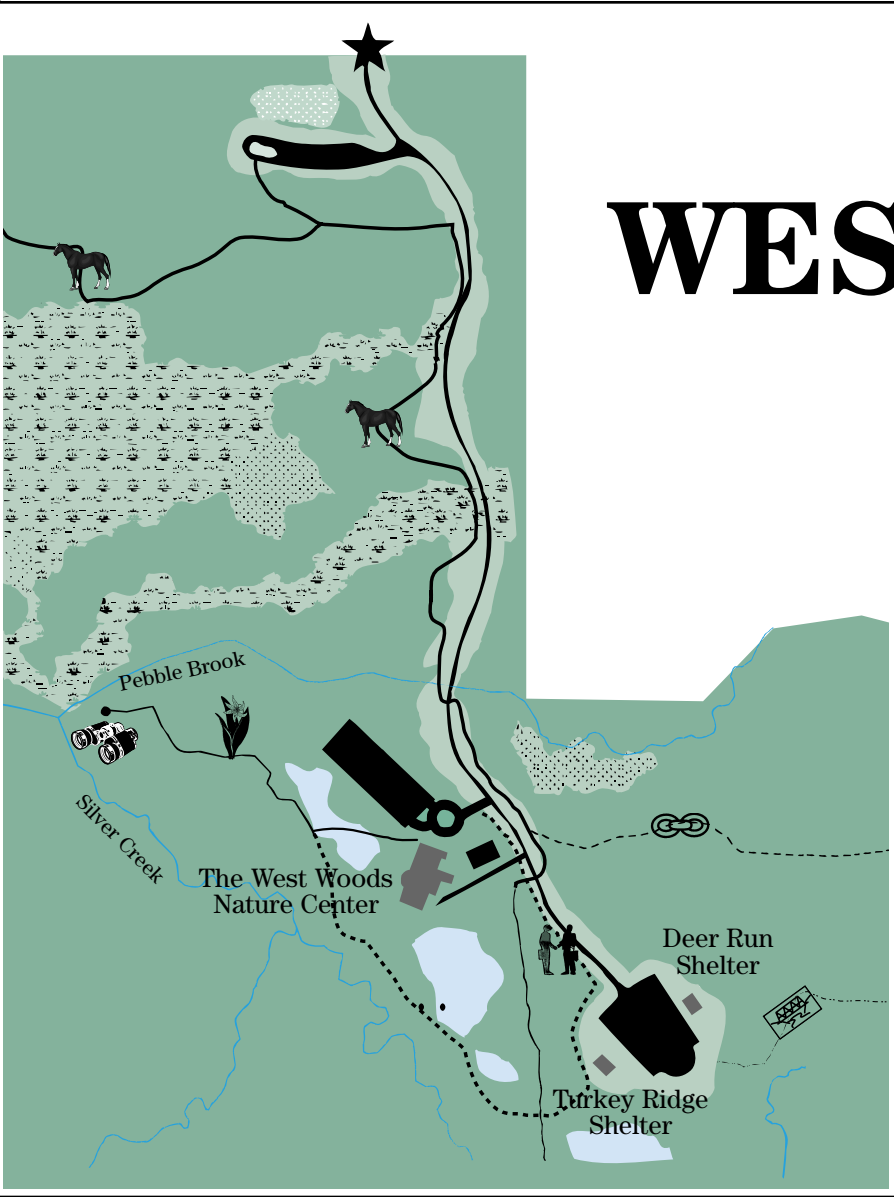


THE WEST WOODS

MAP KEY

- Park Entrance
- Sunset Overlook
- Ansel's Cave
- Meadow/Shrub
- Wetlands
- Woodland
- Vernal Pool
- Mowed Area



T RAILS		MILES
Ansel's Cave Trail		1.5 miles
Neighbor's Way		.1
Ansel's Cave Trail Link		.2 mile
Discovery Trail		.3 mile
Pioneer Bridle Trail		2.7 miles
Trout Lily Trail		.1 mile

PICNIC AREAS

Deer Run Shelter

Turkey Ridge Shelter

THE WEST WOODS is a 902-acre gem in western Geauga County, which protects the historic sandstone ledges of Ansel's Cave, Silver Creek and its watershed, extensive wetlands, and mature forests. The West Woods Nature Center provides a venue for innovative exhibits that teach the geology, hydrology, and diverse ecology of Geauga County lands. *Geauga Park District's intent is to protect this natural area in perpetuity, and utilize the center to provide high quality nature education.*

HISTORY

The history of The West Woods, particularly pertaining to Ansel's Cave, is rich in legends: tales of Civil War soldiers camping and storing munitions in the cave; rumors of runaway slaves stopping for shelter along the Underground Railroad; and accounts of bootleggers taking refuge during Prohibition. No history of the region could be complete without the story of Ansel Savage who, in the 1830's, was rumored to have made the cave his permanent home.

The David Robinson family set up their homestead on the large parcel in the mid 1800s, where remnants of the Robinson family cemetery still remain. In 1933, Mr. W. H. Eisenman purchased approximately 600 acres out of bankruptcy, which he utilized for maple sugaring and many popular parties. He eventually donated 100 acres to ASM International (American Society for Materials) to be used for their headquarters. In 1961, ASM purchased the remainder of the homestead from the Eisenman Trust.

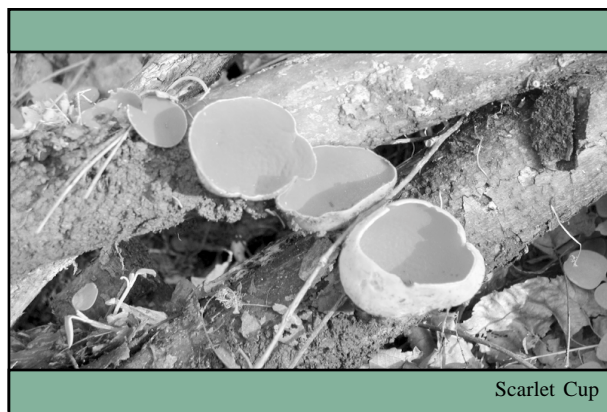
The dream of preserving a large forested area in the western portion of Geauga County took shape for Geauga Park District in 1992 when Louis and Ruth Affelder offered a life estate donation of 85 acres west of the ASM property. In January 1994, the Park District purchased an additional 192 acres from Miller & Company on Route 87 adjoining the ASM property. In April of that same year, ASM International offered Geauga Park District the opportunity to purchase over 500 acres. With strong support from conservationist William D. Ginn, who obtained a loan for the needed funds and spearheaded a successful fundraising campaign, the preservation of this large parcel was secured. At that time the Geauga Park District Board of Commissioners voted to name the park The West Woods, after a fictional account entitled The Young Sugar Makers of the West Woods, by

A.G. Riddle, which set the plot in this region. In 1996, an additional 100 acres was added to the parcel through the support of neighbors and friends of the Park District to make The West Woods a true community treasure.

NATURAL HABITATS

The West Woods features natural diversity that is not only pleasing to the eye but also provides refuge for a variety of wildlife. Ansel's Cave is composed of ledges of Sharon conglomerate sandstone. Silver Creek is a high quality cold-water stream; protection of its watershed improves water quality for all downstream properties and ultimately impacts the Chagrin River and Lake Erie. A tributary of Silver Creek has become one site for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife project for the reintroduction of the state "threatened" species of brook trout. This small stream is proving to be a successful habitat for the trout. Wetlands, mature forests and reclaimed farm fields provide habitat for a great number of plant and animal species.

Several species listed as potentially threatened have been identified in The West Woods, including the butternut tree; closed gentian and blunt mountain mint wildflowers; tall manna grass and the mourning warbler. Britt Bunyard, Ph.D. found over 100 species of fungi, several being rare in North America.



Scarlet Cup

Tami Gingrich

As the forest continues to mature, the intact habitat becomes increasingly valuable to wildlife, including woodland songbirds, such as tanagers, warblers, thrushes, vireos and flycatchers; as well as pileated woodpeckers, barred owls and others which depend on sizable mature forest stands with undisturbed interiors.

Frogs, toads, and a large variety of salamanders benefit from the abundance of seeps,

springs, streams, and both naturally occurring and created wetlands.

FACILITIES

The West Woods Nature Center is a special feature of this park, which provides a venue for nature education for students of all ages. Its innovative, hands-on exhibits portray how the geology (rocks) and hydrology (water) of Geauga County have given rise to a rich variety of natural communities harboring a great diversity of plants and animals. Allow yourself to be awed by the transformations rocks and water work on the landscape, and be inspired to stewardship.

Two shelter houses are available for reservations.



TRAILS



There are currently over 5 miles of trails in The West Woods, traversing through woodlands, across streams and past outcroppings of Sharon conglomerate sandstone.



Pioneer Bridle Trail is open to horseback riders and hikers, making a large loop west of the nature center. Horse trailer parking is available in the north parking lot.



Ansel's Cave Trail leads from the picnic shelter area to **Ansel's Cave**. **Ansel's Cave Trail Link** provides additional access to and from the Nature Center, and the cave.

Enjoy **Discovery Trail**, which leads past vernal pools; take **Trout Lily Trail** to **Sunset Overlook**; or follow **Neighbor's Way** from the Nature Center to picnic shelters.

THE WEST WOODS



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