

Field Trip Policy

Saturday field trips are available on a first-come, first-served basis. ***Please do not ask leaders to join their trip*** if you did not select the trip, or if it's full. Each trip includes specific restrictions related to safety, capacity, and trail conditions. If you have circumstances that prevent you from attending your assigned field trip, please speak with a team member at the registration desk by Friday evening.

Saturday Morning Procedures

- Departure times will be announced Friday. Carpool if possible as parking is limited; all trips leave from Shawnee Lodge. Most trips are half-day with lunch in the field unless noted.
- Leaders have participant rosters and will be waiting for you.
- Collect your pre-ordered meal from Sunshine Catering in the parking lot before joining your leader. Each trip has a cooler with ice; bring your own drinks and extra water. Check your badge for meal details.

Trip Ratings: Weekend hikes are often in the hilly forests of Shawnee National Forest or Adams County Preserves. Trail ratings are a guide, but conditions may change with rain. We recommend wearing sturdy shoes, bring extra water, and use tick repellent. Most trips last half a day with lunch in the field unless noted.

- ⇒ **EASY:** Low exertion; shorter walking distances; mostly roadside stops or flat, even trails.
 - ⇒ **MODERATE:** Moderate exertion; may include 30 minutes of off-trail hiking or shallow creek wading.
 - ⇒ **DIFFICULT:** High exertion; longer distances with steep or uneven terrain. Good physical condition recommended.
-

Trip 1 – Birds of Adams County: Creek Bend Overlook, Adams County

Leaders: Bob Kemp, Dave Helm and Kathi Hutton, Ohio TNC. Team Lead: Kathi

Trip Rating: Easy; flat marked trails and roads for Creek Bend. Optional Portman trail is a moderate hike with slight elevation to the overlook view.

This trip offers roadside botany and birding at the George Rieveschl Jr. Creek Bend Overlook in the 20,000-acre Edge of Appalachia Preserve, plus an optional walk to a scenic overlook via the Portman Trail. The area includes a restroom and a picnic pavilion. Expect sightings of nesting birds such as Blue Grosbeak, Henslow's Sparrow, Yellow-breasted Chat, Prairie Warbler, and more.

Your Leaders: Bob has been passionate about birds since childhood and has birded across the U.S. and the world. He enjoys helping others improve their birding skills. Kathi Hutton is an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist and has been a dedicated birder since 1994 leading local field trips. Dave is an experienced birder and naturalist who has traveled extensively and has led numerous field trips and non-profit initiatives dedicated to birding and conservation. He enjoys painting in his spare time.

Trip 2 – The Butterflies of Shawnee

Leaders: Deb Marsh and Lexie Stevenson, Shawnee Forest. Team Lead: Lexie

Trip Rating: Easy; includes some gentle uphill walking on Bridle Trail 5.

This trip explores Shawnee State Forest, carpooling to several butterfly-rich locations. Spring wildflowers will be in bloom, attracting early butterflies. Participants may encounter Tiger, Black, Spicebush, Pipevine, and Zebra Swallowtails; multiple species of the tricky Duskywings; Falcate Orangetips; and possibly Brown, Pine, and Henry's Elfins.

Your Leaders: Deb's lifelong love of nature spans botany, butterflies, birds, and more, supported by an academic background in biology and environmental science. Lexie loves to learn, and share, everything she can about nature. An Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist and Certified Interpretive Guide, she is particularly interested in the interactions among native plants, insects, and birds.

Trip 3 – Botany and Birds of Shawnee

Leaders: Jim McCormac and Dr. Shauna Weyrauch. Team Lead: Shauna

Trip Rating: Easy; carpooling around Shawnee State Forest.

This trip highlights Shawnee's remarkable floral diversity—nearly 1,000 native plant species. Participants will search for specialties such as Early Stoneroot (*Collinsonia verticillata*), Umbrella Magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*), and White Milkweed (*Asclepias variegata*). The forest also supports about 100 breeding bird species, including abundant spring warblers.

Your Leaders: Jim McCormac was a field botanist for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, a longtime birder and coauthor several books. His most recent are *A Naturalist's Guide to the Odonata of Ohio* (2024, coauthored with Dave McShaffrey and MaLisa Spring) and *Gardening for Moths* (2023, coauthored with Chelsea Gottfried). He has spent untold hours exploring Shawnee State Forest, and has discovered many populations of very rare plants, including one species new to Ohio. Dr. Shauna Weyrauch a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology at The Ohio State University at Newark. Her current research focuses on the ecology of Ohio's recovering bobcat population, including efforts to improve habitat through creating artificial den sites.

Trip 4 – Scenic Rivers and Spring Ephemerals, Scioto County

Leaders: Kelly Capuzzi and Laura Hughes, Arc of Appalachia Preserve. Team Lead: Teri Gilligan

Trip Rating: Moderate, due to wading in some shallow water at creek crossings or creek explorations. Plan to wear waterproof boots/wading shoes that you don't mind getting wet and a change of shoes to hike in.

This trip explores Rocky Fork, an exceptional stream flowing through the Gladys Riley Golden Star Lily Preserve. This 230-acre preserve located in Scioto County Ohio is managed by the Arc of Appalachia. <https://www.arcofappalachia.org/gladys-riley>. Participants will use nets to observe aquatic species including rainbow, orangethroat, and fantail darters; southern redbelly dace; mottled sculpin; suckers; and sunfish species such as smallmouth bass and longear sunfish. The stream also contains unique mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies. After creek exploration, the group will take a short hike to view spring bloomers.

Your Leaders: Kelly is a fisheries biologist, water-quality specialist, a Master Gardener, and a pollinator advocate volunteer. Laura is a biologist and naturalist, working with bobcats, woodrats, and she knows a lot about insects.

Trip 5 – Ferns of Lucy's Lookout Trail, Shawnee State Forest

Leaders: Mark Hoberecht and Ann Geise, Shawnee State Park. Team Lead: Ann

Trip Rating: Moderate.

Participants will explore the 1.5-mile loop Lookout Trail near Roosevelt Lake, surrounded by the mixed mesophytic forest famously studied by botanist E. Lucy Braun. The hike focuses on fern identification and life cycles, but will also include wildflowers, trees, insects, and birds.

Your Leaders: Mark, a retired engineer who has been a Fern enthusiast since childhood. He co-manages a 43-acre nature preserve with over 20 fern species; many he has grown from spores. Ann is a wildlife artist, and her true passion is getting outdoors and observing all aspects of natural history including plants of all kinds, birds, butterflies and moths, and more. Ann's paintings tell a story of the countless interconnections found in nature between flora and fauna.

Trip 6 – Birdsong: Learning to Listen (+ Optional Sketching) Turkey Creek Lake, Shawnee Lodge

Leaders: Dr. Lisa Rainsong and Wendy Partridge. Team Lead: Cathy Plum

Trip Rating: Easy; slow-paced walk. Trip ends around 11:00.

The songs and calls of birds are essential for communication, and many species have multiple songs in their repertoire. It can initially seem overwhelming, but we'll focus on how to listen and what is being communicated. We'll also learn what makes a meadow sound different from a forest and how knowing each avian singer's habitat helps refine our identification choices. Participants may hear species such as Hooded, Kentucky, and Ovenbird; Scarlet and Summer Tanagers; and Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. **Optional Sketching Workshop:** Participants may then join Wendy for field sketching on the lodge deck. Supplies are provided; bring your lunch. Open to anyone, even if not attending the bird walk. Participants will practice observation, sketching, and nature journaling techniques.

Your Leaders: Lisa presents programs and teaches classes on bird song, insect song, and amphibian song throughout Ohio. She also does research on crickets and katydids - the "singing insects." Her educational blog, Listening in Nature, has years of educational tutorials and stories from the field. <http://listeninginnature.blogspot.com>. Wendy Partridge is a letterpress printer, book artist, and painting conservator. She has a graduate degree in art conservation from New York University and works as a painting conservator at the Intermuseum Conservation Association. She is a resident artist at Zygote Press in Cleveland.

Trip 7 – Buzzardroost Rock Trail, Adams County

Leaders: Tom and Penny Borgman. Team Lead: Tom

Trip Rating: Moderate to Difficult. Carpool ~22 minutes.

This 4.4-mile round-trip hike visits one of the most iconic landscapes in the Edge of Appalachia Preserve. Buzzardroost Rock rises 300 feet above Ohio Brush Creek and offers what many describe as Ohio's most spectacular view. The trail features native plants, prairie species—including endangered plains Muhlenbergia—wildlife, and rich forest biodiversity.

Your Leaders: Tom is a retired naturalist and Natural Resource manager where much of the work included controlling invasive plants, planting trees and prairies and restoring wetlands. He enjoys continuing those types of projects on a smaller scale by landscaping with native plants. Penny is a retired naturalist.

Trip 8 – Bioblitz! Shawnee Wilderness Area & Lower Twin Creek, Adams County

Leaders: Judy Semroc, Vince Howard, and Ned Keller. Team Lead: Ned

Trip Rating: Moderate; may include wet stream crossings and off-trail areas. Carpool ~30 minutes.

This trip focuses on documenting as many species as possible across multiple taxonomic groups. Participants will explore accessible areas near the State Forest Wilderness Area along Lower Twin Creek Road, with attention to birds, botany, and anything else encountered. This area has an abundant number of herps and wildflowers.

Your Leaders: Judy is a conservation specialist and naturalist with 25+ years of field experience. Vince is a naturalist from Southern Ohio and wildlife researcher. Ned is an avid birder and naturalist. Gavin is a naturalist and forester.

Trip 9 – Cedar Falls, Adams County

Leaders: Dr. Dave Todt and Dr. Don Cipollini. Team Lead: Michele Martin-Hisnay

Trip Rating: Moderate due to stream crossings and some uphill hiking. Carpool ~25 minutes.

Located in the Edge of Appalachia Trail System, Cedar Falls is named for its disjunct white cedar population. The trail passes limestone cliffs, waterfalls, and a rich wildflower display. The boulder field, though rugged, is ecologically delicate, harboring lush carpets of spring ephemerals supported by the cool, shaded gorge environment.

Your Leaders: Dr. Todt is a retired Natural Sciences professor from Shawnee State University. Dr. Cipollini is a professor of Biological Sciences at Wright State University.

Trip 10 – Cabbage Patch Hollow, Shawnee Wilderness Area, Shawnee State Forest

Leaders: Rick Gardner and Jenny Richards. Team Leads: Nikki and Norah Tempus

Trip Rating: Moderate to Difficult; off-trail hiking – bring hiking poles and wear sturdy boots and long pants. Carpool ~30 minutes.

This hike winds through rich Appalachian woodlands bursting with spring ephemerals like trillium, wild geranium, jack-in-the-pulpit and much more. We will also be listening for and watching returning wood warblers setting up their territory for the nesting season. This hike explores the rich Appalachian woodlands of the Shawnee Forest Wilderness. Participants will encounter spring ephemerals such as trillium, wild geranium, and jack-in-the-pulpit, as well as early season wood warblers.

Your Leaders: Rick is the Chief Botanist for ODNR and plant community ecologist with over 20 years of experience. Specialties: Plant identification, plant community ecology, xeric limestone prairies. Jenny was raised in the hills of the magnificent Shawnee Forest and has worked as the park naturalist for 28 years. She is a generalist who enjoys all aspects of the great outdoors and sharing her passion with everyone she meets.

Trip 11 – Jewels of the Spring Woodland, Shawnee State Forest

Leaders: Denise Ellsworth and John Howard. Team Lead: Cheryl Vargas

Trip Rating: Easy; carpooling around Shawnee Forest areas.

This trip highlights spring bees—their pollen preferences, queen bumble bee activity, kleptoparasitic species, and seasonal flower–pollinator interactions. Participants will consider flower and bee phenology (the timing of events in the natural world) as we study ephemeral woodland flowers and blooming understory trees.

Your Leaders: Denise has experience as the Director of pollinator education at the Ohio State University's. John is an interpretive naturalist and wildlife researcher based in Southern Ohio.

Trip 12 – Springtime at Lynx Prairie, Adams County

Leaders: Mark Wessel and Meg Hanrahan, Edge of Appalachia/Ohio TNC. Team Lead: Debi Wolterman

Trip Rating: Easy; mostly even dirt trails. Carpool ~20 minutes.

Lynx Prairie is the historic birthplace of The Nature Conservancy's conservation work in Ohio, designated a National Natural Landmark in 1967. The preserve features a series of natural grassland openings—cedar barrens or glades—embedded within forest. Trails connect wooded sections and prairie remnants with native grasses such as little bluestem and the rare purple three-awn grass.

Your Leaders: Mark is a lover all forms of life in nature with a special emphasis on plants. He has a history with The Edge of Appalachia preserves that spans 40 plus years. Meg Hanrahan is an Emmy-award winning documentary maker and writer/producer/director of "A Force for Nature: Lucy Braun." She's been enchanted by the forests and natural beauty of southeastern Ohio since childhood, having spent many idyllic summers vacationing in Shawnee with her parents.