

State Parks in Portage County

West Branch

West Branch State Park's large lake with its many forks and coves is extremely popular with fishermen, boaters and swimmers. The park's meadows and woodlots provide an excellent backdrop for camping, hiking and horseback riding.

Nature of the Area

West Branch State Park in Portage County is situated on the glaciated plateau of northeastern Ohio. Although the land was uplifted as part of the Appalachian Mountain building process, the glaciers were able to override the gentle hills of the plateau. Huge ice blocks broke free from the glaciers and kettle lakes formed as the blocks melted. Eventually, these lakes filled with sediment leaving boggy wetlands with unique assemblages of plants. The West Branch area contains numerous bogs filled with buttonbush, alder, skunk cabbage and swamp white oak.

Another natural feature of the park is the stand of beechmaple forest. In pioneer times, the beech-maple belt in Ohio was very extensive and stretched across the plateau from Mansfield to Pennsylvania. These woodlands harbor a variety of plant and animal life. Woodland wildflowers such as Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot and trillium are found here. Red fox, skunk, opossum and raccoon find the park's habitat suitable. Songbirds occupy the leafy canopy of the woodlands while waterfowl and shorebirds dabble in the reservoir.

West Branch State Park
5708 Esworthy Road
Ravenna, OH 44266-9659
330-296-3239
866-644-6727

Nelson Ledges

Although it is a small park, Nelson-Kennedy Ledges provides a thrilling experience to visitors with its rugged cliffs and diverse plant life typical of a more northern climate.

A day-use park, Nelson- Kennedy Ledges is popular for picnicking and hiking.

The spectacular rock formations at Nelson-Kennedy Ledges have become trademarks of the park. These rock formations are among the few outcrops in northern Ohio still exposed to view. Most of the outcrops elsewhere have been covered with soil and rock left by receding glaciers.

The remarkable sandstone cliff formations resulted from the forces of erosion--wind, water freezing and thawing- that wore away at the softer rock layers. As these soft layers eroded, large blocks of rock called slump blocks fell away leaving more resistant layers to form ledges above.

Nelson-Kennedy Ledges
State Park
S.R. 282, Nelson

Tinker's Creek

The majority of Tinker's Creek State Park is maintained in its original state as a swamp and marshland.

These wetlands owe their existence to the glaciers that invaded Ohio during the Pleistocene Ice Age. Glacial features include moraines, kames and eskers.

During the spring and fall migration periods, the marsh provides food and shelter for thousands of waterfowl. Mallards, wood ducks and Canada geese nest in the marshlands each year. In addition, woodcock, rail, gallinule, snipe, heron and bittern are often sighted. Beaver and muskrat are common residents.

Tinkers Creek State Park
10303 Aurora Hudson Rd.
Streetsboro, OH 44241