



Self-Guided Creek Walks

Creek walks are an amazing way to immerse yourself in nature and see parts of your parks that can't be seen while walking the trails. The Grand River watershed is one of the most biologically-diverse tributaries of Lake Erie, making it prime for exploration! So put on your water shoes and explore!

Big Creek

Parks with access to Big Creek: Helen Hazen Wyman Park, Big Creek at Liberty Hollow, Girdled Road Reservation

Parks with access to Kellogg Creek: Helen Hazen Wyman Park

Parks with access to Jordan Creek: Jordan Creek Park

Big Creek is one of the largest tributaries of the Grand River, stretching more than 15 miles into neighboring Geauga County. Flowing through three Lake Metroparks, Big Creek hosts a large array of plant and animal species. Carefully flipping rocks will uncover crayfish and insect larvae such as hellgrammites and fish such as stonerollers. As you wade, watch for northern rough-winged swallows nesting in the sides of the high shale bluffs.

While exploring Big Creek don't forget to travel up its smaller tributaries. Kellogg Creek is a pristine creek accessed via Helen Hazen Wyman Park. Here, rainbow darters are plentiful and belted kingfishers are seen flying up and downstream hunting for food. Jordan Creek provides excellent habitat for a number of animals including Louisiana waterthrush, a migratory bird. Aylworth Creek, located in Girdled Road Reservation, is another easily accessible creek.

Paine Creek

Parks with access to Paine Creek: Indian Point Park, Hell Hollow Wilderness Area

Paine Creek is a Grand River tributary, running through Leroy Township. Paine Creek offers a variety of plant and animal species, as well as geologic features. While walking through Paine Creek you will encounter a number of waterfalls and some deep pools. A variety of reptiles and amphibians including green frogs and northern watersnakes can be seen throughout the summer and invertebrates like large fishing spiders are also quite common.

Mill Creek

Parks with access to Mill Creek: Hogback Ridge Park

Mill Creek is accessible through Hogback Ridge Park. A creek walk through Mill Creek will introduce you to a number of impressive waterfalls and flume-like rapids. Mill Creek, like Paine and Big Creeks, is a well-known fishing spot.

Big Creek at Liberty Hollow

6735 Fay Rd.
Concord Twp., Ohio 44077

Big Creek

Girdled Road Reservation

Skok Meadow entrance
12415 Concord Hanbden Rd.
Concord Twp., Ohio 44077

Big Creek

Helen Hazen Wyman Park

6101 Painesville Warren Rd.
Concord Twp., Ohio 44077

Big Creek

Kellogg Creek

Hell Hollow Wilderness Area

14437 Leroy Center Rd.
Thompson, Ohio 44086

Paine Creek

Hogback Ridge Park

4700 Emerson Rd.
Madison Twp., Ohio 44057

Mill Creek

Indian Point Park

Paine Creek entrance
12951 Seeley Rd.
Leroy Twp., Ohio 44077

Paine Creek

Jordan Creek Park

7250 Alexander Rd.
Concord Twp., Ohio 44077

Jordan Creek



Rainbow darter

Rainbow darters are small fish found in streams with gravel bottoms. Males are a brilliant blue and orange while females are drab in color. They average 1.5" to 2.5" in length.



Northern green frog

Northern green frogs are the most abundant frogs in Ohio. They are identified by two pronounced ridges down their backs and a call that sounds like plucking a banjo string.



Ebony jewelwing

Ebony jewelwings are beautiful damselflies with black wings and metallic blue-green bodies. These delicate insects are often seen on small streams.



Common fishing spider

Common fishing spiders are not considered dangerous to humans despite their large size (females can have a legspan of 4"). They are found near well-vegetated streams.



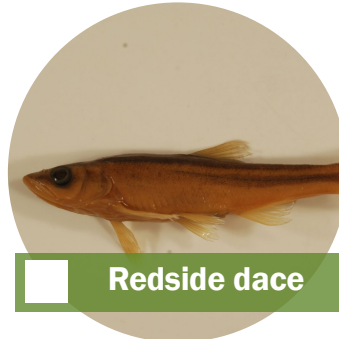
Crayfish

Crayfish are good indicators of high water quality. There are more than a dozen species found throughout northeast Ohio's rivers and streams. Carefully lift rocks and search underneath.



Northern watersnake

Northern watersnakes are one of the most abundant snakes in Ohio. They can be found in almost any permanent body of water. While non-venomous, northern watersnakes can be aggressive—observe from a distance. Northern watersnakes can reach lengths up to 42".



Redside dace

Redside daces are an indicator of good water quality, as they are not tolerant of high turbidity and silt. They have striking red and gold bands going the length of their bodies and average 3" to 4" in length.



Hellgrammites

Hellgrammites are the larval stage of the Dobson fly and can be found under rocks. They are another good indicator of high water quality. Watch out for their pinchers, as they have quite a grip.



Whirligig beetle

Whirligig beetles are small black or bronze beetles often seen in large groups gliding in erratic circles on the water's surface. Whirligigs can also swim underwater by utilizing a pocket of air they trap underneath their forewings to breathe.



Central stoneroller

Central stonerollers are stout minnows found throughout Ohio, mostly in faster-moving streams. Breeding males are orangish in color. Central stonerollers average 3" to 5" in length.



Rock bass

Rock bass are a common sunfish. Look for them in rocky streams near steep dropoffs. They are a mottled olive color and have a distinct red eye. They average 7" to 10" in length.



Water strider

Water striders (also known as pond skaters and water skimmers) can walk on the surface of the water. Water striders have short pincer-like front legs that they use to eat smaller insects. Watch for them skimming the surface of nearly any waterbody.



Stonecat madtom

Stonecat madtoms are small members of the catfish family averaging 4" to 8" in length. They prefer large faster-moving streams with large boulders.



Northern hog sucker

Northern hog suckers are common throughout the Grand River watershed and are easily identified by their large sucker mouths and reddish-brown mottled color pattern.

Remember to exercise caution when walking in creeks. Rocks can be slippery, and don't go into water that may be too deep. Creek walking is not advised after heavy rains when water levels are high.

