



## VISITING &amp; HIKING

## Junction Earthworks

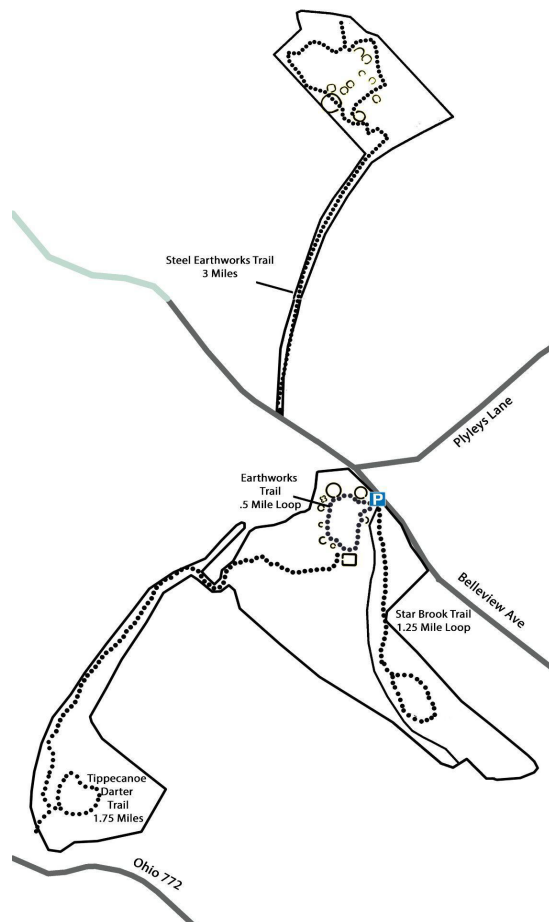
Current Size: 266 acres

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Junction Earthworks features two 2,000-year-old American Indian earthwork complexes, four nature trails providing over five miles of hiking, and a 70-acre native prairie that is in spectacular bloom during the first two weeks of July. Junction is a notable birding site for grassland and riparian corridor birds.



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



**Hiking Trails (4 trails)** **Earthworks Trail 0.5-mile loop** begins at the trailhead parking lot and takes visitors on a tour through the field containing the nine earthworks that compose Junction Earthworks. Because many years of agricultural plowing and activities have dimmed the features of these 2,000-year old structures, the earthworks are selectively moved to reveal their original locations to our modern eyes.

**Tippecanoe Darter Trail 1.7-mile loop** originates from the Earthworks Trail and transverses a 70-acre restored grassland prairie on what was not so long ago a crop field covered with soybeans and corn. We encourage you to bring binoculars and keep your ears alert for grassland bird songs and native bumblebees. After traversing the prairie, the trail crosses through a narrow easement, descends over an ancient steep river terrace, and enters the floodplain woods. This riverine forest is rich in silver maple, cottonwood, and black walnut; and is filled with orioles, vireos, tanagers, and warblers. Two trail spurs lead to Paint Creek, providing scenic river vistas along two cobblestone "beaches."

**Star Brook Trail 1.2-mile loop** leads into the bluff forest that overlooks Junction's earthworks and prairie. Common trees in the bluff forest include shagbark hickory, white oak, red oak, and hackberry.

**Connector Trail 1-mile loop** that originates on Pyley's Lane and follows an old, now wooded railroad corridor to the Steel Earthworks Prairie trail. From the Junction Earthworks parking lot, turn left and walk down Belleview Road and straight onto Pyley's Lane. On the right, just before you reach the farm field, there is an opening in the brush with a silver gate and the mowed corridor. Go around the gate, and walk the mile-long railroad corridor until you get to

the trailhead. Please be cautious while walking the road – not recommended for families with children. Feel free to bike down the corridor, but park your bikes before entering the Steel Earthworks Prairie Loop.

**Steel Earthworks Prairie 2-mile loop trail** leads from the end of the Connector Trail out to the circle mound, traverses a second planted prairie with a spur to the North Fork of Paint Creek, and then loops back to where you started.

**You are Entering a Highly Protected Nature & Historical Preserve.** Please remember that no disturbing of the archaeological record or collecting of artifacts of any kind is permitted on this important cultural site. Regarding the site's natural history, regulations exist to protect natural communities from the impact of public visitors. Please follow them to leave Junction Earthworks as beautiful as you found it. Remain on trails at all times, walking 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.

**Directions:** 1143 Township Hwy 377, Chillicothe, OH 45601. From US 50 in Chillicothe, (also known as Western Avenue and Main Street), in a densely developed retail district on the west side of the city, turn onto Plyleys Lane - look for a Kentucky Fried Chicken and CVS Pharmacy at the intersection. Follow Plyleys Lane until you come to a stop sign. Turn left at the stop sign on Belleview Avenue. The junction is a few hundred feet down Belleview on your right and is well-signed. Turn right into the parking lot.

**Interpretive Kiosk:** An interpretive kiosk is situated at the trailhead. We encourage you to take a picture of the trail map with your phone before heading out on the trails.

**Junction Earthworks 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 1) the Monday through Sunday following Thanksgiving, and 2) the Saturday and Sunday before Christmas.

**Open Hours:** Junction Earthworks Preserve is free and open to the public 365 days a year from 9 a.m. to sunset.

**Junction's Nine Earthwork Features:** Junction is composed of nine ceremonial earthworks constructed by the Hopewell Culture roughly 2,000 years ago. In their original form, the ceremonial enclosures were outlined with raised earthen walls and ringed with ditches, together covering 20 acres of land. Even though the earthworks were no longer visible to the eye when the site was purchased, with the modern technology of magnetic surveying and interpretive mowing, the earthworks are once again revealed.

**Junction's sister earthworks – Steel Earthworks.** Steel Earthworks lies just upstream from Junction on the North Fork tributary of Paint Creek. Steel was also part of the Hopewell Culture's ceremonial landscape and was likely contemporaneous with Junction. The two sites are now connected with a public hiking path creating ONE united preserve – a first-ever achievement for Hopewell Culture interpretation. Steel is in even better archaeological condition than Junction, with a visible circular earthwork. Steel Earthworks is located on the North Branch of Paint Creek and features even more separate earthworks in its complex than Junction – 12 altogether – including a large walled mound in the shape of a circle. Unlike Junction, Steel is not selectively mowed and its earthworks are not visible to the eye.

**Ancient Peoples' Heartland – the Hopewell Culture.** The ceremonial epicenter of the Hopewell heartland was at present-day Chillicothe – the county seat of Ross County and the place where the great waterways of the Paint and the Scioto find their confluence. In Ross County alone, approximately two dozen ceremonial earthwork complexes were built on the floodplains – fully two-thirds of all the major Hopewell earthworks ever constructed (virtually all in Ohio). Junction Earthworks and adjacent Steel Earthworks are two of them.