

Lots of history happened here!

Ohio State Parks encompass more than 174,000 acres of Ohio's finest natural landscapes. Because these areas have remained largely undeveloped, much of Ohio's history has been preserved here.



Come see for yourself.

Bring your imagination, and we'll bring history to life with tours of historic structures, interpretive programs, nature center exhibits, demonstrations of frontier life and reenactments of historic events. Our state parks offer a variety of heritage-themed events year-round celebrating Ohio's rich history.

A Solid Foundation

There's plenty of evidence of Ohio's prehistoric past saved in stone. Exposed fossil beds at several state parks are studded with the remains of primitive plants and creatures that thrived when Ohio was covered by a shallow inland sea during the Paleozoic Era, more than 500 million years ago.

Glaciers carved Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes, and shaped nearly two-thirds of Ohio's landscape as they crept forward from Canada until the end of the last Ice Age about 12,000 years ago. As the glaciers retreated, they left interesting landforms in their tracks, such as glacial grooves gouged into the limestone bedrock by granite boulders.

The First Ohioans

Ohio's first human inhabitants left behind traces of their quest for food, shelter and spiritual fulfillment. Ancient burial mounds dating back to 800 B.C. are the hallmark of Ohio's prehistoric woodland Indian cultures, the Adena and Hopewell. During the 1700s, Ohio was home to several major Native American tribes who established their own bustling towns and trade networks. Relics of their lives have been found in recess caves and rock shelters, and scattered in the soil beneath village sites and hunting camps. Many of today's state parks were once Indian hunting grounds.

Pioneers also left their mark on the wild Ohio frontier. They aggressively cleared the primeval forests to establish farms, build cabins and found villages. Nearby streams were straddled with grist mills where corn and wheat were ground into flour. Some of these structures still stand in our state parks, and serve as reminders of frontier craftsmanship and the hardships of frontier life.

Shaping a State

Violent clashes between the Indians and pioneers escalated as the pioneer settlements multiplied, and the struggle for control of the land continued after Ohio's designation as the seventeenth state in 1803. Tensions between the United States and the English and their Indian allies culminated in the War of 1812. Many battles took place in the Ohio countryside, and the pivotal victory for the Americans was won on Lake Erie. Following the War of 1812, the Indian resistance disbanded and left Ohio, leaving the state safe for settlement and ripe for commerce.



Ohio on the Move

Ohioans needed a reliable transportation system to take their flour and farm products to eastern markets and bolster the fledgling economy. By the 1830s, work had begun to link the Ohio River and Lake Erie via the Ohio & Erie Canal, the Miami & Erie Canal, and the Sandy & Beaver Canal. Locks and dams were also constructed along the mighty Muskingum River to improve navigation from Marietta to Coshocton and connect with the Ohio & Erie Canal. Reservoirs dug by hand to supply water for the canals became public parks after the canals were abandoned, and were





On the Move

Transportation



Must See - Muskingum River Parkway:

The hand-operated, 1840s-vintage locks and dams along the Muskingum River comprise the nation's only remaining system of historic locks and dams. The Muskingum River Parkway has been designated as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

More to See - Lusk's Lock at Beaver Creek is a well-preserved example of the locks and dams of the historic Sandy & Beaver Canal. Portions of the historic Miami & Erie Canal channels and tow paths are still visible in and around Grand Lake St. Marys, Indian Lake, Lake Loramie, and Mary Jane Thurston. At Independence Dam, an historic lock from the Miami & Erie Canal has been restored. Buckeye Lake is steeped in the history of the Ohio & Erie Canal, which is the subject of historical markers at the park and neighboring communities of Buckeye Lake and Millersport, along with exhibits at the nearby Greater Buckeye Lake Historical Society Museum.

Must See - Marblehead Lighthouse: The oldest lighthouse in continuous operation on the Great Lakes has guided sailors safely along the rocky shores of Marblehead Peninsula since 1822. Lighthouse tours are offered on weekdays and select Saturdays during the summer months. The museum in the adjacent Keeper's House is open during the tours.



Commerce

Must See - The Old Grist Mill at Mohican:

The 1831 mill was moved to its present location on Pine Run in the 1970s, and renovated by volunteers. Tours and demonstrations are offered on most summer weekends.



More to See - Gaston's Mill at Beaver Creek: This well-preserved water-powered mill was built on this site along Little Beaver Creek in 1830. Tours are offered on weekends through the summer, and demonstrations are offered occasionally.

More to See - Stockport Mill along the Muskingum River Parkway and Clifton Mill, near John Bryan, have been restored and converted to privately-operated tourist attractions.



Ohio's Pioneer Past

Must See - The Pioneer Village at Beaver Creek: Authentic log buildings include a cabin, chapel, trading post, schoolhouse and blacksmith's shop, along with Gaston's Mill. The village is open on weekends during the summer months.



More to See - The Caesar Creek Pioneer Village features nearly a dozen Ohio-built log houses dating back to the late 1700s that have been moved to the site and reconstructed by volunteers.

An impressive selection of antique tools and farm equipment is on display in the antique barn at Barkcamp. The Pioneer Farm at Hueston Woods features an historic farm house and barn of 1840s-vintage, equipped with period furnishings and farm implements.

Tar Hollow's general store is an historic log house that was moved from nearby Great Seal. The Cline Log House, originally built in the 1860s, was relocated to Mohican. The McLees Log Cabin now serves as hub for programs at the Ohio State Fair.

More to See - Historic cemeteries at Burr Oak, Caesar Creek, Dillon, East Fork, Lake Hope, Malabar Farm, Quail Hollow, and Shawnee have their own stories to tell about pioneer families and later generations of Ohioans whose homesteads are now our state parks. The Old Log Church at Scioto Trail, which serves as the park's nature center, is a replica of the oldest Presbyterian church in the Northwest Territory. The Old Bethel Church at East Fork was cobbled together in 1867 from hand-hewn beams and hand forged nails salvaged from earlier structures that occupied the site.

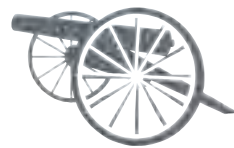


Must See - Hope Furnace at Lake Hope: This well-preserved example of an historic stone blast furnace was used to smelt iron ore. An historical marker at the site describes Ohio's Hanging Rock Iron Region.

More to See - At Jackson Lake, the moss-covered remains of the Jefferson Iron Furnace are still visible along the lakeshore.

Shaping a State

Must See - Great Seal: The rolling landscape of Great Seal serves as the inspiration for the scenic valley depicted in the Great Seal of the State of Ohio.



More to See - Adena State Memorial, the home of Ohio's first governor, Thomas Worthington, who designed the state seal and is credited as the Father of Ohio Statehood, is located nearby. Tours are offered spring through fall by the Ohio Historical Society.

Must See - On South Bass Island, the Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial commemorates the extraordinary naval battle that turned the tide of the War of 1812. The National Park Service operates the visitor center and offers tours of the monument.

More to See - At Alum Creek, a plaque in the park's campground marks the site known as Fort Cheshire where a blockhouse was constructed to provide a secure shelter for local settlers during the War of 1812.

More to See - Historical Society sites near Mary Jane Thurston include a replica of Fort Meigs, and a monument commemorating the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Fort Meigs offers a museum featuring exhibits of the War of 1812.

An historical marker along the Muskingum River Parkway at Rokeby shows where Confederate General John Hunt Morgan and his cavalry crossed the Muskingum River on their raid across 20 Ohio counties. Morgan's Raid marked the northern-most point ever reached by Confederate forces during the Civil War.

At Pike Lake, a solitary headstone marks the grave of an unidentified Union soldier who was found mortally wounded in a nearby farm field and buried at the site.

At Alum Creek, an historical marker celebrates a station on the Underground Railroad, and an historical community of freed slaves who settled in the area.

At Home in Ohio

Historic Homes

Must See - The "Big House" at Malabar Farm: The house has been preserved just as Louis Bromfield and his family left it in 1956. Tours are offered year-round.



Must See - The H.B. Stewart Manor House at Quail Hollow: The Manor features period furnishings and gardens reminiscent of the home's original landscaping. Tours are offered weekly in the summer and fall, and during special events.

More to See - The Kennedy Stone House at Salt Fork was built in 1837 by David B. Kennedy, with large blocks of beautiful sandstone that was locally quarried. The home has been restored and furnished by volunteers and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Crabill House at Buck Creek is the restored home of one of the area's early settlers, David Crabill. Built in the early 1820s, the brick home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is operated by the Clark County Historical Society.

Guest rooms at the Punderson Manor House are lavishly decorated to complement the elegant Tudor-style building. The dining room is open to all park visitors. The Harding Cabin at Deer Creek offers unique accommodations for business meetings or overnight stays in this well-appointed sportsman's retreat of an earlier era.

Leisure Pursuits

Must See - Buckeye Lake Amusement Park: Memorabilia from the Buckeye Lake Amusement Park is on display at the Buckeye Lake Historical Society Museum. An interpretive sign and historical marker at the North Shore Launch Ramp are located alongside the only remaining structure from the amusement park, a decorative fountain that served as the centerpiece of the bustling midway.

More to See - An historical marker at Indian Lake reminisces about the old Sandy Beach Amusement Park, dubbed "Ohio's Million Dollar Playground." The steel arch bridge that spans the Lakeview Harbor is the only remaining structure from the park. Wingfoot Lake, formerly a private retreat for employees of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, still sports a monument with the iconic Goodyear symbol of the winged foot, as well as the vintage blimp hangar across the lake.

Heritage Events

Check the Ohio State Parks Calendar of Events for dates, locations and details. The Calendar of Events is available on our website at www.ohiostateparks.org. Visit the historic log cabin at the ODNR area at the Ohio State Fair.

Historical Society Sites

Check the Ohio Historical Society website at www.ohiohistory.org for information on hours, fees and directions to historic sites.



Ohio State Parks offer lots of ways to explore the past.

Reach out and touch it.

Many state parks are home to restored historic structures, like pioneer villages and grist mills, as well as remnants of authentic pieces of history, like the Ohio & Erie and Miami & Erie canal systems. A number of fascinating historic sites operated by the Ohio Historical Society are located near state parks. Check the Ohio Historical Society website at www.ohiohistory.org for information on hours, fees and directions to historic sites.

Stand on the very spot.

Interpretive signs, historic markers and monuments at several state parks mark the spot where significant events occurred.

Experience it yourself.

Heritage events are held at a number of state parks every season of the year. Check the Ohio State Parks Calendar of Events for dates, locations and details. The Calendar of Events is available on our website at www.ohiostateparks.org.

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