

and admire the sights

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park's natural beauty is enhanced by picturesque bridges, carefully positioned vistas, three artificial lakes and extensive stonework, much of it installed by the Works Progress Administration during the Depression. The park is so scenic, in fact, that Potter said the most popular activity there is just driving its winding roads.

Nevertheless, there's plenty to keep more active types occupied for a day or a weekend. Mill Creek Park is home to a working mill, a public flower garden, museums, picnic areas, 15 miles of foot trails and recreational opportunities that include golf, tennis, fishing, boating and biking.

The best starting point for a visit is the D.D. and Velma Davis Education & Visitor Center at the park's northern end. Here you can pick up brochures and maps of the park and its trails, browse in the gift shop, have lunch in the cafe and visit the museum, art gallery and horticulture library. Climb the center's observation tower for an expansive view of Lake Glacier, one of the best vistas in the park.

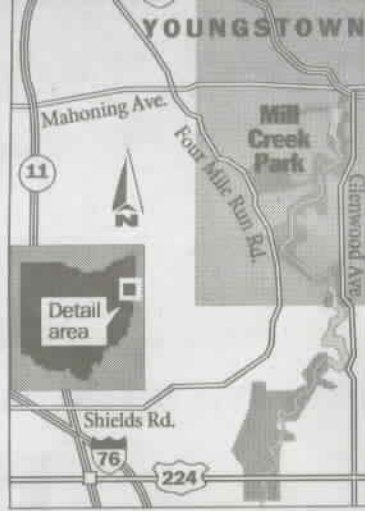
Adjacent to the center is Fellows Riverside Gardens, a 12-acre display garden noted for its roses, specialty plants and seasonal floral displays. A gazebo and pavilion make this a favorite wedding spot, and it's also the site of frequent festivals, plant sales and exhibits.

From the visitor center's parking lot, you can follow the arrows to the rear exit and into the heart of Mill Creek Park. Road names aren't marked inside the park, so finding your way around - even with a map - can be challenging. Directional signs point you toward major attractions and picnic areas, but it's easy to find yourself driving out of the park and into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Lanterman's Mill

Once you've gotten yourself turned around, you can head for Lanterman's Mill, the most recognizable landmark in Mill Creek Park. The 157-year-old gristmill, built into a sandstone cliff above a 23-foot waterfall, was restored to working order in the 1980s. It now grinds wheat and corn periodically, usually when a tour is scheduled or when the supply of flour or cornmeal for sale in the mill's gift shop is getting low, manager Tom Mechling said.

Even when the mill isn't grinding grain, visitors can descend into the mill's lower levels to watch the water wheel turn and see the system of gears, pulleys and belts that transfer power to the millstones above. You can still see the stonemasons' chisel marks on the sandstone



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IF YOU GO

Getting to Mill Creek Park:

Take Interstate 76 east to I-680 south. Exit at Belle Vista Avenue/Connecticut Avenue. Turn left at the end of the exit ramp onto Manhattan Avenue, then right onto Belle Vista.

Drive about four-tenths of a mile, and turn left onto Mahoning Avenue. Travel another six-tenths of a mile, and turn right onto McKinley Avenue at the Fellows Riverside Gardens sign.

Hours of major attractions:

- The Davis visitor center is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.
- Fellows Riverside Gardens, next to the Davis center, is open from 10 a.m. to dusk daily. Admission is free.
- Lanterman's Mill is open from April through November. Hours for most of the season are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends and holidays. In April and November, the mill is open from noon to 4 p.m. weekends only. For handicapped access, call 330-740-7115.

Admission to the mill is \$1 for adults, or 75 cents for Mahoning County residents. For those ages 6 to 18 or 60 and older, admission is 50 cents.

• Ford Nature Education Center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

Information: Visit the park's Web site, www.millcreekmetro.com, for a calendar of events, and overview of the park's recreational facilities and other information. Phone: 330-702-3000.

blocks that make up the foundation, as well as some of the original timbers that were cut from oak and chestnut trees.

Steps lead from the parking lot to the mill and from the mill's main floor to the workings below, but disabled visitors can get special access and enter at the mill's basement level by calling

the Gorge Trail. The 1/2-mile loop takes you along the east bank of Mill Creek, across the picturesque Suspension Bridge and back along the creek's opposite side. The trail passes mammoth sandstone outcroppings and treats you to the views that inspired Rogers to establish Mill Creek Park in the first place. Don't be surprised if water drips onto your head from the rocky ledges when you pass underneath.

The Gorge Trail includes steps and some uneven footing, so it's not for people who have disabilities or are unsteady on their feet. Nevertheless, the park has a number of walkways designed for universal use.

One of those is the Virginia J. Axtmann Nature Trail for All People, an easy walk that winds into the woods just outside the park's Ford Nature Education Center. Even though the trail is only a half-mile long, you get the sense of being deep in the forest, surrounded by bird calls and the skittering of chipmunks over the forest floor.

Kid-friendly stuff

Like the center itself, the trail is a good place to introduce children to the living things that share the park. Markers along the trail explain conservation issues, identify plants and animals, and alert visitors to the goings-on of nature. Inside the nature center are kid-friendly exhibits including a Habitat Room, with mounted animals in depictions of their habitats; the Discovery Room, with exhibits that let children use their senses to explore nature; and the Live Animal Room, where visitors can see snakes, turtles, an Eastern screech owl and an American road.

Another accessible walkway is the Albert E. Davies Wetland Trail, a quarter-mile-long boardwalk that leads out into the marshy southern end of Lake Newport, the southernmost of the park's three lakes. Created as a way of dealing with sediment buildup in the lake, the wetland is home to animals including geese and beavers. Park visitors can rent kayaks to explore the wetlands.

Wildlife is also an attraction at the Lily Pond, where painted turtles sun on logs, and birds, including mallards, herons and belted kingfishers, come to visit. The quarter-mile trail circling the pond is an easy walk for children and older visitors, and Birch Hill Cabin - one of seven picnic shelters in the park - is nearby.

Golfers will want to fit in a round at Mill Creek Park Golf Course, two 18-hole courses carved out of the forested setting. The course was designed by noted golf architect Donald Ross, whose 413 courses include Pinehurst No. 2 in North Caroli-



On the Gorge Trail in Mill Creek Park, a stone carving that says "Grant Brenner"

Fun galore at Mill Creek

Mill Creek Park appeals to people of all ages, but it's an especially fun place for kids to explore - especially if they don't limit themselves to the official attractions.

Here are a few fun things you won't find on the park maps:

• Along the Gorge Trail on the east side of Mill Creek is a bit of 19th-century graffiti that's given generations of youngsters the creeps: a headstone-shaped carving in the hillside's stone face that bears the inscriptions "Grant Brenner" and "July 29, 1884." More than a few ornery older siblings have scared their little brothers and sisters by telling them Brenner's body lies behind the stone.

Look for it just after you leave the mill and pass under the U.S. 62 bridge, heading north.

• Farther on down the trail, you'll encounter a group of boulders in the creek and

na, Seminole in North Palm Beach, Fla., and Oakland Hills outside Detroit.

The course is deceptively challenging, with dense stands of trees hugging the fairways and streams waiting to suck in errant shots. But at least it makes for a pleasant walk.

Come to think of it, that's just