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SPRING 2024

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Nature's Wonders
THIS SPRING

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
Hocking Hills Waterfalls

+

Solar Eclipse

+

Hopewell Ceremonial
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Total solar eclipses are indeed rare and awe-inspiring events. It's fascinating to know that the last total solar eclipse visible in Ohio was in 1806, and the next one after April will be in 2099. This long gap between total solar eclipses makes each occurrence a special and unique experience for those who get to witness it. Only 21 total solar eclipses have crossed the lower 48 states in the entire existence of the United States.

On April 8, 2024 "totality" as it is referred to, will enter Ohio around 3:00 p.m. in the southwest corner of the state and will exit the northeast corner around 3:10 p.m. During that time, those in the path of the total solar eclipse will be cast into darkness. All of Sandusky County will be in the area of totality. Sandusky County will experience 3 minutes 38 seconds of darkness while central and southeast Ohio will experience only seconds of totality or no totality at all. Make the most of a once-in-a-lifetime event and make the drive to Sandusky County.

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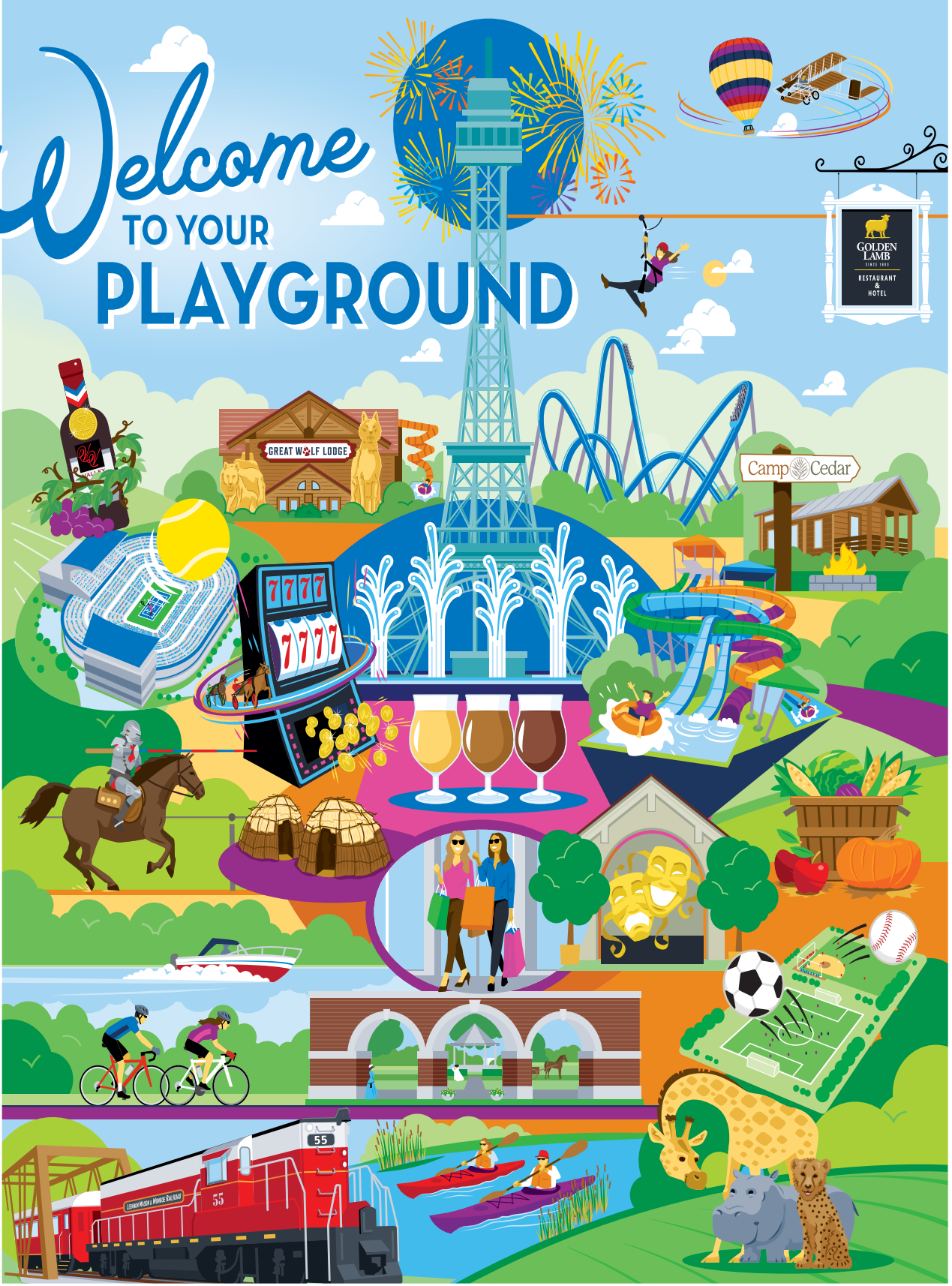
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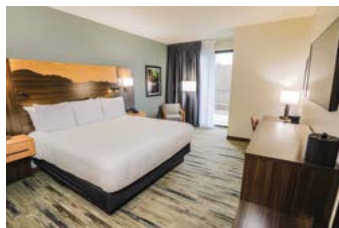
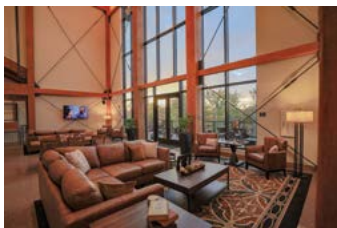
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A Message from The Editor



Spring is here. It's time to peel off the winter layers and "Rediscover Nature's Wonders." I'm excited to share this spring issue with all the exciting opportunities to explore.

This issue we spotlighted waterfalls in Ohio and the surrounding states. I had the opportunity to travel to Canada and explore truly one of the world's great wonders, Niagara Falls. I'm looking forward to sharing this adventure. One of my exhilarating experiences and the most memorable was seeing the Falls up close on the Hornblower boat excursion. It truly was an amazing experience and anyone that travels to Niagara Falls should definitely put this on their "To Do" list.

This spring issue also includes a 60th Birthday celebration spotlight of our friends at COSI in Columbus. It's the perfect weekend getaway to learn, build memories and expand your scientific minds. Also, not too far from Columbus in Licking, Warren and Ross Counties, you can experience the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. They are said to be "A complex masterpiece of landscape architecture."

So, my friends, spring has sprung and all is in bloom! It's time to get out and explore, no matter what you choose to do. Grab your bike, kayak or hiking shoes and "Rediscover Nature's Wonders" in your own way.

Douglas M. Kish, M.A.
Editor

Compass Ohio strives to be a thought leader in Fitness, Health and Recreation information to educate and inspire readers through print, digital, mobile, social media, strategic marketing campaigns and trade shows throughout Ohio and beyond.

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Spring 2024

- 3 **Totality Awesome**
- 9 **Explore the Brandywine Falls Trail**
- 12 **A Cycling Paradise in Knox County Connects Communities and Nature**
- 14 **Luxury Adventure Begins at The Treehouses at Owl Hollow**
- 18 **See Stunning Waterfalls at New River Gorge**
- 21 **Streetsboro is a Gateway to Spring Outdoor Delights**
- 24 **Happy 60th Birthday COSI**
- 27 **Find Waterfall Wonders in the Allegheny National Forest**
- 30 **Fresh-Air Fun in Ohio's Largest Playground**
- 33 **Spring Out and Enjoy Coshocton County**
- 34 **An Epic Waterfall Wonder**
- 38 **Discover the Awe-Inspiring Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks**
- 41 **Dream Weddings in Carroll County, Ohio**
- 44 **Exploring Amish Heritage in Holmes County, Ohio**
- 47 **Springtime Adventures at Caldwell Lake**
- 48 **Get off the Beaten Path**
- 52 **The Spring Awakening of Hocking Hills Waterfalls**
- 57 **Follow the Annie Oakley Trail for a Tribute to a Legend**
- 58 **Spring Awakens in All Her Majesty at Raven Rocks**
- 60 **Take a Walk in Nature - Shores & Islands Ohio Grow on You**
- 65 **Explore Sand Run Falls**



14

Luxury Adventure Begins at The Treehouses at Owl Hollow



34

An Epic Waterfall Wonder



48

Get off the Beaten Path

In the Next Issue

Sunny Days & Vibrant Nights

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EXPLORE THE BRANDYWINE FALLS TRAIL

By Ty Johnson

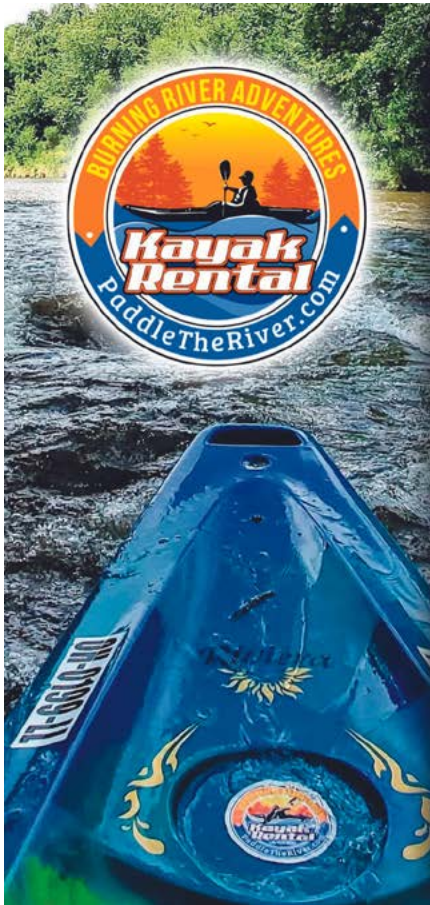
An adventure through the Brandywine Falls Trail is waiting for you. The fresh smell of nature along with the sound of rushing water is something to be desired. The 1.5-mile loop will take you along some of the most beautiful parts of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP), the ninth most visited national park in the United States in 2022.

Start the trail by enjoying some of the freshly preserved grounds that surround Brandywine Falls, a 65-foot waterfall that will leave you speechless. The trail will lead you to an easily accessible boardwalk that takes you directly to the waterfall. The view of the waterfall from the boardwalk is something out of a movie. Take a solo stroll or bring family and friends to see this popular trail and sight in the CVNP.

The sights will have you coming back time and time again. The different seasons will provide you with various experiences of the Falls. Spring offers vernal pools along with prime bloom season and summer comes with sunset views and beautiful weather. The fall is filled with color-changing leaves and the winter brings a winter wonderland giving the waterfall a whole new look! No matter what time of year you visit the trail, there are beautiful sights to see each time to make the same trail feel like a brand new one.

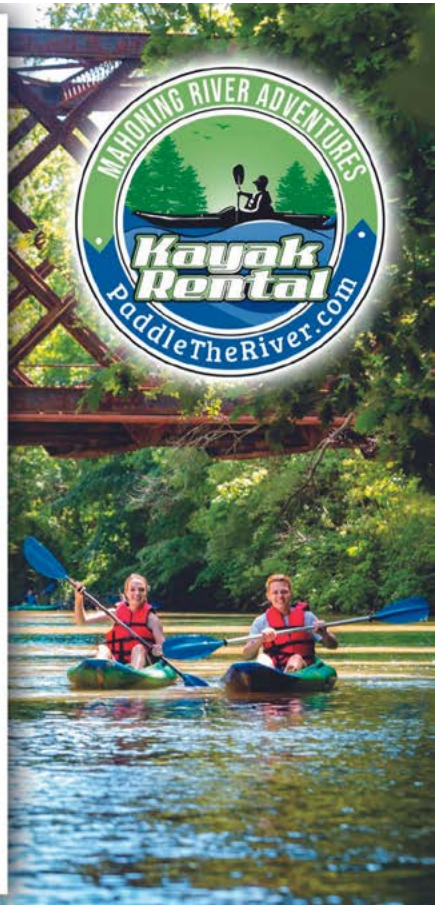
After taking in the stunning view of the Falls, head back up onto the trail. The loop will offer you a look at some of the indigenous nature inside of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. It will then take you back to the beginning of the trail exactly where you started. You'll leave with memories that you can never forget! Plan your trip and learn more at visitakron-summit.org.





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A Cycling Paradise in Knox County Connects Communities and Nature

| By **Candy S. Collins, BS**

Discover the thrill of pedaling through Knox County's Cycling Paradise, where a 35-mile expanse of paved trails offers more than just a path for cycling; it's a vibrant journey connecting the quaint villages and the lively downtown of Mount Vernon. This network, featuring the Kokosing Gap Trail, Heart of Ohio Trail, and Mohican Valley Trail, is not just a route but a gateway to adventure and community connections.

Centrally located along the Ohio to Erie Trail, Knox County is an essential link in the 326-mile pathway bridging the Ohio River and Lake Erie. Cyclists embarking on this journey enjoy a varied panorama of landscapes, ranging from vibrant cities to charming towns and serene countryside. Moreover, these trails form a critical section of the Great American Rail Trail, a nationwide endeavor to create a 3,700-mile trail accommodating diverse activities extending from Washington, D.C., to Washington State.

Every year, the Knox County trails host the exciting 'Trailapalooza,' a celebration of cycling and the great outdoors starting in 2022. Returning in Fall 2024, this event invites visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant activities and amenities of the trail towns.

Along the trails, cyclists can discover attractions enriching the riding experience. Ariel-Foundation Park, Mid-Way Welcome Station of the Ohio to Erie Trail in Centerburg, and South Main Plaza Dog Fountain in Mount Vernon are among these notable stops. Access to the scenic Kokosing and Mohican State Rivers provides a pleasant diversion for those who love the water.

Cyclists eager for a souvenir can pick up a free "Bike Knox Ohio" sticker at the historic CA&C Visitor Center in Mount Vernon, symbolizing their journey through this cycling haven. The Y-Not Bike Shop on the Kokosing Gap Trail in Mount Vernon is a must-visit for anyone with biking needs and cycling enthusiasts.

Other highlights along the trail include the Brown Family Environmental Center, Kenyon College, a historic locomotive and caboose, and the picturesque Bridge of Dreams in Brinkhaven. Each spot offers its unique charm, contributing to the trail's allure.

The trails of Knox County offer far more than mere cycling paths; they stand as a must-visit destination, beautifully merging nature's beauty, cultural depth, and recreational enjoyment. These routes traverse the countryside and serve as gateways to unexpected adventures and meaningful connections with local communities. For more details and to discover other happenings around the county, be sure to visit Knox County's Convention and Visitors Bureau website at www.visitknoxohio.org.



Photos courtesy of
Nicole Leoné Miller Photography



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Knox County welcomes you to our wide open spaces and unexplored places. Located in the heartland of Central Ohio, Knox County is your destination to reconnect with your passion, discover a new way to explore and find a peace that you didn't know was missing. We invite you to arrive curious, stay inspired and leave wanting more.

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LUXURY ADVENTURE BEGINS AT

The Treehouses at Owl Hollow

By Trish Mann

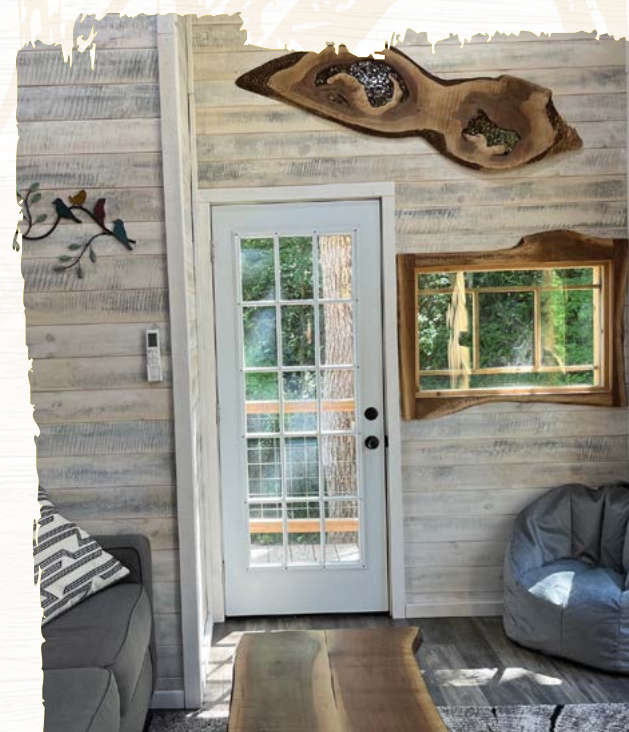
In the heart of Monroe County, Ohio, a unique retreat awaits those seeking an escape from the mundane. The Treehouses at Owl Hollow, set in the scenic Appalachian Mountains, merge the rustic allure of the wilderness with the comforts of modern living. Here, amidst the towering trees and the gentle flow of Sunfish Creek, you'll find a sanctuary that promises both adventure and tranquility.

The creation of The Treehouses at Owl Hollow stems from a lifelong passion for tree climbing and the childhood memory of a treehouse built by the owner's father. "Ever since I was a little kid, I have been climbing trees and even have five broken ribs to show for it. My father built me a treehouse in a large white oak when I was a child, and I have always been enamored with the concept of treehouses," says Casey Bott, owner of The Treehouses at Owl Hollow.

This childhood enchantment, coupled with a deep appreciation for nature's beauty, led to the development of this unique lodging business. Bott continued, "Life doesn't get much better than being a grown man building a treehouse in the woods." The journey involved meticulous research, inspiration from Pete Nelson's *Treehouse Masters*, and a quest for the perfect location, culminating in the creation of two exquisite treehouses: The Royal Roost and The Owl's Perch.

The Royal Roost, a four-person showcase treehouse, and The Owl's Perch, a cozy haven for couples, are designed for the utmost comfort and scenic beauty. They feature modern amenities like Wi-Fi, air conditioning/heating, electric fireplaces, and kitchenettes, ensuring a perfect blend of rustic charm and contemporary convenience. Guests can relax on the decks, sway in hammocks, or gather around the fire pit, all while being enveloped by the tranquil sounds of nature.

With possible plans for a third treehouse rental and an array of outdoor activities, The Treehouses at Owl Hollow will become





a destination in themselves. The spring of 2024 will see the introduction of hiking, guided experiences, creekin' adventures, and much more.

At Owl Hollow every sense is awakened. The flowing waters, the crisp morning air, and the chorus of birds create an immersive natural retreat. The treehouses' design allows you to experience the outdoors fully, whether lounging in a hammock or enjoying a meal on the deck.

Adding a unique flair to the Owl Hollow experience is the option for private, chef-prepared dinners. The owner, with his background as a chef, offers guests the opportunity to enjoy gourmet meals amidst the tranquil setting of the treehouses for an additional cost. This culinary experience is not just about the food; it's about enjoying the flavors and serenity while surrounded by nature's splendor.

The Treehouses at Owl Hollow are a gateway to the diverse attractions of Monroe County. The nearby Piatt Park Cave and Gorge Area, in addition to Raven Rocks, offer exciting

opportunities for exploration. Monroe County, Ohio, is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. It's home to beautiful places like Piatt Park and Kiedaisch Point, where you can see waterfalls, recess caves, and incredible views. The Monroe Lake Wildlife Area and Wayne National Forest are perfect for adventure, offering hidden spots like Lamping Homestead and Ring Mill for exploring.

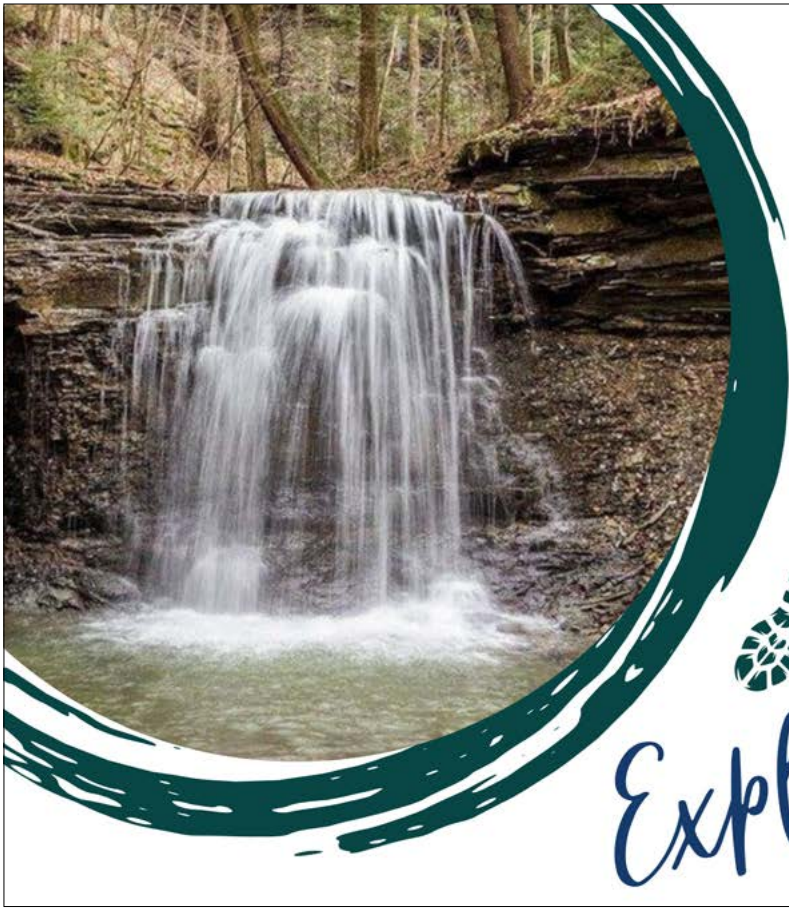
Piatt Park, covering 119 acres, is a highlight with its fantastic hiking trails through recess caves and gorges. You'll see abundant wildlife in this park, which is filled with old forests and waterfalls. Even though it's so beautiful, Piatt Park is relatively quiet, making it an excellent spot for a peaceful day outdoors.

For adventurous souls, Dragonfly Lake, another outdoor retreat by the Botts, presents an off-grid experience. This 20-acre area with a lake and two cabins is perfect for those looking to disconnect and immerse themselves in the wilderness. It offers a different pace and style of adventure, catering to those who love a more rustic and raw connection with nature.

The Treehouses at Owl Hollow offer more than just lodging; they are an opportunity to engage with the tranquility and beauty of rural Appalachia. Whether a quiet retreat in a treehouse rental, a hike through enchanting landscapes, or a culinary delight in the wilderness, this unique destination promises a rejuvenating and thrilling experience.

For those yearning for a path less traveled, The Treehouses at Owl Hollow in Monroe County, Ohio, offers the perfect blend of adventure, relaxation, and natural beauty. Book your stay today at owlhollowtreehouses.com and enter a world where the wilderness whispers and adventure awaits.





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A man in a dark t-shirt stands on a large rock in the foreground, looking towards a wide waterfall cascading over rocks in a dense, green forest. The scene is captured from a low angle, emphasizing the scale of the waterfall and the surrounding trees.

SEE STUNNING WATERFALLS AT NEW RIVER GORGE

By Candy S. Collins, BS

A must-see for nature enthusiasts, hikers, and photographers, the waterfalls at New River Gorge offer unique experiences and a chance to appreciate the region's beauty.

New River Gorge in West Virginia, known for its breathtaking landscapes and exciting outdoor adventures, is also home to some of the most stunning waterfalls in the region. From the popular Cathedral Falls to hidden gems like Wolf Creek Falls, each waterfall presents a unique and captivating experience.

Cathedral Falls, one of the most accessible and picturesque falls in the area, cascades beautifully down a series of rock formations. Located near Gauley Bridge, its ease of access and scenic backdrop make it a favorite among photographers and nature lovers.

Butcher Branch Falls, a lesser-known but equally enchanting waterfall, offers a tranquil escape. Tucked away in the lush forests of the gorge, the journey to this waterfall is as soothing as the destination itself, providing a peaceful retreat for those who venture there.

Turkey Creek Falls and Kanawha Falls, each with their unique allure, are must-see stops for those exploring the region. Turkey Creek Falls, hidden in the woods, is a serene spot perfect for quiet contemplation. At the same time, Kanawha Falls commands attention with its wide, impressive expanse and the awe-inspiring sound of water thundering over rocks.

Glade Creek in Babcock State Park is another must-visit location. The creek is known for its picturesque waterfalls and the iconic Glade Creek Grist Mill, a symbol of West Virginia's rural heritage.

Big Branch Falls and Mill Creek in Hawks Nest State Park offer hikes through some of the most striking landscapes in the New River Gorge area. These falls are a testament to the rugged beauty of the West Virginia mountains, providing hikers and nature enthusiasts with spectacular views.

Dunloup Falls, Finn's Falls, and Wolf Creek Falls each add to the allure of the New River Gorge region. Dunloup, with its dramatic plunge, is a sight to behold. Finn's Falls, a bit more hidden, rewards those who seek it with a tranquil and picturesque setting. Wolf Creek Falls, a lesser-known treasure, is perfect for those looking to escape the beaten path and enjoy a moment of solitude amidst nature.

Visiting these waterfalls is more than just a sightseeing experience; it's an opportunity to connect with nature and appreciate the raw, untamed beauty of West Virginia's landscapes. Whether you are an avid hiker, a photographer, or simply someone who loves to bask in the beauty of nature, the waterfalls of New River Gorge are a must-see on your outdoor adventures. Visit <https://newrivergorgecvb.com/> for more information.



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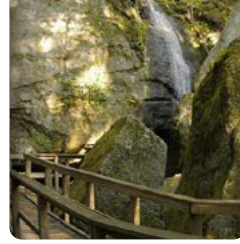
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Streetsboro

is a Gateway to Spring Outdoor Delights



By Trish Mann

Streetsboro, nestled in the heart of Ohio, is the perfect starting point for many spring outdoor activities. Its proximity to various parks and natural landscapes makes it a dream destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Here, you can embrace the rejuvenating spring air and witness the awakening of nature. Streetsboro is the ideal choice for those seeking to indulge in vibrant spring adventures and bask in the beauty of the outdoors.

Just a stone's throw away, West Branch State Park is a sanctuary for springtime fun. This park boasts a sprawling 2,650-acre reservoir, perfect for fishing and boating enthusiasts, especially with the arrival of warmer weather. The park also offers picturesque lakeside picnic spots, hiking trails, and disc golf, surrounded by the unfolding splendor of nature.

For a more tranquil outdoor experience, Trail Lake Park presents peaceful walking paths, ideal for strolls or family hikes. This park allows visitors to surround themselves with the serene beauty of Ohio's springtime.

Nelson Ledges State Park is another must-visit spring destination. Its ancient cliffs and ledges create a breathtaking backdrop under the spring sun. The park's trails, adorned with fresh foliage and reflective quarry waters, offer a stunning setting for hikers and nature lovers.

Wingfoot Lake State Park, nearby, is famed for its serene lake, suitable for fishing and gentle boating. The park features walking and biking trails that wind through forests and meadows. With picnic areas, playgrounds, and sports fields, it's a fantastic location for families and nature enthusiasts.

A short drive from Streetsboro, the awakening Cuyahoga Valley National Park in spring offers over 125 miles of hiking trails suitable for all skill levels. Visitors can enjoy scenic walks



or challenging hikes among blooming landscapes. The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail is particularly popular among cyclists for its picturesque river vistas and lush greenery. Spring also attracts a variety of bird species to the park, making it a haven for bird watchers and photographers.

Kayaking enthusiasts will find delight in Portage County, especially on the gentle currents of the Cuyahoga River. Suitable for kayakers of all skill levels, this activity offers a serene method to explore the region's diverse landscapes and wildlife.

Serving as a gateway to numerous spring activities, from hiking in the Cuyahoga Valley to relaxing kayaking trips and family-friendly park adventures, Streetsboro's central location makes it an outstanding base for those eager to explore the splendor and excitement of Ohio's spring season.

For detailed travel plans and lodging information, the Streetsboro Visitor & Convention Bureau is ready to help you start your adventure.

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Happy 60th Birthday COSI



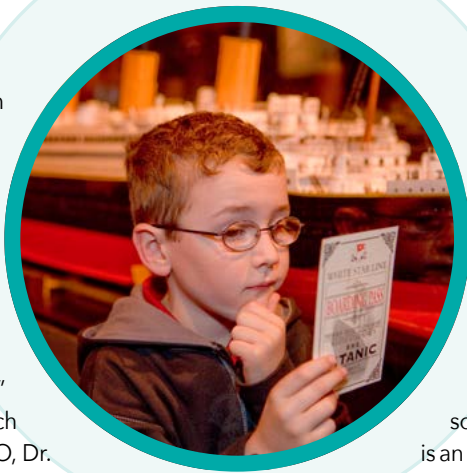
By Kristy Williams

Milestone birthdays are profoundly significant as they give us an opportunity to investigate the past and learn more about ourselves and what makes us special. 60 years is a journey, and it all started on March 29, 1964, when the Center of Science and Industry or COSI (pronounced CO-Sigh), opened its doors to an overwhelmingly large crowd, excited to see what Columbus, Ohio's newest cultural institution had in store.

For 60 years, COSI has inspired interest in science, technology, engineering, math, and art (STEAM) topics while delivering a fun, experiential, "hands-on" brand of learning. 60 years also comes with a lot of recent accolades for the science museum in 2023, including being



voted the “#1 Science Museum in the Country,” according to USA Today’s 10Best and a winner and recipient of the National Medal for Museum and Library Services – the highest honor given by The White House each year. COSI has also been awarded multiple Emmy® Awards for “Dr. B in 3,” an animated video series in which “Dr. B,” COSI’s President and CEO, Dr. Frederic Bertley, leads viewers through challenging scientific topics with clarity and wit.



A big birthday comes with a big exhibition hosted in 2024. *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition* is open now at COSI and runs through Labor Day. Guests visiting will receive a replica boarding pass and experience the wonder and tragedy of the world’s most famous ocean liner, *Titanic*. More than 350 artifacts recovered from the ship’s wreck site will be on display as well as full-scale room recreations, including the iconic Grand Staircase. The personal artifacts recovered and on display offer an emotional connection to the forever-altered lives of those on board.

An event lineup fit for a milestone birthday is in progress as well! After their big birthday celebration on March 29, the entire COSI team gears up for the largest STEAM event in the Midwest, The COSI Science Festival. With three days of community science events May 1 – 3 ranging from the science of glassblowing to documenting real scientific data throughout the community for researchers, the Big Science Celebration caps the event off on Saturday, May 4, at COSI with over 100 exhibitors, live music and performances, and of course, HUGE, larger-than-life science demonstrations during the day. Throughout the year, COSI also hosts events exclusively for those 21 and older called COSI After Dark. These event days are always themed to pop

culture and big events. For example, in May, the “Empire Strikes Bash” will delight visitors, highlighting a night of fun around a large, cultural franchise, and in June, COSI will host “Prom” after a wildly successful COSI After Dark event in 2023.

COSI is also featuring The Science of Big Machines in June. More than just a touch-a-truck type event, this event allows guests to get inside and operate large construction equipment, talk with engineers and construction professionals, and enjoy learning about something that affects everyone daily. In August, Farm Days is an experience where guests can learn about farming, animals, and agriculture. Experts are brought in along with real animals and farming equipment to enhance the learning element of the event. A fan-favorite of Farm Days is the baby chick incubation area. Eggs hatch before visitors’ eyes as they witness the miraculous process of birth for these baby birds. In September, Blast, COSI’s signature fundraiser, allows COSI’s biggest supporters to dance the night away while enjoying culinary delights, live music, and science demonstrations.

Amazing, classic COSI exhibits are available to guests in all seasons. Some of the most popular are Ocean, which has multiple water features, a large, beautiful statue of the ocean god, Poseidon, an interactive, digital fish tank, games to research deep-dive submersibles, live animals and more. Other notable exhibitions include Gadgets, which features hands-on activities and experiments with simple machines of all shapes and sizes, Progress, featuring the same town both in 1898 and 1964 with recognizable updates to their progress throughout the years, and the American Museum of Natural History Dinosaur Gallery, which has real fossils and shows guests how modern-day birds are descended from dinosaurs from the past.

A birthday celebration of this magnitude doesn’t happen often, and COSI is celebrating all-year-long! For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit COSI.org.



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Find Waterfall Wonders *in the* **Allegheny National Forest**

By **Candy S. Collins, BS**

Step into the lush Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania and let Bent Run and Hector Run Waterfalls wow you. These falls promise exhilarating and unforgettable adventures for the passionate nature enthusiast and the thrill-seeking explorer.

Experience the stunning beauty of Bent Run Waterfall, a breathtaking cascade along Rt. 59 in the Allegheny National Forest. It becomes a powerful spectacle in the lively spring months, swelling with the spring rains and runoff. It becomes a gentle trickle during the dry summers, offering a more subtle experience. This waterfall is easy to reach and provides a short, enjoyable hike that blends peaceful nature with a touch of adventure.

Surround yourself with the magical surroundings of Hector Run Falls, a fantastic waterfall set in a remarkable natural area. It may only be 22 feet tall, but it is imposing, with big trees and huge rocks. The water falls over a rock wall shaped like a rectangle, making it feel like a place from long ago. To see something special, go in the spring, fall, or winter when the waterfall has two separate flows, which differs from the gentler stream you see in the summer.

The journey to Hector Run Falls is an adventure in itself. Your expedition begins on a dirt road in Ludlow, Pennsylvania. It's approximately a two-mile hike on some

rugged terrain, but it's an experience that will etch itself in your memory. Be sure to use GPS coordinates 41.6853,- [number_1] to navigate your way, and let the Hector Run stream guide you directly to the waterfall.

Visiting these waterfalls in Allegheny National Forest is more than a quick trip. It's about the whole experience - the journey, the nature sounds, the fantastic views, and all the memories you'll make. If you're looking for something more than just a typical visit, these falls offer a chance to experience nature's incredible beauty.

For more adventures in the Allegheny National Forest, visit their website, <https://visitanf.com/>.



Photos courtesy of ANF Visitor Bureau

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FRESH-AIR FUN IN Ohio's Largest Playground

By Scott Hutchinson

Conveniently cradled between Interstates 71 and 75 and just minutes from two of Ohio's most celebrated cities in Cincinnati and Dayton sits Warren County, a Southwest Ohio suburb so popular among road trip travelers it's affectionally known as *Ohio's Largest Playground*.

While it may be Kings Island's record-crushing roller coasters, Great Wolf Lodge's wild, winding water slides or the legendary Cincinnati Open tennis tournament that keep the county top-of-mind for its millions of visitors each year, what many don't realize is that away from the hustle and bustle of its headline-grabbing hotspots, Warren County's also home to some of Ohio's most amazing outdoor offerings.

Featuring more than 40,000 acres of land designated by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, including miles upon miles of breathtaking trails, a relaxing

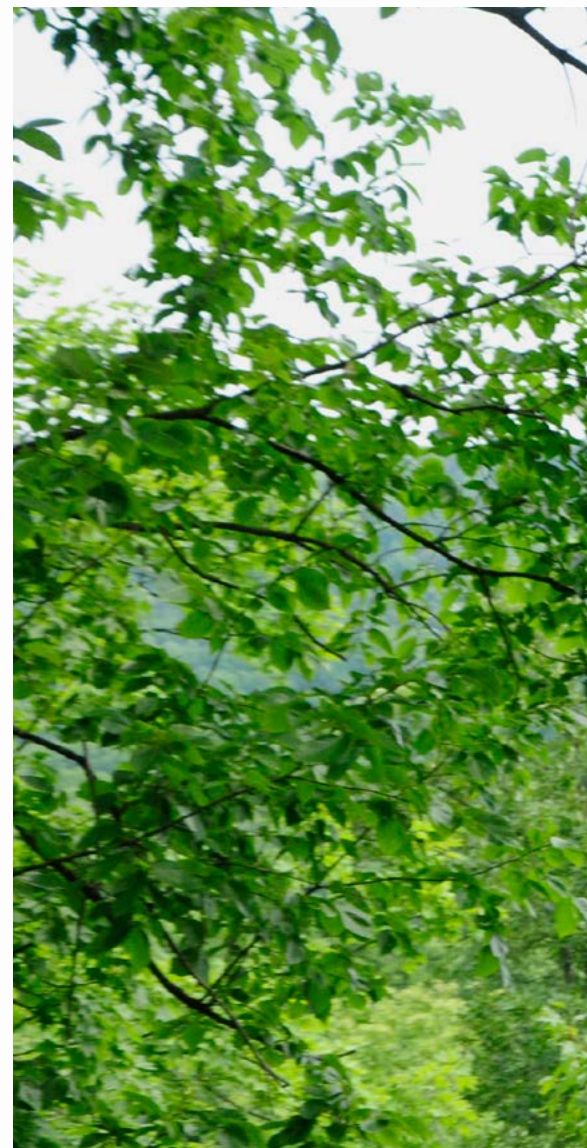
recreational river, a sprawling state park and even skyscraping ziplines, Warren County has quietly become one of the Buckeye State's most popular stops for fresh-air fun.

So where exactly should you head for outdoorsy excitement in Ohio's Largest Playground? There's truly no wrong place to start.

If there's a paddler in your party, you won't want to miss the Little Miami. Winding its way through miles of serene, midwestern wilderness, Warren County's Little Miami Scenic River ranks among the region's most beautiful and easily accessible recreational waterways. Whether you choose to navigate it by kayak, canoe, raft or tube, its excellent water quality, gentle current and experienced collection of local outfitters make it a must-stop spot for outdoorsy adventurers of all ages and experience levels - especially during Ohio's steamy summers.

More into pedaling than paddling? Along the river's banks runs the Little Miami Scenic Trail, one of the most popular and well-maintained paved bike trails in the United States. Stretching 78 miles from its southernmost point near Cincinnati to its northernmost in Xenia, it's the single longest trail in the Miami Valley Trail Network and passes through five different Ohio counties.

Thrill-seekers in your squad? Tucked in the forests of Warren



County's Oregonia, Ozone Zipline Adventures treats visitors to *truly* unique views of the Little Miami, sending them soaring more than 200 feet above the river valley. Those into high-flying fun can find even more of it at Gentle Breeze, a locally owned and operated hot air balloon outfitter that has spent nearly 40 years helping Warren County visitors check off their bucket lists.

Looking for something a little more low-key? Consider Caesar Creek - one of the Buckeye State's most gorgeous State Parks. Once covered by vast seas and later by glaciers, the park is now home to beautifully preserved hiking and horseback trails, carefully crafted





campgrounds, an enormous, beach-bordered lake for boating, fishing and sunbathing, a ranger-staffed visitors center and even some of the region's richest fossil hunting territory.

Speaking of hunting, adventurous Warren County visitors can also embark on the all-new Ohio's Largest Playground GeoTour - a 15-site, scavenger hunt game which sends players scrambling all throughout the county.

If you're the outdoorsy type, but also have a knack for history, don't leave town without experiencing Fort Ancient. Home to hiking trails and scenic overlooks, plus more than 2,000 years of incredible American Indian history, the awe-inspiring

Warren County draw recently became one of Ohio's first and only UNESCO World Heritage sites, joining the ranks of such world wonders as the Great Wall of China, Grand Canyon and Taj Mahal.

Finally, where you *play* and where you *stay* are equally important, and when it comes to outdoorsy accommodations Warren County's Camp Cedar is tough to top. A luxurious twist on the classic family camping trip, Camp Cedar treats guests to state-of-the-art cottages, fully connected

RV sites, swimming pools, on-site restaurants and more modern amenities.

No matter where your Warren County travels take you, you're sure to find adventure around every turn.

Plan your escape to Ohio's Largest Playground today at OhiosLargestPlayground.com.

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Spring Out and Enjoy Coshocton County

By Mindy Brems

Are you ready to get out of the house for some spring activities? Coshocton County offers numerous possibilities for the whole family. Here are some of the favorites.

Friends of the Park Half Marathon, 5k and 10k

Course developer and avid runner Sherry Kirkpatrick brought the Half Marathon to Coshocton in 2022 to raise money for the local park district. She wanted to create a top-notch event for local athletes and to bring new people to Coshocton to experience its beautiful park, the Downtown Historic District, and Historic Roscoe Village. A perfect setting for competitive racers, the event is also family and pet friendly for those who wish to jog or walk. This race is Powered by Coshocton Regional Medical Center and will be held on Saturday March 30, 2024. Runners may register now at www.Dkraces.com.

Eagle Ridge Disc Golf Course

This course features 18 challenging holes with significant elevation changes and three ponds that come into play. There are short tees for casual players and long tees that will challenge even the most advanced. The course is open to the public from dawn to dusk and it is free to play. It also offers extensive asphalt walking paths and trails for those wishing to walk, jog, hike or bike this scenic park that boasts a view of Coshocton County second to none, especially at sunset. The Eagle Ridge Disc Golf Course is a beautiful addition to Coshocton's recreational attractions and is quickly becoming one of Ohio's top disc golf courses. Visit <https://udisc.com/courses/eagle-ridge-31lz>, for details.

McWane River Walk

This new multi-use path includes portions of city blocks and runs along the scenic areas nestled near the Muskingum and Tuscarawas rivers. The river walk begins at the west end of Main Street behind Coshocton Village Inn and Suites, goes under the SR 541 bridge and passes Skip's Landing, which is home to the Coshocton Farmer's Market from May through October. It weaves along the rivers where it joins the Lake Park Connector path, which offers passage under SR 36 for safe access to Lake Park, Eagle Ridge Disc Golf Course, and Historic Roscoe Village. The path will also connect to the proposed County Road 621 multi-use path scheduled for completion in 2025. The McWane River Walk is made possible by a generous donation from McWane Ductile.

Find lodging options, recreation, attractions, events, shopping and dining at VisitCoshocton.com.

An Epic Waterfall Wonder

By Douglas M. Kish, MA

Along the United States/Canada border in the state of New York is a wondrous example of nature in all its glory. Although not officially listed as one of the wonders of the world, Niagara Falls encompasses three individual waterfalls—the American Falls, the Bridal Veil Falls, and the Horseshoe Falls. The American, Bridal Veil and a portion of the Horseshoe Falls are located in Niagara Falls, New York, USA. The larger part of the Horseshoe Falls is located in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Open year-round, the area offers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access to amazing views.

The water flowing over the Falls comes from four of the Great Lakes—Erie, Huron, Michigan and Superior. On our trip, we visited both sides of the Falls and can tell you that there are many things to do and see on both sides.

An up close and personal (and very wet) view of the Falls is an unforgettable experience from the *Niagara City Cruises* boat. Prior to boarding, you are given a waterproof poncho. The boat travels up the Niagara River, passing the American and Bridal Veil Falls before coming so close to the Horseshoe Falls that you will likely be soaked by the torrential mist. The deafening roar in that area explains the name Niagara, believed to be the native origin of “thundering waters.” Boats can be boarded from either the United States or Canadian sides of the river.





The Falls are illuminated nightly, year-round, although the time schedule changes monthly depending on what time it turns dark in the area. Although random colors are usually used, the Niagara Falls Illumination Board does honor requests to use special color combinations for charitable and not-for-profit organizations to light the Falls. From the middle of May to early October there is a fireworks display each night at 10 pm which can be seen from anywhere in the vicinity.

We saw an amazing view of the Horseshoe Falls while enjoying lunch at the Table Rock House Restaurant. Anywhere along the Niagara Parkway you are able to see all of the Falls and take amazing photos. Closer to the Horseshoe Falls, you may be treated to a mist shower,

depending on which direction the wind is blowing that day.

Located behind the Table Rock Centre is the Falls Incline Railway. This Railway allows pedestrians a quick, easy way to go from the many hotels located on Fallsview Blvd. at the top of the hill to the Horseshoe Falls area below. Tickets are available for one-way, two-way, or all-day use and we rode it every day during our stay.

The Journey Behind the Falls entrance is located at Table Rock Centre. This adventure starts with an elevator ride down 125 feet, after which you will explore tunnels while feeling the vibration of the falls over your head. At the end of one tunnel, an opening allows you to take a photo from behind the Horseshoe Falls while thousands of gallons of water flow over it. Another tunnel ends in a viewing area where you will be at the bottom of the falls looking up at the water, making for another unforgettable photo opportunity. This adventure also requires a waterproof poncho, as you will get wet.

As you walk down the Niagara Parkway through the Central Niagara Parks, you

will see beautiful flower displays and manicured bushes, with numerous park benches for a break to rest and enjoy the view. WildPlay Zipline to the Falls offers four riders at a time a view of all three Falls, landing at the base of the Horseshoe Falls.

Clifton Hill has been transformed into a family-friendly area with the Niagara Skywheel, Movieland Wax Museum, Dinosaur Adventure Golf, the Cosmic Coaster, and numerous restaurants and snack areas. You can spend a full day in this area enjoying the attractions. The Fallsview Indoor Waterpark has water activities for all ages and is a year-round attraction.

A major highlight of our trip was dinner at the Skylon Tower revolving dining room. Since the room completes one revolution per hour and our reservation was for 7 pm, we were able to see all of the Falls in both daylight and illuminated. There are numerous choices on the menu. We selected different entrees, as well as a shared desert. After dinner, we walked up to the observation deck, for more beautiful views of the illuminated Falls. Although you can ride a "yellow

bug” elevator to the observation level for a separate charge, dining includes that experience.

During our stay, we parked our vehicle at the hotel and walked everywhere we went. After checking out of the hotel, we drove down the Niagara Parkway to the see the Whirlpool Aero Car. This cable car, suspended above the Niagara Gorge, gives riders an unforgettable view of the Niagara Whirlpool below. We continued down the Parkway to the Floral Clock,

which contains over 20,000 small plants on the face that are changed twice each year.

In New York, we spent a day at Niagara Falls State Park, which is the oldest state park in the United States. Although there is no charge to enter the park, there is a charge for parking. Beautifully landscaped, this 400-acre park allows you to walk alongside the American rapids above the Falls. You can visit the wooden walkways of the Cave of the Winds and stand on Hurricane Deck below the Bridal Veil Falls.

Be prepared to utilize another poncho as you will get soaked at that vantage point.

We had lunch at the Top of the Falls restaurant which offers yet another amazing view of the rapids and the American Falls. Numerous walking paths and observation areas throughout the Park offer different views of all three Falls, as well as a possible mist shower. You can easily spend an entire day exploring the area. Snack bars in the area offer picnic tables for a quick bite or an afternoon ice cream treat to cool off on a hot day.

If you are looking to get away for an overnight, a weekend or a few days, Niagara Falls is certainly a beautiful place to visit. Just a few hours away from northeastern Ohio, you'll be pleasantly surprised at what you can see and do.



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Located on State Route 68, between Xenia and Yellow Springs, in Oldtown, the park will feature a cultural interpretive center focused on Ohio's Native Peoples, their history in their Ohio homeland, and their lives today.

The 12,000 square foot interpretive center will be a three-story structure, designed to pay tribute to the Shawnee longhouse, the traditional dwelling of the Shawnee people.

A living stream will be the signature display on the main floor. Also on this entry level is a theater, exhibits, welcome desk, gift area, and restrooms.

The second floor will feature displays documenting a historical timeline of the Shawnee People in Ohio prior to European settlement to current day. The timeline is punctuated with interesting stories about people of historical importance, bringing history to life in a way that is relatable and memorable.

The lower level of the building will be dedicated to temporary exhibits about the history, culture, art, and modern-day Shawnee Tribe.



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DISCOVER THE
**Awe-Inspiring
Hopewell Ceremonial
Earthworks** // By Emily Klima

In the eyes of the world, Ohio is the birthplace of aviation, the home of Neil Armstrong and the mother of U.S. Presidents. And that vision is expanding to include Ohio's incredible monumental earthworks built by ancient Native Americans well over a thousand years ago.

On September 19, the 21 countries on the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, a branch of the United Nations, issued their decision to inscribe the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks as the United States' 25th addition to the World Heritage List and the first in

the state of Ohio. This list is made up of cultural and natural sites across the world that are deemed to be of "outstanding universal value" which are important across generations. Other examples of World Heritage sites include Stonehenge, Yellowstone National Park, Machu Picchu and the Taj Mahal.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, which include five locations managed by the National Park Service and three managed by the Ohio History Connection, were built by Native Americans between 1,600 and 2,000 years ago. They are complex masterpieces of landscape

architecture and are exceptional among ancient monuments worldwide in their enormous scale, geometric precision and astronomical alignments. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks sites, located in Licking, Ross and Warren counties, are about eight sites telling a single story.

The National Park Service's Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Chillicothe includes the Mound City Group, the largest concentration of burial mounds attributed to the Hopewell Culture, Hopewell Mound Group, the largest of the enclosures and contains a perfect square, Seip Earthworks,



Top: Mound City from West Sunrise, Credit John Hancock; **Above Left:** Rendering Octagon Moonrise, Credit University of Cincinnati Center for the Electronic Reconstruction of Historical and Archaeological Sites; **Above Right:** Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks Logo

one of the largest burial mounds, High Bank Works, which is currently closed to the public and is being actively researched for its astronomical alignments and precise geometric enclosures, and Hopeton Earthworks, another perfect circle and a square with parallel walls that lead down to the Scioto river.

The Ohio History Connection's Great Circle Earthworks, an enormous circular enclosure that measures 1,200 feet across, and Octagon Earthworks, which is aligned to the rising and setting of the moon over its 18.6 year-long cycle, are in Heath and Newark, respectively, and Fort

Seip Mound 4, Credit John Hancock

Ancient Earthworks & Nature Preserve, a three-and-a-half-mile expanse of walls that surround a blufftop, is in Oregonia.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks were nominated to the UNESCO World Heritage List in January 2022 by the U.S. Department of the Interior, but the process to get to that point started back as early as the 90s with thousands of people helping along the way. Many Tribal Partners passed resolutions in support of the World Heritage project, including the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Shawnee Tribe, Miami Tribe, Wyandotte Nation, Seneca-Cayuga Tribe, Quapaw Tribe, Peoria Tribe, Ottawa Tribe, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, and the Seneca Nation of Indians.

These tribes helped provide support, context and feedback to help shape the experience that visitors will see at these sites. None of this is clearer than in the logo design.

The logo is representative of the earthworks themselves on many levels. The graded arches symbolize the earthworks both above and below the ground. The moon rises above them,

representing the many lunar alignments found in the earthworks and the rhythm of nature that has been written in the land. Water features run along the base of the earthworks just as they once did, thousands of years ago. Purple was chosen for the sky to symbolize a wise, revered and maternal presence. Lastly, the typography mimics the circular nature of the icon; a nod to the shapes of many of the earthworks and their amazingly precise geometry.

When visitors come, they most likely will not know the effort that went into creating this experience and protecting these sacred sites. The hope, instead, is that whether they visit for a day, two days or more, they will view these works as outstanding human genius that need to be seen in person and protected for generations to come. Feel a connection to our past and gain a wider understanding of what it means to be human. When you visit a Hopewell Ceremonial Earthwork site, you will be a witness to ancient brilliance.

For more information on planning your trip, visit www.hopewelleathworks.org.

Earthworks Sites

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

Ohio Official Quick Guide

QUICK START GUIDE

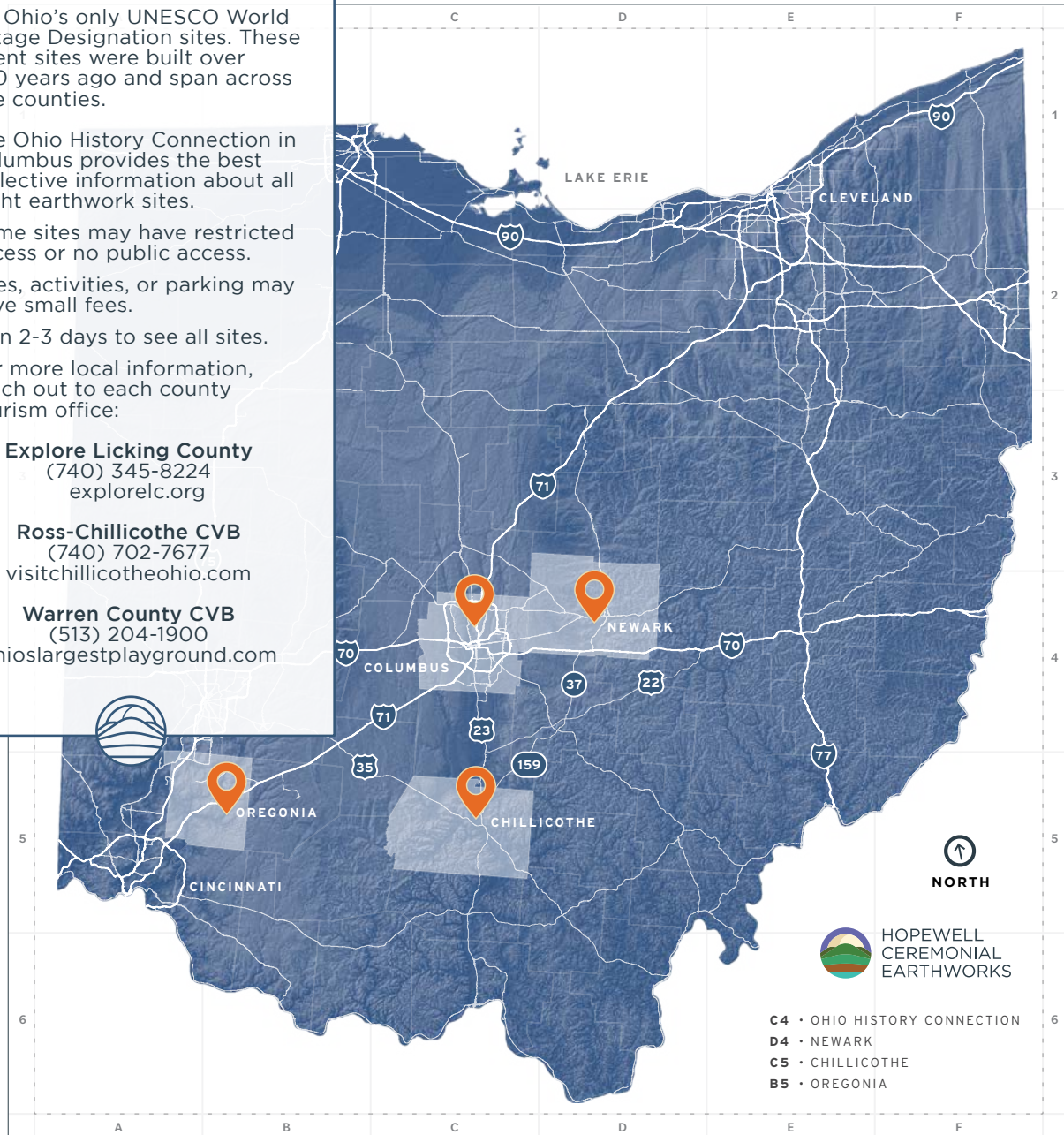
Visit Ohio's only UNESCO World Heritage Designation sites. These ancient sites were built over 2000 years ago and span across three counties.

- The Ohio History Connection in Columbus provides the best collective information about all eight earthwork sites.
- Some sites may have restricted access or no public access.
- Sites, activities, or parking may have small fees.
- Plan 2-3 days to see all sites.
- For more local information, reach out to each county tourism office:

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Dream Weddings in Carroll County, Ohio

By Candy S. Collins, BS

Carroll County wedding venues Century Farms and Heartland on Heritage redefine the essence of a dream wedding in the beautiful hills of Ohio. These exclusive venues stand out as beacons of beauty and sophistication, each offering a unique, picturesque setting for your special day, making it a privilege to celebrate your love here.

Century Farms, a rustic gem in Northeast Ohio, seamlessly blends past elegance with modern sophistication. As you enter its sprawling countryside, you find yourself in a grand yet intimate setting. The historic architecture of the farm blends seamlessly with the panoramic outdoor vistas, creating a perfect backdrop for your ceremony and reception.

Imagine exchanging vows under the open Ohio sky, surrounded by the beauty of nature, and then celebrating in a warmly lit barn where wooden beams and soft lighting evoke an atmosphere of romance, warmth, and intimacy.

At Century Farms, your wedding experience is more than just the ceremony. The venue accommodates two 5-bedroom villas explicitly designed for wedding parties and families. These villas feature plush living spaces and private patios, perfect for basking in nature's splendor.

In a significant enhancement in 2023, Century Farms introduced dedicated hair and makeup spaces, specifically designed for wedding couples, adding an extra layer of convenience to your preparations.

Heartland on Heritage, located among the beautiful rolling hills of Carroll County, brings nature and elegance together on this authentic farm. Alongside offering weekend packages that ensure a stress-free experience,

the venue features the on-site Heartland Lodge. This lodge provides cozy accommodations, contributing to the overall package by creating a welcoming atmosphere where lifelong memories are made. It's an ideal setting for guests to relax and savor every moment of the special weekend.

The barn at Heartland on Heritage, capable of hosting up to 300 guests, perfectly combines rustic charm with refined decor. This setting is ideal for both grand celebrations and intimate gatherings. The beautiful

natural surroundings guarantee that your wedding ceremony will be as visually stunning as it is unforgettable.

Century Farms and Heartland on Heritage in Carroll County are ideal for your wedding day. As you start your journey of love, these venues ensure a day filled with celebration and a lifetime of beautiful memories.

For more information or brochures about Carroll County, contact the Carroll County Visitors Bureau at www.carrollcountyohio.com or call 330-627-4811 ext. 2 for Tielle Miller. You may also contact her via email at tielle@carrollcountyohio.com.



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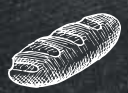
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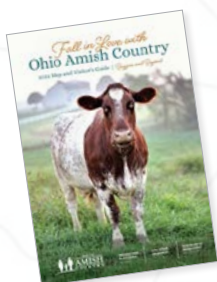
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SCAN FOR GUIDE



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Exploring Amish Heritage in Holmes County, Ohio

By Candy S. Collins, BS

Ohio's Holmes County, renowned for its rich Amish heritage, welcomes you to discover its scenic landscapes and traditional ways of living. This area, brimming with cultural and natural beauty, stands as a testament to a lifestyle that values simplicity, community, and hard work. The Amish community here is known for their horse-drawn buggies, handmade quilts, and home-cooked meals, offering a glimpse into a way of life that has remained largely unchanged over the centuries.

Experiencing the warmth and charm of Hershberger's Farm & Bakery is essential for a complete visit to Holmes County. This bustling destination stands out with its diverse offerings: a bakery renowned for delectable baked goods, a farm store brimming with unique items, and a petting zoo delights visitors of all ages. The bakery serves a wide array of bread, pies, cookies, and muffins, including the much-loved Hershberger's Fry Pies. The shelves at the bakery also display an assortment of fresh produce, local cheeses, and various spices, showcasing the region's abundant agricultural heritage.

The farm store at Hershberger's houses various goods ranging from leather products to wooden toys, furniture, and antiques. Each item displays the careful craftsmanship and attention to detail, critical characteristics of Amish culture. For more information on opening hours, events, and details, visit www.discoveryholmescounty.com.

Yoder's Amish Home presents another aspect of Holmes County's diverse offerings. The focal point of this attraction is a historic barn constructed in 1885, showcasing the architectural ingenuity of the Amish. Visitors in spring can see newborn farm animals. Guided tours of the barn provide educational insights into the Amish community's history and lifestyle, including their unique construction techniques, farming practices, and cultural traditions. Visit www.yodersamishhome.com for more information.

Celebrate the arrival of spring at the Dandelion Festival, taking place at Breitenbach Vineyards, 5773 Old Rt. 39 NW, Dover. This lively event kicks off on Friday, May 3, from noon to 7 pm and continues Saturday, May 4, from 9 am to 7 pm. Set in the beautiful surroundings of Breitenbach Vineyards, the festival is a delightful blend of nature, culture, and community spirit. Enjoy wine sampling, including the unique Dandelion Sangria, and engage





More than just its array of flowers, the farm provides an immersive experience. Engage in interactive workshops or bring a photographer to capture unique moments against the farm's natural landscapes and beautiful floral panoramas (there is a fee for professional photo shoots). Every Hummingbird Hill Flower Farm visit will captivate and soothe with its peaceful beauty and allure. For information on workshops, events, and more, visit Hummingbird Hill Flower Farm's website at www.hummingbirdhillflowerfarm.com.

Be on the lookout for the new Greenhouse Trail program coming this spring. This unique trail features a selection of the area's most popular greenhouses, making it an ideal route for finding a diverse range of indoor and outdoor plants, as well as outdoor and garden décor. To receive the list when complete, email Administrative@holmescountychamber.com.

Holmes County offers a journey through scenic landscapes and a deep appreciation for a lifestyle of simplicity and tradition. From the inviting atmosphere of Hershberger's Farm & Bakery to the historical insights of Yoder's Amish Home, the lively Dandelion Festival, and the tranquil Hummingbird Hill Flower Farm, each site provides a distinct perspective on this captivating region. A visit to this area is more than a retreat into nature but an opportunity to reflect on the values and traditions that shape our lives.

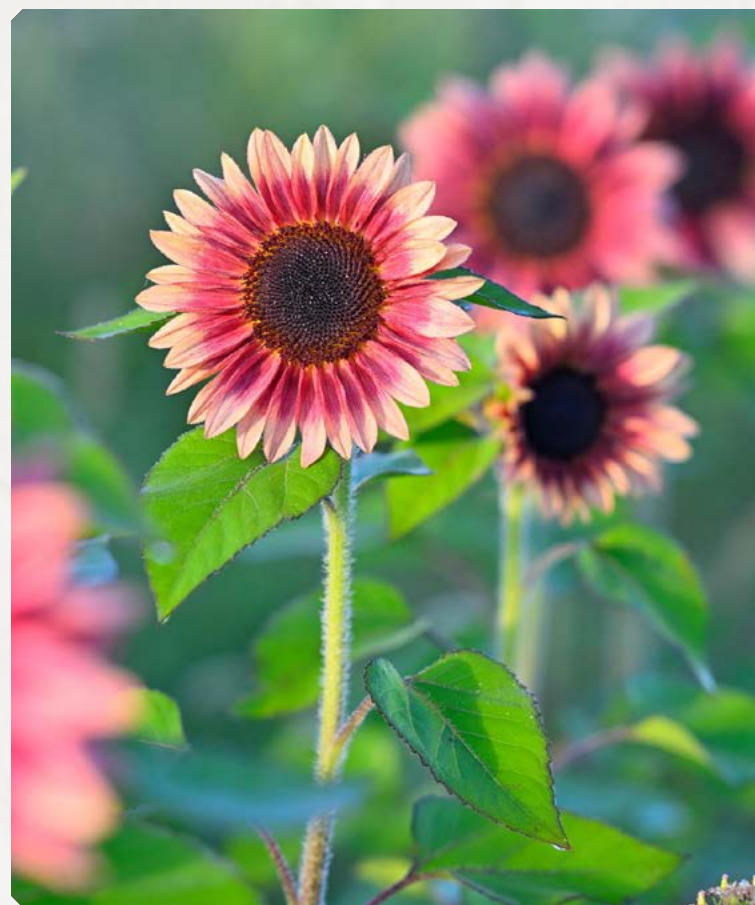
To discover all the exciting activities and events in Holmes County, check out www.visitamishcountry.com for comprehensive information and updates.



in cellar tours, arts and crafts, and live entertainment. Ideal for families and individuals alike, the festival features an array of dandelion-themed culinary delights and showcases a variety of vendors with items ranging from soap and pottery to jewelry and crafts.

On Saturday, kids will have a blast joining the dandelion scavenger hunts. And for the food enthusiasts, take advantage of the cooking demonstrations and tastings in the Tool Shed from 1 to 5 pm. For those who love a good run, the Dandelion 5K and 10K runs also occur on Saturday. Gear up for a great run! Registration and packet pickup kick off at 7 am in the purple barn beside the retail store. For all the exciting details, check out <https://breitenbachwine.com/dandelion-festival/>.

For flower lovers, Hummingbird Hill Flower Farm is a perfect destination. Established to spread hope and joy, the farm offers a range of delightful activities. Meander through fields abundant with flowers, handpick your preferred herbs and blooms to take home or even plan a memorable event in this charming locale.





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Springtime Adventures at Caldwell Lake

By Trish Mann

As winter's grip loosens, Caldwell Lake, nestled in the serene landscape of Noble County, Ohio, emerges as a springtime retreat. Established in the 1930s, this tucked-away treasure offers tranquil beauty and lively outdoor pursuits, ideal for those who appreciate the quieter charms of lesser-known locales.

With the arrival of spring, the lake becomes a bustling haven for anglers. Teeming with trout, catfish, bass, and bluegill, it's an ideal spot for casting a line in the hope of landing a great catch. Meanwhile, the Buckeye Trail presents an enticing call to hikers and nature enthusiasts. Spanning a total of 12 miles, including a 4.1-mile moderately challenging loop, the trail accommodates all levels of hikers, from those seeking a vigorous trek to leisurely strollers and dog walkers, all immersed in the breathtaking scenery of the Appalachian foothills.

Kayaking enthusiasts will find Caldwell Lake a peaceful oasis. The experience of paddling through the calm waters, with only the sound of oars gently breaking the surface, offers a profound connection with nature. Adding a touch of excitement, the newly introduced 18-hole disc golf course is a fusion of scenic beauty and playful challenge. Each throw and each hole present a delightful blend of skill, precision, and enjoyment against a backdrop of sparkling waters and vibrant greenery.

Recent upgrades to Caldwell Lake's facilities have further enhanced its appeal. Modern restrooms provide added convenience, ensuring a comfortable experience for all visitors. The lake's pavilion, boasting stunning views of the glistening waters, is a picturesque venue for various events and receptions, creating memories that last a lifetime.

As the days lengthen and nature awakens, Caldwell Lake calls out to those seeking adventure and tranquility. Whether it's the thrill of fishing, the joy of hiking, the peace of kayaking, or the fun of disc golf, the lake offers diverse activities set against a magnificent natural backdrop.

Planning a visit? Be sure to check out the Noble County Tourism (Convention and Visitors Bureau) for further details on the area's attractions. Caldwell Lake, a perfect harmony of peaceful retreat and active exploration, awaits your discovery this spring.





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Although most of the park was later sold to the State in 2009, the blimp hanger remains in use and if you are lucky during your visit, you just may see the Goodyear blimp parked outside the hanger or taking off. Don't forget to bring your binoculars and keep your eyes peeled for eagles, as well as other waterfowl that have also made residence around the lake.

Once you have finished exploring our parks, we invite you to stay and relish our many locally owned restaurants, coffee shops and breweries. Loved by locals and visitors alike, Mike's Place in Kent is truly a destination, with fun décor and a crazy large menu. Guido's Restaurant in Ravenna was recently voted the best lasagna in the greater Cleveland area by Cleveland.com readers. At Bell Tower Brewing Co. in Kent, you will not only find a woman head brewer, but you will also enjoy sampling brews in this once former church.

Plan your getaway today. Order your FREE visitor guide at centralportagevc.org.

Get off the Beaten Path

By Diane Rock

Whatever the time of year, Portage County offers an abundance of outdoor adventures for those who love to explore or just enjoy a leisurely walk among the trees. With 3 state parks each offering a unique experience, nature centers, lakes and rivers to fish and kayak, hiking and bike trails, numerous birding hot spots and access to The Buckeye Trail, Portage County makes for a perfect getaway for those who love nature and outdoor experiences.

Encompassing over 600 acres, Wingfoot Lake State Park is just a short drive from I-76 and nearby accommodations. Features include a 2-mile paved trail, a 4-mile storybook trail, a nature center,

birding and fishing opportunities, a disc golf course, picnic shelters and play area, as well as a floating bridge. Yes, we said floating bridge.

In 2023, the park added a new ADA-accessible kayak launch. Thanks to a partnership with the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., the addition allows for even more opportunities for those who may not otherwise enjoy all the lake has to offer.

Named after the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.'s iconic "winged foot" logo, the park would not be in existence if in 1916, the company didn't purchase the land to begin building airships for the war. Throughout the park's Goodyear history, employees of the company were invited to spend time with their families at the park.



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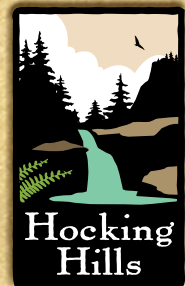
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The Spring Awakening of **Hocking Hills Waterfalls**

By Trish Mann

Spring is a period of transformation, and nowhere is this more evident than in the cascading Hocking Hills waterfalls. The increased rainfall and melting snow breathe life into the streams, causing the waterfalls to swell and roar - an awe-inspiring and humbling sight. The surrounding foliage, budding with new life, adds a vibrant backdrop to these natural wonders.

Depending on snowfall and spring rain, Hocking Hills has many waterfalls throughout the region. Here are some of the most reliable and famed waterfall vistas. Cedar Falls--Perhaps the most iconic among Hocking Hills waterfalls. Cedar Falls boasts a majestic horseshoe shape surrounded by lush hemlocks. Ash Cave Falls--Nestled in the largest recess cave in the state. Ash Cave Falls is a sheer drop from the cave's overhanging ledge, creating a stunning sight in the spring.

Old Man's Cave Falls: Located in a scenic gorge lined with unique rock formations, this waterfall offers beauty and a glimpse into geological history. **Rock House Falls:** Although smaller, Rock House Falls possesses an undeniable charm. Located near the park's sole genuine cave, its rugged landscape significantly heightens the fall's spring flow. **Cantwell Cliffs Falls:** For those seeking a quieter experience, the falls at Cantwell Cliffs are located in one of the park's more remote areas, offering a serene retreat.

While the waterfalls are the show's stars, Hocking Hills offers many activities, making it a delightful spring destination. Various activities take full advantage of the region's natural beauty as it comes to life with warmer weather and blooming flora. Here are some popular spring activities to enjoy in Hocking Hills. **Hiking:** Utilize the Hocking Hills trail map to explore many trails. The landscape is awash with greenery, and the waterfalls are at their most vibrant.

Bird Watching and Wildlife Viewing: With nature reawakening, spring is ideal for observing diverse bird species and wildlife. **Photography:** Capture the essence of spring with shots of wildflowers, lush greenery, and dynamic waterfalls. **Zip-lining:** Experience the thrill of zip-lining through the forest canopy, offering a bird's-eye view of the area's natural splendor. Starting mid-March, the Hocking Hills Canopy Tours provide an exhilarating way to experience the awakening forest from above. Glide through the budding treetops and witness the landscape transform. **Canoeing and Kayaking:** Paddle through the calm waters of local rivers and lakes, enjoying the warm spring weather.

Rock Climbing and Rappelling: Challenge yourself with rock climbing or rappelling, enhanced by the cooler spring temperatures and the beauty of the blooming landscape. **Fishing:** The active aquatic life in the local lakes and rivers is an ideal fishing experience. **Horseback Riding:** Traverse the scenic trails on horseback, a peaceful way to connect with nature.

Exploring Local Attractions: Discover the area's rich history and natural formations, including various caves and historical sites. **Wildflower Spotting:**

Spring is the season for wildflower enthusiasts, with various species blooming across the park. **Camping and Cabin Stays:** Enjoy the captivating outdoors with a camping trip or relax in a cozy cabin.

Maple Sugaring in the Hills: This is just the start of the exciting 2024 season of family-friendly events. From March 9 to March 10, 2024, at the Historic Cabin behind the Old Man's Cave Visitor Center, glimpse traditional maple sugar processing and enjoy local producers selling their delicious goods. It's a sweet way to celebrate the heritage of the area.

Paul A. Johnson Pencil Sharpener Museum, located at the Hocking Hills Regional Welcome Center, boasts America's most extensive collection of over 3,400 unique pencil sharpeners. This nationally recognized display is a testament to over two decades of dedicated collecting.

Picture Hocking Hills Photography Competition, May 17-19, 2024. Capture stunning scenes between May 17 at 4 pm through May 18, with a celebratory ceremony on May 19th. Perfect for those who love photography for pleasure, with a chance to win \$500 for the best overall photo.



Before embarking on your Hocking Hills adventure, you will want to check trail conditions and weather forecasts. Often, springtime weather is unpredictable. The ODNR website offers trail closures, and Explore Hocking Hills covers all the exciting events, activities, and trail information on the Hocking Hills Region.

Explore the captivating allure of Hocking Hills this spring, a gem where nature's beauty unfolds in breathtaking waterfalls and lush trails. Bask in the serene beauty of Ohio's enchanting waterfalls or embark on exciting outdoor escapades. This spring, let Hocking Hills be your playground, offering a perfect balance of relaxation and adventure, sure to enrich your spirit and create lasting memories. Plan your getaway at [ExploreHockingHills.com](https://www.explorehockinghills.com).



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FOLLOW THE ANNIE OAKLEY TRAIL — FOR A TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND —

By Trish Mann

Darke County, Ohio, is a living monument to its illustrious daughter, Annie Oakley. The Annie Oakley Trail offers a chance to follow in her footsteps. Born Phoebe Ann Mosey in 1860, she overcame childhood poverty, becoming a world-renowned sharpshooter and earning her the nickname "Little Sure Shot" from Chief Sitting Bull.

Annie Oakley was more than just a skilled markswoman; she pioneered women's rights and empowerment. In a time when women were largely confined to traditional roles, Oakley shattered stereotypes, advocating for equal pay in the entertainment industry and empowering women through shooting sports. She believed in the strength and capability of women, teaching thousands to handle firearms

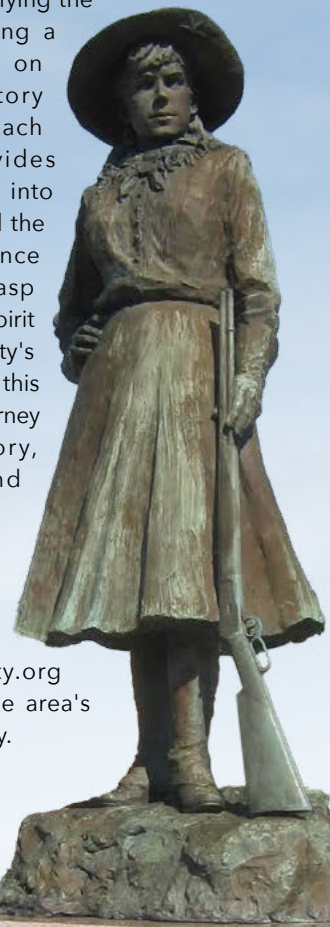
with confidence and grace. Her legal battles to protect her reputation further exemplify her unyielding spirit and commitment to integrity.

Visitors to Darke County can explore Oakley's history at several key locations. Garst Museum and The National Annie Oakley Center in Greenville houses the most extensive collection of Annie Oakley artifacts, offering an in-depth look at her life and legacy. 225/227 East 3rd Street is where Annie Oakley died and is a significant site for her admirers. Tim Wells' Mural at Sure Shot Tap House, located on Martin Street, pays homage to Oakley's sharpshooting skills. Annie Oakley Park, at the intersection of Martin, Broadway, and Washington Streets, features a statue of Oakley overlooking downtown Greenville. SR 127 Barn Mural north on SR 127 reveals a painted barn mural of Annie Oakley, a nod to her nickname "Little Sure Shot," given by Chief Sitting Bull. North Star Roadside Marker indicates the location of Oakley's childhood home. Yorkshire Gravesite, is the resting place of Oakley's parents and siblings. Spencer Road Birthplace Marker located in Willowdell denotes Oakley's birthplace, adding to the trail's historical richness. Brock Cemetery is home to Annie

Oakley's final resting place, where she was buried on the same day as her husband, who passed away 18 days after Annie.

The Annie Oakley Trail in Darke County is a celebration of a remarkable woman's life, defying the odds and leaving a lasting impact on American history and culture. Each location provides unique insights into Oakley's life and the county's influence on her. To grasp Annie Oakley's spirit and Darke County's essence, explore this historic trail, a journey through history, resilience, and human triumph.

For additional details about the Annie Oakley Trail, visit visitdarkecounty.org and discover the area's captivating history.



Spring Awakens in All Her Majesty at Raven Rocks

By Trish Mann

Spring in the Appalachian foothills of Ohio is a season of rejuvenation and beauty, and nowhere is this more evident than at Raven Rocks in Belmont County. This hidden natural preserve transforms into a lush paradise, bursting with life and color.

As the winter snow melts away, the region's rolling hills and dense forests awaken. The landscape, part of the vast Appalachian Mountain range becomes a tapestry of green, interspersed with vibrant wildflowers—trilliums, with their signature trio of petals, carpet the forest floor. Virginia bluebells, wild geraniums, and bloodroots add splashes of color, while jack-in-the-pulpit and Dutchman's breeches create an eclectic mix of shapes and hues.

The heart of Raven Rocks is its enchanting waterfall. Fed by the

spring rains, it cascades with renewed energy, creating a serene soundtrack for hikers. The 0.4-mile loop trail meanders along a babbling creek and into a peaceful gorge. This path, slightly muddy from the season's showers, offers an engaging walk through nature, balancing the waterfall's tranquility with the surrounding landscape's vividness.

Spring at Raven Rocks, a part of the Captina Creek Birding Trail, brings a symphony of bird songs, with

opportunities to spot migratory birds like the Northern Parula. The burgeoning spring season enhances the preserve's natural beauty, making it an ideal spot for birdwatching and nature enthusiasts. The area's unique wildflowers, stunning gorge views, and waterfall add to the charm of every hike, creating an unforgettable experience.

Small towns and rural communities nearby maintain a deep connection with this land, reflecting a cultural and natural heritage. A visit to Raven Rocks in spring is more than just a hike; it's a journey into the heart of Appalachian Ohio, where the rhythm of life moves in harmony with the natural world.

Raven Rocks is a must-see destination for those seeking a peaceful escape or an adventure into the vibrant spring wilderness. Its natural beauty, ecological diversity, and tranquil ambiance make it a perfect retreat for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

For more information on Raven Rocks, go to www.visitbelmontcounty.com/visit/raven-rocks/.





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Take a Walk in Nature — Shores & Islands Ohio Will Grow on You

By Jill Bauer



Spring has sprung in Shores & Islands Ohio and we couldn't be more excited to get out and explore part of what makes this area special - the great outdoors. You're even beginning to see some flowers in bloom, from crocus and snowdrops, to tulips and daffodils. Spring bloom certainly is a great opportunity to enjoy the acres of beautiful gardens available throughout the region. Searching for signs of spring in these natural treasures is a perfect early-spring activity. Here are the top six Shores & Islands Ohio area flower gardens.

Schedel Arboretum & Gardens, Elmore

The 17-acre Schedel Arboretum & Gardens is a hidden treasure located just off the Ohio Turnpike (I80/90 Exit 81) in Elmore. The gardens include a Japanese garden, a kitchen garden filled with ornamental peppers, a bonsai collection, water gardens, perennial gardens, and gardens with nearly 10,000 flowering annuals. The expansive property also features sculpture, a visitor center offering snacks and beverages that can be enjoyed overlooking the gardens, an event space, and the Blair Museum of Lithophanes in the manor house. Schedel hosts many special events and workshops throughout the year and is a popular venue for outdoor weddings. The gardens are open for self-guided tours in April and daily through October. There is an admission fee to visit.



Schoepfle Garden, Birmingham

Located in the small village of Birmingham, just south of Vermilion along the Vermilion River, Schoepfle Gardens is a 70-acre arboretum featuring 20 acres of topiaries, rose gardens, and perennial and annual flowers with miles of paved pathways. A children's garden inspired by music features a working carousel and guided group tram tours through the property are available. Trails along the river are adjacent to the arboretum. These gardens are a popular spot for photographers.

James H. McBride Arboretum, Huron

Located adjacent to BGSU Firelands, James H. McBride Arboretum features over 50 acres of gardens, plants, and flowering crabapple trees with accessible walking trails. The arboretum is open year-round and offers picnic tables as well as public restrooms for guests. This beautiful park is especially popular for weddings and special occasion photos.

Ohio's Most Beautiful Mile, Lakeside

Dubbed "Ohio's Most Beautiful Mile," this lakeside walking trail stretches from Oak Avenue on the western edge of the community of Lakeside to Perry Park. Multi-season perennial gardens with native plants are planted along the entire lakefront path. Walkers will pass by the historic Hotel Lakeside, the Lakeside dock, Bettinger Park with its Steele Memorial Gazebo, and more along the way. In spring, guests can experience the blooming daffodils along the water's edge. Visitors to Lakeside might also enjoy the Memorial

Garden at nearby Chautauqua Park. If you time it right, you may be able to catch a glimpse of the rare Lakeside Daisy (see sidebar). During the Lakeside Chautauqua season, a gate fee is charged to visit the community and guided garden tours are often offered as part of the programming.

Washington Park, Sandusky

Sandusky's Washington Park is beautifully maintained by an amazing group of city employees, assisted by dedicated volunteers and civic sponsors, who generate over 100,000 plants each year in the city's greenhouse. Visit floral mounds sponsored by local businesses and organizations, as well as a working floral clock, a sunken Japanese garden, and the Boy with the Boot fountain. During the summer season the park hosts concerts in its gazebo and is home to many events, such as the annual 4th of July celebration and the weekly Farmer's Market.

Jane Coates Wildflower Trail, Put-in-Bay

While not a manicured garden, the Jane Coates Wildflower Trail is a half-mile loop through a particularly beautiful wooded area filled with many varieties of wildflowers. In the spring, visitors enjoy Dutchman's Breeches, Jack in the Pulpit, and Blue Phlox, according to the Lake Erie Islands Conservancy. Jane Coates was a former island artist who was known for her love of the island's wild areas. This trail is also a great spot for birdwatching.

Get outside and enjoy a walk in the fresh air. We promise, our natural beauty will grow on you!



The Lakeside Daisy

Visit the Shores & Islands Ohio region from early to mid-May when the endangered Lakeside Daisy is in bloom! It grows on the Marblehead Peninsula at the 136-acre Lakeside Daisy State Nature Preserve and is one of the only natural U.S. populations of this wildflower. Lakeside Daisies grow in alvar, a type of limestone where very little else can grow, and this small-but-mighty flower can also be spotted locally within Lakeside Chautauqua and along the East Quarry Trail on Kelleys Island (viewable from an overlook at the Glacial Grooves Geological Preserve).



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EXPLORE SAND RUN FALLS

By Candy S. Collin, BS

As springtime arrives in The Potter-Tioga region of Pennsylvania, the landscape bursts into full bloom, revealing nature's beauty and inviting outdoor enthusiasts to explore the scenic Sand Run Falls. Situated near Blossburg, this captivating 6.7-mile loop trail offers a wilderness escape, attracting nature lovers and adventure seekers with its scenic allure.

The trail perfectly balances challenge and pleasure, making it ideal for those who appreciate a moderately demanding hike. Typically, it takes around 2 hours and 37 minutes to complete this loop, a journey that rewards hikers with a wide variety of landscapes and peaceful natural surroundings. Bird watchers, hikers, and casual walkers find this trail particularly appealing as it offers a variety of experiences. From the melodious chirping of birds to nature's calm and peaceful surroundings, the trail provides an engaging and tranquil environment.

One of the trail's prime attractions is the Sand Run Falls, a natural wonder that captures the essence of The Potter-Tioga region untouched beauty. The falls serve as a breathtaking centerpiece, especially during the spring when the water flows at its fullest, creating a mesmerizing display of nature's power and grace. The surrounding areas, lush with springtime vegetation, provide a vibrant backdrop, enhancing the overall hiking experience.

Though the trail is popular, it retains a sense of tranquility, allowing visitors to

enjoy moments of solitude, particularly during the quieter times of the day. This balance of popularity and peace makes it a unique destination for those looking to connect with nature without the crowds often found in more frequented parks.

The best times to visit Sand Run Falls are April through October, with spring particularly magical. This period sees the landscape transform as winter's touch recedes, and nature awakens in a riot of colors and life. The climate is also favorable, with mild temperatures and the refreshing spring breeze making the hike pleasant and invigorating.

Sand Run Falls is an unmissable destination for hikers and nature enthusiasts planning a spring visit to The Potter-Tioga region. Whether drawn by the allure of birdwatching, the thrill of traversing a moderately challenging trail, or the desire to immerse in the beauty of a waterfall, visitors will find Sand Run Falls a slice of paradise ready for exploration in the spring. Visit The Potter-Tioga region official website, www.VisitPotterTioga.com, to explore all the spring events and activities.



2024 RUBBERDUCKS SCHEDULE

APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 ALT 7:05	6 ALT 8:05
7 ALT 1:05		8 @RIC 8:35	9 @RIC 8:35	10 @RIC 8:35	11 @RIC 8:35	12 @RIC 8:35
13 @RIC 1:35	14	15 ERI 8:35	16 ERI 8:35	17 ERI 8:35	18 ERI 7:05	19 ERI 8:05
20	21 ERI 1:05	22 @ALT 8:00	23 @ALT 11:00	24 @ALT 8:00	25 @ALT 8:00	26 @ALT 4:00
27	28 @ALT 1:00	29	30 RIC 8:35			

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 RIC 8:35	2 RIC 8:35	3 RIC 7:05	4 RIC 8:05
5 RIC 1:05	6	7 @BOW 8:35	8 @BOW 12:05	9 @BOW 8:35	10 @BOW 7:05	11 @BOW 8:35
12 @BOW 1:05	13	14 ALT 11:05	15 ALT 8:35	16 ALT 8:35	17 ALT 7:05	18 ALT 7:05
19	20 ALT 1:05	21 @HBB 11:00	22 @HBB 8:30	23 @HBB 8:30	24 @HBB 7:00	25 @HBB 8:00
26 @HBB 8:30	27	28 NH 8:35	29 NH 8:35	30 NH 8:35	31 NH 7:05	

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 NH 7:05
2 NH 1:05	3	4 @PDR 8:00	5 @PDR 8:00	6 @PDR 11:00	7 @PDR 8:00	8 @PDR 8:00
9 @PDR 1:00	10	11 @HFD 7:10	12 @HFD 7:10	13 @HFD 7:10	14 @HFD 7:10	15 @HFD 8:10
16 @HFD 1:10	17	18 BNG 8:35	19 BNG 8:35	20 BNG 8:35	21 BNG 7:05	22 BNG 7:05
23 BNG 1:05	24	25 @ALT 8:00	26 @ALT 8:00	27 @ALT 8:00	28 @ALT 8:00	29 @ALT 8:00
30 @ALT 8:00						

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 ERI 8:35	2 ERI 8:35	3 ERI 7:05	4 @ERI 8:35	5 @ERI 8:35	6 @ERI 8:05
7	8	9 @REA 7:00	10 @REA 7:00	11 @REA 7:00	12 @REA 7:00	13 @REA 8:45
14 @REA 5:15	15	16	17	18 RIC 7:05	19 RIC 7:05	20 RIC 7:05
21 RIC 1:05	22	23 BOW 12:05	24 BOW 8:35	25 BOW 8:35	26 BOW 7:05	27 BOW 7:05
28 BOW 1:05	29	30 @HBB 8:30	31 @HBB 8:30			

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 @HBB 12:00	2 @HBB 7:00	3 @HBB 8:00
4 @HBB 1:00	5	6 REA 8:35	7 REA 8:35	8 REA 6:35	9 REA 7:05	10 REA 7:05
11 REA 1:05	12	13 @ERI 8:05	14 @ERI 6:05	15 @ERI 6:05	16 @ERI 8:05	17 @ERI 8:05
18	19	20 HBB 12:05	21 HBB 8:35	22 HBB 8:35	23 HBB 7:05	24 HBB 8:05
25 HBB 1:05	26	27 BOW 12:05	28 BOW 8:35	29 BOW 8:35	30 BOW 7:05	31 BOW 8:05

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 BOW 8:05	2	3 @RIC 8:35	4 @RIC 8:35	5 @RIC 8:35	6 @RIC 8:35	7 @RIC 8:05
8 @RIC 1:35	9	10 HFD 8:35	11 HFD 8:35	12 HFD 8:35	13 HFD 7:05	14 HFD 8:05
15 HFD 8:05						

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