

# FALLS OF THE OHIO STATE PARK

201 West Riverside Drive | Clarksville, IN 47129 | 812-294-4306  
 220 Acres | Established 1990





## THE PARK STORY

Falls of the Ohio's ancient formation has influenced wildlife migrations, Indigenous people, and commerce.

The story began roughly 390 million years ago when this area was covered by a warm tropical sea. Corals, shelled animals, and trilobites thrived, died, and left fossilized remains. More than 600 fossil species have been discovered here, many of them new to science. More recently, gushing meltwater from receding glaciers exposed the fossil beds, and their meltwater carved the path of the Ohio River to create today's landscape.

People have lived at the Falls for thousands of years. The Ohio River was abundant in fish, clams, and waterfowl. Forests were rich in nuts, roots, and game. Large Indigenous settlements flourished.

In 1803, Revolutionary War hero George Rogers Clark constructed "the farm" near the Falls of the Ohio. Clark's younger brother, William, set out from here with Meriwether Lewis and their Corps of Discovery to explore the Louisiana Purchase.

At times, the Ohio River was so shallow people could walk across it. Snags and obstructions made travel hazardous. The canal and locks built to bypass the Falls opened in 1830. In the late 1800s, dams were constructed to ensure safe, reliable travel. The first permanent dam at the Falls was completed in 1930 and rebuilt nearly 30 years later as the McAlpine Dam. Today, the Ohio River is a series of dam-created lakes.

In 1966, the Falls were declared a National Natural Landmark. The fossil beds and surrounding 1,404 acres were designated a National Wildlife Conservation Area in 1981. The state park was dedicated in 1990 to further protect the resource and educate guests about its significance.

The park's spectacular Interpretive Center features exhibits and programs related to the site.



## RULES & REGULATIONS

- Please obey all property rules & regulations.

[on.IN.gov/INStateParksRules](http://on.IN.gov/INStateParksRules)



## ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES

- Look for these icons on the map.

**FISHING:** Sauger, striped bass, white bass, walleye, crappie, catfish, etc. State fishing license required, from either Indiana or Kentucky.

**FOSSIL COLLECTING:** Collecting piles (with rock and fossils from quarries) is the only place where rocks may be removed at the Falls of the Ohio. They are located by the parking lot.

**FOSSIL EXPLORING:** Two fossil beds to explore. The upper fossil beds are located near the riverbank and visible most of the year, except during high water. The lower fossil beds (coral beds) are exposed in summer and fall, where you can walk on a Devonian sea floor. No collecting on the fossil beds.

**HIKING:** 220 acres of fossil beds provide easy to rugged hiking, when water level is low.

**INTERPRETIVE CENTER:** Includes two movies and exhibits on the geology, history and cultural development of the Falls of the Ohio, as well as an auditorium, classroom, wildlife observation area, river observation room, and gift shop. An entrance fee is charged for adults and children; see website for admission fees and hours. Fee for parking.

**INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST SERVICE:** Explore the world of natural resources while enjoying interpretive and recreational programs. Program schedules are available at [interpretiveservices.IN.gov](http://interpretiveservices.IN.gov) or call (812) 280-9970. Inquire at interpretive center for family or group tours.

**PICNIC AREAS:** Tables available. Shelter at Clark home site available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**MUSIC GARDEN:** Play and experience the sounds of the musical garden.



## HIKING TRAILS

- For safety, please stay on marked trails.
- Bicycles prohibited on hiking trails.

TRAIL & DESCRIPTION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
<b>Fossil Beds</b>		varies

Explore the 220 acres of unique fossil beds and discover the many different types of fossils that can be found on the ancient sea bottom.

**NOTICE:** Fossil collecting is prohibited.

<b>Woodland Loop</b>	0.75 mi.	Moderate
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Begins and ends at the parking lot. A heavily wooded trail with scenic views of the Ohio River and Goose Island to the west.

**NOTICE:** Trail may be seasonally affected by high water and debris.



## TRAIL CHALLENGE

- Try one of our challenges and earn merchandise to purchase. Participate in the Fossil Challenge at Falls of the Ohio State Park. Visit the site and select your park of choice to learn more.

[on.IN.gov/parks-challenges](http://on.IN.gov/parks-challenges)



## DNR PROPERTIES NEARBY

- Find more DNR properties at [on.IN.gov/recfinder](http://on.IN.gov/recfinder).

### CHARLESTOWN STATE PARK

hiking, 5K course, wildlife watching, interpretive services, nature center, playground, historic features, fishing, shelter house, boat launch, camping, historic Rose Island

### O'BANNON WOODS STATE PARK

boat rental, bridge trails, camping, cave tours, fishing, group camp, shelter house, swimming pool, hiking trails, historical features, interpretive services & center

### DEAM LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

archery range, boating, boat ramps, camping, dump station, fishing pier, hiking trails, hunting, interpretive services, picnic area, play/sports area, shelter house, swimming beach



## TRUE TALES

- **INTERESTING HISTORY:** Ornithologist John James Audubon visited George Rogers Clark at his cabin and made more than 200 sketches of birds while living near the Falls. "The rumbling sound of the waters as they tumble over the rock-paved rapids, is at all times soothing to the ear." —John James Audubon.
- **INTERESTING SPECIES:** The primitive paddlefish can reach more than 5 feet long and weigh 100 pounds. The paddlefish is but one of the 125 species of fish found at the Falls.
- **INTERESTING FIND:** Skeletal remains of at least 810 freshwater drum were located at a nearby site, indicating a historic abundance of fish.
- **DEVONIAN FOSSILS:** Falls of the Ohio is known for its 390-million-year-old Devonian fossil beds that are among the largest exposed beds in the world. More than 600 species of fossils have been described at the Falls, two-thirds of which have been "type specimens," which are fossils described for the first time. More than 250 species of corals have been identified.

Memories made naturally.  
INDIANA STATE PARKS

## DISCOVER • CHALLENGE • EXPLORE

### HOOSIER QUEST-Pin & Patch Program

Each state park offers you the opportunity to complete tasks to earn a patch or property pin.

[on.IN.gov/hoosierquest](http://on.IN.gov/hoosierquest)

## BOOK YOUR STAY • RESERVE TODAY

### GET OUT and GO CAMPING

Call or go online to make your reservation for all types of

- Camping
- Family Cabins
- Shelters

Includes state parks, reservoirs and forests.

1-866-6campIN  
(1-866-622-6746)

[camp.IN.gov](http://camp.IN.gov)

### STAY IN at a STATE PARK INN

Call or go online to make your reservation for a(n)

- State Park Inn
- Inns-managed Cabin

Seven State Parks include Inns: Brown County, Clifty Falls, Fort Harrison, McCormick's Creek, Spring Mill, Turkey Run and Pokagon.

1-877-lodges1  
(1-877-563-4371)

[IndianalInns.com](http://IndianalInns.com)



For a full list of events, visit [interpretiveservices.IN.gov](http://interpretiveservices.IN.gov)



Please carry out all trash you produce to help keep the property clean and beautiful for all to enjoy!



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