



## the nature of TREMPER MOUND

Tremper Mound Preserve is destined to become a well-loved historic park as well as a splendid nature preserve, attracting visitors from Ohio and beyond. Planned developments include trailhead parking lots, educational kiosks, interpretive trails around the mound, longer hiking trails along Pond Creek, a walk-in canoe access to the Scioto River, and a bird blind. The Manor House will be transformed from a private home into a visitor center and overnight lodge - boasting a sunrise view of Tremper Mound and the Scioto River valley beyond. The brick house will serve as the manager's residence.

The 618-acre Matthew's Farm property is the Arc's largest single acquisition in our entire history, and these acres shelter an impressive diversity of native plants and animals. Because the preserve has such rich cultural history, it is easy to overlook that it's a worthy natural area in its own right.

The last ten mile run of the Scioto River before it reaches the Ohio River (a section which includes the preserve), has recorded 61 species of fish. Noteworthy listings include the Shortnose Gar, Blue Sucker, River Redhorse, American Eel, and River Darter - all state-listed species. The lower Scioto is also known for rare freshwater mussels.

If you look at an aerial map of the Scioto River between Chillicothe and Portsmouth (Google maps on aerial view

will do the job nicely), you can easily make out the mile-wide floodplain of the mighty Scioto River. From this view you will see that the riparian forest that once occupied this 70-mile length of river has disappeared with nary a trace. Other than a thin fringe of trees lining the riverbanks, the entire floodplain is now in farm fields.

Prior to European settlement, the Scioto floodplain was a mosaic of riparian forests, marshes and swamps supporting dense populations of breeding birds and other wildlife. It also served as a primary migration flyway for waterfowl, songbirds and raptors. Notably, every species of animal represented by the Hopewell effigy pipes once thrived in the Scioto corridor, which is surely not a coincidence.

The Scioto River was burgeoning with life - in its waters and in its forests. How could something so vast and rich simply vanish? Had this tragedy occurred in modern times by sudden proclamation - it would have been vigorously and vehemently protested. But as it was, it took place well over a century ago by neither plan nor design - simply one farm field at a time.

The master plan for Tremper Mound calls for the restoration of 200 acres of riparian forest along the Scioto River. This will be accomplished by permitting natural forest regeneration and through the introduced plantings of sycamore, red and silver maple, box elder, and cottonwood.



The farm fields bordering the Scioto were previously enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program and planted in tallgrass prairie. This conservation measure fortuitously created a launching pad for an annual spectacle. Each year in early June, thousands upon thousands of twinkling fireflies - commonly known as Four-flashers - light up the lower meadows of the preserve.

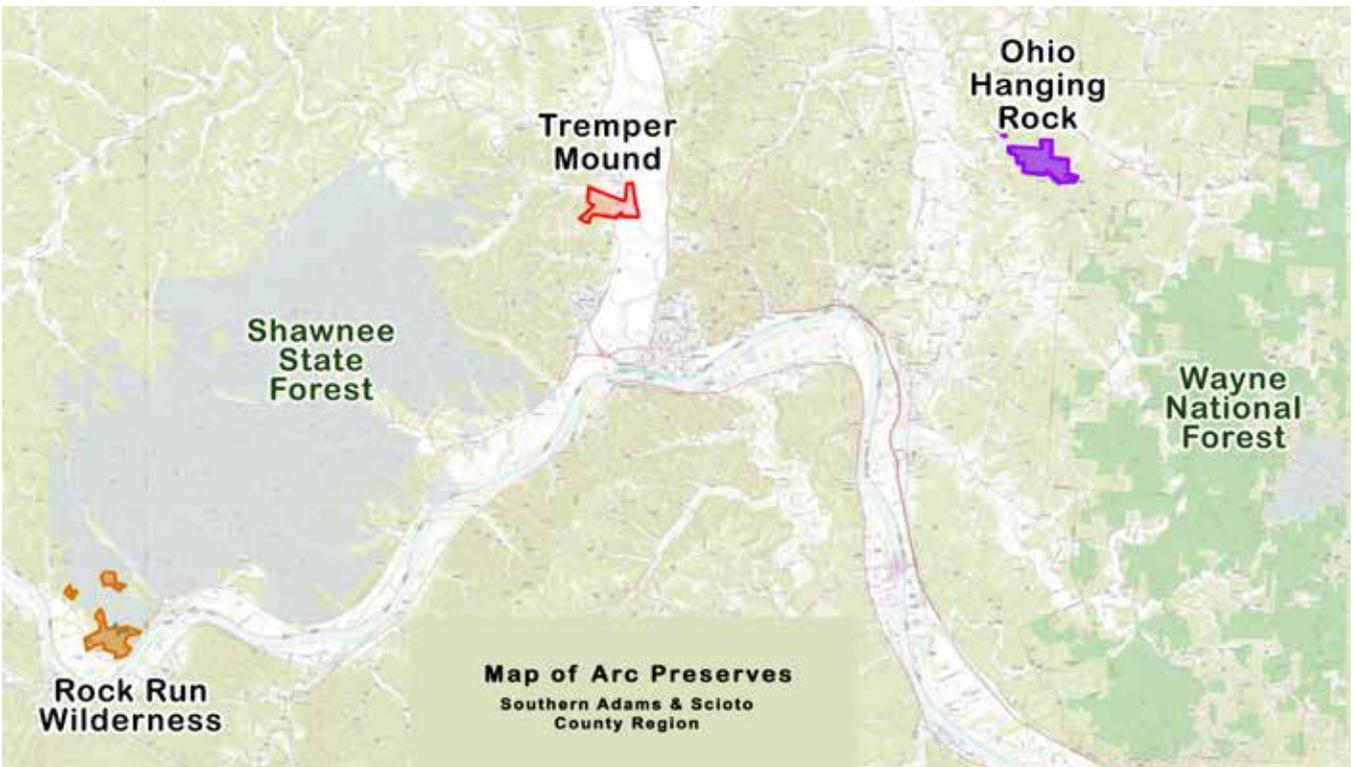
A second firefly - the Chinese Lantern - resides in the large trees bordering the Scioto River and the highway. Their eerie two-second flash brightens and fades very slowly as they gently descend out of the canopy. The sight in mid-June of hundreds of Chinese Lanterns, drifting out of the trees like falling embers, is astonishing to behold.

Three miles of Pond Creek and its tributaries drain the steep hillside forests that occupy the western third of the

preserve. Pond Creek supports 28 species of fish and has earned the outstanding Index of Biodiversity Integrity (IBI) score of 54, a perfect score being 60.

The abandoned pasture lands on the property contain poorly drained, hydric soils. After periods of heavy rain, ephemeral pools quickly puddle on the ground. In early March these pools are teeming with breeding wood frogs and spotted salamanders. The calls of peepers throughout the spring season is deafening to the ear. In early summer the singing peepers are replaced with the pleasing choruses of Cope's Gray Tree Frogs.

The preserve's steep hills, underlain by sandstone and shale, support classic Appalachian hardwood trees, including oak, hickory, sugar and red maples, beech, tulip poplar and black gum. Although Tremper Mound's forests



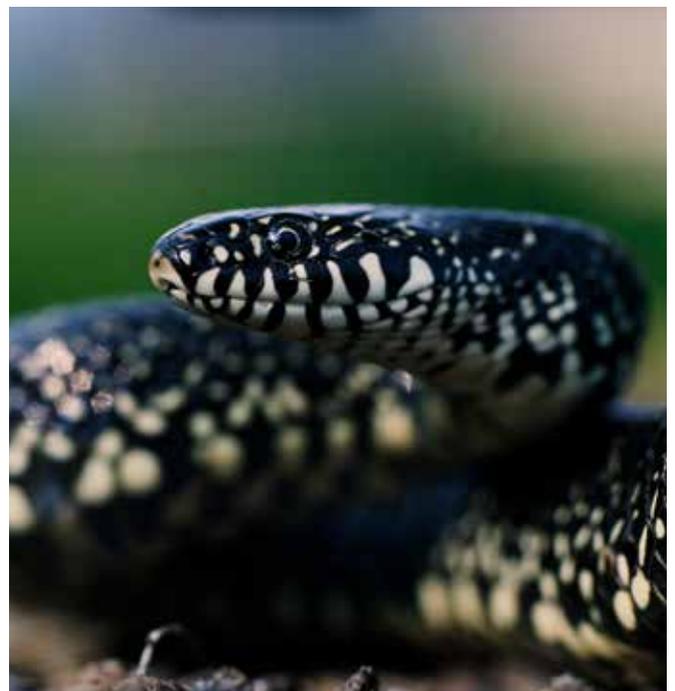


Photos clockwise from top: Tremper Mound Preserve, looking westward into its forested hills. Aerial photo by Lewis Ulman at Trailsidephoto.com; Black Kingsnake by Samuel James; Spring Peeper; Map of southern Scioto County and Adams County.

are recovering from logging that occurred 40-50 years ago, some trees of exceptional size can still be found.

Wildflowers include Yellow Mandarin, Fire Pinks, Showy Orchis, Twinleaf, Twayblade Orchid, Ginseng, Goldenseal, Wild Comfrey, Bear-corn, Downy Wild Ginger, Rattlesnake Plantain, White Baneberry, Partridge Berry, Large-leaf Waterleaf, Toadflax, Dwarf Larkspur, Sweet William, Rue Anemone, Long-spurred Violet, Virginia Bluebells, Solomon's Seal, and Jack-in-the-Pulpit - just to name a few.

Scioto County boasts some of the steepest hills and the largest contiguous forests in the state, anchored by the 60,000-acre Shawnee State Forest. Scioto County is an epicenter of high biodiversity. Particularly noteworthy are its list of reptiles, which includes a wide variety of turtles inhabiting the Scioto River, 4 species of lizards, and notable snake species such as the Timber Rattlesnake and Copperhead. Rare elsewhere in the state but frequently found in the preserve is the showy Black Kingsnake - a sleek and shiny creature that specializes in eating other reptiles.



In order to steward a new preserve region as large and as renowned as Tremper Mound, the Arc will need to strengthen its staff and stewardship capacity. Once our campaign goals are reached, we will be hiring a full-time manager who will not only oversee Tremper Mound, but several of the Arc's southernmost preserves as well, increasing the efficiency of our staff time in the field.

Tremper Mound will be the FIRST preserve outside the Sanctuary to station a full-time staff member. It will also be the FIRST preserve outside the Sanctuary to house a regional equipment center. Both will ably serve our rapidly growing preserve system.

