



VISITING & HIKING
Quiverheart Gorge
Preserve Size: 99 acres

The Arc of Appalachia's operations are 100% supported by private donations. If you love what we do, [please support us](#), so that our wildlands preservation work and trail stewardship can continue.

Quiverheart Gorge Preserve protects an astonishingly deep dolomite gorge in northwestern Adams County in a region better known for its rolling short grass prairies than its deep valleys. The fact that this gorge is an unexpected landscape feature makes it all the more remarkable and treasured. During the rainy season, Quiverheart has the largest and most beautiful waterfall in the Arc of Appalachia preserve system. The rock formations of Quiverheart are diverse and varied, providing hikers with dramatic scenery around every corner.



Dogs are not permitted at Quiverheart Gorge. Please see [Hiking Arc Preserves](#) for dog-friendly trails.

Hiking Trails: Difficulty - moderately difficult. Quiverheart's two trails have been carefully constructed to provide a walking surface that is as level as possible, and a route that is assisted with bridges and steps. However, Quiverheart's terrain is naturally rocky, uneven, and steep, and the trail has many ascents and descents. This trail could be difficult for people with limited flexibility and strength. **Safety Note:** Trails have several creek crossings improved with either stepping stones or bridges that will be underwater during unusually high rains. Consider recent rainfall accumulations before planning a trip.

Find our usual disclaimer about dangerous high cliffs and keeping children close.

Quiverheart Falls Trail begins at the trailhead parking lot and is a 1.5-mile loop trail that winds between the canyon floor and the upper rim of the gorge. The trail is well-designed with steps and bridges, but because it traverses rocky and often steep hillsides, it is a moderately difficult trail for unseasoned hikers. The trail offers a variety of dramatic scenery, including a beautiful waterfall during the rainy season, a canyon floor densely covered with spring wildflowers, steep-sided gorge walls strewn with slump blocks, a hillside of fallen rocks known as Boulder City, a large rock shelter, and a cedar-clad canyon rim boasting memorable views of the surrounding forests.

Whispering Fern Trail is a 1.25 miles loop trail that requires hiking the 2.0-mile Quiverheart Falls Trail to access for a total hiking length of 3.25 miles. This trail has less elevation change than the Quiverheart Falls Trail. The Whispering Fern Trail extends the hiker's downstream journey along Bundle Run and into a remote side tributary. The trail travels below the cliff face, where more beautiful rock formations can be admired, and also follows the stream winding its way along the canyon floor. Spring ephemeral wildflowers grow in rich densities along sections of the wooded trail. Near Bundle Run proper are small cedar openings where remnants of a world-endangered plant and animal community grow - an ecosystem known as an Alkaline Short-grass Prairie, or simply, Cedar Barrens. Here one can see interesting wildflowers in the spring, such as Shooting Stars; and rare prairie wildflowers in August.

You are entering a highly protected nature preserve. Regulations exist to protect the preserve's natural communities from the impact of public visitors. Please follow these regulations to leave Quiverheart as pristine as you found it. Remain on trails at all times and walk in single file to protect the bulbs of native wildflowers bordering the trail - bulbs that are very vulnerable to soil compaction. Do not disturb, pick, or collect flowers, plants, rocks, or wildlife. Hunting, caving, fishing, trail biking, rock climbing, wading, campfires, and swimming are prohibited.

Address: 2199 State Route 781, Peebles, OH 45660

Directions: Quiverheart is located just off of OH-781 in northern Adams County, 4.8 miles south of Peebles. Travel 1.2 miles south of Peebles on OH-41 until you reach the four-lane OH-32, also known as the Appalachian Highway. Turn left onto OH-32 and travel 1.3 miles to the first exit. Turn right onto Steam Furnace Road. Stay on Steam Furnace for 2.3 miles. Steam Furnace will merge with OH-781 for a short distance, passing Toller's Black Diamond Grocery. Stay alert and look for the entrance sign at the very next driveway on your right. Turn right into the lane and into the gravel parking lot. Signs will lead you to the trails. NOTE: If you miss Quiverheart's entrance, OH-781 will soon split off to your left and Steam Furnace will continue straight.

Interpretive kiosk: An interpretive kiosk is planned but not yet installed. We encourage you to download the prepared trail guide and bring it with you to the preserve.

Trails are open year-round from sunrise to sunset. Note: Parking lots are not winter-maintained. Please stay safe by not hiking during trails during periods of heavy rain, ice, and snow. Also note that trails are closed during the annual deer management hunt which takes place on 1) the Monday through Sunday following Thanksgiving, and 2) the Saturday and Sunday before Christmas.

Warning: Trails at Quiverheart border dangerous, potentially life-threatening cliffs: Trails can be narrow, uneven, and steep, with some unimproved creek crossings. It is important to stay strictly on the trail and be sure to keep children close at hand.

Natural History. The bedrock of Quiverheart creates a compelling karst-country landscape of cliffs, springs, seeps, grottos, and sinkholes. The bedrock type is dolomite, a type of limestone that has high concentrations of both calcium and magnesium. Tall vertical walls tower above one's head and huge dolomite boulders tilt at odd angles at the floor of the narrow canyon. High above the gorge is a rim of sentinel rock walls. Covering the fallen rocks in the sheltered, humid depths of the canyon are carpets of liverworts, columbine, miterwort, two kinds of trillium, abundant ferns, and thick cushions of moss. Where Bundle Run widens out into a floodplain, small patches of the globally-rare natural community known as alkaline short-grass prairie persist. This plant community is almost entirely restricted in Ohio to Adams County. Look for such interesting species as prairie dock, little bluestem, pale spiked lobelia, summer bluets, whorled rosinweed, and grey-headed coneflower.

Preserve history: Quiverheart's original owners, David and Kim Baker, shared a heart mission to see their 150 acres of land become an enduringly protected nature preserve that could be shared with the public. Finding a suitable partner in the Arc of Appalachia, they made strikingly generous gifts - financial and otherwise - that made it possible to bring their dream to fruition. One of those gifts was David and Kim's offer to serve as the preserve's voluntary caretakers. They have since removed literally tons of invasive plants, helped to install hiking trails, and led tours. Because of the preserve's compelling scenery, Quiverheart's trailhead parking lot began filling up on the weekends as soon as it was built through word of mouth, long before the preserve was publicized and officially open. Many of those visitors were personally welcomed by David and Kim.

In 1815, Quiverheart was the location of the first steam-powered iron blast furnace built west of the Appalachian Mountains. The business employed 400 workers in its heyday. One can still see piles of charcoal that were used to fuel the furnace, and handmade bricks in the creek from the brick foundry that also operated at the site. It is hard to believe that the gorge - now forested and filled with flowers and birdsong - was a bustling factory site just two hundred years ago - filled with noisy machinery, smoke, and the chatter of hundreds of enterprising workers.