

# FALLS OF THE OHIO STATE PARK



Falls of the Ohio State Park was covered by a shallow tropical sea about 387 million years ago. The abundant fossilized remnants of the creatures from that time and the 16,000 square-foot Interpretive Center that tells their story are the main attractions of this unique state park, the 20th in the system, which specializes in interpretation and education.

Vast numbers of corals, sponges, brachiopods, mollusks and echinoderms thrived under the prehistoric waters. Fish were present too, but remnants of them are rarely found, usually just tiny teeth and scales.

The state park, which lies along the north shore of the Ohio River in Clarksville, Ind., contains approximately 165 acres of land but lies within the Falls of the Ohio National Wildlife Conservation Area, which includes 1,404 acres of federally protected land and water.

As the corals and other prehistoric sea

inhabitants died, they were buried in layers of limey sediment that caused them to fossilize. During the retreat of Ice Age glaciers, rushing melt-water carved the Ohio River basin and exposed the Devonian fossil beds, providing a unique view of the ancient coral sea floor, preserved in stone. This natural stopping place gave rise to the establishment of not only Clarksville, but New Albany and Jeffersonville, Ind., as well as Portland, Shippingsport and Louisville, Ky. The interpretive center provides a panoramic view of the Louisville skyline.

**WHAT ARE THE "FALLS?"**

The Falls of the Ohio were nothing like Niagara Falls. There were a series of rapids caused by water flowing over ledges of hard limestone composed of vast numbers of fossils. The first rapids began in front of what is now downtown Louisville and continued to Sand Island, a distance of 2.5 miles and a drop of 26 feet. When Dam was built in the 1920s, the river's flow was restricted and most of the rapids were covered with water. Today, only remnants of these rapids remain below the dam.

Please lock valuables in trunk so that nothing is visible in your car, to help prevent break-ins.

For a complete list of rules and regulations, inquire at park office.

- Fireworks are prohibited.
- Fossil, rock and mineral collecting is prohibited.
- Park closes from 11 p.m. until 7 a.m. No one is allowed in the park after close, except to night fish.
- Use of metal detectors is prohibited.
- All motorized vehicles shall remain on paved road-way. Snowmobiles are prohibited.
- Report lost or found articles to the park office.
- Drinking water should be taken only from pumps, hydrants or fountains provided for that purpose.
- Swimming is prohibited.
- Motorists shall observe posted speed limits and park only in designated areas.
- Please comply with the Carry In/Carry Out trash policy in all day-use areas.
- Fires shall be built only in designated places.
- Camping is prohibited.
- Vending or advertising without permission of the Department of Natural Resources is prohibited.
- Dogs and cats must be attended at all times and kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Any firearm (except validly licensed handguns) BB gun, air gun, bow and arrow, or spear gun in possession in a state park must be unloaded or un-loaded and stored in a case or locked within a vehicle except when participating in an activity authorized by written permit.
- Do not injure or damage any structure, rock, tree, flower, bird or wild animal within the Park. DO NOT gather limbs, brush or trees (either dead or alive) or firewood because it rebuilds the natural humus.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

Visitors shall follow our rules, which are designed to fulfill the purpose for which state parks were established, namely, to preserve a primitive landscape in its natural condition for the public's use and enjoyment.

## THIS IS YOUR PARK

## CENTRAL RESERVATION SYSTEM

Reservations for all types of camping, family cabins, and shelters at state parks, reservoirs and forests can be made online or by calling toll-free.

[camp.IN.gov](http://camp.IN.gov)  
1-866-6campIN  
(1-866-622-6746)



Reservations for the Indiana State Park Inns and inn-operated cabins can be made online or by calling toll-free.

[IndianalInns.com](http://IndianalInns.com)  
1-877-lodges1  
(1-877-563-4371)



Please carry out all trash you produce in order to keep your park clean and beautiful for others to enjoy.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



Write : Falls of the Ohio State Park  
201 West Riverside Dr.  
Clarksville, IN 47129  
Call: (812) 280-9970

## DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
[dnr.IN.gov](http://dnr.IN.gov)

## SPECIAL NOTE

Receipts from admission and service charges are used to help defray the operation and maintenance costs of the park. List of fees available in the park office.

The programs, services, facilities, and activities of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are available to everyone. DNR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Department of Natural Resources, Executive Office, 402 W. Washington St., W256, Indianapolis, IN 46204, (317) 232-4020.

## FALLS AREA FACTS

- 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.
- In 1778, George Rogers Clark established the first permanent English-speaking settlement in the Northwest Territory on Corn Island. Later he lived on the shore and founded Clarksville. His home site, below the Falls, is now part of the state park, though his cabin no longer exists.
- In 1806 Aaron Burr trained troops in Jeffersonville and built ships at Silver Creek for a possible invasion of Mexico.
- William Clark, younger brother of George Rogers Clark, set out from here with Meriwether Lewis to explore the territory of the Louisiana Purchase.
- "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. Audubon made more than 200 sketches of 14 species of birds while living in the Falls area.
- Over 270 species of birds have been recorded at the Falls.
- Mark Twain and Walt Whitman both wrote about the Falls area.
- The primitive paddlefish is but one of the 125 species of fish found at the Falls.
- Hard limestone layers presented an obstacle to navigation for early explorers and settlers. This was the only place between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, (where the Ohio River starts) and New Orleans, Louisiana, where boats had dangerous rapids or a low water barrage of rock.

## ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

**BOAT RAMP**—Located at the George Rogers Clark home site, the double lane ramp provides year-round launching. An accessible loading ramp is available for wheelchair boaters.

**FISHING**—Sauger, striped bass, white bass, walleye, crappie, catfish, etc. A state fishing license is required, either from Indiana or Kentucky.

**HIKING**—175 acres of fossil beds are available for easy to rugged hiking, when water level is low.

**INTERPRETIVE CENTER**—Offerings include a movie and exhibits on the geology, history and cultural development of the Falls of the Ohio, as well as an auditorium, educational classroom, wildlife observation area, river observation room, and gift shop. An entrance fee is charged for adults and children. The DNR Annual Entrance Permit and Golden Hoosier Passport are sold and accepted at the interpretive center.

Current hours:

Monday-Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday: 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

**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 calling the interpretive center at (812) 280-9970. Inquire at interpretive center for family or group tours.

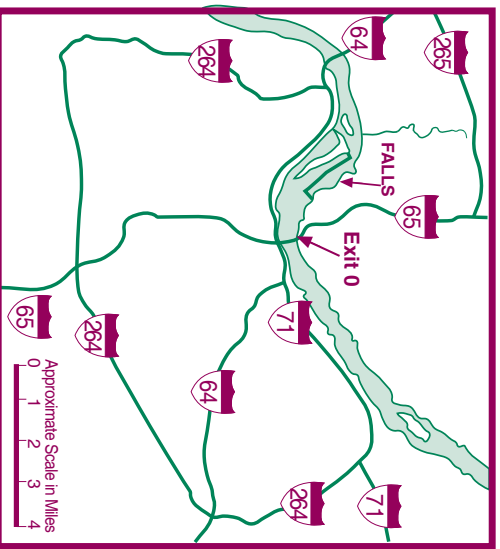
**PICNIC AREAS**—Tables available. Shelter and grills at Clark home site are available for groups on a first-come, first-served basis.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**—Many of events are held annually on the grounds by the interpretive center and Clark home site cabin.

# FALLS OF THE OHIO STATE PARK

201 W. Riverside Dr. • Clarksville, IN 47129 • (812) 280-9970  
 165 acres Established 1990

This map has been turned around to make it easier for locating areas while viewing from the observation deck.



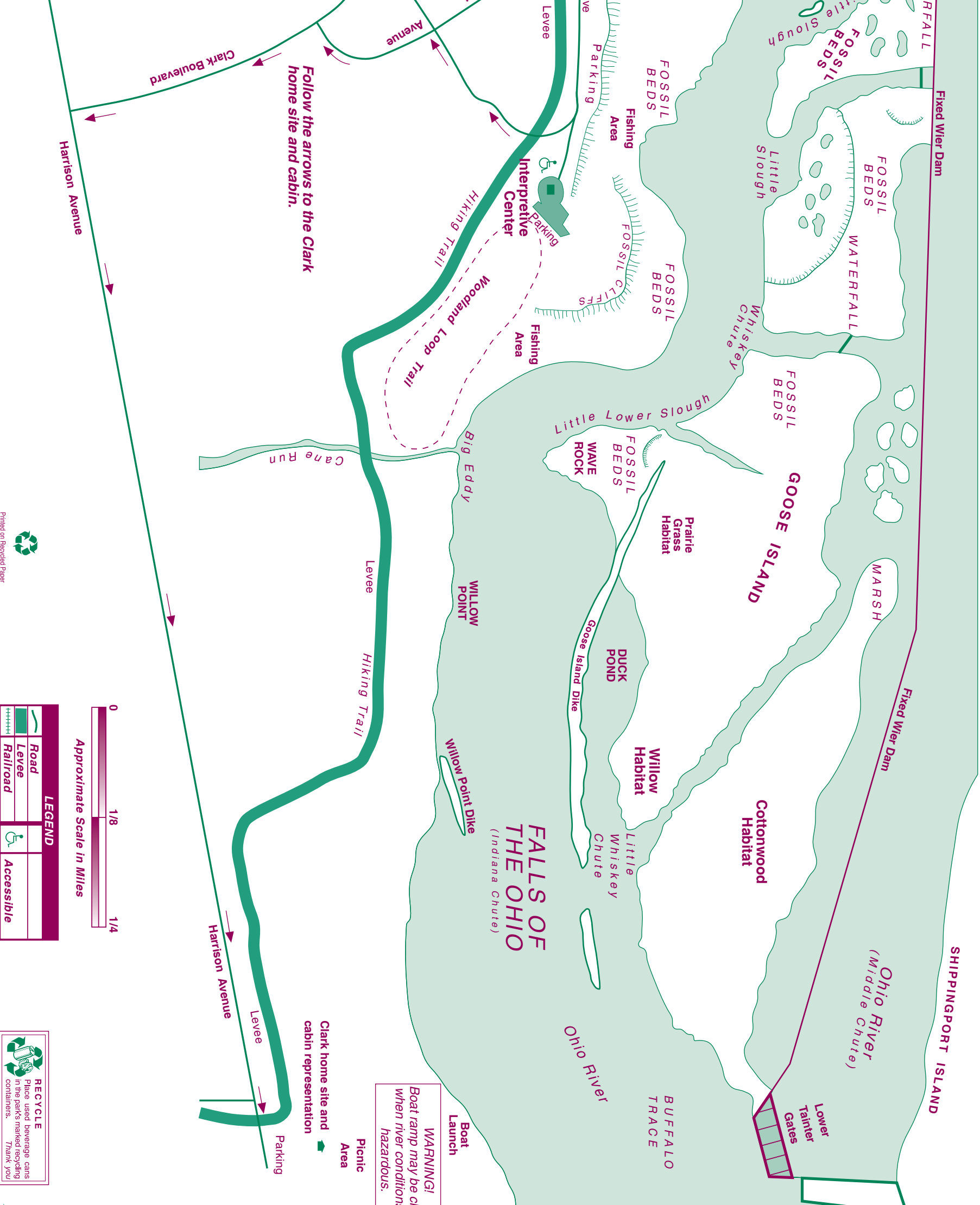
Approximate Scale in Miles  
 0 1 2 3 4

0 1/8 1/4

Approximate Scale in Miles

LEGEND	
	Road
	Levee
	Railroad
	Accessible

**RECYCLE**  
 Place used beverage cans in the park's marked recycling containers. Thank you!



Follow the arrows to the Clark home site and cabin.

Clark Boulevard

Harrison Avenue

Harrison Avenue

Parking