Welcome to Hocking State Forest

Forest Management

Since 1924, Hocking State Forest has been managed through application of the multiple use concept. The forest continues to improve and sustain many products and benefits. Water, soil, habitat, and aesthetics are among the many variables considered during the land management process. Foresters are able to enhance areas for visitors to enjoy many outdoor activities including hiking, camping, wildlife watching, hunting, fishing and horseback riding. These benefits are in addition to growing highly desirable timber for wood products which are shipped throughout the U.S. and the world.

During the spring and fall fire season months—March, April, May, October and November—the division works to prevent, detect and suppress wildfires that occur on state and private land within Hocking County and parts of Vinton and Fairfield counties. Prescribed Fire is a management tool used on Hocking State Forest to reduce fuel loads in the forest and promote oak regeneration. Trained forestry professionals conduct controlled fires, as dictated by a written plan and overseen by a certified Prescribed Fire Manager.

The many gas wells and transmission lines that you see are a result of the development of a natural gas storage field underlying the forest area.

Trail and Boundary Marks

Many different colors of paint are seen on trees throughout the area. Yellow spots indicate the boundary between state and private land. White and/or red spots are the boundaries around the three nature preserves. Blue spots designate the Buckeye Trail. The Bridle Trails are designated by various colors (see Bridle Trail map).

Rockclimbing and Rappelling Area

The ninety-nine acre area is located on Big Pine Road, one mile east of Conkle’s Hollow. A parking area is within easy walking distance of the rock and cliff face. Be sure to use quality equipment and climb with experienced people. Climbers and rappellers must register prior to entering the Rockclimbing and Rappelling Area (see Rockclimbing and Rappelling Area map).

Forest Vegetation

One of the special attractions of Hocking State Forest is the natural vegetation. Plant species commonly found farther north mix with typically southern species to provide an unusual variety of native plant life and associated wildlife. Virginia and pitch pines, sassafras, and black, scarlet, white and chestnut oaks grow on the generally dry ridge areas. Hemlock, beech, black birch, red and sugar maples, yellow poplar, white ash, red oak, basswood and hickories grow in cool gorges, moist coves and on slopes. Flowers, shrubs and ferns commonly associated with these site conditions also abound.

Plantations of red, white and shortleaf pines have developed from plantings of seedlings on abandoned farm fields. These stands of native and planted pines often indicate where corn and wheat once grew on subsistence farms in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are permitted within Hocking State Forest as regulated by the Division of Wildlife. Shooting is prohibited within 400 feet of any building, facility, recreation area or within any designated nature preserve. It is unlawful to shoot from, on, across or along a public road or highway.
Note: Contact 877-247-8733 for information on the bridle trails, and rockclimbing and rappelling area.