

Nature of the Area

Ancient history is recorded in the sandstone hills that comprise Great Seal State Park. It lies upon the Appalachian escarpment, a line of hills stretching across Ohio's mid section which outline the edge of the Appalachian plateau in the state. North and west of the line are glaciated plains while south and east rugged hills extend to the foothills of the mountains. This definition is obvious from the trails in the park where one can see Columbus on a clear day to the north and unbroken forested ridges to the south.

These sharply etched ridges harbor a fine stand of hardwoods. Due to the underlying rock strata, one unexpectedly finds chestnut oaks on the slopes and sugar maples on the crests of the hills where the opposite are more common. Spring wildflowers are abundant in the moist coves, while papaws and persimmons entice wildlife in autumn.

History of the Area

Great Seal State Park is located just north of the town of Chillicothe where the history of Ohio and the culture of the Indian have mingled through time. In the mid to late 1700s, the Scioto River Valley was the home of the Shawnee. Three Shawnee towns, all named Chillicothe, were located just below the hills that comprise Great Seal State Park. North of here was the intersection of five major Indian trails. The Scioto River was utilized by the Shawnee as their primary means of transportation from one village to another. The great Shawnee warrior Tecumseh was born north of here near what is now Circleville. Not far from the park is where Logan, chief of the Mingoes, gave his most eloquent speech ending his vengeance against the white settlers for murdering all his relatives.

The first settlers came to the area in the 1790s. In 1796, General Nathaniel Massie, a well-known surveyor and woodsman, organized the settlement of the Scioto Valley by laying out on his own land the beautiful town of Chillicothe. Chillicothe was the first capital of the new state of Ohio from 1803 to 1810. (The capital was moved to Zanesville from 1811 to 1812 and then back to Chillicothe until it was permanently moved to Columbus in 1816.)

The park takes its name from the state emblem, "The Great Seal of the State of Ohio." The famous seal depicts a sheaf of wheat representing Ohio's agricultural strength and a bundle of seventeen arrows shows Ohio to be the 17th state to enter the Union. The mountains and rising sun signify that Ohio was one of the first states west of the Alleghenies. The Scioto River flows between Mount Logan and the cultivated fields in the foreground. The design is said to have been the cooperative inspiration of Thomas

Worthington, "Father of Ohio Statehood," Edward Tiffin, the first governor; and William Creighton, first secretary of state. After an all-night meeting at "Adena," the magnificent estate of Worthington, they viewed the sun rising over Mt. Logan and the hills of what is now Great Seal State Park thus inspiring the scene of the Great Seal of the State of Ohio.

Camping

A 15-site campground offers pressurized water, vault latrines and a shelterhouse. The campground is scenically located adjacent to Sugarloaf Mountain, offering a view of the Scioto Valley below. Campers with pets are permitted.

Trails

Seventeen miles of multiple-use trails are available to hikers, mountain bikers and horsemen. The terrain varies from steep to gently rolling. It is advised that horses and hikers be well conditioned for these trails. The Sugarloaf Mountain Trail (yellow), 2.1 miles, climbs through dense maple-dominated forests to the crest of Sugarloaf. This loop is short and rises almost 500 feet in less than a quarter mile.

Shawnee Ridge Trail (blue), 7.8 miles, comprises Bald Hill, Sand Hills and parts of Rocky Knob. Several steep sections are part of this forested trail.

Mt. Ives Trail (orange), 6.4 miles, winds along Mt. Ives and provides several scenic vistas. The trail is strenuous.

Three more gentle hiking trails (Grouse Rock, Spring Run and Picnic Loop) are available. The Spring Run Trail may be used for cross-country skiing when weather conditions permit.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted in designated areas. A valid Ohio hunting license is required.

Picnicking

A scenic picnic area offers water, latrines, playground equipment and shelterhouse. The picnic area and campground shelterhouses may be reserved for a fee.

More To Do

Volleyball, basketball and horseshoe courts are located in day-use areas of the park. Playground equipment is also available for youngsters. An 18-basket disc golf course is located at the Ireland Picnic Area.

Area Attractions

Nearby are Scioto Trail State Park which is located south of Chillicothe off State Route 23, Lake White State Park

which is located near Waverly on State Route 220, and Tar Hollow State Park and State Forest which are located off State Route 327 near the Ross-Hocking-Vinton county lines. ODNR Division of Wildlife manages Ross Lake Wildlife Area off Lick Run Road. The area provides many recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, nature study and bird watching.

The famous outdoor historical drama, *Tecumseh*, is presented late June through early September at Sugarloaf Mountain Amphitheater bordering the park.

The Ross County Historical Society at 45 W. Fifth Street in Chillicothe features exhibits of pioneer crafts, firearms, furniture, toys and clothing. An admission fee is charged. The museum is open March through November.

One mile north of Chillicothe on State Route 104 is the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park. The area is a prehistoric Indian complex of 23 burial mounds. A museum, visitor's center and exposed burial mound are open daily.

For additional information on local attractions, call the Division of Travel and Tourism at 1-800-BUCKEYE.

Facilities

Resource	Land, acres	1863
	Water, acres	2
	Nearby Wildlife Area, acres	900
Day-Use Activities	Hunting	•
	Hiking Trails, miles	5
	Bridle Trails, miles	17
	Mountain Bike Trails, miles	17
	Summer Nature Programs	•
	Picnicking	•
Winter Recreation	Picnic Shelters, #	2
	Cross-Country Skiing	•
Camping	Campsites, #	15
	Campsites with Elec., #	0
	Pets Permitted	•

FOR CAMPING RESERVATIONS CALL 1-866-OHIOPARKS



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Ohio State Parks