

19 SUGARCREEK METROPARK



KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

LENGTH: 4.64 miles

CONFIGURATION: Loop

DIFFICULTY: Easy–moderate

SCENERY: Woodlands, tallgrass prairie, and creek

EXPOSURE: Sun and shade

TRAFFIC: Heavy

TRAIL SURFACE: Paved, soil, and gravel

HIKING TIME: 2.5–3.5 hours

DRIVING DISTANCE: 1 hour from Cincinnati

SEASON: Year-round

ACCESS: The park is open April 1–October 31, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; November 1–March 31, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and is closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

MAPS: USGS Waynesville; Sugar-creek MetroPark User's Guide & Map

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE: Some trails

FACILITIES: Latrine and drinking water

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Sugar-creek MetroPark, (937) 433-0004 or www.metroparks.org

SPECIAL COMMENTS: Great hike for the navigationally impaired.

IN BRIEF

Located on Dayton's lower east side, Sugar-creek MetroPark is part of the Five Rivers MetroParks system. With 618 acres, complete with 550-year-old oak trees, creek crossings, a fossil-collecting area, tallgrass prairie, woodlands, and an Osage orange-tree tunnel, you'll find several places to lose yourself.

DESCRIPTION

Five Rivers MetroParks actively manages Sugar-creek MetroPark for a variety of habitats that support an array of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, red fox, waterfowl, and a multitude of delightful songbirds. Most of the trails, as with other Five Rivers MetroParks, are clearly marked and color-coded with numbered intersections. All color-coded trails are also loop trails that will return to the beginning of the loop.

The Sugar-creek MetroPark trail system is peppered with signposts, which benefits anyone who is navigationally impaired. Many different users visit Sugar-creek MetroPark: expect to encounter joggers, dog walkers, and families out for a woodland adventure. In fact, for most of the hike you'll encounter plenty of people. If you are looking for a little

GPS Trailhead Coordinates

UTM Zone (WGS84) 16S

Easting 0749233.3

Northing 4389340.3

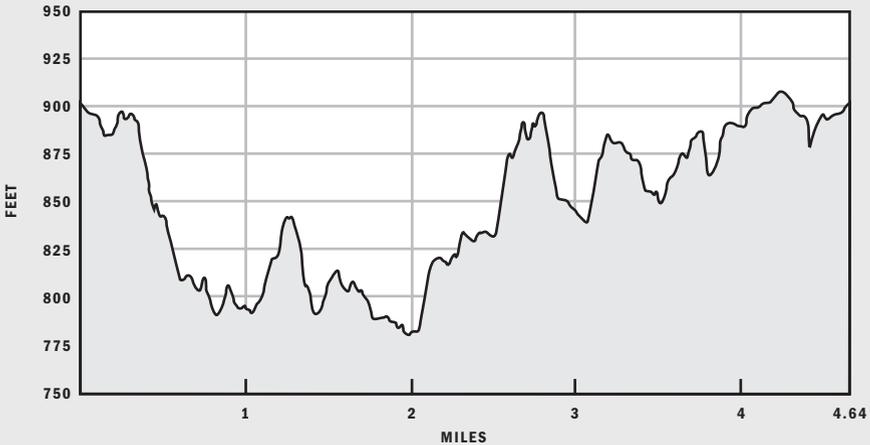
Latitude N 39° 37' 3.22"

Longitude W 84° 05' 47.64"

Directions

From Cincinnati, take Interstate 75 north to Exit 43/Interstate 675 north. Continue on I-675 4 miles and take Exit 4/OH 725/East Alex Bell Road. Take OH 725/East Alex Bell Road east (right) 2.81 miles to Whites Corner. Turn south (right) onto Wilmington-Dayton Road/Conference Road and follow it 1.89 miles to the main parking area for Sugar-creek MetroPark on the north (left) side of the road.

19 Sugarcreek MetroPark





Sugarcreek sees a variety of visitors.

solitude, cross the creek and take the more primitive Big Woods Trail loop. Not many people venture onto it because of its primitive qualities—it's a one-person-wide earthen path.

On the north side of the Sugarcreek MetroPark parking area is a kiosk. At the far side of it, take a moment to look for and investigate the geocache. At this location are water fountains for humans and dogs as well as a latrine facility. Proceed down the paved path that connects directly to the water fountain and latrine area.

At 0.13 miles the trail intersects with the other trailheads at a spot that includes a pavilion and picnic tables.

Follow the signpost marked with blue, green, and red circles. The trail leads straight ahead from the trail you came in on, then left into the woods.

After 0.25 miles you'll see an intersection labeled number 18. Take the red and green trail to the left and uphill along Sycamore Ridge. Stop at the bench at 0.3 miles to enjoy the view of the woods and listen to the birds singing.

When you reach intersection number 17 at 0.5 miles, take the blue and green trail to the left. In a few feet, Sugar Creek becomes visible in the valley to the left of the trail. In spring this area of the trail is lined with trout lilies.

The trail begins to parallel Sugar Creek at 0.75 miles. The bench and kiosk for the fossil area are at 0.81 miles. The kiosk explains the fossil collecting rules and regulations and notes the access point to the area where fossil collecting is allowed. Some of the basic rules: no tools, no more than three fossils per day per person, and no fossils larger than your hand. Please read the regulations posted at the kiosk prior to collecting fossils. Fossils of interest include horn coral, brachiopods, crinoids, trilobites, and gastropods.

This area is also intersection number 16. Look down the hillside to the left and follow the enormous stone steps to the creek and then across Sugar Creek. Take a few steps up a small hill and follow the trail to the left to go on the Big Woods Trail loop.

This trail is dense with vegetation and is a single-person-wide footpath through the undergrowth. At 0.85 miles plenty of wild ginger and spring wildflowers border the trail. Enormous sycamore trees also bracket the trail, so be careful of your footing as you step over exposed roots.

Be wary of the multiple spurs that radiate to the left from this trail, especially near the 0.92-mile mark. But, don't stress out too much. If you take a spur by accident you'll just wind up at the edge of the creek and need to retrace your steps back to the trail.

Big Woods Trail follows along the creek corridor. Take a little time to sit and watch the water in the creek. In the elbows, the water is deep and clear, and you can watch the fish swimming. Just be careful to not stand on an overhang, or you might take an abrupt trip into one of those pools.

The trail begins to diverge from Sugar Creek at 1.21 miles. A user-made spur trail is closed off with well-placed branches. Remain on the main trail, following it around the sharp U-turn. A hiker medallion on a tree at 1.3 miles denotes the correct path. As the trail leads downhill at 1.36 miles, check out the large beech trees and trillium (in spring) in this low-lying area.

When the trail rejoins itself, retrace your steps to Sugar Creek, across and up the stone steps to the bench at intersection number 16. Continue on the blue and green trail to the left.

The hike continues to parallel Sugar Creek. The ambient sounds of the flowing water readily cancel out the ruckus of surrounding suburbia. Continue following this trail along the edge of the creek, and at 2.16 miles you'll reach intersection number 10. Take the connector trail to the right.

The connector trail meets intersection number 11 at the start of the Osage Orange Tunnel at 2.23 miles. Depending on the time of day, the tunnel under the curved branches of the Osage orange trees would either be the perfect spot for wedding photos or a reenactment of Sleepy Hollow. Follow the path through the archway of the tunnel to intersection number eight.

At intersection number eight, take the orange and green trail to the right. At intersection number seven continue on the green trail.

After the stream crossing at 2.56 miles, the trail enters Beech Woods. The trail leads downhill and runs parallel to a small creek. At 3.2 miles the trail crosses the creek and heads up a steep hill for the next 400 feet.

Intersection number four is 3.27 miles into the journey. The trail to the right connects to the Three Sisters, three impressive and massive 550-year-old white oak trees. At intersection number five, take the trail to the right to view the Three Sisters. A boardwalk allows a closer look at the enormous trees without

damaging the soil structure. One of the Three Sisters died in 2005, but it still is an integral part of the forest ecosystem.

Return to the orange trail and continue to intersection number six at 3.5 miles, then take the connector trail to the left to intersection number 12, where it joins the other side of the orange trail. Take a left onto the orange trail and follow it through intersection number 13 (3.88 miles) by taking a right.

The orange trail leads to intersection number 14, which connects with the blue trail. Continue to the left on the blue and orange trail. At 4 miles at intersection number two, turn left and follow the yellow trail as it meanders through the tallgrass prairie. Watch and listen for the variety of songbirds that call it home.

When the looped yellow trail reconnects with intersection number two, take a left onto the yellow, blue, green, and orange trails. Follow this path to the open area with the pavilion and picnic tables. At the paved path you came in on, turn left and return to the trailhead.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Stock up on delicious treats for the trail and home at Dorothy Lane Market near the corner of OH 48 and Whipp Road, or at Health Foods Unlimited off OH 725 near the Dayton Mall. To work off those treats, head over to Germantown MetroPark.