

33 WINTON WOODS



KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

LENGTH: 3.03 miles

CONFIGURATION: Lollipop

DIFFICULTY: Easy

SCENERY: Winton Lake, wetland, and woods

EXPOSURE: Full sun, shaded

TRAFFIC: Moderate–heavy

TRAIL SURFACE: Paved, soil

HIKING TIME: 1.5 hours

DRIVING DISTANCE: 20 minutes from downtown Cincinnati

SEASON: Year-round

ACCESS: Dawn–dusk

MAPS: USGS Green Hills; Hamilton County Parks Winton Woods

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE: Yes, paved portion

FACILITIES: Restrooms, nature center, boat rentals, disc golf, and educational farm

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Hamilton County Parks, (513) 521-7275

SPECIAL COMMENTS: Hamilton County Parks' inexpensive annual pass is a must-have. Take the kids to Parkey's Farm to play and pet farm animals. Winton Woods also has boat rentals, an equestrian riding center, and two golf-course facilities.

IN BRIEF

Winton Woods offers hiking trails, boat rentals, Parkey's Farm, golfing, disc golf, and picnic areas. Check out the event schedule for the park, as the Hamilton County Parks' naturalists provide excellent programs.

DESCRIPTION

Winton Woods was initially known as West Fork Lake. The lake was created in accordance with the Flood Control Act of 1946 and is managed by the Louisville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with the primary goal of reducing flood damage downstream from the dam.

The park began with 905 acres that were leased from the federal government. In 1939, Hamilton County Park District changed the name from West Fork Lake to Winton Woods. Winton is a historical reference to Winton Road, which was constructed in 1798 as part of a military road.

Today the heavily used urban park encompasses 2,465 acres, including two state-dedicated natural areas: Spring Beauty Dell and the Greenbelt Area.

Winton Woods has a disc golf course, parcours fitness trail, campsites, picnic areas and shelters, golf courses, and—the favorite with kids of any age—Parkey's Farm, which is an educational farm and play area.

GPS Trailhead Coordinates

UTM Zone (WGS84) 16S

Easting 0714005.4

Northing 4348155.8

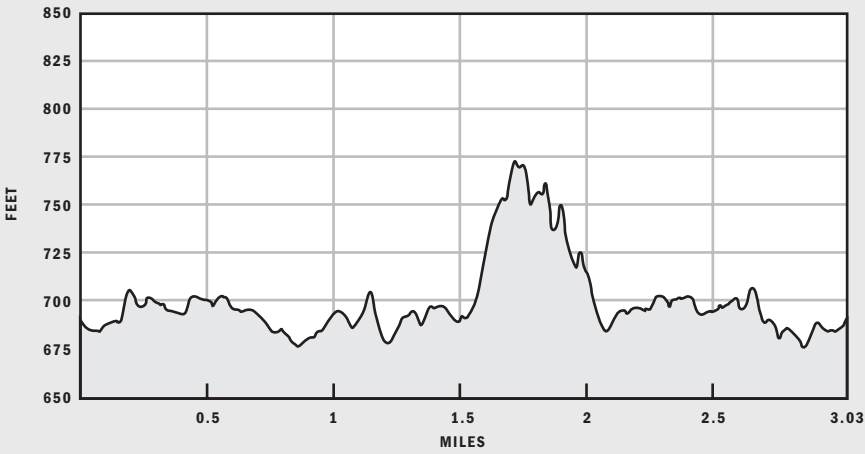
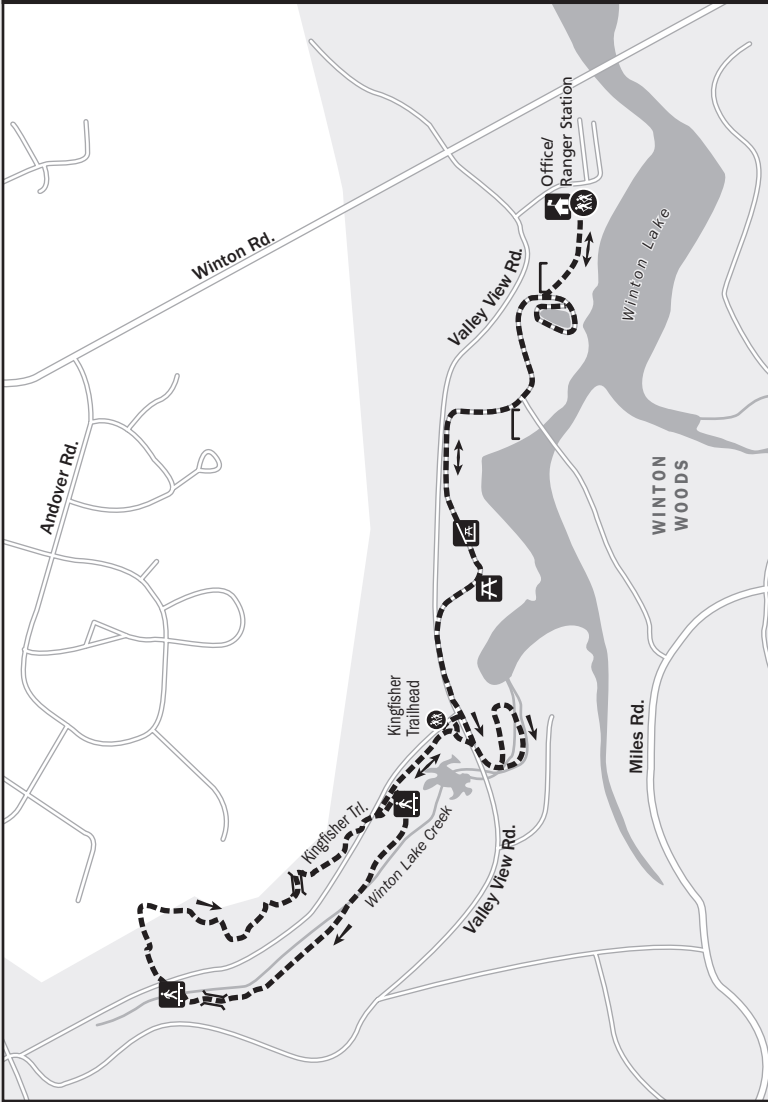
Latitude N 39° 15' 22.83"

Longitude W 84° 31' 11.11"

Directions

From Interstates 275 and 75 on Cincinnati's north side, take I-275 west 4.8 miles. Exit at 39/Winton Road/Fairfield/Forest Park and turn south onto Winton Road. Travel 3.9 miles and turn into the park entrance to the west.

33 Winton Woods



From Winton Road, turn right into the park. Park admission is available via a daily or annual pass. The very affordable annual pass allows access to any of the Hamilton County Park District's parks.

After the gatehouse, take the first left. The building for the Winton Woods office and Ranger Station is to the right. Straight ahead and to the left is a large parking area. Secure your vehicle and walk towards the Winton Woods' office.

Inside the Winton Woods' office are several living displays to help people understand the native wildlife found in Winton Woods and around the Cincinnati area. Throughout the year, talented naturalists on staff host excellent nature programs.

To the left of the office are several playground swings. The paved trail is between the swings and the office building. You won't find an official trailhead sign at this point, but you'll know you're on the right path because this trail is paved and wide enough for a vehicle. Walk up the hill toward the building and away from Winton Road.

The paved trail passes a small pond. At 0.1 mile a bench overlooks the pond area. The trail is bordered by a prairie, and in the summertime a multitude of butterflies, skippers, and songbirds utilize the prairie's resources.

Use the picnic shelter at 0.4 miles to sit in the shade and enjoy the scenery. As you continue, you'll find another picnic area at 0.55 miles.

The trail crosses a parking area at 0.72 miles. Pick up the trail on the other side. Note that this portion of the trail is not paved and therefore is not fully accessible.

This trail leads down to a wetland restoration area. If it has been raining, the trail's lower portion will most likely be underwater. When you reach the fork in the trail, take it. To the right, that is.

Expect to hear the staccato of woodpeckers as well as the chatter of many songbirds and insects. For a more prolonged concert, take a seat on the bench at 0.92 miles and listen to the sounds of the wetland area.

Immediately after the bench, the trail rejoins itself. Follow the portion that leads to the right and back up to the parking area. Cross the road at 1.03 miles. The Kingfisher Trail trailhead sign is to the left of the playground equipment.

The 1-mile-long Kingfisher Trail, a single-person-wide gravel path that leads through wetlands and forest, is the most popular hike at Winton Woods.

When the trail splits at 1.1 miles, take the trail to the left. This trail leads to the Kingfisher wetland, which is fed by the West Fork of Mill Creek.

The boardwalk at 1.23 miles helps to keep hikers' feet dry as they enjoy the songbirds in the wet woods. Look for the tracks of raccoons, white-tailed deer, and wild turkeys in the muck.

Take the stairs at 1.51 miles, and in 260 feet cross the bridge. At 1.9 miles you'll see a sinkhole created when the limestone rock under the surface was dissolved by acidic water, resulting in a cave-in.

The bridge at 1.96 miles overlooks a small valley area. Railroad-tie steps at 2.1 miles lead downhill and into an open field area. This area is actively managed to keep it as a field. Bluebirds, song sparrows, and other birds use this area as nesting and feeding grounds. The trail rejoins itself at this point as well. Take the portion of Kingfisher Trail that leads to the left and exit Kingfisher Trail.

Cross the road, take a left onto the paved trail, and retrace your steps to the pond at 2.83 miles. Turn to the right and take the trail down to the man-made pond. At the pond, take a right and slowly walk the edge of the pond, watching for frogs leaping to the safety of the water.

Return to the trail and turn right to retrace your steps back to your vehicle.

NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Riley's Restaurant on Winton Road just north of Winton Woods has fabulous pies. Bass Pro Shops is located at the Cincinnati Mills Mall. The enormous grocery/specialty store Jungle Jim's is off OH 4. For more hiking opportunities, try Caldwell Park or Spring Grove Cemetery.