



Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail

The Waters that Moved a Nation



“The Great Lakes are a diamond on the hand of North America”

Pat Dailey, Singer/Songwriter, “Great Lakes Song”

Visionary Sponsor

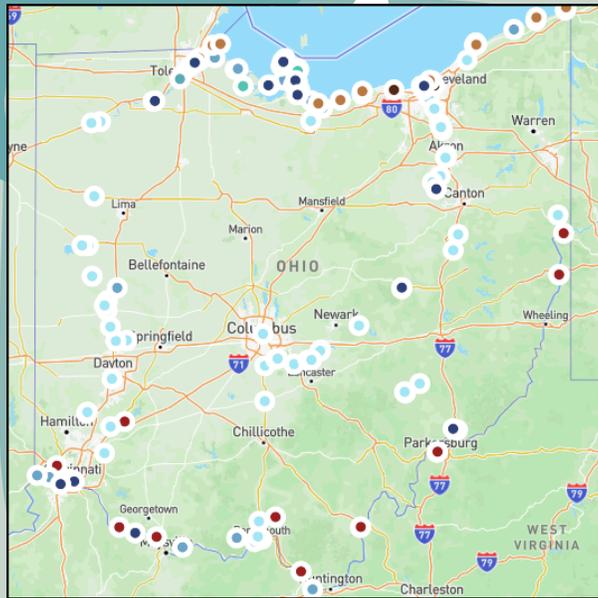


Ohio Travel
ASSOCIATION

Make a splash on your water adventure today:
america250-ohio.org/lake-erie-to-ohio-river

Dive In

Take a deep dive into Ohio's waterways while exploring more than 150 sites that celebrate how Ohio's waters connected the nation!



Tour sites along **Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and Ohio's Canals**, including lighthouses, boat rides, natural areas, aquatic science centers, museums, and historic sites.



Visit our online map and use the filter button to pick and choose the stories you want to explore or visit all sites in a region. You may also find this PDF guidebook handy for planning your adventures.

america250-ohio.org/lake-erie-to-ohio-river/

The Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail is part of an America 250-Ohio program celebrating Ohio's incredible stories through driving trails.





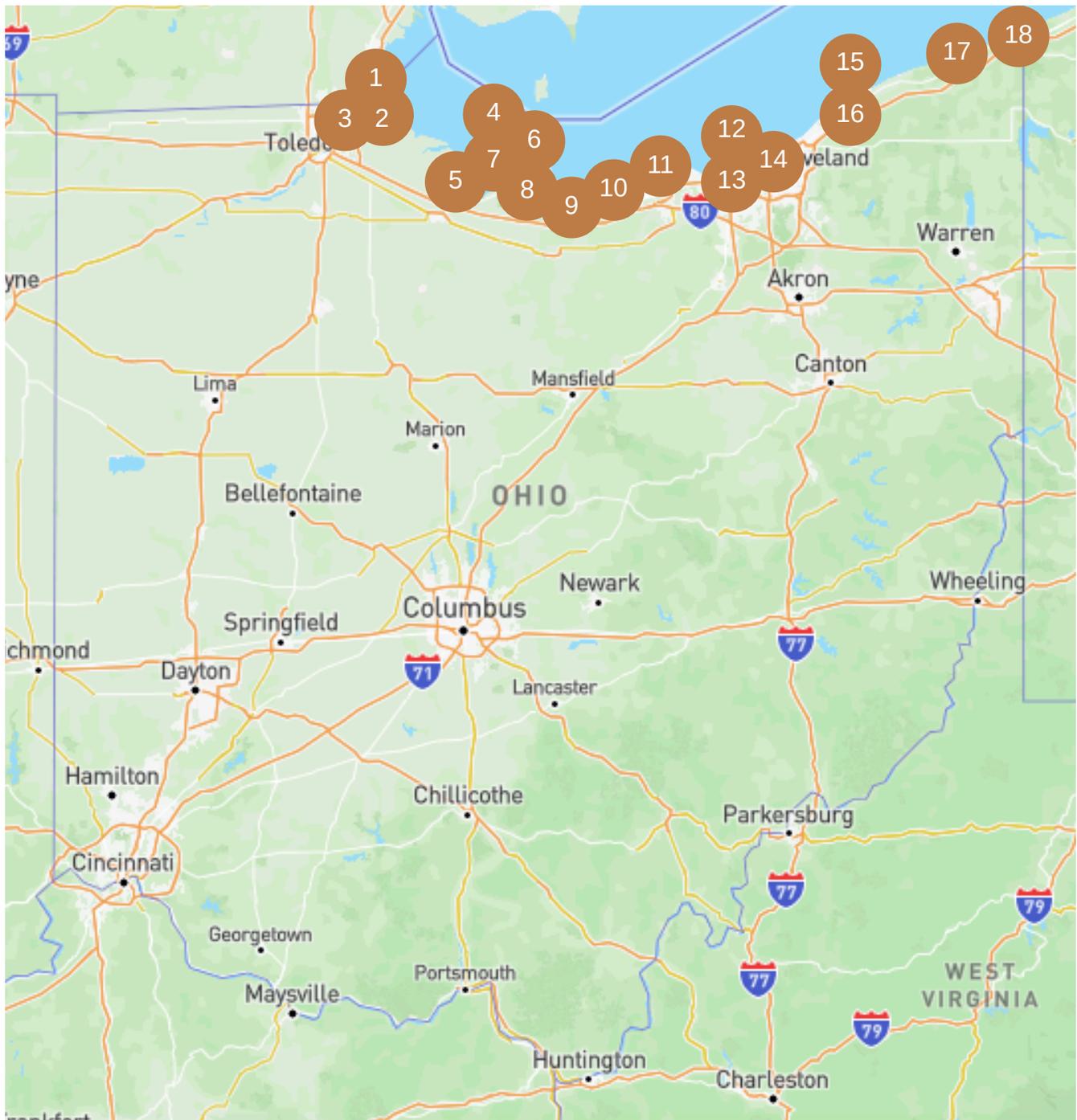
Lake Erie Lighthouses

lighthouses, Fresnel lenses, keepers' homes



Lighthouses have helped ships safely navigate Lake Erie's tricky waters for more than 200 years. As the shallowest of all the Great Lakes, Lake Erie can whip up sudden storms and big waves, making travel risky without clear guidance. Lighthouses mark safe harbors and warn of hidden dangers, keeping cargo ships, fishing boats, pleasure crafts, and ferryboats on course. While modern technology has transformed and improved navigation, these historic structures still serve as navigational landmarks and are beloved symbols of maritime history.

Please confirm days and hours of operation, as some sites have limited access. Please refer to each site's website for information. Not every lighthouse is open for tours, nor is every lighthouse accessible to the public.



Map provides general location and should not be used for navigational purposes. Visit the Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail website for more information and mapping.



Lake Erie Lighthouses

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1 Toledo Harbor Lighthouse

The Toledo Harbor Lighthouse, built in 1904, is a Romanesque-style structure guarding the Maumee Bay entrance to Lake Erie. Constructed of brick to endure harsh lake conditions, it features a three-story design with a lantern room. Automated in 1966, it remains an active navigational aid. The lighthouse originally housed a fourth-order Fresnel lens, a lens renowned for its powerful light. Made of precisely arranged glass prisms, Fresnel lenses created focused light and exemplified 19th-century technological innovation. You can view the lens at the nature center in Maumee Bay State Park in nearby Oregon.

Address: Located offshore; view from Maumee Bay State Park, Oregon

Website: toledoharborlighthouse.org or jmcruiselines.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

2 Turtle Island Lighthouse

The first lighthouse in Maumee Bay - originally built in 1831 and rebuilt in 1866 - it guided ships entering Lake Erie until it was decommissioned in 1904 upon the opening of Toledo Harbor Lighthouse. The 44-foot square brick tower, once considered "one of the finest lighthouses on the Great Lakes," is now only ruins. Remnants of the tower, foundations, and supporting structures remain. The Ohio-Michigan boundary runs through the middle of the island.

Address: Only viewable by boat, including cruises with J&M Cruise Line

Website: jmcruiselines.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

3 Manhattan Range Lights

Constructed in 1918 to guide vessels safely along the river channel into the Port of Toledo, twin towers worked in tandem to guide ships along the safe channel into the Maumee River. Once 80-feet in height, they were deactivated in the late 1980s, but lighthouse aficionados can still get a glimpse of both towers (now 20-feet-tall) in their new location.

Address: Located on private property at 2824 N. Summit St., with at least one visible from the street. Not open to visitors.

Website: us-lighthouses.com/manhattan-rear-range-lighthouse

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

4 South Bass Island Lighthouse

The U.S. Lighthouse Board sought funds for a lighthouse in 1890, successfully raising \$8,600 for its construction over time. The tower was first lit in 1897 by keeper Harry H. Riley, with his wife later taking over after his passing. Spacious by most lighthouse standards, this lighthouse is a homey two-and-a-half-story brick dwelling with an attached tower. The tower is crowned with a fourth-order Fresnel lens that produces a fixed red light. South Bass Island Lighthouse is now home to OSU research staff and open for public tours in the summer.

Address: 2368 Langram Rd., Put-in-Bay

Website: ohioseagrant.osu.edu/visit/south-bass-lighthouse

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau](#)

5 Port Clinton Lighthouse

This fully restored lighthouse, built in 1896 and placed at the entrance of the Portage River, remained active for 56 years. The light was decommissioned in 1952 when it was replaced by an automatic channel marker. For more than 60 years, this lighthouse stood quietly on private property. Restoration and relocation of the lighthouse began in 2014 by the Port Clinton Lighthouse Conservancy. A replica Lightkeeper's Boathouse, located near the lighthouse, features historical displays and artifacts, a keeper's rowboat, and a gift shop. Tours are offered on a seasonal basis.

Address: 501 Ohio 163, Port Clinton

Website: portclintonlighthouse.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

6 Marblehead Lighthouse State Park

Marblehead Lighthouse, the oldest lighthouse in continuous operation on the Great Lakes, has guided sailors along Lake Erie's rocky shoreline since 1821. Located within Marblehead Lighthouse State Park, the limestone tower stands beside the historic U.S. Coast Guard keeper's house and lifesaving station museum. Over its history, 15 lighthouse keepers - including two women - tended the beacon. Revolutionary War veteran Benajah Wolcott was the first keeper. He lit 13 whale oil lamps each night and recorded ship traffic and weather. After his death in 1832, his wife Rachel took over his duties, becoming the first female lighthouse keeper on the Great Lakes.

Address: 110 Lighthouse Dr., Marblehead

Website: ohiodnr.gov and marbleheadlighthouseohio.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

7 Wolcott Keeper's House

The Wolcott Keeper's House, built in 1820, served as the residence for Benajah Wolcott, the first keeper of the Marblehead Lighthouse, and his family. The home provides a glimpse into the life of early lighthouse keepers, highlighting the dedication and resilience required to maintain a beacon vital to maritime safety. Inside, visitors can explore exhibits detailing the daily tasks of lighthouse keepers, such as cleaning and maintaining the light, recording weather conditions, and performing critical repairs to ensure the safety of passing ships. The house tour sheds light on federal provisions for keeper well-being, from government-supplied housing and equipment to rations and pensions, which supported keepers in their isolated and challenging roles.

Address: 9999 E. Bayshore Rd., Marblehead

Website: ottawacountyhistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

8 Cedar Point Lighthouse

Built in 1862, the Cedar Point Lighthouse is the oldest structure at Cedar Point and one of Ohio's earliest lighthouses. Originally constructed to guide mariners safely through Sandusky Bay into Lake Erie, the lighthouse operated until 1909 when it was decommissioned. Today, the 6-room limestone keeper's house topped with the beacon, stands as a historic landmark on the grounds of Cedar Point's Lighthouse Point cottage and cabin area.

Address: 1 Cedar Point Dr., Sandusky

Website: cedarpoint.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

9 Huron Harbor Lighthouse

Built in 1936, the Huron Harbor Lighthouse is a striking Art Deco-style structure at the end of the Huron Pier, guiding vessels into the Huron River and Lake Erie. This 72-foot lighthouse, managed by the U.S. Coast Guard, replaced an earlier wooden light and remains an active navigational aid. Visitors can walk the pier year-round to admire its unique design, enjoy lakefront views, and learn about its history from nearby markers. The Huron Lighthouse is the "sister" lighthouse to one in Conneaut, both built by a team of engineers who standardized Great Lakes lighthouse blueprints in the early 1910s.

Address: Main Street Pier, Huron

Website: shoresandislands.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)





Lake Erie Lighthouses

lighthouses, Fresnel lenses, keepers' homes



10 Vermilion Lighthouse

The Vermilion Lighthouse is a replica of the original 1877 iron lighthouse that served mariners until its removal in 1929. Reconstructed in 1991, this 34-foot landmark symbolizes Vermilion's rich maritime history and its connection to Lake Erie. Known as the "Town of Sea Captains," Vermilion was home to many Great Lakes sailors and shipbuilders. Between 1840 and 1876, local shipyards produced around 48 large schooners. Historic surveys highlight at least 16 well-preserved captains' homes, with ongoing research suggesting up to 50 structures linked to sea captains, making Vermilion unique in its architectural heritage.

Address: 480 Main St., Vermilion

Website: mainstreetvermilion.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Main Street Vermilion](#)

11 Lorain Breakwater Lighthouse

The Lorain Breakwater Lighthouse, built in 1917, is affectionately known as the "Jewel of the Port." Located at the end of the Lorain Harbor breakwater, this three-story steel-framed lighthouse guided sailors into the Black River until its automation in 1965. The lighthouse stands as a symbol of Lorain's industrial and maritime heritage. Seasonal boat tours allow visitors to explore the interior, offering insights into the lives of its keepers and breathtaking views of Lake Erie.

Address: Located ½ mile off Lorain

Website: lorainlighthouse.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Lorain County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

12 Cleveland Harbor Main Entrance Lighthouse

The Cleveland Harbor Main Entrance Lighthouse, constructed in 1911, is a historic steel and brick structure that serves as a vital navigational aid for ships entering Cleveland Harbor from Lake Erie. Situated at the end of the west breakwater, it played a key role in supporting the city's bustling industrial and shipping industries. The small building adjacent to the lighthouse housed a lighthouse keeper and two assistants. Its original Fourth Order Fresnel lens was removed in 1995 and is on display at the Great Lakes Science Center. The lighthouse was purchased for \$425,000 in 2023 by private owners during an open auction. The foghorn and flashing red light remain as U.S. Coast Guard-monitored navigational devices.

Address: Cleveland Harbor

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

13 Cleveland East Pierhead Lighthouse

As early as 1818, Cleveland petitioned the federal government for a lighthouse at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. The city was still quite small, but the prospect for growth based on the construction of a new canal – the Ohio & Erie Canal – was promising. The cast iron Cleveland East Pierhead Lighthouse was built in 1911. It wasn't the first lighthouse to stand guard; a 63-foot lighthouse once stood on a bluff where West 9th Street is today.

Address: Cleveland Harbor

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

14 Cleveland Harbor East Entrance Lighthouse

The Cleveland Harbor East Entrance Lighthouse, constructed in 1915, marks the eastern approach to Cleveland Harbor. Its distinctive steel and cast-iron design, with a white cylindrical 47-foot tower and black lantern room, reflects the practical elegance of early 20th-century lighthouse engineering.

Address: Cleveland Harbor

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

15 Fairport Harbor Lighthouse & Marine Museum

Built in 1871, the Fairport Harbor Lighthouse keeper's house and tower are now home to the Fairport Harbor Marine Museum and Lighthouse. The light that shone from this lighthouse until 1925 became the beacon for immigrant groups seeking a new and better life by finding employment in the numerous factories in Northeast Ohio. Fins, Hungarians, Slovaks, and later Slovenians, settled in Fairport where they worked the iron ore and coal docks that fueled the growing steel industry.

Address: 129 Second St., Fairport Harbor

Website: fairportharborlighthouse.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

16 Fairport Harbor West Breakwater Lighthouse

In 1925, the Fairport Harbor West Breakwater Lighthouse replaced the original Fairport Harbor Lighthouse, now a marine museum. Constructed at the Grand River's mouth, it was among the last Great Lakes lighthouses built. Congress allocated \$42,000 for its construction in 1917, but WWI delayed the project for years. Initially, plans included demolishing the original lighthouse, sparking opposition from Fairport residents. Their efforts led the Secretary of Commerce to preserve the historic structure.

Address: Located at the end of the west breakwater pier, Fairport Harbor

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

17 Ashtabula Lighthouse

Standing sentinel at the entrance to Ashtabula Harbor since 1836, the lighthouse's current steel-plate tower (built 1905, relocated in 1916) guided shipping until its automation in 1973, making it the last manned light on Lake Erie. Though lighthouse access requires water transit, the nearby maritime museum grounds and breakwall provide prime vantage points to appreciate this emblem of Great Lakes navigation history.

Address: Visible from 1071 Walnut Blvd., Ashtabula

Website: ashtabulalighthouse.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau](#)

18 Conneaut Harbor West Breakwater Lighthouse

Built in 1936 in an Art Moderne design, this 60-foot steel tower stands on a concrete crib at the end of Conneaut's west breakwater. Serving as a guide since 1835 - first with a pier light, later evolving through wooden and concrete structures - it now flashes alternating red and white every six seconds with a beam reaching 16 miles. Originally paired with a diaphone foghorn, it still marks the entrance to a harbor once pivotal for grain, whiskey, and timber shipments.

Address: Best view from Conneaut Township Park at 480 Lake Rd., Conneaut

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau](#)





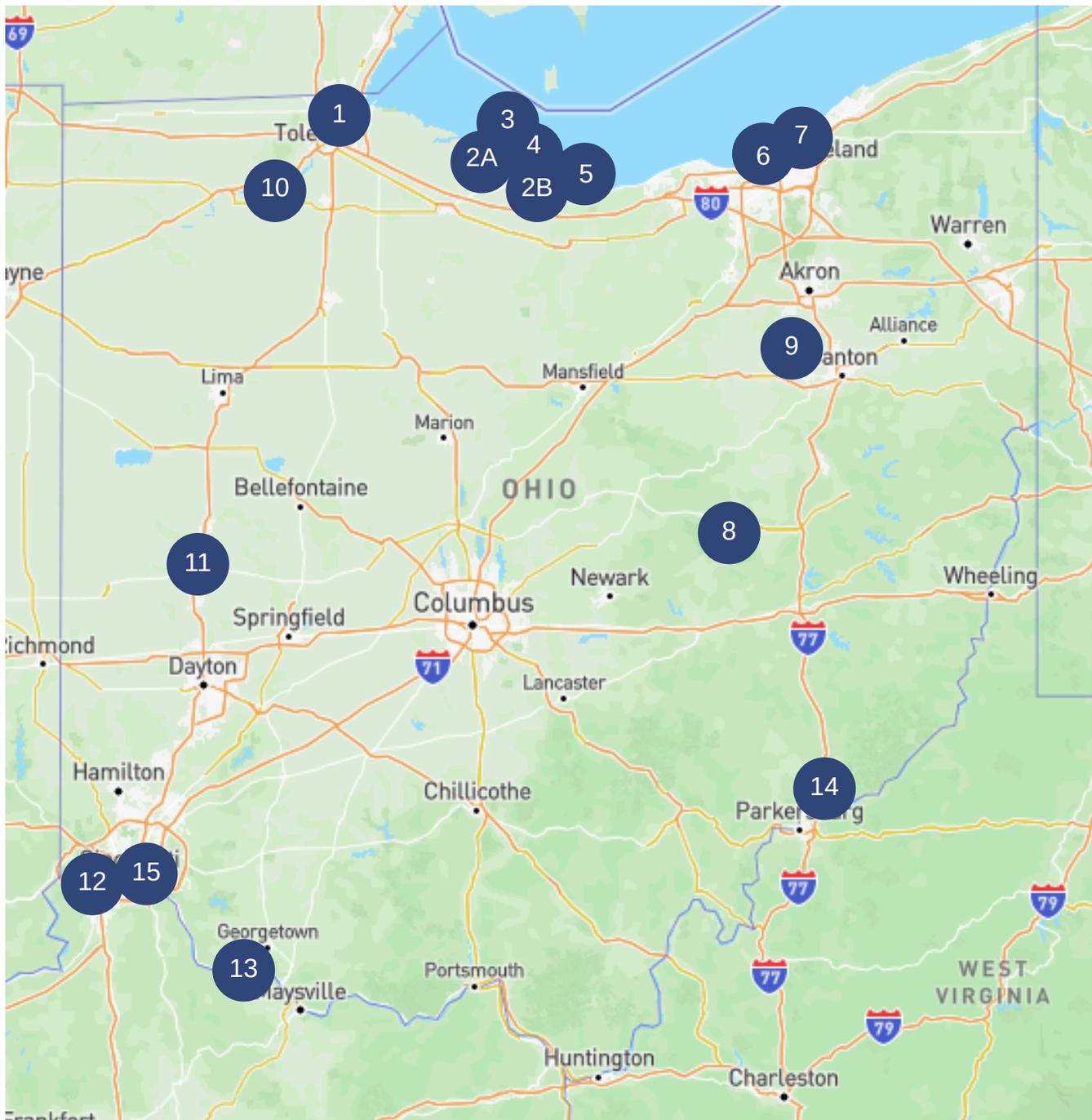
Boat Rides & Ferry Boats

narrated cruises, ferryboats, canal boats



There's no better way to experience Ohio's waterways than by getting on the water! Below, we have listed some of the larger boats and cruises available along Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and the canals. However, this is not a comprehensive list. As you plan your travels, visit the websites of the local visitor bureaus to discover additional options, including sailing and fishing charters, as well as river cruises.

Please confirm days and hours of operation, as some sites have limited access. You may also want to plan visits around demonstrations, special events, lectures and hands-on workshops, so please refer to each site's website for information.



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Boat Rides & Ferry Boats

narrated cruises, ferryboats, canal boats



Lake Erie

1 J&M Cruise Lines

Several cruises are available on the Maumee River and Lake Erie, including the Toledo Lighthouse Cruise aboard the *Glass City Pearl* and the Historical Cruise on *The Sandpiper*. The two-hour Historical Cruise highlights the river's significance in the expansion of Ohio and the Great Lakes regions by being the primary transportation route for global goods. This cruise also passes along the largest mural in North America, featuring portraits of Native Americans that call the Toledo area and a field of sunflowers which was once their preferred crop.

Address: 1 Jefferson Ave., Toledo

Website: jmcruiselines.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

2 Jet Express

The Jet Express, launched in 1989 by the Put-in-Bay Boat Line Co., revolutionized Lake Erie transit with its sleek, water-jet-powered catamarans - among the first in North America - making the 12-mile crossing from Port Clinton to Put-in-Bay in about 25 minutes. Today, its fleet of four vessels offers ultra-fast transportation to Put-in-Bay from both Port Clinton and Sandusky, as well as Kelleys Island from Sandusky. Passengers choose climate-controlled lounges or open-air decks with panoramic lake views and restroom facilities.

2A on map - Port Clinton Dock Address: 49 Jackson St., Port Clinton

2B on map - Sandusky Dock Address: 158 W. Market St., Sandusky

Website: jet-express.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

3 Miller Boat Line

Islanders rely on ferryboats and airplanes for connecting them to mainland services and goods. Miller Boat Line, a family-owned business for three generations, was founded in 1905 and is the largest and oldest ferry system on Lake Erie. Originally a fishing charter business, islands water taxi, and ice harvesting business, Miller Boat Livery evolved into a ferry service for transporting freight, island residents and visitors, and vehicles in the mid-1900s. Their ferryboats continue to link the islands to the mainland, offering breathtaking Lake Erie views enroute and island experiences to enjoy on both islands.

Address: 5174 E. Water St., Port Clinton (End of OH-53N)

Website: millerferry.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau](#)

4 Kelleys Island Ferryboat Lines

The Kelleys Island Ferry Boat Line began serving Marblehead to Kelleys Island after acquiring the Neuman Ferry fleet in 2002. Its fleet - ranging from the 140-ft *Shirley Irene* (1991) to the massive 168-ft *Carmen Lee* (2022) - operates every 30 minutes year-round, weather permitting. Capable of carrying cars, bikes, pets, and foot passengers, it makes a 20-minute Lake Erie crossing. It is the only car ferry to the largest American island on Lake Erie, Kelleys Island.

Address: 109 W. Shoreline Dr., Sandusky

Website: kelleysislandferry.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

5 Goodtime I Lake Erie Island Cruises

Sandusky's port has flourished since the 19th century, serving as a hub for regional commerce - ice harvesting, quarrying, lumber, and manufacturing. The Port of Sandusky remains a bustling Great Lakes harbor, accommodating up to 500-ft freighters and handling bulk cargoes like coal, limestone, and agricultural products. Cruises aboard the *Goodtime I* depart from the midst of the action and offer day-long island-hopping narrated cruises, as well as special excursions.

Address: 109 W. Shoreline Dr., Sandusky

Website: goodtimeboat.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

6 Lady Caroline Lakefront Dining Cruises

Cleveland's waterfront has transformed from an industrial hub to a vibrant recreational destination, blending history with modern attractions. *The Lady Caroline*, a luxurious four-deck dining yacht, offers unique cruises that depart from North Coast Harbor near landmarks like the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Guests enjoy narrated excursions highlighting Cleveland's maritime history, sunset dining experiences with chef-curated meals, and themed events.

Address: Flats West Bank, 1153 Main Ave., Cleveland

Website: ladycaroline.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

7 Goodtime III Lake Erie & River Cruises

Cleveland's waterfront has evolved from a thriving industrial river port to a dynamic recreational and cultural district. *The Goodtime III*, a 1,000-passenger, four-deck luxury sightseeing vessel, embarks from North Coast Harbor, passing the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Great Lakes Science Center. The narrated two-hour sightseeing cruise showcases the Cuyahoga River's history and Lake Erie shoreline, offering a mix of indoor climate-controlled lounges and open-air decks.

Address: 825 E. 9th Street, Cleveland

Website: goodtimeiii.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

Ohio Canals

8 Monticello III Horse-Drawn Canal Boat Rides

Roscoe Village was a thriving 19th-century canal port on the Ohio & Erie Canal, with commerce flourishing from the 1830s to the early 1900s. Today, the *Monticello III*, a replica canal boat, is drawn by draft horses over a one-mile restored canal stretch, offering 45-minute guided rides complete with historical narration. Passengers connect with early canal life - watching the canal driver at work, learning about towpath logistics, and viewing Lock 14 - immersing in the "Big Ditch" era that shaped Ohio's frontier expansion.

Address: 23253 State Route 83 N., Coshocton

Website: coshoctonlakepark.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Coshocton](#)





Boat Rides & Ferry Boats

narrated cruises, ferryboats, canal boats



9 St. Helena III Canal Boat Rides

The arrival of the Ohio & Erie Canal in the early 1800s allowed local farmers and manufacturers to send their products to distant markets faster and more affordably than ever before. Canal Fulton Canalway Center preserves this legacy through the *St. Helena III*. This canal boat replica offers 55-minute narrated cruises pulled by two draft horses along a historic canal stretch. Trips pass landmarks like McLaughlin Dry Dock and Lock IV, with an on-board historian recounting canal-era life. Visitors can also view the 30-minute "Our Canal Heritage" video before boarding.

Address: 123 Tuscarawas St. NW., Canal Fulton

Website: cityofcanalfulton-oh.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Canton](#)

10 The Volunteer at Canal Experience at Providence Metropark

It's here that life travels at the speed of mules. *The Volunteer* is a replica mule-drawn canal boat that offers a unique voyage into 1876-era Ohio. Guests aboard *The Volunteer* hear tales from canal diggers, lock tenders, farmers and others as they meander along the canal and go through Lock 44, one of the nation's only functioning 19th-century limestone locks. The development of the canal system allowed cities like Providence to fully leverage its connection to the Maumee River and Great Lakes. At the height of canal usage, almost 4,000 boats a year passed through the area, totaling more than \$10 million in goods on their way to places west.

Address: 13827 S. River Rd., Grand Rapids

Website: metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/providence-metropark

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

11 General Harrison of Piqua Canal Boat Rides

General Harrison of Piqua is a replica of a 70-foot-long canal boat often used for transportation of passengers and cargo in the 19th century along the Miami & Ohio Canal. Costumed guides direct the mule-drawn boat to provide an authentic and memorable experience. Visit a museum, restored farmhouse, cider house, double pen barn and other buildings.

Address: Johnston Farm & Indian Agency, 9845 N. Hardin Rd., Piqua

Website: johnstonfarmohio.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau](#)

Ohio River

12 Anderson Ferry

The Anderson Ferry has been in continuous operation since 1817. It is a privately-owned company operating four automobile and passenger ferryboats. The boats travel between a dock 10 miles west of downtown Cincinnati to Hebron, Kentucky. Ferryboats were originally powered by manpower using oars or by horses walking on a treadmill. With the advent of technology, steam engines became common in the 19th century, and modern ferries now rely on diesel engines for efficient operation. The Anderson Ferry is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its contributions for transporting people and goods between Ohio and Kentucky for more than 200 years.

Cincinnati Dock Address: 1 Anderson Ferry Rd., Cincinnati

Hebron, KY Dock Address: 4030 River Rd., Hebron, KY

Website: andersonferry.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)

13 Augusta Ferry

Ferryboats crossing the Ohio River were once plentiful, with "one every 15 to 20 miles" before bridges were built. The Augusta Ferry has been operating since April 2, 1798, when John Boude began shuttling passengers between Kentucky and Ohio in a hand-propelled ferry. It is among the oldest operating ferry services on the Ohio River. To this day, the *Jenny Ann*, continues to transport her passengers between Augusta and Boude's landing, located one mile west of Higginsport, Ohio.

Ohio Dock Address: Off Route 52, between Utopia and Higginsport

Augusta, KY Dock Address: 104 E. Riverside Dr., Augusta, KY

Website: augustaky.gov/ferry

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Brown County Ohio](#)

14 Valley Gem Sternwheeler Cruises

Marietta, Ohio, was the first permanent settlement in the Northwest Territory, established in 1788, and played a vital role in westward expansion and early American frontier life. Ohio River sternwheelers contributed to this growth as they transported people and goods. *The Valley Gem Sternwheeler* offers a blend of history and scenic exploration along the Muskingum and Ohio rivers. This 290-passenger vessel features a diesel-powered sternwheel, echoing the elegance of 19th-century steamboats. Passengers enjoy narrated tours of historic riverfront sites, locks, and wildlife, with offerings like lunch and dinner cruises and fall foliage excursions.

Address: 601 Front St., Marietta

Website: valleygemsternwheeler.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Marietta / Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

15 BB Riverboats Sightseeing & Dining Cruises

Sternwheelers were uniquely adapted to the Ohio River because their paddle wheel, located at the stern (rear), allowed them to navigate shallow and narrow waterways. This design provided better maneuverability and required less draft than side-wheel steamboats. Sternwheelers were also versatile, serving as cargo vessels, passenger boats, showboats, and even towboats, making them essential to river commerce and transportation in the 19th and early 20th centuries. BB Riverboats echoes the golden sternwheeler era with trips down the Ohio River aboard the *Belle of Cincinnati* and the *River Queen*.

Address: 101 Riverboat Row, Newport, KY

Website: bbriverboats.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)





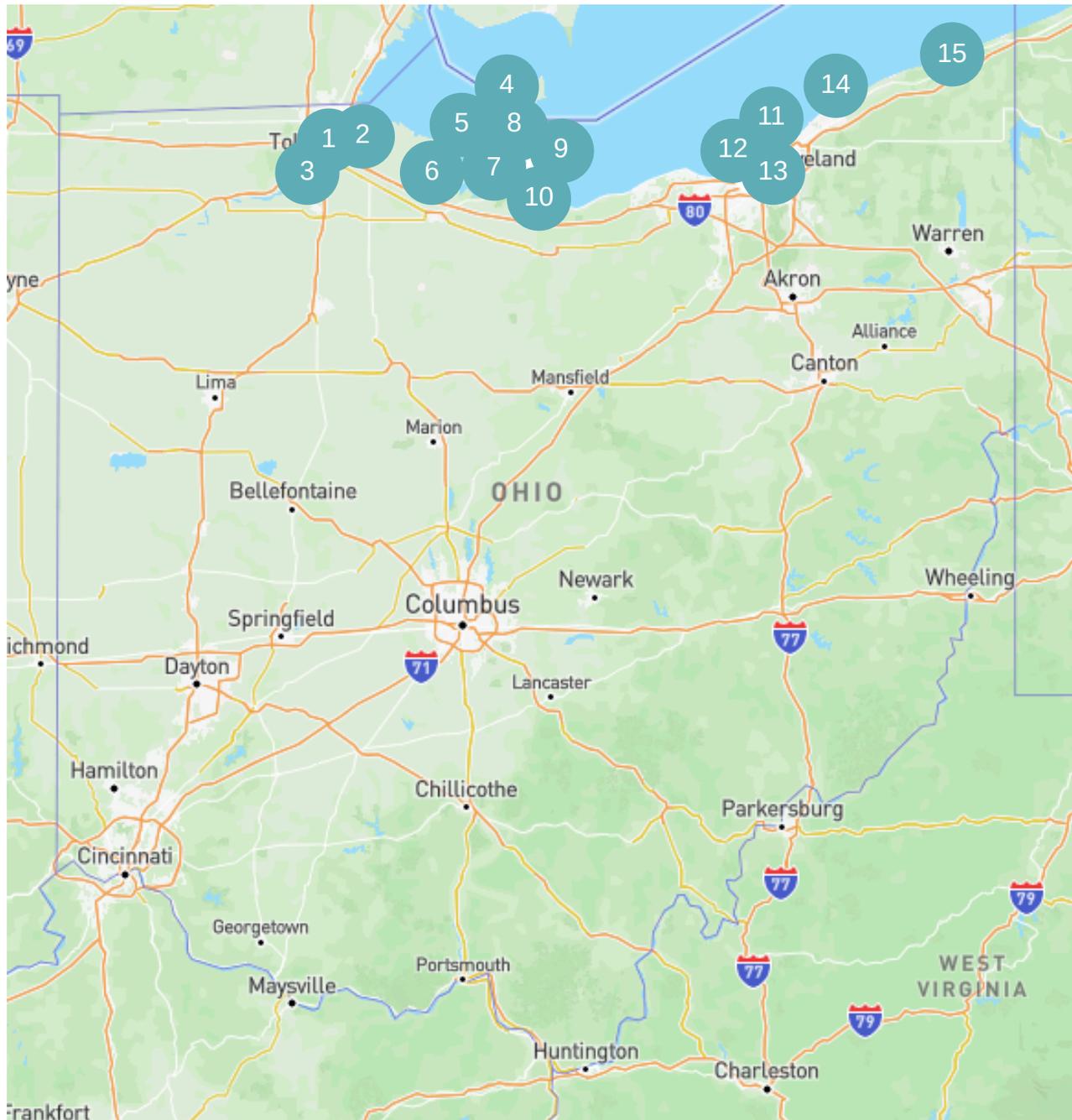
Lake Erie Museums & Historic Sites

maritime museums, museum ships, War of 1812 sites



Lake Erie's story is one of power, passage, and preservation. In the early 1800s, its waters were a strategic prize during the War of 1812, when Captain Oliver Hazard Perry's dramatic victory secured American control of the Great Lakes. As Ohio blossomed, Lake Erie became the heart of its commerce, linking inland canals to booming ports like Cleveland and Ashtabula. Freighters hauled stone, iron ore, coal, and grain while lighthouses and Morse code signals ensured safe passage. As cities rose along its shores, so did a rich maritime culture - from fishing fleets and passenger steamers to shipbuilding feats like the world's first electrically welded steel hull ship.

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Lake Erie Museums & Historic Sites

maritime museums, museum ships, War of 1812 sites



1 National Museum of the Great Lakes

Learn about Lake Erie's involvement in westward expansion and the War of 1812, and see lighthouses and navigational tools that made lake travel safer. Hear about environmental changes brought to the lake with industrialization and growing populations, and how efforts today work to keep the lake healthy. Be sure to visit the *Col. James M. Schoonmaker Museum Ship* and the *Museum Tug Ohio*, two vessels which traveled the Great Lakes, to experience the legacy of maritime travel.

Address: 1701 Front St., Toledo

Website: nmgj.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

2 Tony Packo's Cafe

Established in 1932, Tony Packo's reflects the immigrant communities who helped build Toledo through work in factories, rail yards, canals, and Lake Erie ports. Irish, German, Polish, and Hungarian laborers brought their skills, culture, and recipes, shaping the city's identity. Packo's famous Hungarian hot dogs became a local icon, symbolizing the blend of European heritage and American creativity. Don't miss the café's walls lined with signed buns—and be sure to mention the Lake Erie to Ohio Trail for a free cookie!

Address: 1902 Front St., Toledo

Website: tonypackos.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

3 Fort Meigs Historic Site

Step into the reconstructed largest wooden-walled fort in North America, where President William Henry Harrison commanded troops and Shawnee Chief Tecumseh helped stage a fake battle to beat the British. Located at the Foot of the Rapids of the Maumee River, Fort Meigs withstood two British attacks during the War of 1812. Experience musket demonstrations, visit blockhouses, and explore the museum at this 10-acre reconstructed fort.

Address: 29100 W. River Rd., Perrysburg

Website: fortmeigs.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Wood County Tourism](#)

4 Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial

Captain Oliver Hazard Perry rallied his crew during the Battle of the Great Lakes by saying, "Don't give up the ship," and his crew went on to win the battle. This naval victory secured American control of the Great Lakes during the War of 1812. The memorial was erected to honor these heroes. Explore exhibits about the battle and visit the top of the memorial to see one of the best views of the lake and the islands

Address: 93 Delaware Ave., Put-in-Bay

Website: nps.gov/pevi

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau](#)

5 Lake Erie Islands Historical Society and Museum

Tucked in the heart of Put-in-Bay, this museum offers an intimate glimpse into the spirited, resilient life of the islanders who've called these waters home for generations. Through engaging exhibits, rare artifacts, and historic photographs, the museum tells the story of a community shaped by fishing, shipping, tourism, and tradition. Discover the legacies of grape growers, ice harvesters, and ferry captains; explore the island's role in the War of 1812; and step into the charm and adventures of island living.

Address: 443 Catawba Ave., Put-in-Bay

Website: leihs.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau](#)

6 Oak Harbor Public Library, Local History & Museum

Generations of settlers transformed Oak Harbor at the timber-rich edge of the Great Black Swamp into a thriving river port and industrial hub. The swamp formed over 12,000 years ago, when retreating glaciers left behind a flat, clay-rich basin—once part of ancient Lake Maumee, a predecessor to Lake Erie. This land supported oak forests. Oak Harbor fueled Lake Erie's shipbuilding and steam-powered trade, later evolving into a vibrant agricultural and industrial community, as explored at the museum through artifacts and exhibits.

Address: 147 W. Main St., Oak Harbor

Website: oakharborpubliclibrary.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

7 Lakeside Chautauqua

Founded in 1873, Lakeside Chautauqua is one of Ohio's most enduring 19th-century lakefront retreats. Part of the national Chautauqua movement, it emerged during a time when Lake Erie's shores became popular destinations for leisure, learning, and spiritual renewal. The lake's cool breezes and beauty attracted visitors seeking escape from city life. Lakeside offered lectures, concerts, and religious gatherings in a picturesque setting, becoming a cultural hub. Its rich history reflects Lake Erie's role in shaping Ohio's recreational and intellectual life. Tour self-guided heritage trails and markers around the community to learn more.

Address: 236 Walnut Ave., Lakeside

Website: lakesideohio.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

8 Kelleys Island History Association Museum

The largest American island on Lake Erie, Kelleys Island blends natural beauty with a rich, rugged past. Museum guests explore the lives of quarry workers, fishermen, and winemakers who helped shape the island's identity. Exhibits highlight limestone industries, glacial grooves, and 19th-century lake resorts. During that era, Lake Erie islands and shoreline towns became popular retreat destinations, drawing visitors via steamboat and rail. These resorts offered scenic escapes, fresh air, and the promise of healing by water—part of a growing national movement that embraced nature, leisure, and the restorative power of Lake Erie's water.

Address: 224 Division St., Kelleys Island

Website: kelleysislandhistorical.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

9 The Kelleys Island German Reform Church

German immigrants worked the farms, fisheries, quarries, and more jobs on the island. They visited the church to meet, worship, seek solace, and find a little bit of home in a strange new world, as all services were conducted in German. The church was built of native limestone with ornate detailing and operated from 1865 until 1942.

Address: 224 Division St., Kelleys Island

Website: kelleysislandhistorical.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)





Lake Erie Museums & Historic Sites

maritime museums, museum ships, War of 1812 sites



10 Maritime Museum of Sandusky

Sandusky was an important port for shipbuilding, fishing, and lake trade. With its links to railroads and steamship lines, and its waterfront amusement park which opened in 1870, it was also a popular leisure destination. Discover the region's colorful history of shipbuilding, commercial fishing, ice harvesting, and its role on the Underground Railroad. Highlights include 19th-century schooner tools, passenger steamship models, and a restored 1939 Lyman runabout.

Address: 125 Meigs St., Sandusky

Website: sanduskymaritime.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

11 Steamship William G. Mather

See what life was like on a working 618-foot Great Lakes freighter. Guests explore the 1925-built freighter from stem to stern, witnessing its huge cargo holds, brass and oak pilot house, elegant guest quarters, captain's and crew quarters, galley room, and four-story engine room. Walk the decks overlooking the massive cargo doors, and marvel at the "engineering firsts" that helped the *Mather* transform Cleveland into a great industrial center. Guests choose from a self-guided tour, daily guided tours, or special Hard Hat Tours for a deeper look into the inner workings of the ship.

Address: 601 Erieside Ave., Cleveland

Website: greatscience.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

12 USS Cod Submarine Memorial

USS Cod is a WWII-era Navy submarine that represents the industrial heritage of great lakes manufacturing. Climb aboard and see a working periscope and a Navy torpedo built in Tiffin, Ohio in 1945. The submarine served as a naval training vessel on Lake Erie in Cleveland following World War II. Much of the steel and the five massive diesel engines aboard *Cod* were built in Cleveland. The *USS Cod* is one of the finest restored submarines in the country and the only one to feature original doorways and stairways.

Address: 1201 N. Marginal Rd., Cleveland. Located between E. 9th Street and Burke Lakefront Airport, about 1,000 feet east of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Website: usscod.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

13 Merwin's Wharf

Merwin's Wharf sits on the post-industrial site of Cleveland's Flats neighborhood. A once-booming industrial site, Merwin's Wharf helps show the importance of Ohio's waterways to Cleveland's industry. Proximity to Lake Erie and the Ohio & Erie Canal led businesses to easier transport their goods. A Cleveland Metropark property, the wharf has paddling access, nearby parks and historic cruises along the Cuyahoga River.

Address: 1785 Merwin Ave., Cleveland

Website: clevelandmetroparks.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

14 Fairport Harbor Marine Museum and Lighthouse

The museum tells the rich and dynamic story of one of Ohio's most historic Great Lakes ports. In the early 1800s, Fairport was a key entry point for settlers heading into the Western Reserve. It was so vital, in fact, that nearby Painesville outpaced Cleveland in population by 1820. The harbor became a major fueling and supply stop for ships bound for the upper Great Lakes, carrying thousands of immigrants westward. Shipbuilding and trade thrived, connecting northeast Ohio to national markets.

Address: 129 Second St., Fairport Harbor

Website: fairportharborlighthouse.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

15 Ashtabula Maritime & Surface Transportation Museum

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ashtabula thrived as a hub for coal and iron ore shipping, linking Great Lakes freighters to inland rail lines. Immigrants from Europe fueled the city's booming docks, rail yards, and ironworks. The museum, housed in the former lightkeeper's home, showcases the city's role in maritime trade, rail transport, and the immigrant labor that shaped Ashtabula's identity and industrial strength. Outside of the museum, see the first electrically welded steel hull ship in the world, built locally. No trip is complete without exploring the pilot house from the Steamer *Thomas Walters*.

Address: 1071 Walnut Blvd., Ashtabula

Website: ashtabulamaritime.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau](#)





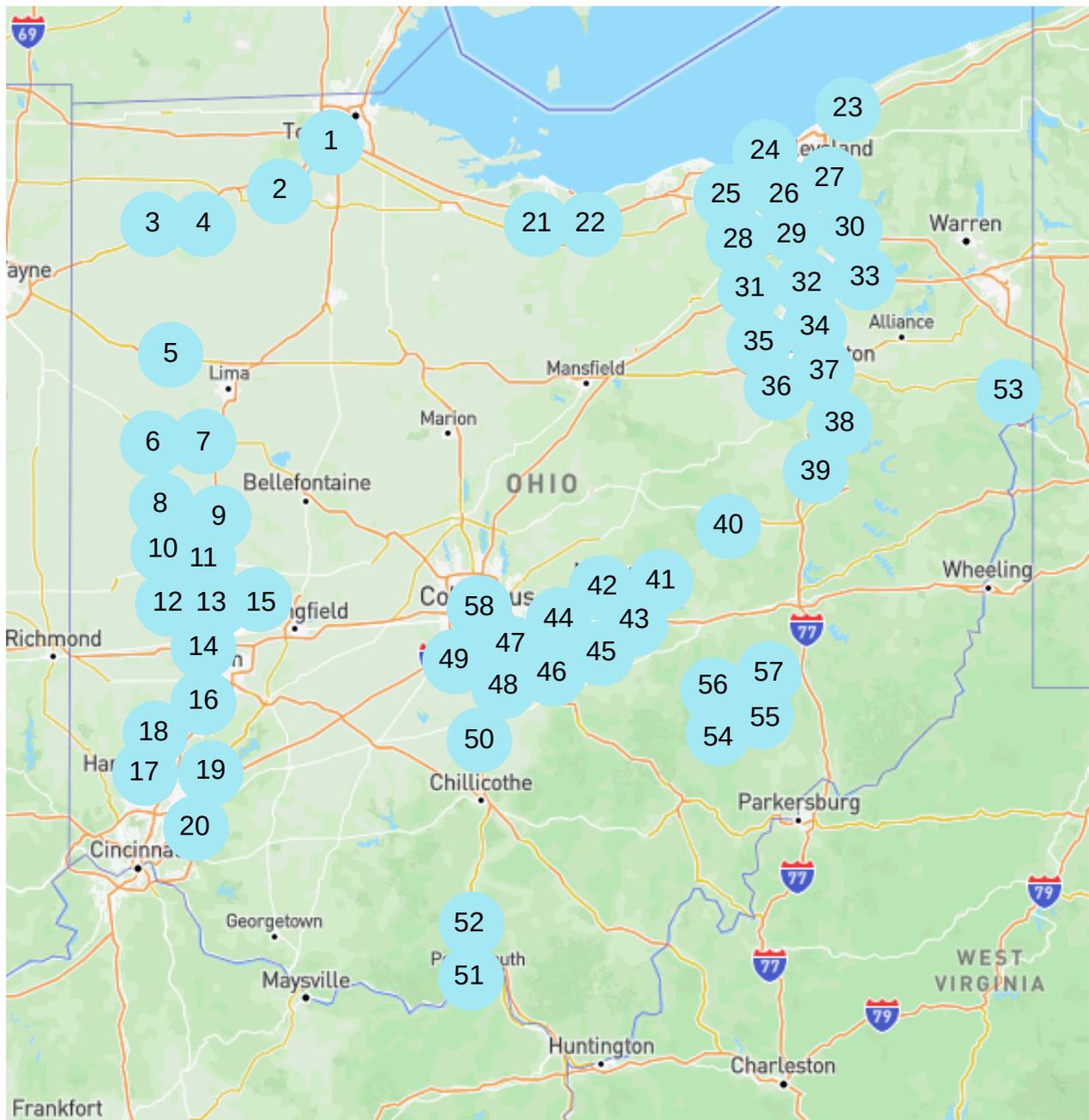
Canal Locks, Sites, & Natural Areas

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



Ohio's canal system was a 19th-century engineering marvel that transformed the state into a commercial powerhouse. The Ohio & Erie Canal and Miami & Erie Canal connected Lake Erie to the Ohio River, linking Ohio to global markets via the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Hand-dug, these canals featured towpaths, stone locks, and aqueducts - allowing boats to traverse rugged terrain and elevation changes. Canals reduced transport costs, accelerated settlement, and boosted industries like farming and manufacturing. Towns flourished along their routes, and the "Big Ditch" era laid the groundwork for Ohio's rapid economic and population growth.

Please confirm days and hours of operation, as some sites have limited access. You may also want to plan visits around demonstrations and workshops. Please refer to each site's website for information.



Map provides general location and should not be used for navigational purposes. Visit the Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail website for more information and mapping.



Canal Locks, Sites, & Natural Areas

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



Miami & Erie Canal

274-mile canal connecting Toledo (Lake Erie) and Cincinnati (Ohio River)

1 Wolcott Heritage Center

Step back in time as you explore Ohio's historic canal era through the lens of James Wolcott's legacy. A savvy merchant and shipbuilder, Wolcott recognized the transformative potential of the canal system and built his stately 14-room Federal-style mansion along the Maumee River between 1827 and 1836. These canals connected communities and commerce, fueling regional growth. As you tour the grounds, uncover how these waterways shaped local industry and glimpse the daily life of a family bridging both Native American and European American heritage.

Address: 1035 River Rd. Maumee

Website: wolcotthouse.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

2 The Canal Experience at Providence Metropark

Enjoy a 1.5-mile journey along the restored banks of the Miami & Erie Canal while hearing canal tales and passing through the original working Lock 44. First-person interpreters focus storytelling efforts on ensuring visitors understand the importance of canal transportation by creating characters from historical accounts. Make sure to visit *The Volunteer*, a mule-drawn canal boat reconstruction, and the Isaac Ludwig Mill, a working water-powered saw and gristmill.

Address: 13205 S. River Rd., Grand Rapids

Website: metroparkstoledo.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

3 Miami & Erie Canal Lock #37

Towed by horse or mule teams, canal boats traveled about six miles an hour. A trip from Defiance to Cincinnati took six days, a remarkable achievement at the time. In the middle of downtown Defiance, Lock #37 has been restored. Visit the nearby Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum to learn about the impacts of the canal system in Defiance.

Address: 309 Perry St., Defiance

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Defiance Development & Visitors Bureau](#)

4 Independence Dam State Park

Located along the Maumee River, Independence Dam State Park preserves a vital stretch of the Miami and Erie Canal. Explore the remains of Lock #13, walk or bike 7 miles of original towpath trail, and cross the historic Independence Dam, once key to feeding the canal system. The park also features scenic river views, remnant old-growth forests, and a War of 1812 marker honoring fallen soldiers from nearby Fort Winchester. Ideal for history buffs, hikers, paddlers, and birders alike.

Address: 27722 State Route 424, Defiance

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Defiance Development & Visitors Bureau](#)

5 Delphos Canal Museum

Delphos served as a prominent port on the Miami & Erie Canal. Many canal boat owners and captains lived in Delphos, and farmers shipped their goods along the canal. See the excavated hull of the canal boat *Marguerite*, which is believed to be the only authentic canal boat remains on display anywhere. Visit a recreation of a captain's cabin and explore the photo collection of Delphos during the canal era.

Address: 241 N. Main St., Delphos

Website: delphoscanalcommission.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Greater Lima](#)

6 Grand Lake St. Marys State Park and Canal

Once the world's largest manmade lake, Grand Lake St. Marys was engineered in the 1840s as a massive reservoir to supply the Miami & Erie Canal. This shallow, sprawling lake helped maintain water levels across the canal's summit near St. Marys, enabling cargo boats to travel between Cincinnati and Toledo. Today, visitors enjoy boating, fishing, and camping along its shores while standing on the shoulders of a grand feat of water engineering that once powered Ohio's prosperity.

Address: 834 Edgewater Dr., St. Marys

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Greater Grand Lake Region Visitors Center](#)

7 Belle of St. Marys Canal Boat

At the heart of Memorial Park sits the *Belle of St. Marys* Canal Boat, showing the rich canal history in St. Marys. The boat was placed in the canal in 1990 and reconstructed in 2002 following water damage. The boat now sits on a cement block and allows visitors to explore the inside of the boat, stepping into the history that helped settle St. Marys.

Address: 129 E. Spring St., St. Marys

Website: cityofstmarys.net/facilities

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Greater Grand Lake Region Visitors Center](#)

8 Lake Loramie State Park

Originally built to feed the Miami & Erie Canal, Lake Loramie was one of several carefully managed reservoirs that sustained navigation across Ohio's flat and often dry western terrain. From here, waters flowed south toward the Great Miami River and ultimately to the Ohio River. As you paddle or picnic along the lake's quiet shoreline today, it's easy to imagine the steady movement of canal boats and the network of locks, aqueducts, and feeder channels that kept Ohio's inland trade alive.

Address: 4401 Fort Loramie-Swanders Rd., Minster

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Greater Grand Lake Region Visitors Center](#)

9 Wallace Family Learning & Innovation Center

The economic development of Shelby County depended on the Miami & Erie Canal. German immigrants settled the area following the canal's construction and freed people traveled the canal to freedom. In the Onward and Upward Gallery an interactive map details these new citizens arrivals and shares the story of the Miami & Erie Canal in Shelby County.

Address: 115 E. North St., Sidney

Website: shelbycountyhistory.org/learningcenter

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Sidney Visitors Bureau](#)

10 Lockington Locks

The Miami & Erie Canal's elevation changed rapidly while approaching Lockington from the north, so a system of five stone locks was placed to help safely and slowly lower the canal boats to the new elevation. These locks are still visible and accessible via the towpath trail, which is part of the greater Ohio Buckeye Trail and the North Country Scenic Trail.

Address: Museum Trail & Cross Trail, Lockington

Website: ohiohistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Sidney Visitors Bureau](#)





Canal Locks & Sites

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



11 Johnston Farm & Indian Agency

Before European explorers, the land of the Agency was occupied by Indigenous peoples. In 1804, John Johnston purchased the land and kept good company with the Indigenous people living in the area. Visit the restored Johnston property, featuring one of the oldest and largest log barns in Ohio. Learn about the fur trade and the impact of the Miami & Erie Canal. Be sure to catch a ride on the *General Harrison* Canal Boat.

Address: 9845 N. Hardin Rd., Piqua

Website: johnstonfarmohio.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau](#)

12 Lock 9 Park

Visit the Lock 9 remnants of the Miami & Erie Canal at the heart of the park. Locks numbers along the Miami & Erie Canal appear out of sequence because the canal was built in disconnected phases - each with different planners - leading to overlapping or skipped numbers. This park offers hands-on experiences with a performance pavilion, trailhead access to two historic trails, and the installation of love locks.

Address: 125 E. Water St., Piqua

Website: piquaoh.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau](#)

13 Miami & Erie Canal - Footprint of Lock 12

Lock 12 opened in 1837 with General William Henry Harrison in attendance. It was one of 105 locks that managed water elevations along the 274-mile canal. The Miami & Erie Canal brought prosperity to Troy, with new trade markets opening and more people moving to the area. Railroads and flooding led to the canal's demise. When the canal stopped operations, a building was built over the canal, which has since been razed. Visit the footprint monument that uses some of the original lock stones.

Address: 439 N. Elm St., Troy

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau](#)

14 Canal Lock Park

Canal Lock Park in Tipp City sits on a preserved dry lock from the Miami and Erie Canal, built in the 1830s to connect Cincinnati and Toledo. A replica canal boat and the historic Tipp Roller Mill reflect the area's role in Ohio's early agricultural and industrial growth. This lock, built between 1833-1837, helped launch regional commerce and settlement. Nearby, original buildings from the canal-era boom still stand, reminding visitors how the canal transformed Ohio's economy and communities.

Address: 325 E. Main St., Tipp City

Website: downtown Tipp City.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau](#)

15 Indian Creek Distillery LLC

Ohio's canal systems once linked inland businesses to distant markets - including New Orleans, a top destination for whiskey from this historic distillery. Visit the site of Ohio's oldest original standing grist mill and the nation's earliest canal-side distillery, founded by the Staley family. Explore pioneer-era agricultural and industrial equipment, original shipping tools, and authentic whiskey barrels. Distilling has returned to the site using the original copper pot stills - the oldest still operating in the U.S. - reviving a 100-year family legacy.

Address: 7095 Staley Rd., New Carlisle

Website: indiancreekdistillery.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau](#)

16 Carillon Historical Park

Step into the past at Carillon Historical Park, where the toll collector once tallied the passage of passengers and freight, and the canal superintendent enforced order along the bustling waterway. Visit a Canal Superintendent's office and explore Lock 17, nestled along a preserved section of the Miami & Erie Canal. Stroll the reconstructed trail beside the canal bed, where hoofprints etched in the path evoke the steady rhythm of mules and horses that once powered this artery of commerce.

Address: 1000 Carillon Blvd., Dayton

Website: daytonhistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Dayton](#)

17 Canal Model & Port Middletown Mural

A standout feature in Middletown was its rare hydraulic lock, which used water pressure to help raise and lower boats - an engineering innovation for its time. This made navigation more efficient and reliable. Middletown became a key hub for transporting goods like pig iron, paper, and crops, linking local industry to wider markets and cementing its status as a 19th-century center of commerce. A mural brings to life the canal days, featuring a replica canal model of a water feature in front of the mural.

Address: 1131 Central Ave., Middletown

Website: middletownhistoricalsociety.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Travel Butler County](#)

18 The Canal Museum

The Canal Museum was built as a replica of a lock keeper's house. It sits on the site of the former Miami & Erie Canal and the Hydraulic Canal. Middletown's hydraulic lock used pressurized water, unlike traditional gravity-fed locks, and was part of a hydraulic race system. This diverted water to power turbines for local industries like paper and steel, making Middletown both a vital canal transport hub and an early center of industrial activity.

Address: 1605 N. Verity Pkwy., Middletown

Website: middletownhistoricalsociety.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Travel Butler County](#)

Warren Canal

20-mile canal feeder connecting the Miami & Erie Canal at Middletown to Lebanon

19 Harmon Museum: Art, History, Culture

The Warren Canal was a feeder to the Miami & Erie Canal. Built in the mid-1830s, the Warren County Canal aimed to boost commerce by allowing goods such as grain, pork, and lumber from the interior to reach markets via the Miami & Erie Canal. Like many feeder canals, it was narrower and shallower, and faced issues with water supply and maintenance. Learn about its construction and impact at this museum.

Address: 105 S. Broadway St., Lebanon

Website: wchsmuseum.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)





Canal Locks & Sites

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



20 Little Miami State Park - O'Bannon Creek Bridge Area

This scenic stretch of Little Miami State Park highlights the transportation legacy of the Little Miami River corridor. Near the O'Bannon Creek Bridge, remnants of the Warren County Canal - an extension of the Miami & Erie Canal - once connected riverboats in the Little Miami to Ohio's canal system. Today, cyclists and hikers follow the same route where goods once moved by mule-drawn boats. Interpretive signs and the restored rail-trail honor the area's layered past of canals, railroads, and river trade.

Address: 2093 S. State Route 66, Morrow

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

Milan Canal

Three-mile canal feeder connecting Milan to the Huron River which emptied into Lake Erie

21 The Milan Museum

The Milan Museum tells the fascinating story of the Milan Canal. While most canals were relatively shallow, the Milan Canal was dug deep enough for lake schooners. Linking Milan to Lake Erie, the canal allowed large lake schooners to travel inland, directly into the village, bringing in goods and exporting local products like grain and lumber. The canal turned Milan into one of the busiest inland ports in Ohio and supported a thriving shipbuilding industry that shaped the region's economy.

Address: 10 Edison Dr., Milan

Website: milanmuseum.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

22 Thomas Edison Birthplace Museum

At its peak, Milan was one of the busiest inland grain ports in the world, second only to Odessa, Ukraine, in volume. Growing up alongside this hub of activity, young Thomas Edison was undoubtedly shaped by the industry and innovation around him. Thomas Edison went on to become one of the world's most prolific inventors, securing 1,093 U.S. patents during his lifetime and leaving a lasting impact on modern society.

Address: 9 Edison Dr., Milan

Website: tomedison.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

Ohio & Erie Canal

308-mile canal connecting Cleveland (Lake Erie) to Portsmouth (Ohio River)

23 James A. Garfield National Historic Site

Before becoming a Union Army General and the 20th President of the United States, James A. Garfield worked as a hoggee - a person who led mules along the Ohio & Erie Canal. His early experiences on the canal shaped his work ethic and connection to Ohio's developing infrastructure. During the era of westward expansion, Garfield played a key role in state and national politics, championing Ohio and other western states as prime destinations for settlers. Discover more about his canal work and political legacy by visiting the Garfield family home.

Address: 8095 Mentor Ave., Mentor

Website: nps.gov/jaga

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

24 Canal Basin Park

Canal Basin Park is the northern terminus of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. This spot along the Cuyahoga River is where the canal and river met. When the canal was complete in 1832, the canal basin is where Cleveland's agricultural products were shipped eastward to New York City and where the manufactured items were unloaded for Cleveland consumers. Interpretive signage and trailheads guide you through the layered history of this canal-to-lake corridor—a story of engineering, industry, and the power of water to shape a region.

Address: 989 West St., Cleveland

Website: ohioanderiecanalway.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

25 CanalWay Center

The CanalWay Center offers a compelling look at how humans have shaped the natural environment. Through interactive exhibits and hands-on displays, visitors explore the legacy of the Ohio & Erie Canal, industrial development, and land restoration. The center highlights how waterways were rerouted, landscapes transformed, and ecosystems altered for transportation and commerce—while also showcasing ongoing efforts to heal and preserve the environment through green spaces, habitat restoration, and sustainable park management.

Address: 4524 E. 49th St., Cleveland

Website: clevelandmetroparks.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

26 Canal Exploration Center

Explore two floors of hands-on exhibits designed for both children and adults. Interact with maps and games to discover why the growing nation and Ohio needed canals. Learn about people who lived and worked along the canals. Step into the 1800s and hear debates on who the public works project benefited and how it brought changes in immigration, jobs, and daily life.

Address: 7104 Canal Rd., Valley View

Website: nps.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

27 Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

The Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail travels more than 90 miles from Cleveland to Bolivar, following the path taken by mules pulling canal boats from 1827 to 1913. Wayside exhibits describe the natural and historic locations along the trail. Visit the Tinkers Creek Aqueduct, Wilson Feed Mill, and Canal Exploration Center while traveling down the trail. Historic canal towns retaining their historic charm also welcome visitors along the trail.

Address: 7104 Canal Rd., Valley View

Website: ohioanderiecanalway.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#), [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#), [Visit Canton](#), and [Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)





Canal Locks & Sites

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



28 Cuyahoga Valley National Park

The park stretches from Independence in the north to Akron in the south, following the course of the Cuyahoga River and the historic Ohio & Erie Canal. This corridor includes a mix of forested hills, canal-era villages, and river floodplain, managed in partnership with the National Park Service and local communities. Today, Cuyahoga Valley National Park preserves that historic corridor, inviting visitors to bike the Towpath Trail, ride the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and explore restored locks and canal-era villages. The river still flows, the towpath still guides, and the land continues to tell the story of how water fueled Ohio's growth.

Address: 15610 Vaughn Rd., Brecksville

Website: nps.gov/cuva

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#) and [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

29 Boston Mill Visitor Center

Located at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the Boston Mill Visitor Center is a beautifully restored 1905 general store. Boston was a significant stop along the Ohio & Erie Canal, and the towpath still runs just steps away from the visitor center. During the canal era of the 1800s, Boston thrived as a port and mill town, with boats carrying goods and passengers along the waterway. The village also had a lock, mill, and several businesses tied to canal operations.

Address: 6947 Riverview Rd., Peninsula

Website: nps.gov/cuva

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

30 Mustill Store Museum

Learn about Akron's rise from frontier to an industrial power along historic Lock 15. As part of the Cascade Locks system, the Mustill Store served as an important canal stop. Tour the Cascade Locks and mills by following interpretive signage along the supporting trails. The Mustills owned this former grocery and butcher shop, which served Lock 15 patrons as they traveled down the canal. As the last remaining residence-and-store combo on the canal, it once served as a bustling hub for mule-towed canal traffic - sometimes up to 70 boats a day.

Address: 57 W. North St., Akron

Website: cascadelocks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

31 Lock 3 Park

Akron relied on the Ohio & Erie Canal to bring in companies that helped settle the area. The American Marble & Toy Manufacturing Company was founded in 1884, right along the edge of Lock 3. This area was ideal for receiving material and shipping products quickly. The park today sits in downtown Akron, around many historic and performance sites, continuing the legacy of this area being at the center of everything.

Address: 200 S. Main St., Akron

Website: akronohio.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

32 Akron History Center

Located beside Lock 4 on the historic Towpath of the Ohio & Erie Canal, the Akron History Center houses 3,000 square feet of immersive exhibits that trace Akron's origins to the canal era. On the lowest level, a grand floor map from 1899 reveals the precise canal routes that fueled Akron's 19th-century boom. Explore stories of early settlers - like Simon Perkins - and the vital role canals played in industry, abolition, and social change.

Address: 172 S. Main St., Akron

Website: akronhistorycenter.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

33 Richard Howe House Visitor Center

Richard Howe was the Chief Resident Engineer of the Ohio & Erie Canal between Cleveland and Massillon. Visit the home which served as offices for the Ohio & Erie Canal to control operations on the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Learn about the life of Richard Howe and watch presentations regarding the Ohio & Erie Canal.

Address: 47 W. Exchange St., Akron

Website: ohioeriecanal.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

34 Portage Lakes State Park

A web of glacial lakes south of Akron, Portage Lakes once served as crucial reservoirs feeding the summit level of the Ohio & Erie Canal. Their waters enabled canal boats to pass from Lake Erie to the Ohio River by maintaining water levels at the system's highest elevation. Today, these lakes are a haven for boating, fishing, and paddling—but beneath the surface lies a hidden canal story, where natural lakes became vital tools of transportation and trade.

Address: 5031 Manchester Rd., Akron

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

35 Locks 2 & 3

Visit Locks 2 & 3 to learn the local history of the area and how the Ohio & Erie Canal influenced the area. Follow the trail on bike or on foot to see the locks and the path of the canal. Lock 2 served as the site of a coal-loading operation, the Old Messenger Coal Slip. This operation carried seven to eight boats of coal a day from Rogues Hollow.

Address: 2749 North St., Clinton

Website: downtownakron.com/go/lock-2

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Akron/Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

36 Canal Fulton - Canalway Center

The arrival of the Ohio & Erie Canal in Canal Fulton allowed local farmers and manufacturers to expand their markets faster and more affordably than ever before. The Canalway Center features the McLaughlin Dry Dock, Lock 4, and a Lockman's house within a mile of the center, so there is plenty to see during your visit. Ride the Helena III Canal Boat, pulled by two horses, and hosted by a historian sharing the history of the canals, boat, and area.

Address: 123 Tuscarawas St. NW., Canal Fulton

Website: ohioanderiecanalway.com/plan/listings/canal-fulton-canalway-center/

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Canton](#)

37 Old Canal Days Museum

Known to locals as "the biggest little museum in the U.S.A." see unique artifacts from Canal Fulton and photographs depicting life along the Ohio & Erie Canal. Learn about the daily life of those in Canal Fulton during the canal's heyday.

Address: 103 Tuscarawas St. W., Canal Fulton

Website: cfheritage.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Canton](#)





Canal Locks & Sites

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



38 Zoar Village

Step into 19th-century life at Zoar Village, where German separatists carved out a thriving communal society—and where the Ohio & Erie Canal transformed their future. Completed through Zoar in the 1830s, the canal brought much-needed income and connection to the outside world. Villagers worked as skilled laborers and engineers on the canal, which in turn fueled Zoar's economic stability. Today, walk the canal's path, explore preserved buildings, and discover how water shaped the resilience and prosperity of this remarkable community.

Address: 198 Main St., Zoar

Website: historiczoarvillage.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)

39 Reeves Museum/Dover Historical Society

Dover played a major role in Ohio's canal system. Its mills, warehouses, and boatyards supported broader canal operations, earning it the name "Canal Dover." From the 1830s to 1870s, it served as a vital toll point. At the Carriage House Museum, learn about the development of the canal, life on the canal, and the Flood of 1913, which ended use of the canal in Dover.

Address: 325 E. Iron Ave., Dover

Website: doverhistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)

40 Roscoe Village

Step into an authentic 1830s canal port where the Ohio & Erie Canal first arrived on Aug. 21, 1830, turning this once-quiet settlement into one of its largest wheat hubs along the canal. Explore restored triple-locks, chat with costumed artisans in historic buildings, and drift along the water on a horse-towed canal boat replica. Today's living history tours, hands-on crafts, shops, events, and gardens celebrate the town that rose along the Ohio & Erie Canal.

Address: 600 N. Whitewoman St., Coshocton

Website: roscoevillage.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Coshocton Visitors Bureau](#)

41 Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve

Cut through solid sandstone by the Licking River, Blackhand Gorge became a natural corridor for both the Ohio & Erie Canal and early railroads. As boats passed through hand-carved canal towpaths along the gorge walls, travelers marveled at this dramatic meeting of water and stone. Today, visitors hike the same route where river, canal, and rail once competed for space—each drawn by the same narrow, powerful passageway.

Address: 2200 Gratiot Rd. SE., Newark

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Explore Licking County](#)

42 Buckeye Lake State Park

Ohio's first state park surrounds a manmade lake built as a feeder reservoir for the Ohio & Erie Canal. Buckeye Lake once kept water levels stable for canal boats traveling between Lake Erie and the Ohio River. Today, its wide, sparkling waters support boating and recreation, but echoes of its canal roots remain. Walk the towpath, visit historic locks, and imagine this inland lake as a vital engine powering Ohio's canal era.

Address: 2871 Liebs Island Rd. NE., Millersport

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Explore Licking County](#) and [Visit Fairfield County](#)

43 Millersport Canal Deep Cut

Marvel at the Millersport "Deep Cut"—a dramatic 32-foot-deep trench carved through the Licking Summit between 1825–1831 to connect Buckeye Lake reservoir to the Ohio & Erie Canal. Carved by Irish immigrant laborers wielding picks, wheelbarrows, and oxcarts, this two-mile cut stands as one of Ohio's most daring canal engineering feats. Once bustling with up to 3,000 canal boats annually, today it offers scenic views, interpretive signage, and links to recreation and reflection along a storied waterway.

Address: 12080 Lancaster St., Millersport

Website: visitfairfieldcounty.org/listings/the-millersport-canal/

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Fairfield County](#)

44 Baltimore Community Museum

Nestled in the heart of "Canal Baltimore," the museum celebrates how the Ohio & Erie Canal transformed this village. Discover immersive exhibits on the eight local locks, the expansive canal basin that powered mills and warehouses, and fierce rivalries with neighboring towns. Stroll through recreated period settings, explore artifacts, and learn how canal water fueled industry—shaping the community's identity and prosperity.

Address: 209 Market St., Baltimore

Website: baltimorehistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Fairfield County](#)

45 Lock South 8 - Bibler Lock

The remains of the Bibler Lock are quietly tucked away behind the Baltimore Wastewater Plant and in 2018 became one of nine Ohio & Erie Canal locks to become part of the National Register of Historic Places. During the heyday of the canals, Bibler Lock served as a skating rink during the winter when the canal was not operating. This is the best-preserved lock in the area and there are still active efforts to continue to preserve the lock.

Address: 2005 Basil Western Rd., Baltimore

Website: visitfairfieldcounty.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Fairfield County](#)

46 Lockville Canal Park

Lockville Canal Park preserves three consecutive stone locks (11, 12, and 13) and a covered bridge along a quiet stretch of the Ohio & Erie Canal. Fed by the waters of the Hocking River and surrounding creeks, this area once teemed with traffic as boats navigated the narrow channel. Today, it offers a contemplative walk among ruins and restored structures, where water once carved a path of prosperity through Ohio's heartland.

Address: 5895 Pickerington Rd., Carroll

Website: fairfieldcountyparks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Fairfield County](#)

47 Groveport Canal Lock 22 & Dry Lock

This impressive sandstone structure stretches 117-ft-long, with a 16-ft-wide, 10-ft-deep chamber, once guiding boats over changing terrain. Adjacent lies the former dry dock and boatyard (now Blacklick Park), echoing a once-thriving maintenance hub where canal boats were repaired. Originally a key commercial artery, the lock supported freight, transport, and even leisure - fishing, rowing, ice skating—before the canal's decline. Today, visitors enjoy a short canal-side hike, interpretive signage, picnic spots, playgrounds, and serene pond views - all while walking through a storied slice of Ohio's engineering legacy.

Address: 7370 Groveport Rd. / 744 Blacklick St., Groveport

Website: groveport.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Experience Columbus](#)





Canal Locks & Sites

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



48 Sharp's Landing

Sharp's Landing served as a docking site for canal boats along the Ohio & Erie Canal in the 19th century. The three major sections of the stop were used as a smokehouse, bakery, and icehouse for travelers to access and get items they would need for their journey. Visit these rooms to learn about life in the mid-1800s with mannequins that teach how the shops served the community and the canals.

Address: 536 Wirt Rd., Groveport

Website: groveport.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Experience Columbus](#)

49 Lock Meadow Park

Lock Meadow Park highlights a unique chapter of Ohio's canal history. Located where the Ohio & Erie Canal made a crucial elevation change, Lockbourne featured multiple locks in close succession - unusual engineering for the time. This made the village a key control point for canal traffic. Today, trails wind through meadows near Lock 30, with interpretive signs telling how Lockbourne's clustered locks shaped its growth. The park offers a peaceful blend of nature, history, and engineering innovation along the Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail.

Address: 154 Commerce St., Lockbourne

Website: lockbourneohio.us

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Pickaway County Visitors Bureau](#)

50 Canal Park

Unlike canal sections in hillier regions that required multiple locks or complex engineering, the Circleville stretch was relatively flat, allowing for long, straight prism segments with minimal lock interference. This made it a faster, more efficient shipping route, ideal for moving agricultural goods from Pickaway County farms.

Address: 23352 Canal Rd., Circleville

Website: pickawaycountyparks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Pickaway County Visitors Bureau](#)

51 Union Flour Mill & Distillery and Canal Lock 50

The Ohio & Erie Canal brought many businesses to settle along its path, including many in West Portsmouth. The Union Flour Mill & Distillery land formerly hosted a grist mill, distillery, and many other shops, and was a flurry of activity during the canal era. The mill processed corn for flour and feed, which was later turned into whiskey at the distillery.

Address: 1120 Galena Pike, West Portsmouth

Website: sciotoheritagetrail.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)

52 Canal Lock 48

Part of the Ohio & Erie Canal, Lock 48 is one of the few remaining remnants of the transportation system. The lock's location just north of the Scioto River brought large numbers of people and ideas to the area. The McDermott Stone Company was founded because of the access that the river and canal brought to the area.

Address: 8595 OH-104, McDermott

Website: sciotoheritagetrail.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)

Sandy & Beaver Canal

73-mile feeder canal planned to run from Bolivar into Pennsylvania

53 Beaver Creek State Park

Set in the sandstone hills of eastern Ohio, Beaver Creek State Park showcases the legacy of the Sandy & Beaver Canal, a 73-mile route once intended to link with the Ohio & Erie Canal. Though never fully completed, its eastern section briefly operated—and today, visitors can see Lusk's Lock, the canal's largest and most ornate. Explore the restored Gaston's Mill (1837), a hands-on pioneer village, and hike along Little Beaver Creek, a National Wild and Scenic River shaped by four Ice Ages.

Address: 12021 Echo Dell Rd., East Liverpool

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Columbiana County](#)

Muskingum Side Cut Canal & Navigation System

The Muskingum Side Cut Canal (built in the 1830s) connected the Ohio & Erie Canal at Dresden to the Muskingum River at Zanesville. The locks in McConnelsville were part of the Muskingum River Navigation System, constructed shortly after (1837–1841) to make the Muskingum River itself navigable from Zanesville to Marietta. Together, they enabled seamless water transportation across canal and river systems—making it possible to travel and ship goods from Cleveland (Lake Erie) all the way to Marietta (on the Ohio River) entirely by water.

54 Rokeby Lock #8

Rokeby Lock #8 was an important stop along the Muskingum Locks & Dam system to help increase transportation to the Ohio River. During the American Civil War, Confederate Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan and his raiders didn't follow the Ohio & Erie Canal, but their route crossed or paralleled canal-era towns and infrastructure, especially in southern Ohio and the Muskingum Valley. Their path reflected the same strategic corridors shaped by the canal - river valleys, roads, and key trade hubs.

Address: 698 N. Riverside Dr., McConnelsville

Website: ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/muskingum-river-state-park

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Morgan County Ohio](#)

55 Morgan County Historical Society Museum

Dive into life along the Muskingum River at the Morgan County Historical Society Museum. While not on the Ohio & Erie Canal, McConnelsville thrived because of the Muskingum River locks and dams built shortly thereafter, allowing steamboats and flatboats to navigate downstream grain and lumber commerce. The museum's exhibits trace the rise of river travel, local industry, pioneer families, and regional heritage. Don't miss the satellite site at Lock #7, spotlighting riverboat stopping points and engineering feats that connected Morgan County to broader 19th-century markets.

Address: 168 E. Main St., McConnelsville

Website: ohio.org/things-to-do

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Morgan County Ohio](#)





Canal Locks & Sites

Miami & Erie Canal, Ohio & Erie Canal, canal locks



56 Muskingum River Locks & Dam

The lock system on the Muskingum River helped boats safely bypass ten dams along the Muskingum River from Zanesville south to where the Muskingum meets the Ohio River in Marietta. It is one of only two remaining systems of hand-operated locks in the nation. Originally, there were 11 operating locks, but only 10 still operate today. These locks offer recreational and sightseeing opportunities for visitors.

Address: *N. Riverside Dr., McConnelsville*

Website: ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/muskingum-river-state-park

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Morgan County Ohio](#)

57 Miner's Memorial Park at Jesse Owens State Park

Set within reclaimed mining land, Miner's Memorial Park honors Ohio's coal heritage and its vital role in canal and lake transportation. In the 1800s and early 1900s, coal from this region was shipped by canal boat and barge to the Ohio & Erie Canal and Lake Erie ports. Visitors can see the giant Big Muskie bucket, explore tributes to mining families, and reflect on this industry's impact. Nearby, Jesse Owens State Park offers fishing, hiking, and scenic views of restored landscapes.

Address: *4470 State Route 78, McConnelsville*

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Morgan County Ohio](#)

Additional Site

58 Ohio History Center

Many Ohio History Connection sites across Ohio relate to canal history, and the Ohio History Center holds canal maps, models, and interpretive materials that help tell the story of Ohio's canals. Visit the Archives to research canal history and learn more details not addressed at smaller canal historic sites.

Address: *800 E. 17th St., Columbus*

Website: ohiohistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Experience Columbus](#)





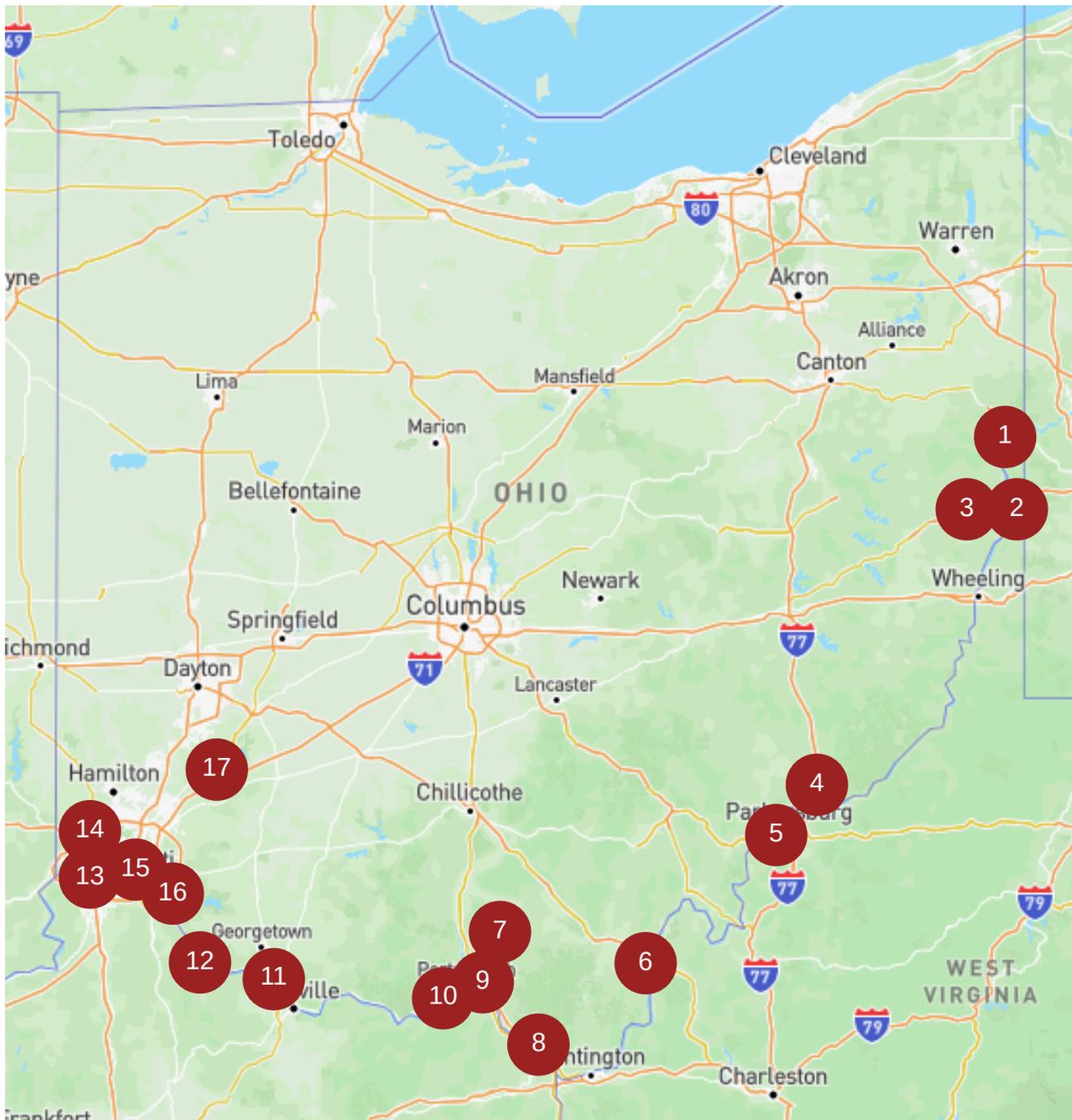
Ohio River Museums & Historic Sites

ancient sites, early settlement sites and nation-building museums, freedom seeker sites



The Ohio River has long served as a lifeline and landmark - defining Ohio's southern border while shaping its history and identity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was a gateway to the western frontier, carrying settlers, goods, and ideas. The river marked the boundary between slave and free states, making it a critical route for freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Riverboats and ferries fueled commerce and connected communities, helping cities like Cincinnati and Marietta thrive. Today, the Ohio River remains vital - supporting transportation, tourism, and recreation, while echoing stories of struggle, resilience, and progress along its winding path.

Please confirm days and hours of operation, as some sites have limited access and only operate seasonally. Please refer to each site's website for information.



Map provides general location and should not be used for navigational purposes. Visit the Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail website for more information and mapping.



Ohio River Museums & Historic Sites

ancient sites, early settlements sites and nation-building museums, freedom seeker sites



1 Museum of Ceramics

Discover how the Ohio River transformed East Liverpool into the nation's pottery capital. This museum displays ornate ceramic works, factory tools, and stories of immigrant laborers who helped the industry flourish. Learn how steamboats and river transport carried millions of ceramics downriver, shaping American homes and global markets.

Address: 400 E. Fifth St., East Liverpool

Website: themuseumofceramics.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Downtown East Liverpool](#)

2 Historic Fort Steuben & Scenic Byway Visitor Center

Step into Ohio's early frontier days at Historic Fort Steuben, a reconstructed 18th-century fort that protected government surveyors mapping the Northwest Territory. Located just above the banks of the Ohio River, the site's Visitor Center features exhibits on river navigation, flatboat commerce, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, whose early journey passed through the Ohio River Valley. Discover how the river served as a highway for settlers, soldiers, and ideas - and how it shaped the boundaries and identity of a young Ohio.

Address: 120 S. 3rd St., Steubenville

Website: oldfortsteuben.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Steubenville](#)

3 Jefferson County Historical Society

As the second-oldest settlement in Ohio, Steubenville was instrumental in shipping commerce on the Ohio River. The shipbuilding and wool industries thrived in Steubenville. The museum features exhibits on early river transport, shipbuilding, and the rise of industries fueled by river trade. Step into a dedicated gallery of flatboats, keelboats, and steamboats, and learn how merchants, immigrants, and workers used the Ohio River to shape one of Ohio's oldest river towns.

Address: 426 Franklin Ave., Steubenville

Website: jeffcountyhistorical.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Steubenville](#)

4 Campus Martius Museum

Located at the confluence of the Muskingum and Ohio rivers, Marietta was a hub of early river trade and settlement. It was the first settlement established in the Northwest Territory, and the Campus Martius stockade served as the primary civilian defense. Visit the Rufus Putnam House, which is incorporated into the museum and sits on its original foundation. Learn the history of the settlement and the first settlers of Ohio. Be sure to visit the Ohio Company Land Office to see land surveys that were awarded to Revolutionary War veterans.

Address: 601 Second St., Marietta

Website: mariettamuseums.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Marietta/Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

5 Belpre Historical Society & Farmers Castle Museum

Explore the first organized settlement in the Northwest Territory to establish a public school and a center for anti-slavery activity. Exhibits highlight Belpre's critical role in Ohio River crossings, the Underground Railroad, and frontier life. The Farmers Castle Museum features local artifacts and narratives about river travel, education, and early Ohio pioneers.

Address: 509 Ridge St., Belpre

Website: mariettaohio.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Marietta/Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

6 Our House Tavern Museum

This 1819 tavern once welcomed steamboat passengers, traders, and townsfolk to the bustling port of Gallipolis. Step into the parlor where Lafayette dined in 1825 and imagine the lively riverfront life of early Ohio. Explore the French influence, river travel, and tavern culture that shaped early river life in Gallipolis.

Address: 432 First Ave., Gallipolis

Website: ohiohistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Gallia County](#)

7 Tremper Mound Preserve

Located near the banks of the Scioto River, Tremper Mound is a striking remnant of Indigenous earthworks built over 2,000 years ago. Water played a vital role in the ceremonial and daily lives of the people we now call Hopewell. More than just resources, rivers were sacred pathways connecting earth and sky. Interpretive signage and walking trails guide visitors through this peaceful and powerful landscape.

Address: 20580 SR. 73, McDermott

Website: arcofappalachia.org/tremper-mound

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)

8 Lawrence County Museum

Located in a restored Victorian home, this museum showcases Ironton's rise as a 19th-century iron and riverport powerhouse. Learn how pig iron, coal, and other products were shipped via the Ohio River, and how Ironton's shipyards contributed to Civil War efforts. Period rooms, industrial tools, and early river commerce exhibits round out the story.

Address: 506 S. 6th St., Ironton

Website: ohio.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Lawrence County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

9 Southern Ohio Museum

The Southern Ohio Museum explores how the river shaped Portsmouth's rise as a regional industrial powerhouse. Exhibits highlight the river's role in transporting goods, people, and ideas, from Indigenous ancient waterways to the canal and steamboat era. Explore local photographs, river artifacts, and industries like steel, brick, and shoe manufacturing that depended on the river. The museum brings to life how the Ohio River powered Portsmouth's cultural and economic development.

Address: 825 Gallia St., Portsmouth

Website: somacc.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)

10 Portsmouth Floodwall Murals

Sitting along the Ohio River, the Floodwall Murals depict the history of Portsmouth and Scioto County, from the height of what is now referred to as the Hopewell culture through present day. Each panel displays a significant moment in time for the area, including portraits of important individuals and overlooks of the Ohio River. The backdrop of the floodwall is a powerful reminder of the power of water and how it can affect the surrounding area.

Address: 342 Second St., Portsmouth

Website: portsmouthmurals.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)





Ohio River Museums & Historic Sites

ancient sites, early settlements sites and nation-building museums, freedom seeker sites



11 John Rankin Historic House

Perched high above the Ohio River, the John Rankin House was a beacon of hope for freedom seekers escaping slavery. From this hilltop, the Rankin family watched the river - a dangerous but vital boundary between slavery and freedom. The Ohio River served as a symbolic and literal line of escape; crossing it was often the first step to liberty. Learn how the Rankins aided over 2,000 people on their journey to freedom, and how the river shaped Underground Railroad routes and resistance.

Address: 6152 Rankin Hill Rd., Ripley

Website: ohiohistory.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Brown County Ohio](#)

12 Chilo Lock 34 Park Visitor Center and Museum

Chilo Lock and Dam 34, completed in 1929, was one of 53 built to make the Ohio River navigable year-round. Before their construction, the river was often too shallow for boats. The new system enabled steady transport of coal, grain, fuel, and people. Because of these navigational systems, steamboats like the Delta Queen cruised its waters, and World War II ships launched from river cities. Visit the museum to explore the lock system, a working scale model of a wicket dam, and historic diving gear.

Address: 521 County Park Rd., Chilo

Website: clermontparks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Discover Clermont County](#)

13 Cincinnati Museum Center

Located in a grand 1933 Art Deco train station, the Cincinnati Museum Center offers an immersive journey into Ohio's river heritage. At the Museum of Natural History & Science and Cincinnati History Museum, discover how the Ohio River shaped commerce, culture, and community—long before and after canals were built. Exhibits feature early flatboats, steamboats, and riverfront industries, along with stories of immigration, trade, and engineering. Don't miss the recreated Public Landing exhibit or real steamboat artifacts that connect Cincinnati's past to America's inland waterways legacy.

Address: 1301 Western Ave., Cincinnati

Website: cincymuseum.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)

14 German Heritage Museum

Nestled in a reconstructed 1840 German log house, this museum tells the story of Cincinnati's transformation into the "most German city in America." Exhibits explore German immigration, riverfront settlement patterns, and the establishment of iconic neighborhood Over-the-Rhine, just north of the Miami & Erie Canal and close to the Ohio River. Learn how German artisans, brewers, and merchants harnessed river and canal trade routes to shape the city's culture, industry, and festivals.

Address: 4754 W. Fork Rd., Cincinnati

Website: germanconnections.org/listing/german-heritage-museum/

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)

15 National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Overlooking the Ohio River - the boundary between slavery and freedom - the Freedom Center tells powerful stories of courage, resistance, and hope. Through immersive exhibits, explore the Underground Railroad, modern human trafficking, and the enduring fight for justice. The river itself is central: a symbol of peril and promise, crossed by freedom seekers aided by brave conductors. The museum connects local stories to global movements, offering a deeply human perspective on the Ohio River's role in the pursuit of liberty.

Address: 50 E. Freedom Way, Cincinnati

Website: freedomcenter.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)

16 Roebling Suspension Bridge

The Roebling Suspension Bridge opened in 1867 as an engineering marvel, employing many new bridge-building techniques, including two primary wires spun into place, and operating as the longest suspension bridge in the world. It was the prototype for the Brooklyn Bridge. The bridge connects Cincinnati to Covington, Kentucky, serving as one of the primary travel options. Walk the bridge for an up-close look at the structure and get a view of the Ohio River.

Address: Theodore M Berry Way & Roebling Way, Cincinnati

Website: roebblingbridge.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)

17 Fort Ancient Earthworks & Nature Preserve

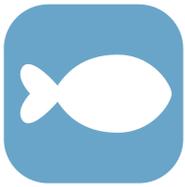
High above the Little Miami River - a tributary of the Ohio River - Fort Ancient was built by Indigenous peoples over 2,000 years ago. Water shaped their lives, beliefs, and connections: rivers served as sacred boundaries, trade routes, and gathering corridors. The earthworks overlook one of the most scenic stretches of Ohio's ancient waterways. Inside the museum, exhibits highlight how the Ohio River and its tributaries supported the movement of goods, ideas, and ceremonial traditions across cultures long before European arrival. This site is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Address: 6123 OH-350, Oregonia

Website: fortancient.org and hopewellearthworks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)





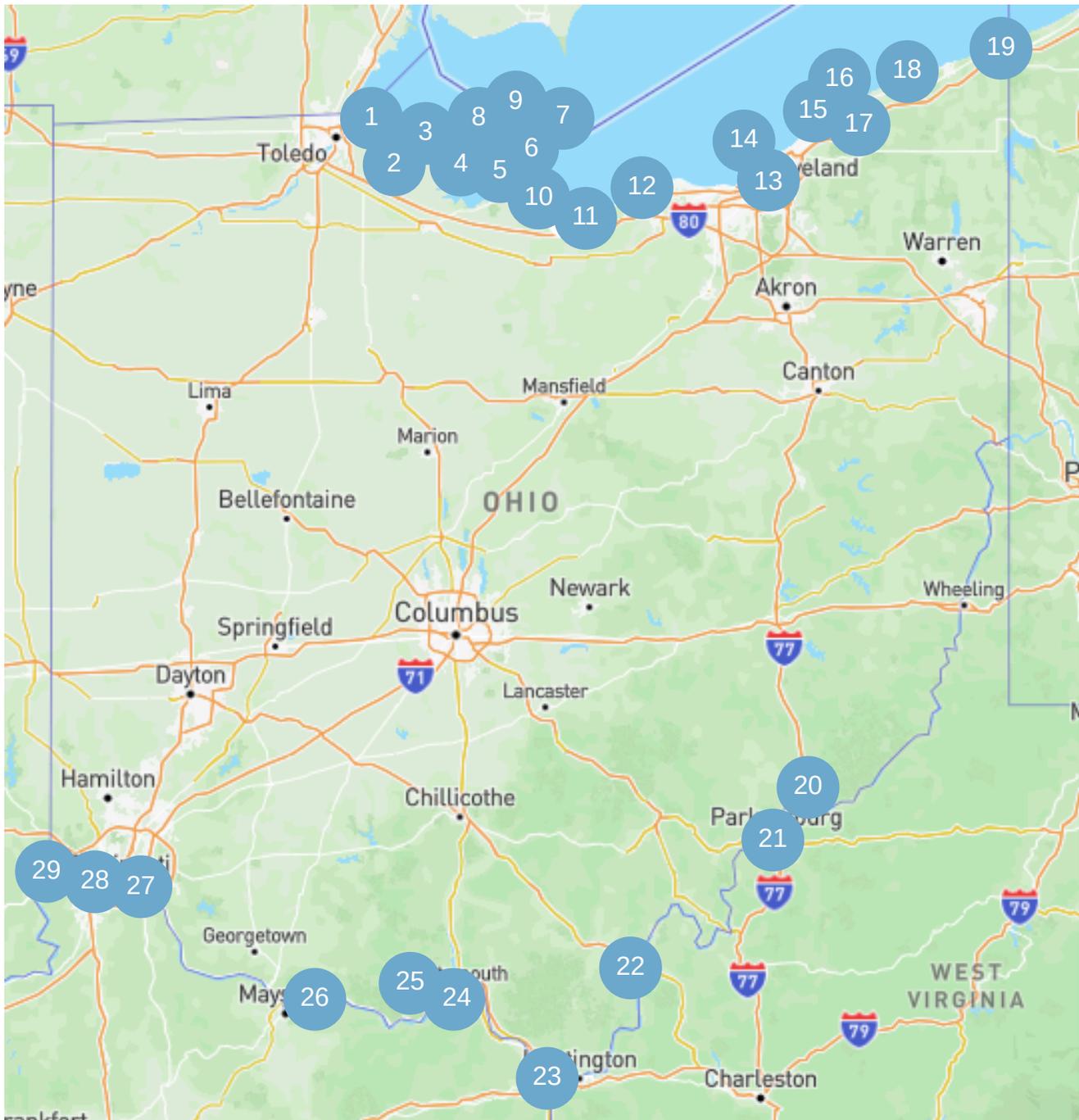
Natural Sites & Overlooks

parks, nature preserves, scenic views

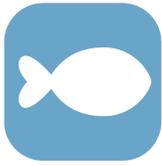


Ohio's waterways have shaped a diverse and vital natural landscape, from Lake Erie's coastal marshes to the wooded bluffs of the Ohio River Valley. Wetlands provide essential habitats, filter water, and support a thriving fishery—especially in Lake Erie, home to one of the world's most valuable freshwater fisheries. Glacial remnants like kettle lakes and moraines add to the region's ecological richness. Canal corridors and river overlooks offer scenic beauty and access to these environments. These landscapes not only sustain biodiversity and recreation, but also support local economies through fishing, tourism, and conservation—connecting Ohioans to nature, history, and shared environmental responsibility.

Please confirm days and hours of operation, as some sites have limited access. You may also want to plan visits around demonstrations, lectures and workshops, so please refer to each site's website for information.



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Natural Sites & Overlooks

parks, nature preserves, scenic views



Lake Erie

Stretching from Toledo to Conneaut, Ohio's 312-mile Lake Erie coast offers many exciting recreational opportunities and places for spectacular Lake Erie views. Visit the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's [Lake Erie Public Access](#) guide for additional sites not listed here. Another great resource is the [Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail](#), an America's Byway, with a Story Map and mobile application available.

1 Maumee Bay State Park

Maumee Bay State Park is special for its unique blend of natural beauty, ecological significance, and recreational opportunities. Located on the shores of Lake Erie and within the historic boundaries of the Great Black Swamp, the park features rare coastal wetlands, marshes, and woodlands that support diverse wildlife, especially migratory birds. Its boardwalks and trails immerse visitors in these vibrant habitats. The park also offers a sandy beach, inland lake, modern lodge, and camping, making it a premier destination for nature lovers and families alike.

Address: 1400 State Park Rd., Oregon

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

2 Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge protects one of the largest remaining wetland complexes along Lake Erie and is a critical habitat for migratory birds, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Spanning over 10,000 acres, the refuge offers hiking trails, a scenic wildlife drive, and a modern visitor center with interpretive exhibits. It plays a key role in the western basin's coastal marsh system and is part of the Great Black Swamp's natural legacy. Birdwatching peaks during spring and fall migrations, attracting visitors from around the world.

Address: 14000 W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor

Website: fws.gov/refuge/ottawa

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

3 Magee Marsh Wildlife Area and Visitor Center

Magee Marsh Wildlife Area is renowned as one of North America's top birdwatching destinations, especially during spring migration. Located along the Lake Erie shoreline, it serves as a crucial stopover for warblers and other migratory birds as they stop for fuel before crossing the lake. The boardwalk through its rich wetlands and woodlands offers close-up views of birds in their natural habitat. Its preserved marshes are remnants of the Great Black Swamp, making Magee Marsh both ecologically vital and historically significant.

Address: 13229 W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor

Website: ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/magee-marsh-wildlife-area

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

4 East Harbor State Park

East Harbor State Park is best known for its expansive sandy beach, making it a top destination for swimming, sunbathing, and family fun. The park lies where lake and land continuously reshape each other. The harbor, carved by wind, waves, and glacial forces, has long offered a safe haven for canoes, schooners, and today's pleasure craft. Visitors can swim, paddle, or hike through dunes and wetland habitats.

Address: 1169 N. Buck Rd., Lakeside-Marblehead

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

5 Lakeside Daisy State Nature Preserve

Lakeside Daisy State Nature Preserve protects Ohio's only natural population of the rare Lakeside Daisy, a bright yellow wildflower that blooms each spring. Set on exposed limestone bedrock, this unique alvar habitat offers striking views of Lake Erie and the Marblehead Peninsula's rugged landscape. The preserve is open seasonally during the bloom (late April to early May) and is fragile, with no trails or facilities. It's a must-see for wildflower enthusiasts and fans of rare natural landscapes.

Address: 309 Alexander Pike, Marblehead

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

6 Kelleys Island State Park

Kelleys Island, the largest American island in Lake Erie, offers stunning natural landscapes and diverse habitats. Visitors can explore coastal cliffs, wetlands, forests, and alvar ecosystems - rare limestone plains supporting unique plant life. Highlights include the Glacial Grooves, showcasing ancient ice-carved rock formations. Early settlers quarried limestone, shipped goods, and relied on the lake for transportation and livelihood. As you explore forested trails and limestone cliffs, you'll witness how Lake Erie shaped island life - and how the island shaped the lake's legacy.

Address: 920 Division St., Kelleys Island

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

7 North Shore Alvar State Nature Preserve

The North Shore Alvar on Kelleys Island is a rare and fragile ecosystem formed on exposed limestone bedrock shaped by glaciers thousands of years ago. This unique landscape, part of the larger geological formation of the Lake Erie islands, features thin soils, flat rock surfaces, and seasonal pools. It supports specialized plants and wildlife adapted to its extreme conditions. The alvar's sweeping lake views, windswept character, and striking geology make it one of Ohio's most distinctive natural treasures. It's located within Kelleys Island State Park.

Address: 920 Division St., Kelleys Island

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

8 Middle Bass Island State Park

Middle Bass Island played a role in Ohio's winemaking industry and was home to the famed Lonz Winery. The island's fertile soils and lake-moderated climate made it ideal for grape cultivation. Today, visitors explore the restored Lonz Winery grounds, enjoy panoramic lake views, and experience quiet natural beauty across wooded trails and shoreline parks. Less developed than nearby islands, Middle Bass offers a peaceful retreat with rich history, scenic landscapes, and a strong connection to Lake Erie's cultural and ecological heritage.

Address: 1719 Fox Rd., Middle Bass Island

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)





Natural Sites & Overlooks

parks, nature preserves, scenic views



9 South Bass Island State Park

South Bass Island State Park has sweeping views of Lake Erie and a mix of recreation and history. Located on the island known for Put-in-Bay, the park features limestone cliffs, wooded campsites, and a waterfront perfect for kayaking, swimming, and fishing. The waters off Put-in-Bay were the site of Commodore Perry's famous War of 1812 victory, underscoring Lake Erie's strategic importance. Later, these same waters carried limestone, grapes, and people between ports. Visitors enjoy both natural beauty and lively nearby attractions in one of Lake Erie's iconic destinations.

Address: 1523 Catawba Ave., Put-in-Bay

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce](#)

10 Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve

Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve protects one of the last remaining undeveloped stretches of Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline. This diverse habitat includes old beach ridges, marshes, woodlands, and open water, supporting a rich variety of plant and animal life. It's a critical stopover for migratory birds and a haven for rare and native species. The preserve offers a peaceful, natural experience with a paved trail that leads visitors through quiet wooded areas and marshes to stunning views of Lake Erie.

Address: 2715 Cleveland Rd. W., Huron

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

11 Old Woman Creek State Nature Preserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve

Old Woman Creek is Ohio's only National Estuarine Research Reserve, protecting a rare freshwater estuary where creek and lake waters meet. This habitat supports rich biodiversity, including birds, fish, and wetland plants. The site includes a visitor center, research facilities, boardwalks, and nature trails through marshes, forests, and open water. It offers hands-on educational programs and is a model for coastal conservation. With scenic views and a peaceful setting, Old Woman Creek connects science, stewardship, and public exploration of Lake Erie's natural systems.

Address: 2514 Cleveland Rd. E., Huron

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

12 Lakeview Park

Lakeview Park offers a broad sandy beach, historic rose garden, and sweeping views of the water. Here, the Lake Erie shoreline begins to shift from the flat coastal marshes of the western basin to a more elevated, sandy, and gently sloping landscape. Managed by Lorain County Metro Parks, the park features a bathhouse, playground, picnic areas, and seasonal events, making it a favorite for families and lakefront visitors.

Address: 1800 E. Erie Ave., Lorain

Website: loraincountymetroparks.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Lorain County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)

13 Edgewater Park

Edgewater Park blends natural beauty with vibrant recreation along Cleveland's Lake Erie shoreline. Sweeping lake views, gentle bluffs, and sandy beaches define its landscape, where open water meets tree-lined slopes and native plantings. The park features a designated swimming beach, fishing piers, walking and biking trails, and the iconic Cleveland script sign. Sunset vistas, migratory birds, and access to the Lakefront Bikeway make it a scenic escape within the city. Managed by Cleveland Metroparks, it's a year-round destination for nature and leisure.

Address: 6500 Cleveland Memorial Shoreway, Cleveland

Website: clevelandmetroparks.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

14 Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve

The Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve is a remarkable example of urban ecological restoration, transforming a former dredge disposal site into an 88-acre natural sanctuary. Located on the Lake Erie shoreline near downtown Cleveland, it features looping trails, meadow and woodland habitats, and scenic overlooks with views of the lake and city skyline. The preserve provides critical stopover habitat for migratory birds and native wildlife, making it a peaceful retreat for birdwatchers, walkers, and those seeking a quiet connection to nature.

Address: 8701 Lakeshore Blvd. NE, Cleveland

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

15 Headlands Beach State Park

Headlands Beach State Park features Ohio's longest natural beach, stretching nearly a mile along Lake Erie's shoreline. The park's wide, sandy beach is perfect for swimming, beachcombing, and picnicking, with expansive views of the lake.

Address: 9601 Headlands Rd., Mentor

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

16 Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve

Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve protects one of the last remaining natural dune systems along Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline. This rare habitat features rolling sand dunes, swales, and beach ridges that support unique plant communities and serve as critical nesting grounds for rare and migratory birds, including the endangered piping plover. Located next to Headlands Beach State Park, the preserve offers a quiet, undeveloped setting for birdwatching, nature walks, and conservation-focused visits. Low-impact access only - no facilities or developed trails.

Address: Parking at 9601 Headlands Rd., Mentor

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

17 Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park

Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park offers scenic public access to Lake Erie with a sheltered sandy beach ideal for swimming, sunbathing, and paddling. Located at the mouth of the Grand River, the park provides views of the historic Fairport Harbor West Breakwater Lighthouse and access to boating, kayaking, and fishing. The landscape features a unique blend of beach and dune habitats, with nearby trails connecting to Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve.

Address: 301 Huntington Beach Dr., Fairport Harbor

Website: lakemetroparks.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Tour Lake County](#)

18 Geneva State Park

Along Ohio's northeastern shoreline, Geneva State Park stretches across marshes and beaches once traveled by canoes, schooners, and steamships. The park's breakwalls and harbor protect one of Lake Erie's deepwater ports—critical for coal, ore, and passenger traffic in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, visitors stroll the shore or paddle the Geneva State Park Marina, connecting to the same waters that linked Great Lakes commerce to the Ohio River and beyond.

Address: 4499 Padanarum Rd., Geneva

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau](#)





Natural Sites & Overlooks

parks, nature preserves, scenic views



19 Conneaut Township Park

Conneaut Township Park offers one of Ohio's most scenic and accessible Lake Erie beaches, with wide sandy shores, grassy bluffs, and sweeping lake views. Located at the mouth of Conneaut Creek, the park is nationally recognized as a hotspot for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl - earning kudos from birding groups and conservationists alike. Amenities include a playground, picnic shelters, seasonal concessions, and access to fishing and paddling. With its peaceful natural setting and excellent birdwatching, the park is a gem of Ohio's eastern shoreline.

Address: 480 Lake Rd., Conneaut

Website: conneauttownshippark.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau](#)

Ohio River

The Ohio River Way is a 308-mile National Water Trail stretching through much of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Access its digital visitors guide to find even more adventures along the Ohio River at ohioriverway.org.

20 Kroger Wetland Park / Marietta River Trail Park

At the meeting point of the Muskingum, Little Muskingum and Ohio rivers, this scenic park and trail corridor offers a rare glimpse of waterways converging in one of Ohio's oldest river towns. Once a vital hub for trade, migration, and frontier settlement, the area remains rich in natural beauty and cultural history. Follow the paved Marietta River Trail past wetlands, interpretive signage, and restored green spaces—where river commerce once thrived and native habitats now return. From here, you can see how flowing water continues to shape life in the Appalachian foothills.

Address: 80 Acme St., Marietta

Website: mariettaohio.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Marietta/Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

21 Civitan Park

Stretching along the banks of the Ohio River, Civitan Park offers peaceful views, recreational trails, and open green space in one of Ohio's oldest river towns. Once a center for river trade and early settlement, Belpre's riverfront now invites walkers, cyclists, and families to enjoy its scenic beauty. The park connects to the Belpre Riverfront Trail, part of a growing network of greenways tracing the route of historic river commerce. From here, visitors can watch barges pass, see the bridges linking Ohio and West Virginia, and reflect on the enduring role of the Ohio River in shaping life along its shores.

Address: 1500 Blennerhassett Ave., Belpre

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Marietta/Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

22 Gallipolis City Park

With sweeping views of the Ohio River, Gallipolis City Park honors the town's founding by French immigrants in 1790. Known as the "French 500," these settlers built a riverside community after being misled by land speculators, giving Gallipolis its name, "City of the Gauls." Today, the park offers open lawns, river access, and a setting for festivals and recreation. Visitors can enjoy the same riverfront that shaped early migration, trade, and life in this historic Ohio River town.

Address: 334 2nd Ave., Gallipolis

Website: visitgallia.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Gallia County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)

23 Three-State Point

Three-State Point marks the meeting of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia—where the Ohio River becomes a border and a bridge. Historically, this junction was a strategic site for river transport, linking industries across all three states. From river ferries to rail transfer hubs, the area highlights how shared waterways shaped regional identity. Stand at this quiet overlook and consider how the river unified rather than divided communities across state lines.

Address: 100 2nd St. W., South Point

Website: ohioriverparksproject.com/the-parks/three-state-overlook/

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Lawrence County Convention & Visitors Bureau](#)

24 Raven Rock State Nature Preserve

Towering 300 feet above the Ohio River, Raven Rock has long served as a natural overlook and landmark for river travelers. From prehistoric Indigenous peoples to 19th-century steamboat captains, this sandstone promontory was a key feature along one of America's busiest waterways. Standing here, you can glimpse the river's immense power to shape land, culture, and commerce - its winding channel connecting Ohio to the heart of the nation.

Address: 2 Old River Rd., West Portsmouth

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)

25 Shawnee State Park

Nestled in the Appalachian foothills along the Ohio River, Shawnee State Park reflects a deep relationship between landscape and livelihood. Here, the river once served as a thoroughfare for Native American trade, pioneer expansion, and steamboat commerce. Surrounded by the Shawnee State Forest, the park offers a retreat where river views, wooded ridges, and Civilian Conservation Corps-era cabins echo the rhythms of the past. The Ohio River still flows below - linking history, nature, and culture across generations.

Address: 4404 State Route 125, Portsmouth

Website: ohiostateparks.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Portsmouth Scioto County Visitors Bureau](#)

26 Ohio River Bluffs

Perched high above the village of Manchester, the Ohio River Bluffs offer panoramic views of the river's winding path through southern Ohio. This Nature Conservancy preserve protects rare post-glacial prairie openings, known as cedar barrens, which support uncommon wildflowers, grasses, and butterflies. The site is part of the Arc of Appalachia, a regional network of nature preserves dedicated to protecting the rich biodiversity and ancient landscapes of the Appalachian foothills.

Address: 400 Gilkison Hollow Rd., Manchester

Website: arcofappalachia.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Adams County Travel & Visitors Bureau](#)

27 Fernbank Park

Stretching along the banks of the Ohio River, Fernbank Park invites visitors to stroll where towboats and steamboats once plied their trade. This scenic greenspace lies just west of Cincinnati, a city whose rise was inseparable from the river's pulse. Interpretive signs highlight the river's natural rhythms and cultural legacy - offering a family-friendly gateway to reflect on how water shaped one of Ohio's great urban centers.

Address: 50 Thornton Ave., Cincinnati

Website: greatparks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)



Natural Sites & Overlooks

parks, nature preserves, scenic views



28 Smale Riverfront Park

Smale Riverfront Park celebrates Cincinnati's connection to the Ohio River with gardens, play areas, bike trails, and public art spanning the city's historic riverfront. The park invites visitors to stroll along the water's edge, relax on swinging benches, and take in iconic views of the Roebling Suspension Bridge and Kentucky hills beyond. Built on land once vital to steamboat commerce and 19th-century industry, the park now honors the river's role in shaping the city's culture, economy, and sense of place. Interpretive signage and river-themed features connect past to present in one of Ohio's most vibrant urban green spaces.

Address: West Mehring Way, Cincinnati

Website: cincinnatiiparks.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)

29 Shawnee Lookout

Located above the Ohio River Valley, Shawnee Lookout features ancient Native American earthworks, panoramic views of the Ohio and Great Miami rivers, and the historic Springhouse School. The Miami Fort Trail leads visitors past earthworks to a scenic overlook of the tri-state river confluence. This site tells a 14,000-year story of human habitation, strategic geography, and evolving transportation routes, from Native settlements and steamboats to railroads and highways still visible today.

Address: 2008 Lawrenceburg Rd., North Bend

Website: greatparks.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Visit Cincy](#)





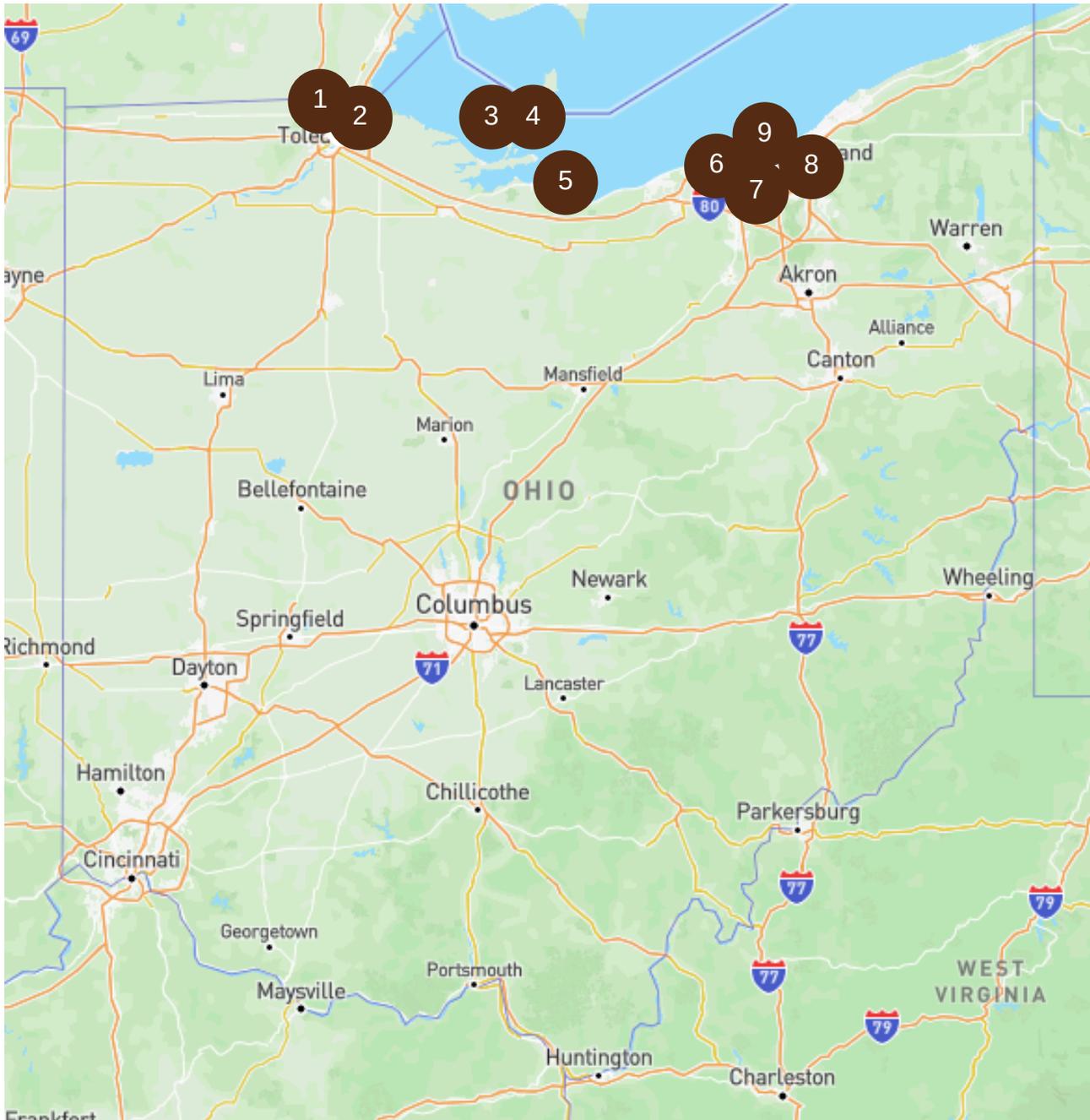
Aquatic Science & Research Sites

science centers, aquariums, environmental education



Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and the historic canals are more than travel routes; they're living ecosystems with powerful environmental stories. Across aquariums, science centers, and nature exhibits, visitors discover how glaciers shaped the land, how fish hatcheries support Lake Erie's wildlife, and how industrial growth impacted water health and led to landmark national legislation. These sites explore native species, watershed dynamics, and conservation efforts addressing challenges like pollution and algae blooms. From hands-on stream tables to immersive shoreline trails, each location highlights the importance of protecting Ohio's natural treasures while learning from their past. Together, they inspire stewardship of the water that sustains us all.

Please confirm days and hours of operation, as some sites have limited access. You may also want to plan visits around demonstrations, lectures and workshops, so please refer to each site's website for information.



Map provides general location and should not be used for navigational purposes. Visit the Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail website for more information and mapping.



Aquatic Science & Research Sites

science centers, aquariums, environmental education



1 Toledo Zoo & Aquarium

The Toledo Zoo plays a leading role in conserving Lake Erie's native species and habitats. Through its Lake Erie Center for Conservation, the zoo monitors water quality, restores wetlands, and supports recovery efforts for endangered species like the Lake Erie watersnake and spotted turtle. Staff and volunteers engage in hands-on restoration, while educational programs connect visitors to the region's unique coastal ecosystems. From shoreline cleanups to scientific research, the zoo helps protect the health and biodiversity of Lake Erie's environment.

Address: 2 Hippo Way, Toledo

Website: toledozeo.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

2 University of Toledo Lake Erie Center

The University of Toledo Lake Erie Center is focused on the health and sustainability of Lake Erie's western basin. Scientists study harmful algal blooms, nutrient runoff, invasive species, and aquatic ecosystem health to support evidence-based solutions for water quality and habitat protection. The center regularly offers public tours, science cafés, and outreach events, inviting visitors to explore research labs, view monitoring equipment, and engage with scientists working to protect Ohio's most vital Great Lake.

Address: 6200 Bayshore Rd., Oregon

Website: utoledo.edu/nsm/lec

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Toledo](#)

3 Put-in-Bay Aquatic Visitor Center

The Put-in-Bay Aquatic Visitors Center, a partnership with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Ohio Sea Grant, connects island guests with Lake Erie conservation and research. Located on South Bass Island, the center supports studies on fish populations, invasive species, and water quality. Visitors can learn about ongoing scientific efforts through interactive exhibits, aquariums, and hands-on activities. As a field station for students and researchers, it connects public education with real-time environmental science, helping protect and sustain Lake Erie's fragile freshwater ecosystem.

Address: 360 W. Shore Blvd., Put-in-Bay

Website: putinbay.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce](#)

4 Stone Laboratory

Stone Laboratory, operated by Ohio Sea Grant and The Ohio State University, is the oldest freshwater biological field station in the U.S. Located on Gibraltar Island (just off South Bass Island), it plays a leading role in Lake Erie research, studying algal blooms, invasive species, fish populations, and water quality. Public tours of the lab and Gibraltar Island offer an inside look at ongoing scientific work. Educational cruises, exhibits, and student programs connect visitors to Lake Erie's ecology and conservation challenges.

Address: 878 Bayview Ave., Put-in-Bay

Website: ohioseagrant.osu.edu/stone-lab

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#) and [Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce](#)

5 Old Woman Creek State Nature Preserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve

Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve serves as a center for cutting-edge science focused on the unique freshwater estuary where the creek meets Lake Erie. Researchers study water quality, wetland ecology, nutrient cycling, and the effects of climate change on coastal habitats. Long-term monitoring tracks how land use and weather patterns impact biodiversity and ecosystem health. The reserve also supports education and stewardship programs, connecting science to the public and informing conservation strategies for Ohio's sensitive Lake Erie shoreline.

Address: 2514 Cleveland Rd. E., Huron

Website: ohiodnr.gov

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Shores & Islands](#)

6 Lake Erie Nature & Science Center

The Lake Erie Nature & Science Center combines hands-on education with wildlife rehabilitation and ecological research. Located near the Lake Erie shoreline, the center supports research on native species, bird migration, and lake-related environmental health. Its team cares for injured wildlife, collecting data that informs conservation efforts across the region. Visitors can explore interactive exhibits, attend science programs, and meet animal ambassadors up close - connecting science to stewardship in one of Ohio's most ecologically rich lakefront environments.

Address: 28728 Wolf Rd., Bay Village

Website: lensc.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

7 Greater Cleveland Aquarium

The Greater Cleveland Aquarium showcases the convergence of industry and conservation. The aquarium is housed inside a former electric powerhouse. Constructed in 1892 during the peak of the industrial revolution, the building's architecture is now juxtaposed with aquatic life to tell the story of industrial growth, reclamation and environmental conservation. Learn how the Cuyahoga River sparked national environmental change through the Clean Water Act, and see species native to Ohio in the Ohio Lakes & Rivers Gallery.

Address: 2000 Sycamore St., Cleveland

Website: greaterclevelandaquarium.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

8 Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History advances Lake Erie conservation through research on water quality, invasive species, and watershed health. Its Natural Areas Program protects more than 12,000 acres across northern Ohio, including critical Lake Erie habitats. Scientists study coastal ecosystems, native plants, and wildlife to inform sustainable land and water management. Visitors can explore exhibits on Great Lakes ecology, attend lectures, and engage with ongoing fieldwork—connecting museum learning to real-world environmental challenges facing Lake Erie and its watersheds.

Address: 1 Wade Oval Dr., Cleveland

Website: cmnh.org

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)





Aquatic Science & Research Sites

science centers, aquariums, environmental education



9 Great Lakes Science Center

The Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland educates visitors about Lake Erie conservation through interactive exhibits, hands-on labs, and real-time data displays. Visitors can explore topics like water quality, algae blooms, invasive species, and the role of science in protecting freshwater ecosystems. The center partners with regional researchers and agencies to share cutting-edge findings and promote stewardship. Programs for students and families encourage active learning, making science accessible while highlighting the importance of preserving Lake Erie's health and biodiversity.

Address: 601 Erieside Ave., Cleveland

Website: greatscience.com

Nearby Visitors Bureau: [Destination Cleveland](#)

