

Hellbender Preserve

History of the Park

This 15.43 acre site contains the Buckeye Grove Loop Trail. The site was named after the state endangered and Ohio's largest amphibian, the "Eastern Hellbender." Eastern Hellbenders live in the clean, high-quality waters of Jelloway Creek and the nearby Kokosing State Scenic River. The site, which consists of Jelloway Creek and floodplain with wild flowered tree species, is accessed from the Kokosing Gap Trail.

Highlights of the Park

Buckeye trees are numerous throughout the site. A sign and steps leading from the multi-use trail to the Buckeye Grove Loop Trail beckon the user to explore.

In May, spring wildflowers abound on the site, including Virginia bluebells, toad trillium, buttercups and wild-blue phlox. Excellent birding opportunities abound on the trail as well, with Baltimore Orioles, Belted Kingfishers and Northern Cardinals filling the air with song. Various types of dragonflies or damselflies flourish along Jelloway Creek.



Parking for the Preserve is found at the Kokosing Gap Multi-Use Trail lot located in Howard. The area provides a restroom, picnic tables and a children's playground. The nature trail of the Preserve begins at the multi-use trail bridge north of the trail parking lot and offers streamside access to beaches along Jelloway Creek. Anglers may be seen occasionally with their fishing rod in the water anxiously awaiting that first bite.

As you walk to the entrance at the trailhead, you will view one of Knox County's most photographed areas which is that of the Railroad Tunnel.



Hellbender Preserve is one of (7) that features a geocache on our newly established GeoTrail. Check out our website for more details. Geocaching has become a very popular recreational activity for all ages. Many will travel to our parks to engage in locating the cleverly hidden geocache and claim the Park District's custom Geotoken.

What is a Hellbender?

The hellbender is the largest amphibian in Ohio and one of the largest salamanders in the world. This totally aquatic salamander can occasionally attain a length of 27 inches. In spite of its formidable appearance, the hellbender is quite harmless. Found mostly in unglaciated (south and east) Ohio, hellbenders prefer large, swift flowing streams where they hide during the day under large rocks. It typically feeds on crayfish, snails, minnows, insects, and worms.



The Kokosing River is a prime habitat for the life of an Eastern Hellbender. In 2016, a release of 77 Hellbenders into the river was conducted through joint efforts of researchers from the Toledo and Columbus Zoo and Ohio Biodiversity Conservation Partnership at Ohio State University. The Hellbenders were carefully placed in their new homes, under large, flat rocks in the heart of the waterway's clear, cool flowing waters, which is also home to 76 different species of fish.



Park Courtesy

In order to maintain our trails and park systems that reside within the Knox County Park District we must have courtesy of the parks, river accesses, and trails.

- Alcohol and illegal drugs are prohibited.
- Motorized vehicles are restricted to designated parking areas.
- Littering is prohibited. Trash cans are located at some of our properties for proper disposal, otherwise pack it in, pack it out.
- Removal of plants, animals, minerals, artifacts or other natural features is prohibited.
- Help preserve the solitude of the park by being considerate and quiet.
- Dogs need to be on a leash. Visit our “Bark Park” at Wolf Run Park for your dogs to run off their leash.
- Camping is not permitted.

Improvements to our park systems are made possible, in part, by the passage of the Knox County Park District levies. We thank you for your support to our systems and hope you enjoy all that the Knox County Parks and Trails have to offer outdoor enthusiasts.

For a complete list of events the Park District offers please visit our website at www.knoxcountyparks.org or follow us on Facebook at Knox County Park District or Instagram at [explore_knoxcountyparkdistrict](https://www.instagram.com/explore_knoxcountyparkdistrict). Our mailing address is 117 E. High Street, Suite 224, Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050. You may also reach us at 740-392-PARKS (7275).

Explore Our Parks;

*Hellbender Preserve

23316 Coshocton Road, Howard 43028

*Honey Run Highlands

10865 Hazel Dell Road, Howard (Lot) 43028
10816 Millersburg Road Howard (#62 Lot) 43028

*Honey Run Waterfall

10855 Hazel Dell Road, Howard 43028

*Indianfield Bluffs Park

10855 Sapp Road, Howard 43028

*Thayer Ridge Park

7077 Thayer Road, Mount Vernon 43050

*Wolf Run Regional Park & Bark Park

17621 Yauger Road, Mount Vernon 43050

*Bat Nest Park

30500 Walhonding Road, Danville 43014

Explore Our River Accesses;

*Big Run Road Access (Kokosing River)

8921 Big Run Road, Gambier 43022

*Greer Landing Access (Mohican River)

20389 Brinkhaven Road, Glenmont 44628

*Kokosing Gap Canoe Access (Kokosing River)

17812 Lower Gambier Road, Mount Vernon 43050

*Kokosing Water Trail Access (Kokosing River)

Brown Family Environmental Center

10115 Laymon Road, Gambier 43022

*Millwood Access (Kokosing River)

11640 Bridge Street, Howard 43028

*Mohican Water Trail Access (Mohican River)

16606 Hunter Road, Brinkhaven 43006

*Pipesville Road Access (Kokosing River)

12059 Pipesville Road, Howard 43028

*Riley Chapel Road Access (Kokosing River)

10300 Riley Chapel Road, Walhonding 43843

*Zuck Riparian Preserve (Kokosing River)

28300 Zuck Road, Howard 43028

Explore Our Trail Systems

Heart of Ohio Trail- (see other accesses on website)

2750 Huffman Road Centerburg 43011

Kokosing Gap Trail (See other accesses on website)

500 Mt Vernon Ave Mt.Vernon 43050

Mohican Valley Trail - (see other accesses on website)

Bridge of Dreams 16606 Hunter Road Brinkhaven 43006



Hellbender Preserve



Located at
23316 Coshocton Rd.
Howard, OH

Established in 2007