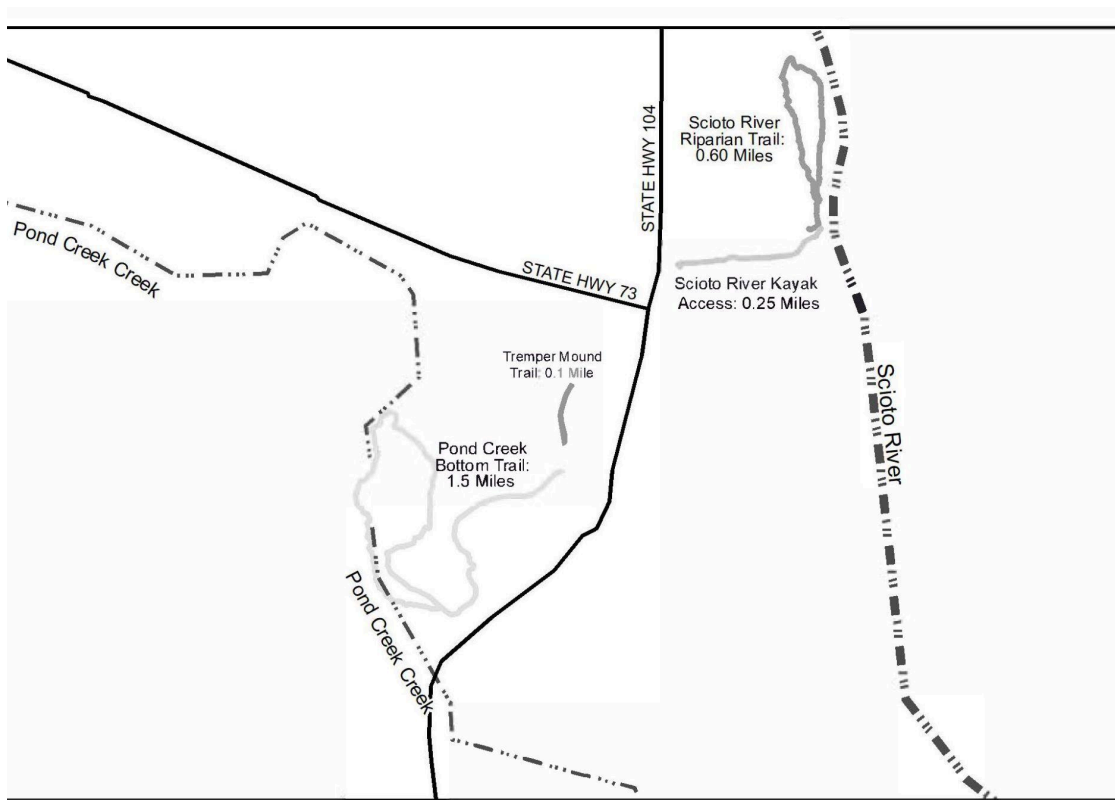




VISITING & HIKING
Tremper Mound
Preserve Size: 706 acres

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.

Tremper Mound protects a world-significant 2000-year-old Hopewell Earthwork near Portsmouth, Ohio. The solitary Mound lies just four miles north of what was once an immense Hopewell ceremonial complex developed on both banks of the Ohio River known today as the Portsmouth Works. The vast majority of the once grand complex of promenades, walls, and mounds on the north side of the Ohio River now lies buried beneath the city of Portsmouth, an early Ohio river town founded in 1803.



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

Hiking Trails: Difficulty - Easy to Moderate for all trails. All three trails are located upon the relatively level floodplain terraces of the Lower Scioto River Valley and its Pond Creek tributary. The trails have no rocky surfaces or challenging ascents/descents. **Caution:** The floodplain of the Scioto River Valley Bottoms is prone to heavy flooding from winter through spring. Be sure to take into consideration recent rainfall accumulation before planning a walk on the Scioto River Access Trail. Because of the long distance from the Scioto River Access trailhead to the Scioto River, kayakers are strongly encouraged to bring a kayak dollie.

Tremper Mound Trail- .20-mile loop trail - The Tremper Mound Trail begins at the north end of the parking lot and leads through grassland meadows to the 2,000-year-old ceremonial earthwork, Tremper Mound returning to the parking lot on the same path. In late summer the fields are at their brightest with the flowers of goldenrod, ironweed, wingstem, and the seed heads of towering Indian grass. To the east, the trail provides panoramic views of the sweeping course of the Scioto River. The path approaches the mound through the original gateway that dissects the elliptical earthen wall surrounding the mound. Once inside the enclosure, you may freely walk around the centrally-positioned Tremper Mound but, out of respect for the sacredness of this ancient place of burial, do not walk on the mound or the embankment wall.

Pond Creek Bottom Trail- 1.5-mile loop - Trail winds through large, old agricultural fields before descending along the edge of the valley terrace into a now-abandoned gravel and sand quarry. Today the site is covered in prolific swaths of Indian Grass, Gray Goldenrod, New England Aster, and Rosepink Gentians, bringing about a spectacular array of colors during the late summer months. Descending further, the trail reaches Pond Creek Bottoms, a low riparian forest that is dramatically bounded by a steep-sided terrace carved out by melting torrents of glacial waters thousands of years ago. Here one can admire towering yellow buckeyes, American sycamores, cottonwoods, black walnuts, and rare white walnuts. Below their canopies in the spring, rich floodplain soils foster scattered populations of Virginia bluebells, trout Lilies, toothworts, fumeworts, and larkspurs.

Scioto River Kayak Access Trail - .50 mile out and back. The trail cuts through the heart of Tremper Mound's vast Scioto River bottoms, leading through 200 acres of grassland meadows of Indian grass, big bluestem, and goldenrod growing on top of deep glacial outwash deposits and offering expansive views of the vast floodplain. As the trail approaches the water's edge, the trail descends into a corridor of mighty silver maples, sycamores, and black walnuts. Here migratory shorebirds and waterfowl can be seen frequenting the gravel bars.

Tremper Mound is 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 Tremper Mound as pristine as you found it. Please remember that no disturbing of the archaeological record or collecting of artifacts of any kind is permitted on this important cultural site. 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. [Click here for a list of full regulations.](#)

Address: 20580 SR-73 McDermott, OH 45663 Tremper Mound's main entrance is on OH-104. Because this section of OH-104 is busy and potentially dangerous, you can only turn into the preserve's main entrance if you head south. From the intersection of OH-73 and OH-104, turn south toward Portsmouth. In .25 miles on your right, you will see the gravel entrance lane into the preserve separated by a cement island..

PLEASE NOTE: PRESERVE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT QUITE COMPLETE: The preserve's primary Entrance Sign and an interpretive kiosk are in the design process and are not yet installed. For secure navigation, we encourage you to download the prepared trail guide and bring it with you when traveling to the preserve.

Trails are open year-round from sunrise to sunset with the following exceptions. Parking lots are not winter-maintained. For your safety, do not hike trails during periods of heavy rain, ice, and snow. The trail to the Scioto Bottoms and river access is in a region that floods heavily after prolonged heavy rains or snow melt. The Scioto River floods heavily in the spring, putting the entire floodplain and the hiking trail underwater. 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.

A world-significant historic site. Tremper Mound is one of the most famous of Hopewell Culture's earthworks. The Mound was constructed roughly 2000 years ago along the Scioto River which borders a mile of the preserve's eastern boundary. The now solitary Mound stood among a small cluster of companion earthworks. The mound lies just four miles north of what was once an immense Hopewell ceremonial complex developed on both banks of the Ohio River known today as the Portsmouth Works. This once grand complex of promenades, walls, and mounds on the north side of the Ohio River now lies buried beneath the city of Portsmouth, an early Ohio River town founded in 1803. Tremper Mound is one of the few standing reminders of the architectural scale and grandeur achieved by the Hopewell Culture's engineering feats. Its preservation honors our land's rich indigenous legacies. The 1915 excavation that explored the mound unearthed a truly magnificent and unexpected find – one of only two caches of nearly 100 animal effigy pipes ever discovered in the larger Hopewell landscape - carved in the shape of the common wildlife species with whom the Hopewell peoples shared their world. The animals selected by the carvers of the Hopewell pipes were not only powerful animals such as panthers and bears, but toads, wood ducks, turtles, and vultures. All of the stone carvings honored the members of the living community in which the Hopewell peoples lives were embedded, illustrating the wide ecological and sacred relationships the people had with their animal relations.

Natural History. Tremper Mound protects an outstanding 6.17 miles of forest corridor, including 3.56 miles of Pond Creek's main stem and primary headwaters, and 1.30 miles of riparian corridor along the Scioto River. The riparian forest – long missing from the fertile floodplain of the lower Scioto that is today entirely occupied by farmlands – is being restored on the 200-acre lower terrace bordering the preserve's mile-long stretch of the Scioto River – serving as a welcome sanctuary for migrating birds.

The steep unglaciated sandstone/shale hillsides found at Tremper Mound are low in pH and grow classic Appalachian hardwood species, including oaks, hickories, sugar maple, beech, poplar, and black gum, some of which have reached impressive sizes. Acid Appalachian soils like these rarely grow the density of wildflowers that more basic soils can support, but they offer a wider diversity of species. These include yellow mandarin, fire pinks, showy orchis, twinleaf, twayblade orchid, ginseng, goldenseal, wild comfrey, bear-corn, wild ginger, rattlesnake plantain, white baneberry, partridge berry, large-leaf waterleaf, toadflax, dwarf larkspur, sweet William wild phlox, rue anemone, long-spurred violet, Virginia bluebells, Solomon's seal, Jack-in-the-Pulpit and a large diversity of ferns.

The preserve protects 68 acres of wetland habitat that support high populations of breeding wood frogs and spotted salamanders, and thousands of spring peepers that can be heard singing in April. The wet fields produce prodigious crops of fireflies of many species, including the mesmerizing slow flashes of the—Chinese Lanterns. Because of the spectacular nature of the displays, the Arc intends to include Tremper in its line-up of firefly-watching destinations each June, during our Firefly Biodiversity Weekend.

Preserve history: For nearly a decade, the Arc mused and strategized ways to preserve Tremper Mound, along with the Appalachian hills and long stretch of the Scioto River that bounded it. Because of the scale of the project, it appeared to be an improbable if not an impossible mission. Over 2/3 of the mound was part of the 618-acre Matthews Farm owned by three siblings. Although the family members were willing to sell the land to the right buyer and wanted to see the mound protected, they also did not want to break up the farm. We were unaware of any funding mechanism sufficient for a task of this size. Adding to our challenges was the fact that although the Matthews owned most of the mound, they did not own all of it. The boundaries of two private two-acre house sites both penetrated the embankment walls that encircled the mound, their boundaries marked by barbed wire pasture fences.

The Arc finally devised a risky funding plan to purchase the 618 acres of the preserve through the Ohio EPA's WRRSP funding program in 2020. To achieve winning scores on the application, both Pond Creek which dissected the farm, and the lower Scioto that bordered it, had to meet the EPA's requirements for exceptional warm water designation. Unfortunately, EPA's records designated both waterways at a lesser ranking. Nevertheless, encouraged by aquatic

biologists, we privately contracted to have the waters studied, and to our delight, both waterways – for the first time in their history – qualified for the exceptional warm water designation. An application was submitted to WRRSP, as well as to the Clean Ohio grant program. Their subsequent awards helped fund the immense costs of Tremper Mound Farm’s acquisition and development.

Seemingly miraculously, in the same year that the Matthew Farm was acquired, both of the remaining neighbors who owned portions of the mound separately approached the Arc and offered their properties for sale. By year’s end, the entire mound was united under the single ownership of the Arc of Appalachia and protected into perpetuity.

In 2023, Arc of Appalachia was given the opportunity to expand the Tremper Mound Preserve on its southern boundary with a fourth acquisition, Huckleberry Ridge. The 85-acre property is a steep-sided forested hill with stunning panoramas of the Little Smokies of Ohio. Today that expansion has been consummated, with major funding assistance provided through the Clean Ohio grant program.