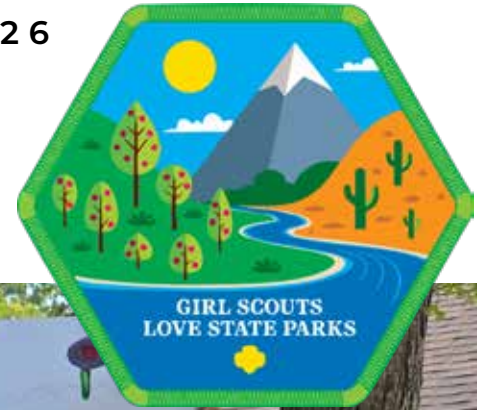


8TH ANNUAL SEPTEMBER 11 - 13, 2026

GIRL SCOUTS LOVE OHIO'S STATE PARKS



Girl Scouts are invited to explore the natural wonders and fun activities found in Ohio's State Parks during this year's **Girl Scouts Love State Parks Weekend!**

In 2025, nearly 800 Girl Scouts and their family members and friends participated in activities around the state — from the shores of Lake Erie to the hills of southern Ohio.

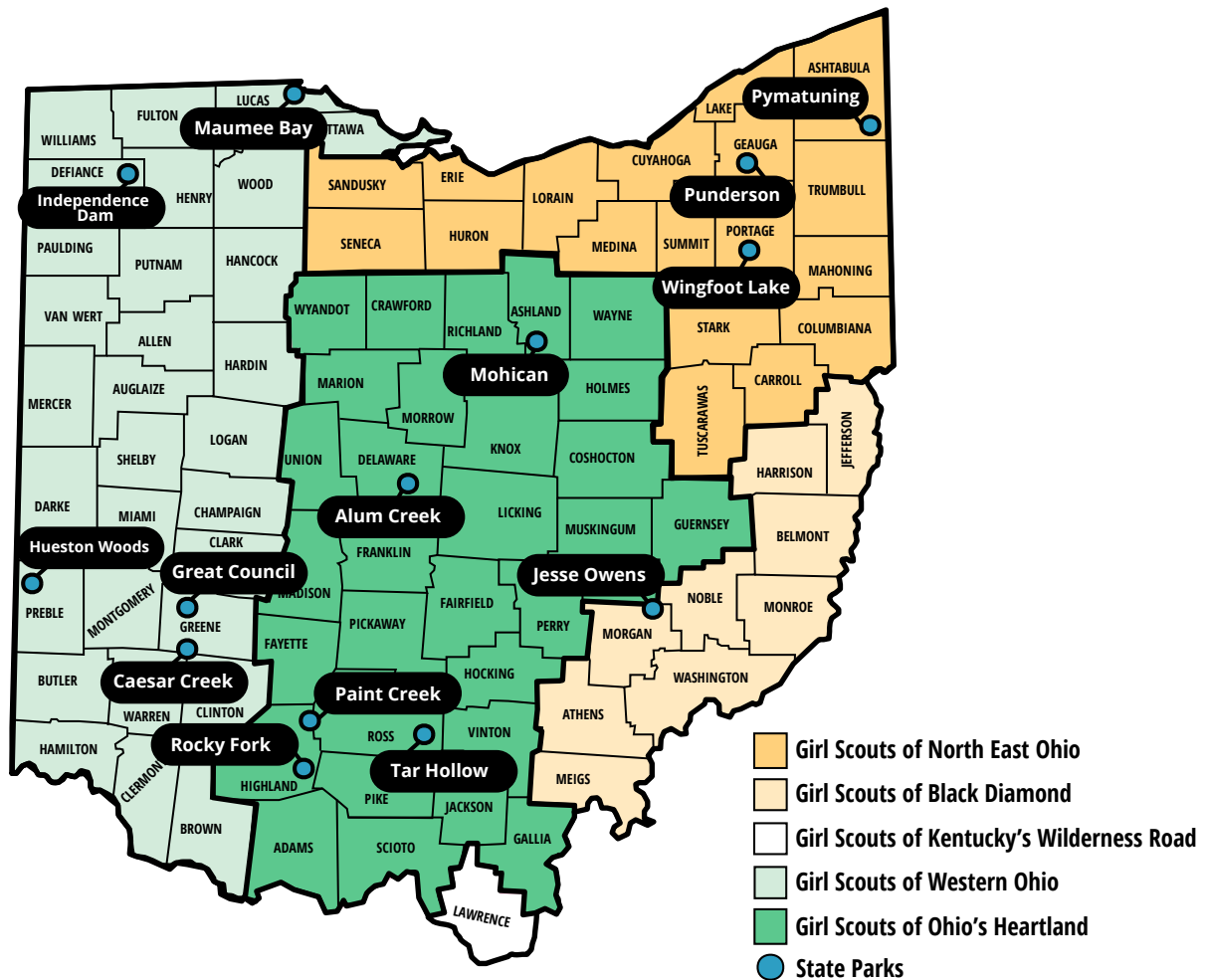
Don't miss out on this year's fun! Use this guide to explore a variety of naturalist-led programs and self-guided experiences at 14 participating parks and check with your council to register. Will you choose a familiar favorite or explore somewhere new?



Find out more and plan your trip
at ohiodnr.gov/girlscouts



2026 FEATURED PARKS & PROGRAMS



Know before you go!

- **Visit ohiodnr.gov** to learn about your park before your visit. Discover the park's history and natural features, print a trail map, and review any important announcements.
- **Register** for any special programs through each local council's event platform.
- **Download *Outerspatial*** to your mobile device. This free mobile app gives users access to trail maps and important information. Scan the QR code to download the app and then access Ohio Trails+ by joining the 'Ohio Community' tab on the app.
- **Pack** for the outdoors — you'll need water, snacks and maybe a packed lunch, sunscreen, and bug repellent. You may also want to bring a notebook and something to write with to record your observations.

Looking for more fun at a park near you?

Ohio is home to 76 state parks that are open everyday and always free to visit.

We'd love to see you at a scheduled GSLSP activity, but also welcome you to find a park close to home or attend a public program.

Navigate to **ohiodnr.gov** and click "Go & Do" for links to our Property Finder and Events Calendar.



Alum Creek State Park

Delaware, Delaware County

Activity registration through GSOH

Alum Creek State Park is a popular park located a short distance from the Columbus Metro Area. The park features a Storybook Trail near the swimming beach on the west side of the lake, an 18-hole disc golf course, numerous trails, a nature center, and camping. A Heritage of Freedom Trail opened in 2025 at the New Galena Picnic Area serves as a visual history lesson about the Underground Railroad.

Friday, September 11

5:30 – 7 p.m. | *Cookie Crunching Archery* | BJCSA
Try your hand at archery, with a Girl Scout twist!

7:30 – 8:30 p.m. | *Nighttime Forest Exploration* | BJCSA

Look for and learn about Ohio's nocturnal wildlife on a short hike with a Naturalist.

Saturday, September 12

9 – 11 a.m. | *Miniature Nature Notebooks* | DBJCSA
Create your own pocket-sized notebook using natural and recycled materials and learn how to contribute to science on your next nature exploration!

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. | 1 – 3:30 p.m. | *Movie Screening* | DBJCSA

Visit our partners at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Alum Creek Visitor Center for a Girl Scout screening of an animated movie that teaches about the consequences of environmental choices and encourages people to care for the natural world. While you are there, be sure to check out the Visitor Center's hands-on exhibits to learn about the dam, park, and local area, or pick up a Junior Ranger activity book.

For more fun:

Visit the Nature Center | Walk and Read along the Storybook Trail | Pack a Picnic | Explore the Beach | Camp Overnight | Take a Hike | View the Lake from the Dam | Stop into the Alum Creek Lake Army Corps Visitor Center | Follow the Heritage of Freedom Trail



Mohican State Park

Loudonville, Ashland County

Activity registration through GSOH

Mohican State Park is a fun and scenic park to explore, with wooded trails, waterfalls, river views, and a rich history. Ready for a hike? Choose from numerous options that take you to landmarks like Big and Little Lyons Falls, the Swinging Bridge, and the Covered Bridge. Or, check out the beautiful views from Vista Point or the Gorge Overlook.

Saturday, September 12

12 – 1 p.m. | *Water Filter Competition* | All Ages
Learn about water quality and construct a water filter. Compete with others for the cleanest water!

2 – 3 p.m. | *Creeking* | All Ages

Learn about Ohio's aquatic life as you explore the river in search of critters.

Sunday, September 13

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. | *Archery* | BJCSA
Learn the basics of archery and try out your skills!

For more fun:

Explore the New Visitor Center (Interactive Displays & Gift Store) | Visit the Gorge Overlook, Grist Mill, Covered Bridge, Memorial Shrine, or Cline Cabin | Take a Hike | Mine for Gems or Enjoy Ice Cream at the Camp Store (\$) | Stay Overnight at the Lodge or Campground | Visit the Park Lodge for a Snack, Lunch, Souvenirs, and Great Views of the Lake

Jesse Owens State Park

McConnelsville, Morgan County

Registration through BDGSC

Jesse Owens State Park is a success story in environmental stewardship, conservation, and reclaiming land for outdoor recreation. This park and the surrounding Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area were recovered from past coal mining and now features acres of grasslands, brushlands, lakes, and ponds that support the area's vast wildlife populations. In 2026, ODNR celebrated the opening of the new Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area Visitor Center which features displays on local wildlife and an opportunity to view live bison, in partnership with The Wilds. A brand-new campground and cabins at Jesse Owens State Park expand overnight amenities for visitors.

Saturday, September 12

10 – 11:30 a.m. | Hook & Cook | All Ages

Learn the basics of fishing. Then, fry up your catch with our partners at the Division of Wildlife! Equipment is provided. Participants 16 years and older require a valid Ohio fishing license to fish.

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. | Archery | BJCSA

Try your hand at archery at the range at Hook Lake. Instruction and equipment are provided.

2 – 3 p.m. | Nature Craft | All Ages

Relax and enjoy making crafts with materials from nature.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. | Bison Encounter | All Ages

See bison from the deck of the Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area Visitor Center. Learn some fascinating facts about this incredible animal.

For more fun:

Visit Miner's Memorial Park and Stand Inside the Massive "Big Muskie" Bucket | Explore the NEW Appalachian Hills Visitor Center | Watch the Bison Roam | Go Fishing | Pack a Picnic | Stay Overnight in a Cabin or Campground | Drive to Nearby Muskingum River State Park to View the Locks and Dams | Hike the 2.6-mile Loop Trail (Moderate-Difficult) at Sand Hollow Campground

Tar Hollow State Park

Laurelville, Ross County

Activity registration through GSOH

The rugged hills of Southeastern Ohio welcome adventure seekers! This secluded and peaceful park is near the popular Hocking Hills region, without the hustle and bustle. Visitors can hike numerous trails, camp, fish at the quiet Pine Lake, have a picnic, or play a round of mini golf. Nestled within one of Ohio's largest state forests, you'll feel immersed in nature at Tar Hollow. A portion of the Buckeye Trail traverses the park and state forest.

Sunday, September 13

9 – 10 a.m. | Lakeside Birding | BJCSA

Take a gentle stroll along Pine Lake in search of beautiful songbirds and other wildlife.

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Reptiles & Amphibians | All Ages

Get up close with Tar Hollow's native reptiles and amphibians. Program features live animals.

1 – 3:30 p.m. | Creeking Adventure | All Ages

Explore a beautiful creek ecosystem in search of salamanders, crayfish, aquatic insects, and more.

4 – 6 p.m. | Archery 101 | JCSA

Learn the basics of archery and try out your new skills on the 3D archery range. Learn some fun facts about local wildlife, along the way.

For more fun:

Take a Hike | Pack a Picnic (shelters available for reservation) | Visit the New Education Center and Peek at the Animals | Camp Overnight | Play on the New Playground | Walk Around Pine Lake | Play a Round of Mini Golf (\$) | Rent a Paddle Boat (\$)





Caesar Creek State Park

Waynesville, Warren/Clinton/Greene Counties

Registration through GSWO

One of southwest Ohio's most popular state parks with plenty of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Visitors can enjoy a large lake (the deepest inland lake in Ohio!), beautiful, wooded ravines, fossil collecting (free permit required through the Army Corps of Engineers, unless participating in a Naturalist program), a historic Pioneer Village, and a newly renovated Nature Center with live reptiles, fish, and birds of prey.

Saturday, September 12

10 – 11 a.m. | Fossil Hunting | All Ages

Caesar Creek has some of the best fossil hunting in Ohio! Layers of limestone are exposed on the emergency spillway, and new fossils are revealed all the time. Search for interesting fossils and even take some home.

12 – 12:45 p.m. | Animal Encounter | All Ages

The Nature Center at Caesar Creek is home to many education ambassador birds and reptiles. Learn how these animals came to live in the Naturalist's care and why it is important to keep wildlife wild.

1 – 2:30 p.m. | Wildlife Hike | All Ages

Take a hike with the Naturalist to see Pioneer Village, Horseshoe Falls, and the Swinging Bridge while searching for wildlife, along the way.

For more fun:

Explore the Nature Center and Outdoor Play Area | Hike to Horseshoe Falls | Walk on the Beach | Pack a Picnic | Camp Overnight | Go Fishing | Collect Fossils on the Emergency Spillway | View the Gorge above the Dam | Play on a Playground | Visit the Army Corps Visitor Center

Great Council State Park

Xenia, Greene County

Activity registration through GSWO

Ohio's newest state park celebrates nature, history, and the stories of the Shawnee people. Visitors can explore peaceful trails, learn about wildlife, and discover the rich culture of the Indigenous communities who once lived along the Little Miami River. The park's museum and interpretive center feature hands-on activities and displays that help bring the past to life.

Saturday, September 12

1 – 1:45 p.m. | Passport to the Past | JCSA

Explore the 1700s landscape of what is now Xenia, OH. Learn about the people that lived and the events that happened in the area as you explore the interpretive center.

2 – 2:45 p.m. | Plant Partnerships | DBJCSA

Learn about the relationship between plants and people and how you can be a better plant partner as you hike the prairie at Great Council.

3 – 3:45 p.m. | Trade Like it's 1779 | JCSA

Join a Naturalist to learn the intricacies of the fur trade economy in the 18th century.

For more fun:

Explore the Interpretive Center's Educational Displays, Theater, Living Stream, and Games Exhibition | Join a Public Tour at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., or 3:45 p.m. (Sat/Sun) or Program | Stroll Along the ½-mile Blackfish Trail Through a Prairie or take the Tecumseh Preserve Trail to the Little Miami River | Travel to Nearby John Bryan State Park (Hiking, Camping, Storybook Trail, Playgrounds, Disc Golf) or Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve (Trails, Exploration Center Open 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Fri/Sat/Sun)

Hueston Woods State Park

College Corner, Preble County

Registration through GSWO

The limestone and shale bedrock of the Hueston Woods region provides evidence of the ancient shallow sea that once covered Ohio. Fossilized remnants of ancient marine animals are so abundant that the park attracts collectors year-round. Fossil hunting is just the beginning of the outdoor adventures found at this park which also has opportunities for hiking, disc golf, fishing, and more. The park also features a Haiku Trail, the first of its kind, in Ohio.

The park's Nature Center is open daily and features interactive displays related to the park's history, geology, and Ohio's native plants and animals. The Nature Center and surrounding area is also home to a variety of live animals including fish, reptiles, birds of prey, and mammals.

Saturday, September 12

1 - 2 p.m. | Orienteering | BJCSA

Learn to navigate with a map and compass.

3 - 4 p.m. | Raptors of Ohio | All Ages

Learn about some of the park's resident birds of prey.

Sunday, September 13

1 - 2 p.m. | Fossil Expedition | All Ages

Join the Naturalist in search of signs of prehistoric life as you collect fossils.

3 - 4 p.m. | Lakeshore Clean-Up | All Ages

Take a close look at native shorebirds, waterfowl, and aquatic vegetation, as you help the park by picking-up littler around the water's edge.

For more fun:

Visit the Nature Center (Daily, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) | Take a Hike | Play a Round of Disc Golf | Walk the Haiku Trail | Stay Overnight in the Lodge or Campground | Play a Round of Golf \$ | Pack a Picnic | Visit the Covered Bridge | Go Geocaching



Rocky Fork State Park

Hillsboro, Highland County

Paint Creek State Park

Bainbridge, Highland and Ross Counties

Activity registration through GSWO

At the center of **Rocky Fork State Park (RF)** is a large lake, popular for fishing and boating. Six picnic areas on the north and east shores in wooded areas overlook the lake, and swimmers can enjoy two large beaches. A scenic gorge, dolomite caves, natural wetlands, and a bird watching station appeal to nature lovers.

Nearby **Paint Creek State Park (PC)** marks the boundary between the hilly eastern section and flatter western portions of Ohio. Visitors can enjoy hiking, swimming, picnicking, camping, and a 21-hole disc golf course (equipment rental is available from the camp store).

This area of Ohio is rich in Native American culture. Fort Hills, Serpent Mound, Seip Mound, Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, and Adena State Memorial are located nearby.

Friday, September 11 (RF)

9 – 11 a.m. | *Try-it Kayaking* | CSA

No school? No problem! Spend the morning paddling on Rocky Fork Lake with the park Naturalist. This program fulfills several requirements for the Senior Paddling badge.

Saturday, September 12 (RF)

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. | *Fishing Pond Adventure* | All Ages

Enjoy casting your line at the Family Fishing Pond with the help of the Naturalist. Come or go during this time, as you'd like. Instruction and equipment are provided. Participants 16 years and older require a valid Ohio fishing license to fish.

Sunday, September 13 (PC)

1 – 2:30 p.m. | *Milkweed Meadow Hike* | JCSA

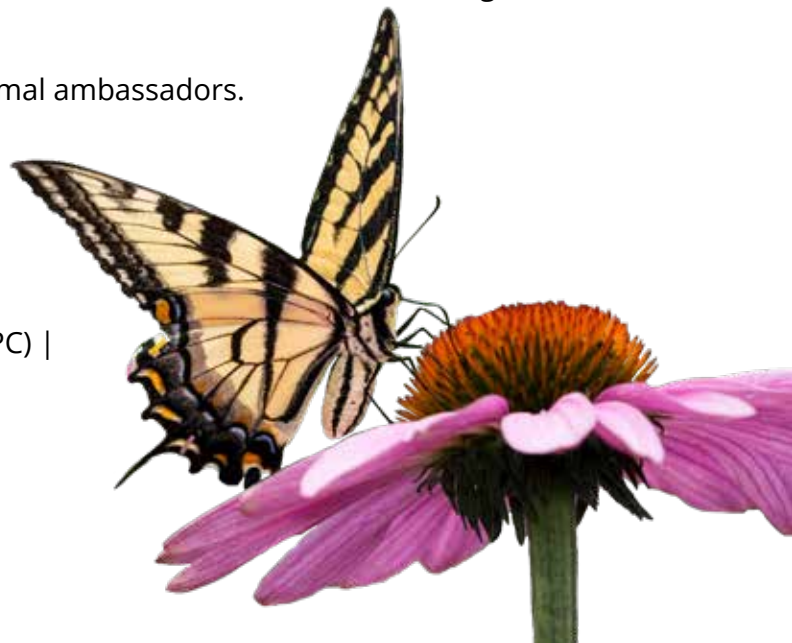
Spend the afternoon with the Naturalist as you explore the woods to discover wildlife, fungi, and flowers.

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. | *Reptile Encounter* | All Ages

Stop into the nature center for a peek at the park's animal ambassadors.

For more fun:

Take a Hike | Pack a Picnic | Camp Overnight |
Play a Round of Disc Golf | Enjoy a Playground |
Play a Round of Mini Golf (RF \$) |
Stop into the Army Corps of Engineers Visitor Center (PC) |
Walk and Read Along the Storybook Trail (RF)



Independence Dam State Park

Defiance, Defiance County

Registration through GSWO

This park, nestled along Ohio's scenic Maumee River just east of Defiance and across from GSWO's Camp Libby, is a peaceful riverside escape. The park blends rich history - featuring remnants of the old Miami & Erie Canal — with a wide range of outdoor activities. A quiet 3-mile trail follows the old canal towpath and shady picnic areas are found along the riverbank. A portion of the Buckeye Trail passes through the park.

Friday, September 11

5:30 – 7:30 p.m. | History and S'mores | All Ages

Take a guided hayride to learn the fascinating history of the park and the local area. After the ride, warm up by the fire with hot chocolate and s'mores.

Saturday, September 12

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Maumee River Stream Stomp | All Ages

Wade into the river in search of tiny invertebrates and learn why native plants are important.

3 – 5 p.m. | Eagle Adventure Hike | All Age

Take a 2-mile trek from the campgrounds to the eagle nest observation area. Other activities include nest building challenges, eagle education, and a fun graphing activity.

Sunday, September 13

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Reel Fun Sunday | All Ages

Learn the ropes (and the lines) of fishing. We'll cover fish ID, knot tying, and casting. All equipment is provided. Participants 16 years and older require a valid Ohio fishing license to fish.

For more fun:

Walk and Read along the Storybook Trail | Visit the Eagle Viewing Area | Find the Historical Marker | Walk Along the Canal Towpath Trail

Maumee Bay State Park

Oregon, Lucas County

Registration through GSWO

This park features a resort lodge and cabins nestled among scenic meadows, wet woods, and lush marshes. Visitors enjoy the campground, inland lake, accessible Boardwalk Trail, and the Storybook Trail. More than 300 species of birds have been observed here!

Don't miss the renovated Nature Center featuring displays related to the park's natural history, a bird watching area, and multiple live specimens of native reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Up for a hike? Follow the boardwalk to the Eagle Nest Observation Area (find the outing in the OuterSpatial trails app!)

Saturday, September 12

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. | Nature Adventure | All Ages

Take a hike with the Naturalist on the big loop of the Boardwalk Trail to learn about birds, plants, and local fauna. Climb to the top of the nest observation tower for a great view of the wetlands and Lake Erie!

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. | Many Muddy Macros | All Ages

Come play in the pond in front of the Nature Center and learn about macroinvertebrates and their importance to a healthy ecosystem.

2 – 3 p.m. | Take Aim – Archery | BJCSA

Learn the basics of archery and try out your skills on the range!

For more fun:

Explore the Nature Center | Walk on the Beach | Climb to the Top of the Big Hill or the Eagle Nest Observation Tower for Great Views | Walk and Read Along the Storybook Trail | Play a Round of Disc Golf | Pack a Picnic | Fly a Kite | Play a Round of Golf (\$)



Punderson State Park

Newbury, Geauga County

Registration through GSNEO

This state park features evidence of the last glacier to scrape across Ohio. A natural kettle lake, Punderson Lake is the largest and deepest of its kind in Ohio. The park offers opportunities for paddling, fishing, camping, hiking, and traditional golf or disc golf.

Saturday, September 12

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 pm. | *Cookie Shootout* | BJCSA

Try your hand at archery, with a Girl Scout twist!

1:30 - 2:30 p.m., 3 - 4 p.m. or 6 - 7 p.m. | *Intro to Kayaking* | BJCSA

Learn how to safely enter, exit, and paddle a kayak on flat water.

7:45 - 9 p.m. | *A New Look in the Dark* | All Ages

Use your senses to uncover what goes on in the woods at night.

For more fun:

Explore the Nature Center | Visit the Historic Punderson Manor | Walk on the Boardwalk behind the Lodge | Enjoy a Picnic | Play a Round of Disc Golf | Go Fishing | Play a Round of Golf (\$) | Walk on the Beach | Go for a Hike

Pymatuning State Park

Andover, Ashtabula County

Registration through GSNEO

Spanning the border of Ohio and Pennsylvania is Pymatuning State Park, a popular vacation destination. Enjoy views of the lake and surrounding scenery from one of the park's trails, pack a picnic to eat in a shady area, or visit the Nature Center to see how you measure up to a hawk or an owl, explore the benefits of wetlands, and peek into a model beaver lodge.

Friday, September 11

5 - 6 p.m. | *Paddle Power* | BJCSA

Paddle through nature learning basic kayaking and spot wildlife along the way.

Saturday, September 12

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. | *Take Aim - Archery* | BJCSA

Learn the basics of archery and try out your skills on the range!

12:30 - 2:00 p.m. | *Leave No Trace Geocaching* | All Ages

Try your hand at geocaching while learning about responsible outdoor recreation.

3 - 4 p.m. | *Fishing Fun* | All Ages

Cast a line and try your luck at catching fish. Poles and bait are provided. Participants 16 years and older require a valid Ohio fishing license to fish.

5 - 6 p.m. | *Creativity Hike* | All Age

Marvel at the wonders of the wilderness on a guided hike. Gather materials and make a natural mandala.

For more fun:

Visit the Nature Center | Go Fishing at Pymatuning Lake | Play on the Playgrounds | Check Out the Spillway | Pack a Picnic | Take a Hike



Wingfoot Lake State Park

Mogadore, Portage County

Registration through GSNEO

Groves of tall trees, expanses of grass, and a picturesque lake create a relaxing backdrop to paddling, fishing, picnicking, or disc golf at this day-use park. Originally owned by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, this park has been part of the state park system since 2009.

On a clear day, visitors might spot the Goodyear blimp parked in its hangar on the lake's south shore. The park also features a Storybook Trail and a Nature Center. Don't miss the wildlife pond on the far east side of the park near the boat ramp for a chance to spot frogs and other critters.

Saturday, September 12

11 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Frog Condo Makeover | All Ages

This program is perfect for curious minds who are passionate about animals, their habitats, and the principles of wildlife care.

1 - 2 p.m. | Macro Mania | BJCSA

Collect macroinvertebrates from the lake and identify them under a microscope. Learn what water bugs can tell us about water quality.

3 - 5 p.m. | Fishing Frenzy | All Ages

Learn the basics of fishing or improve your techniques and explore different equipment. The Naturalist will discuss fish ID and fish ecology while you test your skills from the shore. Participants 16 years and older require a valid Ohio fishing license to fish.

11 a.m. - 5 p.m. | On-Your-Own Litter Pick-up |

All Ages

Stop into the Nature Center for a litter pick-up kit (trash bags, gloves) and a map with sections of the park that need your help! Then, enjoy a walk in the park at your leisure while you pick-up trash along the way.

For more fun:

Explore the Nature Center | Walk and Read along the Storybook Trail | Enjoy a Picnic Near the Lake | Play on the Playgrounds | Look for the Goodyear Blimp | Play a Round of Disc Golf

