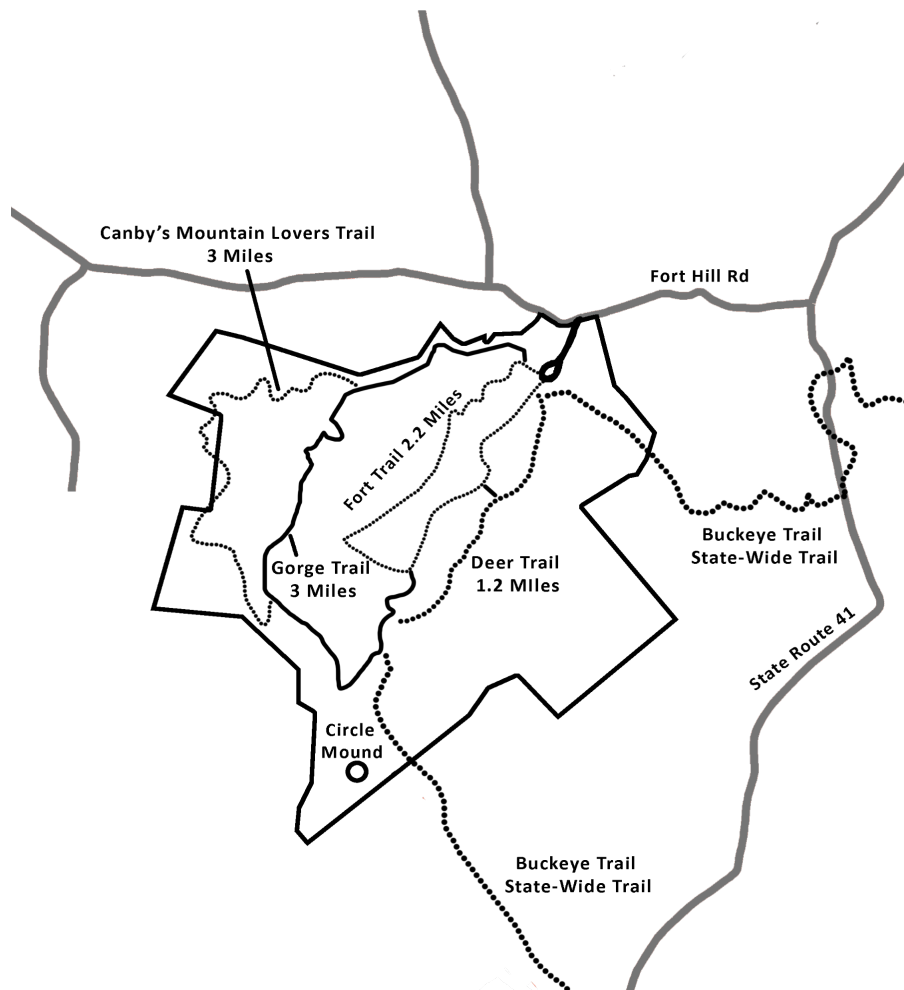




Most of Fort Hill is owned by the Ohio History Connection and is managed by the Arc of Appalachia, which has expanded the preserve over the years by more than 400 acres. The Arc of Appalachia's operations are 100% supported by private donations. If you love what we do, [please support us](#), so that our wildlands preservation work and trail stewardship can continue.



Dogs are permitted at Fort Hill on a six-foot leash. See [Hiking Arc Preserves](#) for more dog-friendly trails.

Hiking Trails: Fort Hill offers eleven miles of hiking trails, accessing the largest, oldest forest remaining in Ohio. Because of the relatively long length of the preserve's three trails, they are best suited for hiking enthusiasts in relatively good condition. Hikers, please note backcountry trail conditions. Plan to dedicate approximately one hour per mile in order to leisurely and safely enjoy Fort Hill's backcountry trails. The trails are generally primitive in

nature, being narrow and uneven and traversing rolling hills, some of which are steep. Dogs are permitted but must be kept on a 6-foot leash at all times. Pit latrines, picnic tables, and a picnic shelter are available.

The **2.2-mile Fort Trail** ascends from the base of the hill to the top of the ridge, providing a steep climb but also the best views of Fort Hill's earthworks. The **1.2-mile Deer Trail** leads through a rolling landscape and a beautiful mature forest. The **3-mile Gorge Trail** leads by the cliff-lined and boulder-strewn course of Bakers Fork, three stone arches, and a standing pioneer log cabin. The wildflowers in the spring are outstanding. Two unimproved creek crossings make the **3 mile Canby's Mountain Lover Trail** an adventure. The trail leads through gorgeous remote Appalachian hill country with fine forests and excellent views but it can be dangerous when the water crossings are deep and cold. **Connector Trail:** Use the connector trail to follow the Fort Trail to the earthworks, then return by the Deer Trail, making a shorter loop. **To view the circle mound:** Hike to the south end of the park and follow the southern leg of the Buckeye Trail away from the preserve. When it leaves the forest and enters a grass meadow, look for the raised rim of the circle mound to your right. The mound is rarely mowed and might be hard to spot in tall grass. Hikers are permitted to leave the trail to access this site.

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 Fort Hill 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: 13614 Fort Hill Road, Hillsboro, Oh 45133

Directions: Fort Hill Preserve is located in Highland County, one mile west of OH-41 South on Fort Hill Road. Fort Hill lies 12 miles south of Bainbridge off OH-41 South; 10 miles south of Rainsboro off OH-753 South; and 11 miles north of Locust Grove off OH-41 North. The preserve is well-signed with ample parking. GPS: N39 6.2' / W83 21.73'

Interpretive kiosk: An interpretive kiosk is located at the trailhead. We encourage you to take a picture of the trail map with your phone before hiking the trails.

Fort Hill 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.

Ancient earthworks: Fort Hill is an ancient earthen-walled ceremonial enclosure atop a large flat-topped ridge, constructed by Native Americans an estimated 2,000 years ago. Its architects were part of the Hopewell Culture, representing an extremely artistic and influential era in the eastern United States. People of the Hopewell Culture erected as many as 36 large complexes of high-walled enclosures on the floodplains of southern Ohio in shapes of precise circles, squares, and hexagons. Additionally, they built at least a dozen irregular hilltop enclosures, including the one at Fort Hill. The earthen-stone wall's circumference is more than one and a half miles, with thirty-six definite man-made openings and possibly three more such openings. The wall itself ranges from 6 to 15 feet in height, averages 30 feet in width at its base, and encloses 35.3 acres. It was built to follow the natural contour of the rim of the hill and is bordered on the inside wall by a substantial ditch. A second extremely well-preserved earthwork exists on the south side of the preserve, being a circular walled enclosure with a diameter of approximately 170 feet and a height of 2.5 to 3 feet. Archaeologists have discovered two concentric circles of post holes that once outlined this earthwork, but no supporting posts in the middle of the enclosure. It is conjectured that this area may have been an artisan workshop and/or a short-term habitation site, possibly accommodating visitors making the journey to the Fort Hill ceremonial complex.

Fort Hill floral displays: Fort Hill has a truly spectacular spring wildflower display, including such showy species as large-flowered trilliums, columbine, celandine poppy, and Sweet William woodland phlox. Hiking the gorge trail in mid-April is an enchanting experience.