



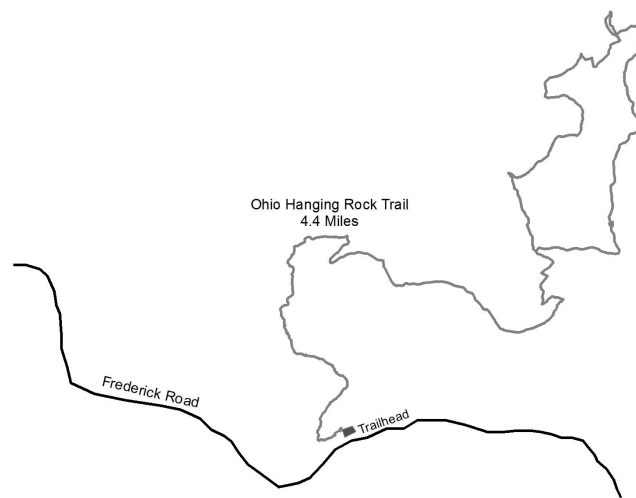
VISITING & HIKING

Ohio Hanging Rock Preserve

Current Size: 750 acres

The Arc of Appalachia's operations are 100% supported by private donations. If you love what we do, [please support us](#), so that our wildlands preservation work and trail stewardship can continue.

Ohio Hanging Rock Preserve is in the remote Little Scioto River region of Ohio, an area boasting relatively low populations, extremely dissected terrain, dense forests, and closely packed hills.



Dogs are permitted at Ohio Hanging Rock on a six-foot leash. Please see [Hiking Arc Preserves](#) for more dog-friendly trails.

Hiking Trails: The **Ohio Hanging Rock Trail** length is 4.4 miles. Designed with a loop on the far end, the mileage is measured as a round trip. Due to its considerable length and several ascents and descents, it should be considered a strenuous, difficult trail. The trail, although a narrow pathway, is well constructed. Under construction for two years, Arc staff cut against and into the steep slopes to ease your ankles and improve your experience with many steps and a few bridges. The trail boasts several rock shelters and narrow ravines, and its crowning glory is its jumble of immense blocks of rock that are strewn on the upper-elevation hillsides and covered with mosses, ferns, and lichens. You will enjoy them at the far end of the trail.

You are entering a highly protected nature preserve. Regulations exist to protect natural communities from the impact of public visitors. Please follow these regulations to leave Ohio Hanging Rock as beautiful as you found it. Remain on trails at all times and walk in single file to protect bulbs of native wildflowers bordering the trail. Do not disturb, pick, or collect flowers, plants, rocks, or wildlife. Hunting, caving, fishing, trail biking, rock climbing, wading, campfires, and swimming are prohibited.

Address: [38.816401, -82.793272](#)

From Lucasville, OH at the intersection of US-23 & OH-728 & OH-348

From US-23, turn east on OH-728 toward Minford for 7.8 miles. You will pass the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility on your right. (Note that OH-728 will turn into County Rd. 28/Lucasville-Minford Rd.) In the town of

Minford, turn right on High Street and continue south. Minford High School and primary school will be on your left. In 1.2 miles, you will see a commuter lot on your right and an IGA grocery store on the left. Just past the IGA, turn left on Bennett Schoolhouse Rd./Co. Rd. 12. In .7 miles turn left (east) on Taylor Hill Rd./ Co. Rd. 235. In 2.6 miles turn left (east) back onto Bennett Schoolhouse – South Webster Rd./Co. Rd. 12. You will immediately cross the bridge spanning the Little Scioto River. In .3 mile Bennett Schoolhouse Rd. will dead end on Frederick Rd./Co. Rd. 17. Turn right (south) on Frederick Rd. Be alert—in 2.0 miles you will see a small gravel parking lot on your left which is the preserve trailhead’s parking lot. The trailhead is signed but is easy to miss because it is tucked into the trees. The trail begins from this parking lot.

Ohio Hanging Rock’s hiking trails are open from sunrise to sunset. Please note parking lots are not winter-maintained, and the trails are not safe to hike during periods of heavy rain, ice, and snow. Trails are closed during our annual Deer Management Hunt which takes place on the 1) Monday through Sunday following Thanksgiving, and 2) Saturday and Sunday before Christmas.

Interpretive kiosk: An interpretive kiosk is not yet posted at the preserve trailhead. Please be sure to download a trail map onto your phone before hiking, or print this handout and carry it with you.

High Species Diversity. The young forest is a classic Appalachian assemblage of oaks (chestnut, white, black, red), hickories (pignut and shagbark), and red maple, interspersed with a diverse assortment of trees including blackgum, sourwood, sugar maple, yellow buckeye, and tulip. The fern abundance and diversity in the preserve is splendid. Notable botanicals include butternut trees, northern roselshell azalea, pink lady slipper, and cornel leaved aster. Four state-listed species include feather-bell, *Strenantheium gramineum*; yellow crown-beard, *Verbesina occidentalis*; southern red oak, *Quercus falcata*; and small-flowered alum-root, *Heuchera parviflora*.

The Great Teays. Prior to the continental glaciations, a majestic river, the precursor of the Mississippi River, wound north through southern Ohio, through present-day Minford, and past Ohio Hanging Rock Preserve. When the glaciers to the north blocked the great river, the Teays, from flowing in its traditional channel, a lake formed nearly as large as Lake Erie, existing over 6,000 years. The clay that built up as sediment in the lake’s bottom, known today as Minford clay, is the source of the preserve’s rich deposits. Today the abundant clay that remains in the preserve creates a high water table in the spring and low elevation wetlands. The preserve resounds seasonally with the calls of spring peepers, eastern gray tree frogs, and leopard frogs. The waves of this glacially-derived lake were the force that carved out, isolated and brought into relief the great rock boulders that line the upper elevations of the preserve. It is remarkable to think that these beautiful high-elevation rock formations were once the wave-kissed shoreline of a mighty sea. The ridgetops of the hills in the greater region would have dotted the sea with thousands of forest-capped islands. What a sight that must have been!

Not always wilderness. Until the Civil War, the Hanging Rock region of Ohio was the nation’s leading producer of iron. An average of 400 acres of forest each year produced the necessary charcoal to keep just one furnace operating. When, in 1828, a smelting and iron furnace was built in the nearby village of Scioto Furnace, the 600-acre property would have been completely cleared of its timber, probably more than once. Over sixty furnaces were built in the Ohio Hanging Rock region, and, not surprisingly, forest and iron ore resources both were depleted before the end of the century. At that time in history, the iron industry transitioned from charcoal fuel to coal and moved to other locales. The great stone furnaces of the region flickered out, giving the forests a chance to partially recover, although heavy timbering for lumber continued in the area.

From Iron to Clay. Often clay deposits are associated with iron ore, and the Ohio Hanging Rock region has both. The last quarter of the 19th century, into the early 1900s, was the peak of clay-derived manufacturing in the Hanging Rock region, producing fire bricks, tile, pavers, and pottery. Ohio Hanging Rock Preserve has had at least two underground clay mines of which we are aware, maybe more. Most of America’s major urban streets were paved with bricks between 1870 and 1900, and the Hanging Rock iron region was a leading manufacturer of those bricks, thanks to the region’s rich clay deposits.