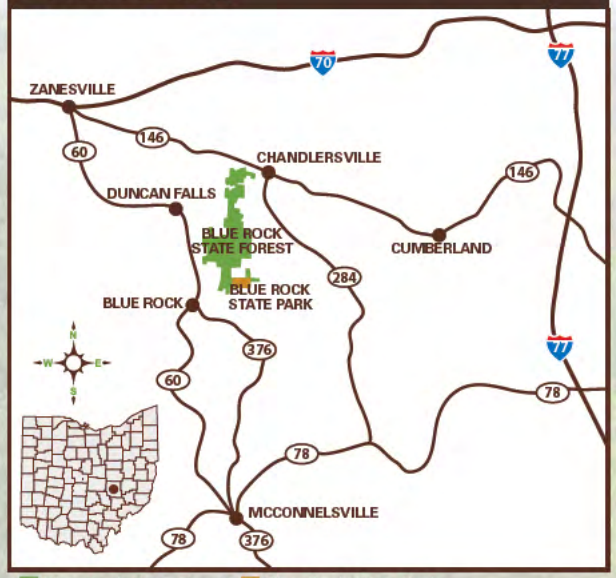
General Rules for Forest Visitors

1. Blue Rock State Forest is open daily to visitors between the hours of 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. Legal campers, hunters and fishermen may be present during other hours.
2. Operation of motor vehicles is restricted to roads provided for such travel. The speed limit on state forest roads is 30 mph unless otherwise posted. Vehicles may not be parked where traffic or access to division service roads or trails will be obstructed.
3. Horses may be ridden only along forest roads or on designated bridle trails.
4. Fires are not permitted, except in grills or fire rings provided or in portable stoves. Fires must be attended at all times.
5. Trash may be disposed of only in receptacles provided or "pack-it-in/pack-it-out."
6. Camping is permitted only in areas provided and designated for such use.
7. Public display or consumption of any alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
8. Disturbance, defacement or destruction of any structure, property, natural feature, tree, shrub or wildflower is prohibited. Berries, nuts and mushrooms may be gathered and removed, except from tree seed orchards or posted areas.
9. The use of bait to attract or hunt wild birds or deer on state forest land is prohibited.
10. Deer stands must have a waterproof tag at all times identifying the user and user's address in legible English.
11. Game cameras are not permitted unless they bear a waterproof, legible tag identifying the owner's name, phone number and address in English.
12. State forest boundaries are indicated with yellow blazes on the trees and/or posted signs.

Rules found in the Ohio Administrative Code Section 1501:3.

Location Map



Blue Rock State Forest Blue Rock State Park

Additional Information

BLUE ROCK STATE FOREST
ODNR Division of Forestry
6665 Cutler Lake Road
Blue Rock, Ohio 43720-9740
740-674-4035
877-247-8733

BLUE ROCK STATE PARK
ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft
7924 Cutler Lake Road
Blue Rock, Ohio 43720
Blue Rock State Park Office:
740-674-4794
parks.ohiodnr.gov

forestry.ohiodnr.gov

EMERGENCIES: Call 911

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
2045 Morse Road, Building H-1
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BLUE ROCK

STATE FOREST

Ohio Department of
NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Welcome to Blue Rock State Forest

Acquisition of the first state forests began in 1916, originally to be used as testing grounds for reforestation of tree species. Land acquisition later broadened to include land of scenic and recreational values and to restore forest cover to land that had been abandoned and abused. Today, Ohio's 21 state forests cover nearly 200,000 acres and provide an abundance of benefits for everyone to enjoy. With the advantage of decades of management, Ohio's foresters are enhancing nature's growth cycle, and the state forests continue to produce some of the finest hardwood trees in the world. Forest management activities such as timber stand improvement, prescribed fire and harvesting are employed to enhance the health, vigor and natural regeneration of the forest. But foresters' concerns go well beyond the trees. Evaluations of water, soil, wildlife habitat, age and condition of the vegetation, recreational opportunities and aesthetics are considered in preparation of area management plans. This process ensures that visitors may enjoy many outdoor activities, including camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, hunting and scenic touring.

Area History

Millions of years ago, the area now known as Ohio was inundated by a shallow inland sea. The bedrock materials of Ohio are sedimentary and were formed beneath this sea. They are either comprised of limestone, shale or sandstone. In the Blue Rock State Forest area, the bedrock material is blue-colored sedimentary shale, which led to the name of this forest.

Sometime in the late 18th century, prior to the settlement of the area, a Virginian named Major Duncan was a hunter and trapper who lived in the area. He was friendly with the Delaware Indians of the Shawnee nation who claimed the area. Duncan is purported to have become enraged by the Indians for stealing game from his traps, and he began shooting Indians that bothered his traps. The Indians retaliated by killing him as he crossed the Muskingum River. The nearby town and the waterfall, where Duncan fell and died, both bear the name of Duncan Falls.

In 1786, Ephraim Cutler was involved with the Ohio Company of Associates from its inception. His father, Manasseh Cutler of Massachusetts, was an important member of the Ohio Company of Associates that purchased property for settlement from the Continental Congress in the portion of the Northwest Territory, which is now southeastern Ohio. Ephraim Cutler was one of the five men who wrote the Constitution of Ohio in 1802. He was a famous judge in Athens County in the state's early history and has many descendants in Ohio, and Cutler Lake was named after him.

In 1796, Congress gave Colonel Ebenezer Zane authority to build a road from Wheeling, West Virginia, to Maysville,

Kentucky. The point where the road, known as Zane's Trace, crossed the Muskingum River at the junction with the Licking River became the site of Zanesville--named for Ebenezer Zane. Zanesville was Ohio's second state capital for two years from 1810 to 1812 (Chillicothe was the first state capital).

The industries of the area in the mid-19th century included iron foundries, flour mills, a paper mill, cotton mills, oil processors and sawmills. The Muskingum River and Zane Trace made the movement of resources and products convenient, allowing Zanesville to become a prosperous community. Because of the vast reserves of suitable clay in the area, Zanesville became a leader in the art pottery business. One such business owned by Samuel Weller was the biggest art pottery company in the world for a time in the early 20th century. Coal mining was also an important industry in Muskingum County in the 20th century.

A combination of the Great Depression, the low productivity of the soil and the rugged terrain caused a lot of Muskingum County farms to be abandoned or fall into bankruptcy and ruin in the 1930s.

Forest History

Land acquisition for Blue Rock State Forest began in 1937. During the 1930s, the federal government formed the Resettlement Administration to address the impoverished conditions on marginal agricultural areas across the nation. The Resettlement Administration initiated the Land Utilization Program. Through this program, unproductive and abandoned farmlands were acquired to promote forest management and provide recreational opportunities. The area around Blue Rock, Ohio, was one of these resettlement areas. Restoration was started through the application of erosion control devices and the planting of the tree seedlings.

Other improvements, including roads, numerous firebreaks, wildlife ponds and public facilities, were constructed, many with the assistance of such programs as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). For example, the CCC planted trees and constructed a fire tower at Blue Rock State Forest. Operational control of this area was turned over to the Division of Forestry in 1939. In 1949, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was formed, and management of Cutler Lake and the adjoining recreational facilities (Blue Rock State Park) was transferred to the ODNR Division of Parks. The Division of Forestry was transferred from the Agricultural Experiment Station to the new ODNR. Management of the forest remained with the ODNR Division of Forestry. In September 1958, surface ownership of both park and forest land was transferred to ODNR from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM retained 75 percent of the mineral ownership under this land. Blue Rock State Forest has become one of Ohio's most beautiful and productive forests.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are permitted under the ODNR Division of Wildlife regulations. Shooting is prohibited within 400 feet of any building, facility or recreation area, and it is prohibited from or across any road or driveway. Discharge of any firearm except during lawful hunting is also not permitted. Hunting is prohibited in Blue Rock State Park.

Fire Tower

The Blue Rock fire tower was constructed in 1937. It is the last remaining 100-foot fire tower in the state, and the public may climb it. It is an Aermotor tower with a 7' x 7' metal cab. Aermotor is a company that has been building windmills since 1888, and the company diversified to include the design and production of most of the nation's forest observation towers starting in 1926.

Come visit Blue Rock State Forest and climb the tower. The view is breathtaking.

BLUE ROCK

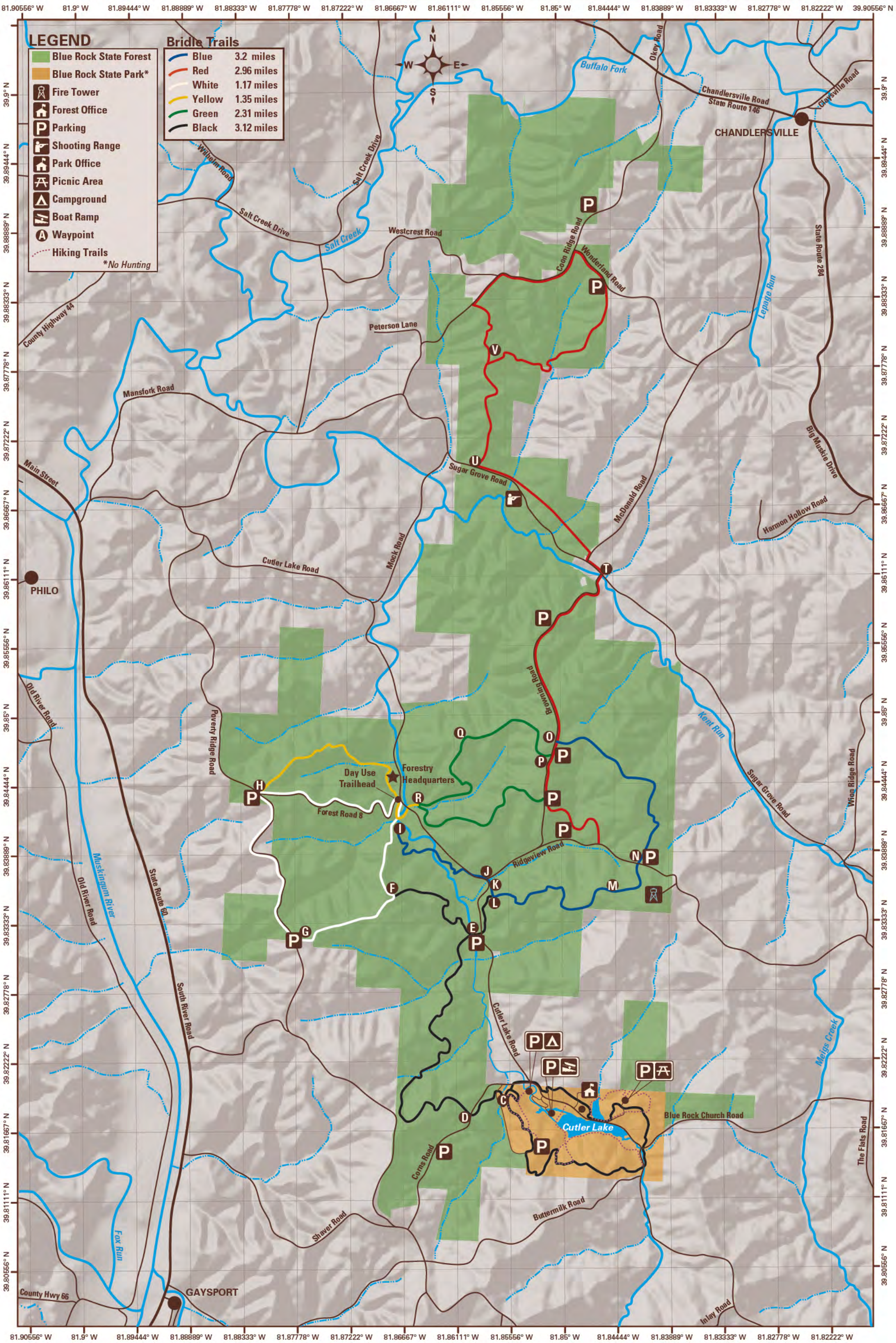
STATE FOREST

MILES 0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1

KILOMETERS 0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1

1:55,000

State forest boundaries shown are representative and believed to be correct but not warranted. State forest boundary lines on the ground are identified with signs and/or yellow paint marks on trees.

Map reviewed and approved by Robert Boyles, Chief, ODNR Division of Forestry, 02/2017.

Data provided by ODNR Forestry, ODNR GIMS, US Census Tiger, ODOT.