Hunting and Fishing

Hunting is permitted on Shawnee State Forest as regulated by the Division of Wildlife. Shooting within 400 feet of any building, facility or recreational area, and discharge of any firearm except during lawful hunting are prohibited. Fishing is also permitted under Division of Wildlife regulation. Most fishing, however, is confined to the lakes. The use of bait to attract or hunt wild birds or deer on state forest land is prohibited. Deer stands must have a waterproof tag at all times identifying the user and user’s address in legible English. Game cameras are not permitted unless they bear a waterproof, legible tag identifying the owner’s name, phone number and address in English.

General Rules for Forest Visitors

This Shawnee State Forest area receives hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Please respect the forest.

1. Shawnee State Forest is open to visitors between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Legal campers, hunters and anglers may be present during other hours.
2. Operation of motor vehicles is restricted to roads provided for such travel. The speed limit on state forest roads is 30 mph unless otherwise posted. Vehicles may not be parked where traffic or access to division service roads or trails will be obstructed. The use of ATVs (four-wheelers) is prohibited.
3. Horses may be ridden only along forest roads or on designated bridle trails.
4. Swimming and motorized boats, except with electric motors, are prohibited in state forest lakes.
5. Fires are not permitted except in grills, fire rings, or portable stoves. Fires must be attended at all times.
6. Trash may only be deposited in provided receptacles or “pack-it-in/pack-it-out.”
7. Camping is permitted only in areas provided and designated for such use. Limited road side camping is permitted during deer and turkey hunting season when camps are registered at the Forest Office.
8. Public display or consumption of any alcoholic beverage is prohibited.
9. Disturbance, defacement, or destruction of any natural or man-made objects is prohibited. Berries, nuts, and mushrooms may be gathered and removed except from tree seed orchards or posted areas. Root digging is prohibited.
10. State forest boundaries are indicated with yellow blazes on the trees and/or posted signs.

Rules found in the Ohio Administrative Code Section 1501.3.

Additional Information

Shawnee State Forest
Division of Forestry
13291 US Highway 52
West Portsmouth, Ohio 45663
740-858-6695

Shawnee State Park
4404 State Route 125
West Portsmouth, Ohio 45663
Park Office: 740-858-6652

Shawnee State Park Resort and Conference Center
P.O. Box 189
Friendship, Ohio 45630-0189
740-858-6621

forestry.ohiodnr.gov

EMERGENCIES: Call 911
especially during the fall color and spring blossom drive in Shawnee State Forest is always enjoyable. The horse camp includes 58 campsites with tie rails, designated as wilderness. This designation minimizes human influence by prohibiting vegetative manipulation and all mechanized activity. Prior to acquisition by the State of Ohio, these properties had been heavily impacted by mining and logging. Vastine and Cabbage Patch Hollows, located in the southwestern portion of the Wilderness Area, were utilized in the mid 1800’s and early 1900’s as a source for building stone. The stone was transported by rail to the Ohio River, where it was loaded on barges. Much of the stone was used in the construction of buildings in Cincinnati.

A variety of vegetation grows in the rugged unglaciated hills of Shawnee State Forest. Several species of oaks and hickories, sassafras, and native pitch and shortleaf pines populate the ridges. Midslope areas support oaks and hickories as well as soft and hard maple, basswood, yellow poplar, buckeye, black gum, white ash, red elm, hackberry, and aspen. Sweetgum, beech, black cherry, black walnut, sycamore, birch, and butternut can also be found in bottomland areas and coves. Several methods of management are used to harvest and improve the growth, yield, and quality of trees. In selection harvesting, single trees and small groups of trees are removed from the stand creating openings in the forest canopy. Species that can grow well in shaded environments, such as beech and sugar maple, are favored by this type of management. In regeneration cutting, or clearcutting, all trees are removed in a given area to allow full penetration of sunlight to the forest floor. This method creates conditions favorable for tree species such as yellow poplar, white oak, and red oak, which need abundant sunlight to grow well. Deer, grouse, and many species of songbirds also benefit from this type of management.

To see the Ohio River Valley as it was viewed by Native Americans who scouted advancing parties of explorers and settlers moving down river. Motorists are urged to exercise caution while driving the narrow and winding forest roads. Hazardous driving conditions and road closures may be encountered during the winter season.