

History of the Area

The 60,000 acres of Shawnee State Forest and Shawnee State Park encompass a part of the former hunting grounds of the Shawnee Indians. Historians note that the Shawnee name means "those who have silver," as the tribe conducted considerable trade in this precious metal. A major Shawnee village, known as Lower Town, was located near the confluence of the Ohio and Scioto rivers. The Scioto River provided access to the heart of the Shawnee country in central and southern Ohio.

The Ohio River was the gateway to frontier settlement in the Ohio region as well as for Indiana and Illinois. This expansive waterway, the Spaylawitheepi in Indian tongue, was the site of many confrontations between incoming pioneers and the red man. The Shawnees monitored the influx of the white settlers from the line of ridges that overlooked the mighty Ohio River.

During the 1700s, the Shawnee Indians were gradually displaced as the settlers continued to build their cabins and clear land in this new and fertile country. The face of the region changed a great deal in the years to come, but through effective timber management practices by the state's Division of Forestry, Shawnee State Forest has regained much of its original appearance. Similarly, resource conservation programs coupled with wise land use practices at Shawnee State Park have assured that this 1,168-acre recreational facility will continue to maintain its natural beauty.

Lands were acquired for the park in 1922 and it was first operated as Theodore Roosevelt State Game Preserve. In the 1930s, six Civilian Conservation Corps camps were located in the area. It was at this time that many of the roads and lakes of the area were constructed. In 1949, with the creation of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Parks and Recreation, the area became a state park and forest. The name was changed to Portsmouth State Park in the early seventies but has since been changed back to Shawnee State Park.

Lodge



The resort lodge at Shawnee offers a breathtaking view of the surrounding hill country. The lodge features fifty guest rooms, elegant dining room, meeting rooms, indoor and outdoor pools, tennis, basketball and shuffleboard courts.

Cabins



There are 25 family cabins at Shawnee. They have two bedrooms with twin beds, bath with a shower, living room with a sleeper sofa, complete kitchen, dining area and screened porch. Lodge facilities are available to cabin guests.

Camping

The family campground at Shawnee has 107 sites suitable for tents or trailers. The campground features electric hookups, waste disposal, heated shower houses, flush toilets and laundry facilities. Pet camping is available on a limited number of sites. A 20-site horsemen's campground with latrines is available near Bear Lake on state forest land.

Boating

Roosevelt and Turkey Creek lakes offer boating with electric motors only. Launch ramps are provided for access to the lakes. Canoes are available for rental. Boaters may spend a day on the Ohio River with access from the park's marina facility.

Fishing

The well stocked lakes provide good catches of largemouth bass, catfish, bluegill, crappie and trout. A trout derby is held annually at Turkey Creek Lake.

Trails

The park and surrounding state forest invite hikers to discover the plant and animal life of Shawnee's forested hills. The Shawnee backpack trail operated by the Division of Forestry takes hikers to some of the best wilderness areas in Ohio. The forest also offers 75 miles of bridle trails.

Swimming



Two public beaches with change booths are situated on Roosevelt and Turkey Creek lakes.

Golfing

An 18-hole championship golf course and pro-shop are within a short drive of the main park area.

Picnicking

Picnic areas with tables and grills are located in many secluded and scenic areas of the park. Two picnic shelters are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Area Attractions

Many historic attractions can be found in the Shawnee area including Tremper Mound, Serpent Mound, the Olde Wayside Inn, the 1810 House and the Southern Ohio Museum and Cultural Center. The Bonyfiddle section of nearby Portsmouth is a historic district containing numerous antique shops and historic architectural buildings.

Shawnee State Forest is the largest of Ohio's twenty state forests. The forest contains impressive stands of oak, hickory, sassafras, buckeye, black gum, pitch pine and shortleaf pine. Other forest features include a 42-mile backpack trail with primitive campsites, over seventy miles of bridle trails, horsemen's campground, and an 8,000-acre wilderness area.