

Group tours Blue Hole property
By ANDY OURIEL, Sandusky Register August 26, 2019



Paul Schoenegge of Castalia speaks to other community members participating in the Aug. 19 Walk it Out event at the Blue Hole. Schoenegge provided some history and context about the property, once known as a popular tourist attraction.

About 50 community members toured the Blue Hole property as part of the Walk it Out program, hosted by Erie MetroParks.

CASTALIA

Fond memories popped into Stephen Lewis' mind when he visited a property for the first time in 40 years. "I remember my mom used to bring me here, and they used to have honey in little souvenir bottles you could buy," Lewis said. "I would also look into the lake. It was so clean. No algae." He even recalls the exact folklore often recited by those touring these hallowed grounds. "Fall in, and you will never be seen again," said Lewis, a Sandusky resident. "I still remember the mythology of it. But, whenever I came here, I always felt safe."

Along with about 50 other community members, Lewis explored the famed Castalia Blue Hole property.

During its heyday, about 165,000 people visited the Blue Hole on an annual basis, according to the book "Castalia, Cold Creek, and the Blue Hole." Why? Mostly because of its size, about 75 feet in diameter, clarity, vibrant blue hue and mysterious "bottomless" appearance.

Closing to the public almost 30 years ago, Erie MetroParks officials received special permission to host one of the district's Walk it Out events there on Aug. 19.

Visitors strolled around the freshwater pond, known as the Blue Hole, and could spot gorgeous homes nearby.

The Walk it Out program encourages people to explore new facets of Erie County while exercising. The recent event at Castalia's Blue Hole perfectly exemplifies that very mission, said park district spokesman Ethan Unzicker. He added this specific meet up was one of the most popular Walk it Out events ever. "Many people expressed excitement in getting to revisit a destination from their youth," Unzicker said. "Erie MetroParks and the (Erie County) Health Department have tried to add new and exciting locations to the program every year."

Some background on the Blue Hole

In a 2014 Register article, Castalia Trout Club manager Steve Sessler provided the following responses to questions regarding Castalia's Blue Hole:

Q: When did the Blue Hole close? A: The Blue Hole in Castalia officially closed in 1990.

Q: Why did it close? A: It was closed for financial and declining attendance reasons. To my knowledge, there were no safety concerns other than a financial outlay to upgrade the facilities to comply with the ADA (handicap accessibility) act.

Q: Will it ever reopen to the public? A: It will never be reopened to the public again. Most of the facilities and fencing have been removed from the property.

Q: Who owns the Blue Hole? A: The Blue Hole has always been owned by the Castalia Trout Club and its members.

Filling in the gaps on Castalia's Blue Hole

Only in Your State, a website dedicated to tourism, provides some back story on Castalia's Blue Hole:

-Located about 7 miles southwest of Cedar Point, this incredible pond attracted tourists from all over the region. It welcomed visitors from the 1920s until 1990.

-This pond is always strikingly blue, giving it a bottomless appearance. The Blue Hole is actually about 45 feet deep, but locals liked to believe that it was truly bottomless at the height of its popularity.

-Locals have long whispered about the rumored creatures that live in these vibrant waters. Some may recall hearing that eye-less fish lived in these waters, but the water actually does not have enough oxygen to naturally sustain fish.

-The pond is actually fed by an underground spring that spills into Lake Erie.

-You can still access another blue hole fed by the same spring at the Castalia State Fish Hatchery. The site, which is located at 7018 Homegardner Road, is managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and is open to the public.