

31 SHAWNEE LOOKOUT



KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

LENGTH: 1.5 and 2.0 miles

CONFIGURATION: Lollipop

DIFFICULT: Moderate

SCENERY: Ohio River overlooks and historic Native American earthworks

EXPOSURE: Mostly shaded

TRAFFIC: Moderate

TRAIL SURFACE: Gravel, bare ground, and wooden steps

HIKING TIME: 1–1.5 hours each

DRIVING DISTANCE: Less than 15 minutes from Interstate 275 and OH 50 interchange

ACCESS: Dawn–dusk

MAPS: Available at www.great-parks.org or onsite at the museum

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE: No

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

SPECIAL COMMENTS: The museum details the unique history of the Native American tribes that lived in the area. Steep Miami Fort Trail has a multitude of steps and fantastic vistas. Meandering Little Turtle Trail offers several places to rest and enjoy the view of the Ohio River.

IN BRIEF

Shawnee Lookout is another gem of the Hamilton County Park District. Covering 1,421 acres and more than 14,000 years of Native American history, this park offers incredible overlooks of the Ohio and Great Miami rivers and the confluence as well as the oxbow of the Great Miami River.

DESCRIPTION

On the far west side of Cincinnati and inside the I-275 loop, Shawnee Lookout is an excursion into thousands of years of Native American history, plus the overlooks provide incredible panoramic views of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers and valleys. This park is also bordered by the Uhlmansiek Wildlife Sanctuary and the Oxbow Wetlands.

The journey begins at the Shawnee Lookout visitor center, where interpretive signs, maps, and archeological exhibits highlight the history of the Native American tribes that once lived in this area.

Continue on the entrance road, passing Little Turtle (2 miles long) and Blue Jacket (1.25 miles long) trails, as well as the historic Springhouse School and Log Cabin. You'll

Directions

Shawnee Lookout is located along the southwest side of Cincinnati near the Ohio River and the Indiana state line. From I-275 on the far west side of Cincinnati, take Exit 16/US 50 (Ohio Scenic Byway) east. At 3.4 miles turn right and head south on Lawrenceburg Road. Follow Lawrenceburg Road 2.25 miles to the park entrance. Follow the entrance road past the museum, golf course, log cabin, and playground areas to the turnaround and parking area at the Miami Fort trailhead.

GPS Trailhead Coordinates

UTM Zone (WGS84) 16S

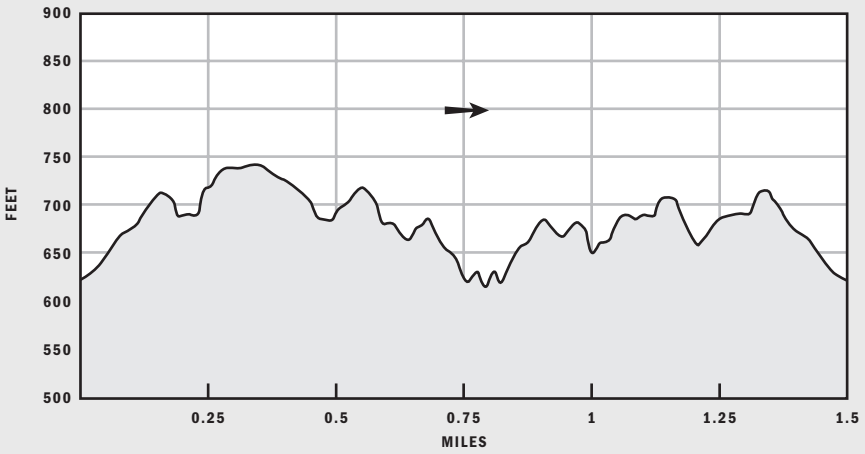
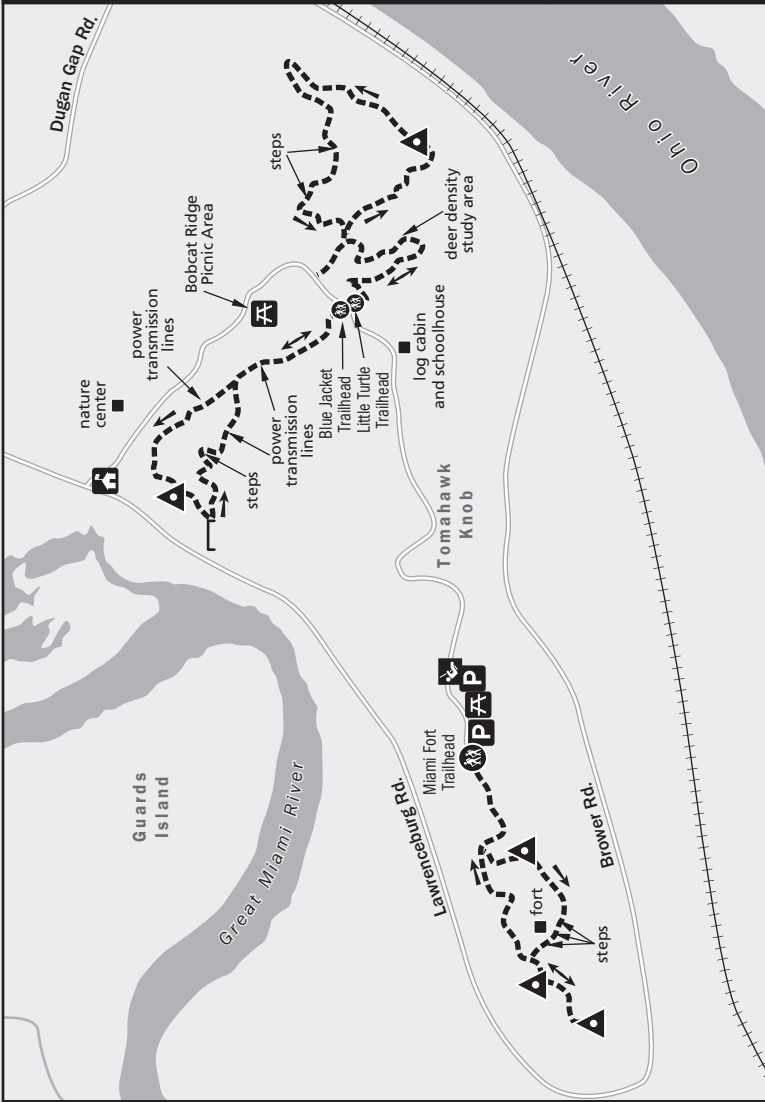
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Northing 4332456.9

Latitude N 39° 7' 14.49"

Longitude W 84° 48' 30.23"

31 Shawnee Lookout





View of confluence of the Ohio and Great Miami rivers at Shawnee Lookout

find ample picnic and playground areas throughout the park. Continue on the entrance road to the turnaround and parking area for the Miami Fort trailhead. The hike begins with Miami Fort Trail and will include Little Turtle Trail. If you want additional mileage, add Blue Jacket Trail (directly across the road from Little Turtle).

A large information sign and bench clearly mark the Miami Fort trailhead. Walk up the steep, gravel-covered trail with steps for erosion control. The climb ends with a delightful seating area and view of the Great Miami River far below—a prime spot to catch your breath after the 0.2-mile climb.

Small camps and habitation sites have been discovered within the fort's walls, but historians theorize that the original builders of the fort probably lived in the valleys below. The valley overlook takes in views of the Great Miami River basin framed by a patchwork of green and gold farm fields. Follow the trail to the left and enter the pleasant open area shaded by ash and walnut trees. Continue up a small hill that leads to an overlook with millstone benches, which sit next to the Daniel Carter Beard memorial commemorated on a large boulder. From this vantage point it is very easy to see the power plant stacks as well as hear heavy equipment from far below. Despite the modern-day sounds and structures, the view from the stone benches shows the grace and beauty of the Ohio River as it curves and eventually joins the Great Miami River. This area was once home to the Hopewell Native Americans, who typically lived in family groups.

At the end of a handful of steps, the trail winds to the right and enters a lovely upland forest with plenty of shagbark hickory trees. The trail meanders by an enormous walnut tree growing in the path and then descends into the valley by way of more than 50 steep steps down. At the small footbridge there is only one thing left to do—climb the more than 50 steps leading out of the beautiful valley.

When the trail connects onto itself, go left for 0.2 miles. This part of the hike is slightly uphill. Black cherry and hackberry trees compete along the edges of the trail, which then opens into an impressive overlook.

During the 1700s, the area was populated by the Shawnee, Wyandot, Mingo, and Miami tribes, as well as others. The benches at the end of the overlook allow you to enjoy the views and ponder what the river valley and confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers far below might have looked like before the area was seen by European settlers.

The Native American tribes of this area used the ridge as a strategic position during battles, and they hunted in the area. Burial mounds and earthworks from a variety of area tribes are found throughout this park. In fact, historical finds date the use of this area by humans as early as 270 A.D. The trail along the ridge is lined with elm, hackberry, black cherry, and red oak trees. It then leads downhill and into a younger wooded area, with plenty of walnut trees, so watch your step.

Throughout this hike, several openings in the tree canopies allow for a peek at the valleys and farm fields below. The trail joins back together, and you should keep going straight, then head down the steep slope to the parking area.

Take the entrance road back to the parking area for Blue Jacket and Little Turtle trails. Park and walk to the edge of the playground area. The entrance to Little Turtle Trail is marked with a large interpretive sign.

The 2-mile-long Little Turtle Trail is named after Chief Little Turtle of the Miami Native American tribe known to have spent some time in the area 200 years ago. The gravel and dirt trail is wide enough for two people to walk side-by-side for most of the hike. The hike will take one-and-a-half to two hours, depending on how much time you spend enjoying the Ohio River overlooks.

Brambles of blackberries and multiflora rose border the trail for 0.3 miles before the trail opens into a meadow. In the forest, the fenced-off area is a study plot for measuring deer density. Expect to see and hear a variety of birds, including chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals, and woodpeckers. Trees include boxelder, ash, black cherry, and black locust.

A junction appears at approximately 0.5 miles. The trail to the left leads out of the forest and to the Water Hole Meadow and Shelter. Continue on Little Turtle Trail to the right. The habitat changes to a forest with black cherry and hackberry trees and a prairie area. At 0.8 miles, the Ohio River is visible from the ridge. Plan to spend a few minutes at the scenic overlook and bench 70 yards farther along the trail. Watching the Ohio River and occasional barge traffic flow past is an oddly serene and enjoyable experience.

Red oaks, sugar maples, and sycamores provide ample shade as the trail meanders down and uphill to the next scenic overlook a little more than 100 yards away from the last. A good breeze flowing in off the Ohio River keeps you cool, especially as you climb the series of steps leading uphill.

The trail eventually flattens out and leads up to yet another overlook at 1.2 miles. This overlook is very open and free of trees due to the natural widening of the Ohio River. Throughout Shawnee Lookout are numerous burial mounds, such as Site 39 at 1.3 miles. Please respect these sacred burial mounds by viewing them from the trail only.

The trail begins a steep descent, and after 45 yards flattens into a valley area where it meanders along a creek bed with moss-covered rocks and fallen trees. Of course those who travel down must travel back up. Climb up the steps until you reach the four-way junction you crossed at the beginning of the hike.

Retrace your steps from here back to your vehicle. If you would like to do an additional hike, try the Blue Jacket Trail, which is named after Chief Blue Jacket of the Shawnee Native American tribe. This 1.25-mile loop trail meanders up and downhill and offers several places to rest and enjoy the woodland views.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Hamilton County Park District's Miami Whitewater and Mitchell Memorial forests are within a few miles of Shawnee Lookout. For even more hiking options, try Cincinnati Park Board's Mount Airy Forest.