees, tall grass, or garden plants. | ☐ A pinecone or acorn.
These small seeds may one day be big trees. |
| ☐ A spiderweb.
Small creatures can make amazing work. | ☐ Two different types of birds.
Can you hear the difference between their songs? |
| ☐ Three different types of leaves.
Compare the similarities and differences between plants. | ☐ A pretty rock.
There are so many! |
| ☐ An earthworm.
There's an entire world living in the soil below your feet. | ☐ A clover.
It's good luck to find one with four leaves. |



Coloring Contest

Congratulations to **Lyla M.** for winning our Q2 Sparky coloring contest!



Sparky and Smokey are saving cash and staying cool at a local public beach!
Add a little color to their sunny day out! Submit your entry **by August 17, 2026** for a chance to win a prize!

(Child) Name: _____ Age: _____ Phone: _____

(Parent/Guardian) Name: _____ Email: _____

Mail to: FFCCU-Sparky's Club 4664 East 71st Street, Cuyahoga Heights, Ohio 44125