

**Seven Ponds Nature Center Presents:**

# *Fall in the Little Smokies Southern Ohio*

**October 16 – 21, 2022**

Explore the edge of the Appalachian foothills in southern Ohio this fall with Seven Ponds. We will immerse ourselves in the ancient history of this area through its geology and culture. The gorgeous autumn leaf color and crisp, cool air will add to our experience. We will spend our time in streamside forests, rocky gorges, with ancient white cedars,



and investigating stunning rock formations. This region of Ohio also boasts the highest number of mounds and complex American Indian earthworks in North America. This field tour is designed to allow us to explore at a relaxed pace, and take in this wonderful place using all of our senses.

## **Sunday, October 16**

Participants should travel to Southern Ohio and arrive at the Shawnee State Park Lodge by late afternoon (Check-in is 4:00 p.m.). Our lodge is surrounded by 63,000 acres that make up the Shawnee State Park and Shawnee State Forest. This area was the former hunting grounds of the Shawnee People. The hills of the Shawnee, nicknamed “Ohio’s Little Smokies”, seem to roll away toward the horizon in a gentle blue haze. If you arrive early, you can explore the trails around our lodge. At 6:00 p.m. we will meet in the lodge for a short orientation meeting followed by dinner in the Lodge’s restaurant, The Smokehouse.

## Monday, October 17

After breakfast at the lodge, we will carpool north and spend the day in the Highland Nature Sanctuary in the Arc of Appalachia Preserve System. The Arc of Appalachia is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Eastern Temperate wildlands, and is currently protecting over 7300 acres. Highlands Nature Sanctuary is their oldest and largest preserve, at 3100 acres, and contains the breathtakingly beautiful Rocky Fork Gorge. Our first stop will be the Arc's Appalachian Forest Museum which features large artistic murals interpreting the history of the Great Hardwood Forest. The Museum is also an entry point and orientation into the Rocky Fork Creek. This portion of the preserve was once a tourist attraction known as the Seven Caves, named from the numerous caves in the dolomite cliffs along the creek. After lunch, we'll hike the nearby Barrett's Rim Trail. This trail is a 2.5 mile loop which will descend into the gorge of Rocky Fork Creek, and follows along the base of a vertical rock wall in a section of the canyon called "the jewel of the gorge". We will have the afternoon to enjoy the trail at a leisurely pace before returning to the Lodge and dinner.



## Tuesday, October 18

After breakfast at the Lodge, we will head north to Fort Hill. This Ohio Historical Society site is managed by the Arc of Appalachia. Fort Hill protects a 2000 year old large earthen-walled ceremonial enclosure on its flat-topped ridge built by the Native People of the Hopewell Culture. This 1400 acre preserve also shelters the largest mature forest in Ohio. The 4.2 mile trail is considered a "hiker's paradise" with its limestone boulders and cliffs bordering the Baker Fork, stone arches, and towering ancient trees. When we finish hiking, we will return to the Lodge where participants many rest or walk the trails around the Lodge. We will have an early dinner, and plan for a sunset outing at Copperhead Lookout Tower. This was the first fire tower built in Ohio in 1924. We are sure to have excellent 360° views of the "Little Smokies".





## Wednesday, October 19

After breakfast, we will carpool north to Serpent Mound a site managed by the Ohio History Connection. This Mound is an internationally known National Historic Landmark built by ancient cultures. It is an effigy mound representing a snake with a curled tail. We will visit the museum at the site and walk the paved trails around the earthwork. There is also a short nature trail which winds down to a tributary of Ohio Brush Creek. We will lunch at Serpent Mound, and then head south stopping along the way at different preserves, parks, and oddities. We will return to the Lodge for dinner.



## Thursday, October 20

Today we will stay close to the Ohio River which creates the border between Ohio and Kentucky. We will take a short hike through the Ohio River Bluffs (an Arc of Appalachia Nature Preserve). This



property runs from ridge top to nearly the level of the Ohio River, and is a great example of a classic Ohio River corridor forest. After this hike, we will head over to Adams Lake State Park to lunch and walk the Adams Lake Prairie State Nature Preserve. This is a globally rare, sparsely vegetated, dry prairie that is situated on a highly eroded slope of Estill Shale. This short walk will provide another example of the many ecosystems that make up southern Ohio.

In the afternoon, we will venture over to The Wilderness, one of the nature preserves in the Edge of Appalachia Preserve System. This secluded 2.5 mile hike will move us through deep woods and past cool glens and gray cliffs of limestone. Part of the path winds for half a mile along the rim of a dolomite cliff that drops precipitously for 60 feet into the shaded gorge of Cliff Run. We will return to the Lodge for dinner.

## Friday, October 21

This will be our last morning at the Shawnee Lodge. After breakfast, we will part for our safe travels home. Check out is at 11:00 am so move at your leisure.

## Trip Leaders

**Carrie Spencer** is an experienced naturalist who enjoys sharing her knowledge and love of the natural world with others. She has led trips for the last 15 years, and is excited to explore “The Little Smokies” with each and every one of you.

**Katie McKiernan** is a seasoned naturalist with a love for the great outdoors. She helped lead Seven Ponds’ Acadia Trip in 2019, and looks forward to exploring southern Ohio with everyone.

## Accommodations

During our time in southern Ohio we will stay at the Shawnee Lodge and Conference Center surrounded by Ohio’s biggest state park. Each lodge room features a private balcony so you can enjoy the amazing views. For more information visit [shawneeparklodge.com](http://shawneeparklodge.com).

## Meals

All meals will be included from Sunday dinner to breakfast on Friday. Breakfast will be in the lodge’s restaurant, The Smokehouse, and dinner will be at different local restaurants in West Portsmouth or at The Smokehouse. Lunch fixings will be provided for participants to make their own lunches each day. Additional snacks, drinks, and alcoholic beverages are not included in the trip fee.

## Transportation

Transportation to southern Ohio is the participant's responsibility. Seven Ponds will help arrange rides for those who do not wish to drive, or would like to carpool. During the trip some participants will be asked to drive to day trip destinations, and will be reimbursed for days of driving.

## Trip Fee

**\$1,160.00** and includes room (double occupancy), meals as described above, transportation while in southern Ohio, membership to the Arc of Appalachia, and leader fees. Participant who would like a single room may pay the supplement fee of \$289.00 (subject to availability). **To sign up for the tour, please send your name, contact information (phone, home address, and email), and \$300.00 deposit to Seven Ponds Nature Center, 3854 Crawford Road, Dryden, Michigan 48428.** Full payment is due September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## Cancellation Policy

In the event of cancellation, refunds will be made according to the following schedule. If a cancellation occurs before September 5<sup>th</sup>, a full refund including deposit will be made. If cancellation occurs after September 5<sup>th</sup>, we will only be able to provide a refund for the portion of the trip fee that is recoverable by Seven Ponds.

## Additional Information

If you have questions or need more information, contact Carrie Spencer at [cspencer@sevenponds.org](mailto:cspencer@sevenponds.org) or Katie McKiernan at [kmckiernan@sevenponds.org](mailto:kmckiernan@sevenponds.org) and you can always call the nature center (810) 796-3200.