

# Hiking the Highlands Nature Sanctuary

## The Arc of Appalachia Preserve System

[www.arcofappalachia.org](http://www.arcofappalachia.org)

Information line: 937-365-1935

The Arc of Appalachia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the beauty, balance & biodiversity of Ohio's wildlands. Of the Arc's 24 preserves, the Sanctuary is the oldest and the largest, at 3000 acres. Its central feature is the Rocky Fork Gorge, renowned for its steep canyon walls, wildflower showcases, springs, grottos, and rare botanical treasures.

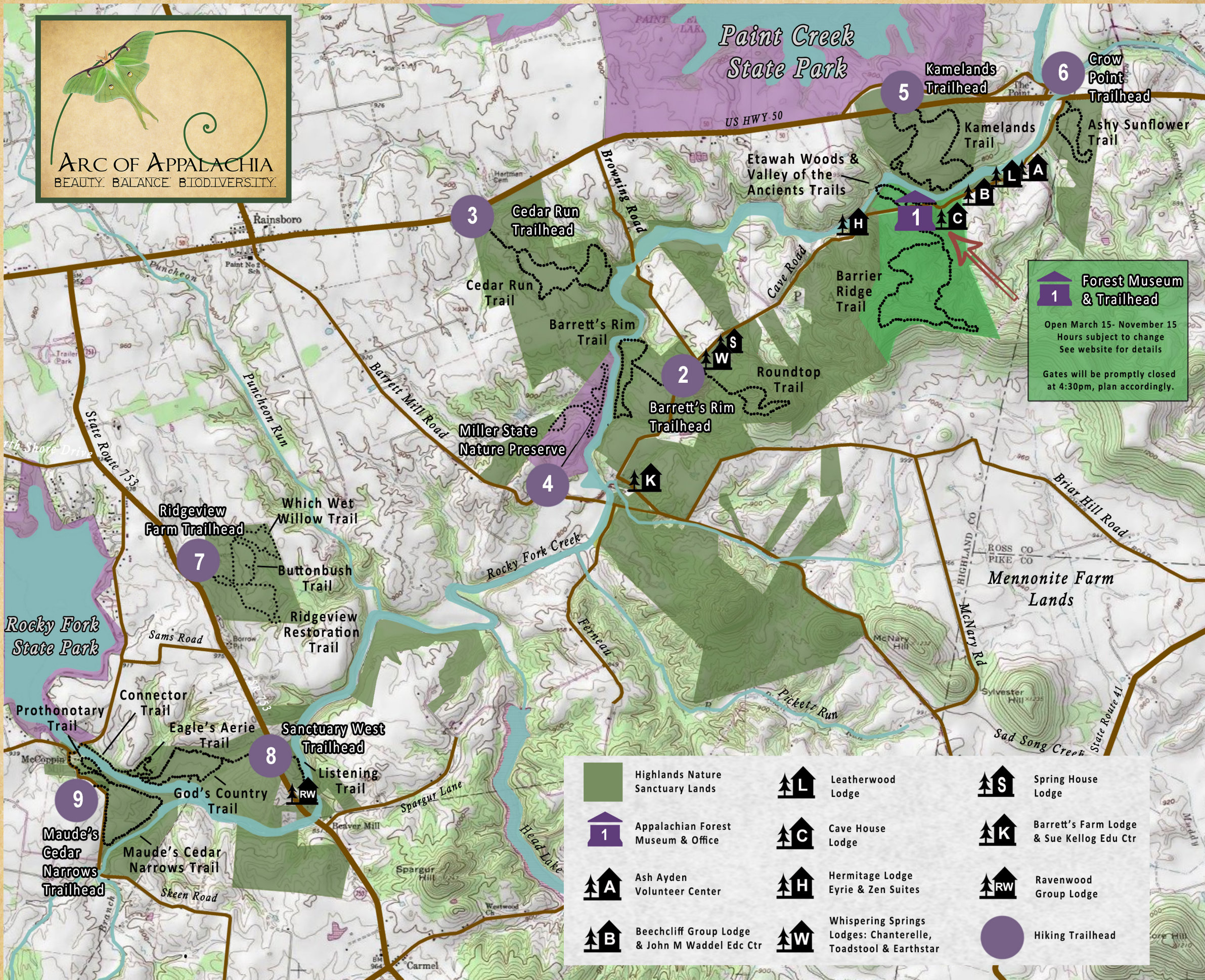
**Hours:** The Appalachian Forest Museum and the museum trails are open March 15 - November 15 daily, from 9:30am - 4:30pm. Hours are subject to change, please see website for updates. All other trails are open daily throughout the year from sunrise to sunset EXCEPT during snowy or icy weather (parking lots are not winter maintained), and during our annual Deer Management Hunt: a) Monday through Sunday following Thanksgiving, and b) Saturday and Sunday before Christmas.

**Nature Preserve regulations apply,** including staying on trails at all times, and not collecting nor disturbing any plant (including wildflowers), animal or mineral. Please see website for complete trail regulations, [www.arcofappalachia.org/hiking-regulations](http://www.arcofappalachia.org/hiking-regulations).

**Safety Warning:** Most of the Sanctuary trails are narrow, often not level, and traversing dangerous cliff country. Other standard outdoor perils exist, such as ticks, poison ivy, and treacherous footing in the winter. Visitors must hike at their own risk. Children must be kept close to their guardians and carefully in hand. Youths 18 or younger may not hike without a guardian.

**About Dog Friends:** Because the Sanctuary is a worldclass destination for wildflowers that grow immediately bordering the trails, dogs are not permitted on Sanctuary trails except for Crow Point and Ridgeview Farm where dogs may accompany guests when kept on a six foot leash. Other dog friendly destinations include Fort Hill, also managed by the Arc, and Harmony Trail located at Paint Creek Reservoir.

**Other Arc of Appalachia Preserves:** The Arc has saved over 7000 acres of land in its quarter century of stewardship. Arc land protects over 1100 species of plants, 80 of which are state-listed as rare & endangered, and provides outstanding habitat for tens of thousands native plant and animal species. 99 bird species have been documented at the Sanctuary, including many that are rare and/or in decline. Other preserve hiking maps can be found on our website.



Arc services to the public are 100% dependent upon tax-deductible donations. If you love us, please support us!




# Hiking at the Highlands Nature Sanctuary


## 1 Forest Museum Trailhead — 3 trails

**Trailhead closed mid-November through mid-March.**

**Directions:** The Forest Museum is one mile south of Hwy 50 on Cave Road. The parking entrance is on your left, across from the Museum. These relatively short Museum trails are some of the most stunning trails in all of the Sanctuary.


**Etawah Woods Trail:** 1.2 mile *moderate* loop with spur. Begins at Museum. 


**Valley of the Ancients:** 0.5 mile *moderate* trail begins at Museum. 

**Barrier Ridge Trail:** 3.0 mile *moderate to difficult* loop. A long gradual climb up to the top of Barrier Ridge with a faster descent. We recommend carrying this map and your cell phone since sometimes the route is difficult to find in autumn when the leaves have just fallen. The trail begins in the lower elevation parking lot west of the Museum. Look for a set of stone stairs on the right-hand side in the middle of the lower parking lot. Do not begin this trail after 1 pm to ensure return before the parking lot closes. 

## 2 Barrett's Rim Trailhead — 2 trails


**Directions:** Follow Cave Road south until you pass Browning Road on the right. Turn into the very next parking lot on the right. It is a gravel parking lot with a wooden fence at its entrance.

**Barrett's Rim Trail:** 2.5 mile *moderate* loop. A mostly level trail with one short descent and ascent. The trail follows the Rocky Fork Creek along the base of a vertical rock wall. The area is often referred to as the "Jewel of the Rocky Fork Gorge." 

**Roundtop Loop:** 1.75 mile *moderate* loop. Roundtop winds through a rich sugar maple forest and through a chestnut oak shale barrens. The trail makes a gradual climb to the ridgetop and back down. 


## 3 Cedar Run Trailhead — 1 Trail

**Directions:** Turn left onto Hwy 50 from Cave Road and follow Route 50 for 3 miles. After you pass Browning Road on your left, look for a gravel parking lot on the left in front of an old silo. The trail begins at the parking lot.

**Cedar Run Trail:** 2.5 mile *moderate* loop. Trail begins by following an old farm lane into an open meadow and then enters the woods as it continues to the Cedar Run Gorge. Trail provides beautiful views of rock walls and fern-covered boulders along spring-fed Cedar Run. A spur leads to a small waterfall nearly hidden by a fallen rock. 


## 4 Miller State Nature Preserve — 3 trails

**Owned and Operated by Ohio Division of Natural Areas & Preserves**

**Directions:** Follow Cave Road south until it dead ends, then turn right on Barrett's Mill Road. Cross over the Rocky Fork Creek. Miller's parking lot, which is signed, will be on the right, midway up the first hill. Drive or walk down the long lane to the trailhead. Miller boasts classic Rocky Fork scenery with rock-scapes, sparkling streams, and spring flowers. Three trails are available for hiking: the **Falls Trail**, a 1 mile *moderate* loop, the **Tuliptree Trail**, a 0.75 mile *easy to moderate* loop, and the **Arch Trail**, a 0.5 mile *moderate* loop. 


## 5 Kamelands Trailhead — 1 trail

**Directions:** Follow Cave Road north to Hwy 50 and turn left (west). The parking lot is exactly 0.5 miles down the road on your right. Park near the old barn and walk towards Hwy 50. To the right of the driveway a trail sign leads you underneath Hwy 50 through an old cattle tunnel and onto the Kamelands Trail.

**Kamelands Trail:** 2 mile *moderate* loop. Mostly level trail. This trail leads through rolling meadows to the wooded corridor bordering the high bluffs of Rocky Fork Creek, directly across the gorge from the Forest Museum. This trail boasts immense ancient oaks, interesting rock formations, and an optional spur trail down to the canyon floor. 

## 6 Crow Point Trailhead — 1 trail - DOG FRIENDLY on 6-foot leash


**Directions:** Follow Cave Road north. Just before you reach Hwy 50, turn right at the mowed entrance. The parking lot is signed.


**Ashy Sunflower Trail:** 1 mile *easy* loop, mostly level. This trail runs through a planted prairie that is stunningly beautiful in early- to mid-August when the rare but showy ashy sunflower bloom. 


## 7 Ridgeview Farm Trailhead — 3 trails - DOG FRIENDLY on 6-foot leash

**Farm Restoration Model and American Chestnut Demonstration Orchard**

**Directions:** Follow Cave Road north to Hwy 50. Turn left. One mile west of Rainsboro on Hwy 50, turn south onto State Rt. 753 at the blinking yellow light. After 1.8 miles, turn left at the sign for Beaver Cemetery on a gravel lane. Keep left at the fork and follow the lane back to the cemetery, where you can park. Trail entrance is signed.


**Ridgeview Farm's Restoration Trail:** 1.5 mile *easy to moderate* loop trail features educational signs interpreting the biodiversity-boosting practices that are taking place on this old farmland. The trail winds through gently rolling open fields and into a swamp forest that shelters skunk cabbage and marsh marigolds. Along the trail is an Educational Chestnut Orchard featuring three species of chestnuts and blight resistant F-3 hybrids. Listen for orchard orioles and the rare Henslow's sparrow, Ridgeview's signature birds. This preserve exists to demonstrate that restoring biodiversity is possible on an abandoned farm. 


**Which Wet Willow Trail:** A 0.76 mile *moderately easy* loop trail originating off of the Buttonbush Swamp Trail near Black Willow Run that takes visitors into a gently rolling open meadow with scattered patches of native willows, dogwood, and other early succession trees. 


**Buttonbush Trail:** A 0.55 mile *easy* loop trail originating off of the Ridgeview Farm Restoration Trail winding around an expansive open meadow, with a spur to a dense stand of buttonbush and other wet-foot-loving plant species. 


## 8 Sanctuary West Trailhead — 1 trail

**Directions:** Follow Cave Road north to Hwy 50. Turn left. One mile west of Rainsboro, turn south onto State Rt. 753 at the blinking yellow light. Follow 753 for 2.8 miles. The mowed lot will be on your right.

**God's Country Trail:** 2 mile *easy* loop trail takes visitors into a bowl of open meadowlands filled with Henslow's Sparrows, Yellow-Breasted Chats and Yellowthroats, encircled by hillsides and bordered by the Rocky Fork Creek. This trail is exceptionally rich in wildlife, including frequently-seen bald eagles and diverse flocks of waterfowl. A bird blind provides outstanding wildlife observation opportunities. 


**Eagle's Aerie Trail:** 0.5 mile *easy* forested loop trail off of the God's Country trail. 


**Listening Trail:** 0.5 mile *moderate to difficult* trail following the bluffs of the Rocky Fork with a spur down to the creek. Gorgeous views of the Rocky Fork Creek and handsome rock formations. This trail begins across State Rt. 753. Please watch for fast-moving cars when crossing the street. Follow the mowed lane to the trail. 

**Connector Trail:** 0.6 mile *easy* trail that connects the Sanctuary West Trailhead to the Maude's Cedar Narrows Trailhead. Trail originates off of the Eagle's Aerie Trail and runs into McCoppin Mill Road. Take a left to follow McCoppin Mill Road, crossing over the Rocky Fork Bridge. Take the next left onto Skeen Road. Follow Skeen Road 0.3 miles. The Maude's Cedar Narrows Trailhead will be on your left. 

## 9 Maude's Cedar Narrows Trailhead — 2 trails

**Directions:** Follow Cave Road north to Hwy 50. Turn left. One mile west of Rainsboro, turn south onto State Rt. 753 at the blinking yellow light. 1.2 miles down 753 turn right onto McCoppin Mill. Follow McCoppin Mill for another 1.3 miles. After crossing over the Rocky Fork Bridge, take the next left on Skeen Road. Follow Skeen around the bend. When the road straightens, (at the 0.3 mile mark), turn onto the first lane on your left. Look for tall hickory trees shading the trailhead parking lot.

**Prothonotary Trail:** 0.5 mile *moderate* loop with a descent into the canyon floor and back up along the rim. Gorgeous views of the Rocky Fork Creek, rich spring wildflowers, and interesting rock formations. 

**Maude's Cedar Narrows Trail:** 1.5 mile *moderate* loop with a 50-foot rise and fall in elevation. The trail follows the foot of the bluffs overlooking the Rocky Fork Creek, then up Franklin Branch tributary. Marvelous spring wildflower displays and rock formations. Great grassland birding on the return route. 

### See a maintenance issue on a trail?

Text Ethan at 513-508-8549 (cell)

### Emergency Numbers to call or text:

9am - 5pm at 937-365-1935

After hours: Ethan at 937-588-1268 (land line)