

30 SHARON WOODS



KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

LENGTH: 5.3 miles

CONFIGURATION: Series of loops

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

SCENERY: Woods and lake

EXPOSURE: Shaded and sun

TRAFFIC: Heavy

TRAIL SURFACE: Paved

HIKING TIME: 2.5–3 hours

DRIVING DISTANCE: 20 minutes from downtown Cincinnati

SEASON: Year-round

ACCESS: Dawn–dusk

MAPS: USGS Glendale; Sharon Woods Park map

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE: Paved portions and around lake

FACILITIES: Water and restrooms at harbor and Sharon Centre

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Hamilton County Park District, (513) 521-7275 or www.greatparks.org

SPECIAL COMMENTS: The gorge area is beautiful. There are plenty of activities at Sharon Woods to keep kids entertained for hours.

IN BRIEF

Sharon Woods Park offers a variety of activities, including playgrounds, a harbor, and a marina that rents paddleboats. The trail system is well maintained and has a fair amount of traffic. This park is also well known for an incredible holiday light show.

DESCRIPTION

Sharon Centre's interactive nature displays, indoor playground, and Nature Niche Store offer plenty of places to explore. From the parking area, walk north to the paved trail behind Sharon Centre's outdoor playground and Pavilion Grove.

Before crossing a bridge 200 feet into the hike, explore the Heritage Village Museum area to the right. Cross the stone arched bridge and stop for a few minutes to enjoy the view of the waterfall before continuing on the paved trail.

The trail crosses a road at 0.2 miles and heads uphill, where red oak and sugar maple trees border the path. At 0.49 miles you'll see several white pines on the left side of the trail; at 0.55 miles you'll pass a historic cemetery. Follow the trail to the right downhill at 0.57 miles (immediately after the cemetery).

If you're with your kids, they'll be happy to see a playground area to the right at 0.63

GPS Trailhead Coordinates

UTM Zone (WGS84) 16S

Easting 0724021.9

Northing 4350925.7

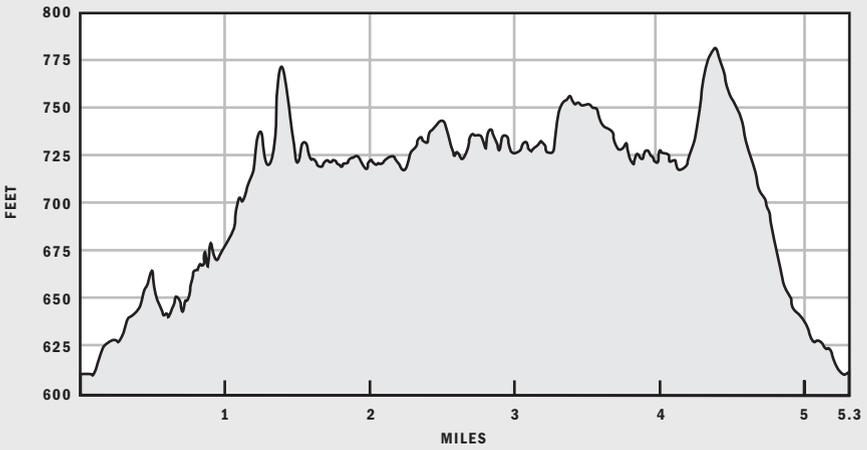
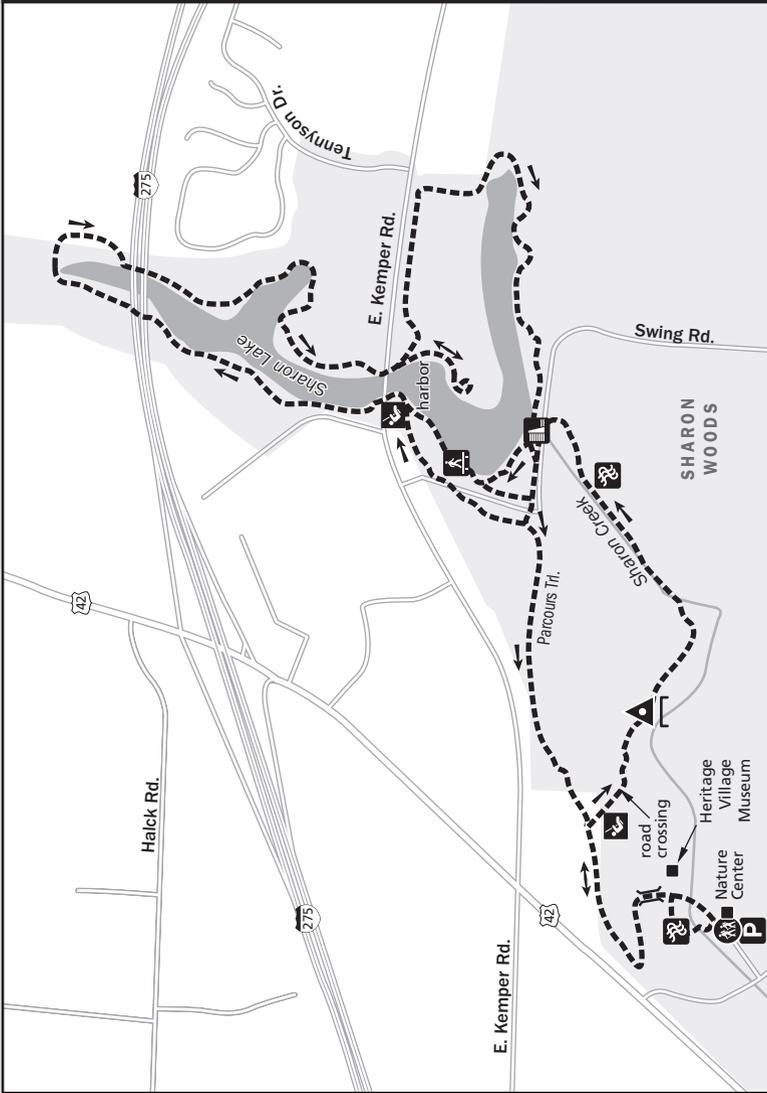
Latitude N 39° 16' 43.49"

Longitude W 84° 24' 10.27"

Directions

From the north side of Cincinnati, on Interstate 275, take Exit 46/US 42 south. Drive 0.8 miles to the entrance to Sharon Woods on the east (left) side of the road.

30 Sharon Woods





Sharon Woods gorge has several beautiful waterfalls.

miles. Cross the road at 0.67 miles and walk to the entrance for Richard H. Durrell Gorge Trail in a small vehicle pulloff area. The Gorge Trail is well known for its abundance of Ordovician fossils. Collecting fossils and going off trail are prohibited.

Overhead on the Gorge Trail is a tall canopy of black cherry, hackberry, and white oak trees. The shade provided by the trees, in addition to the low-lying gorge, make this trail a pleasant retreat in summer. Benches and an overlook area await at 0.82 miles. Cross the bridge at 1.07 miles.

The overlook at 1.19 miles provides a scenic view of Sharon Creek. The waterfall cascades into a deep basin at 1.34 miles. This area suffered a substantial landslide in 1996 due to the saturated clay and the shell limestone bedrock giving way.

The trail climbs uphill over several steps before reaching the road. Cross the road and continue on the trail to the left that is the closest to the lake. Walk on the boardwalk extending along the edge of the lake. The boardwalk transitions to a paved trail near the harbor. On the parking area side of the harbor is a wet playground. During warmer weather the harbor rents paddleboats, kayaks, rowboats, and bicycles. Pass the harbor and continue on the trail, taking it through the stone-arch tunnel under the Kemper Road bridge. After the tunnel, watch the lake for waterfowl. This portion of the hike is shaded by sugar maples and red and chinquapin oak trees. At 1.7 miles, sit on the bench and enjoy the tranquility of the bridge and lake.

Sycamores border the lake, stretching their ghostly white gnarled limbs over the water to provide a cool spot for fish. Another bench at 1.9 miles lends a portal view of the lake through the branches of birch and sugar maple trees.

Before the trail passes under I-275, you will pass a footbridge that connects to the trail on the opposite side of the lake. Staying on the paved trail, go under I-275 at 2.2 miles. This is a unique auditory experience, with the ghostly drone of the cars passing overhead and echoing through the passageway. Immediately after the overpass is another bench in an open area.

The trail passes over a small bridge at 2.2 miles where Sharon Creek enters the park. The trail continues into an area with sycamores. Sycamores are easily identified by the tan, green, and gray platy bark that peels away from the tree, exposing the white bark. Sycamore trees are found in areas with wet soils.

The trail passes back under I-275 at 2.4 miles. Numerous benches along the side of the lake offer panoramic views of the lake.

The trail passes back through the tunnel under Kemper Road. When the trail splits 3 miles into the hike, continue on the trail to the right and follow it to the Harbor Overlook area. Harbor Overlook is a shaded retreat where you can sit and enjoy the peaceful view of the lake.

Return to the main trail and continue on it to the right, which passes through a parking area at 3.4 miles before reentering the beech, red and chinquapin oak forest. Follow this trail as it meanders through the shady woods bordering the lake on the right. Several benches are scattered through this wooded area. Continue following this trail as it passes over the dam at 4.2 miles.

When the trail splits on the other side of the dam, take the trail to the left that parallels Swing Road. This trail leads uphill, crosses the entrance road, and reenters the forest at 4.4 miles. At the T intersection, follow the Parcours Trail to the left, continuing uphill and into the forest. Try out the fitness moves on the parcours equipment by following the directions on the signs. The Parcours Trail ends at the trail intersection 4.8 miles into the hike. You are now on the first part of the paved trail. (The trail on the left leads back to Gorge Trail.)

Continue on the paved trail. The trail splits again at 5 miles. Take the trail to your left and retrace your earlier steps back to the Sharon Centre and your vehicle.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Additional hikes include Caesar Creek State Park, Fort Ancient State Historical Site, Winton Woods, and Caldwell Park. Kings Island and The Beach are within 20 minutes of this hike. There is also ample shopping at the Tri-County Mall and in the Kings Mill area.