

Farnsworth Metropark Highlights

Please use this as a supplement to information provided on the Farnsworth Metropark map.

Messages for Interpretation

Rocks and water combine to create unique land features, history and recreational opportunities at Farnsworth Metropark.

- Rich in Maumee River geology, Farnsworth Metropark boasts the only site of the exposed Bowling Green Fault and offers rapids and rock outcroppings.
- The obvious natural features of Farnsworth Metropark have been an attraction to people since pre-settlement.
- Sculpted by nature and defined by people, this park reflects those who influenced its development.
- Since its inception as a park in the 1930s, Farnsworth has provided generations of visitors a beautiful river backdrop for recreational pursuits such as swimming, boating, dancing, camping and cycling.
- Farnsworth Metropark preserves river habitats exceptional for animal, fish and plant biodiversity.

What's In A Name?

Once a favorite swimming site known as Waterville Park, the area was named Farnsworth Metropark in 1937. W.W. Farnsworth was an Ohio Senator, Metroparks board member and Waterville orchardist.

Natural and Human History

The Maumee River watershed covers an area about 6,600 square miles, and is the largest watershed in the Great Lakes System. The land adjacent to the Maumee River, called floodplain, is critical for ecological function, allowing space for floodwaters, reducing erosion, filtering water as it returns to the mainstream, and providing wildlife habitat. The land on the opposite side of the Maumee River from Farnsworth Metropark was once a massive wetland known as the Great Black Swamp, and stretched from Fort Wayne, Indiana all the way to the marshes of Lake Erie.

The limestone bedrock seen at rapids and outcroppings at Farnsworth is over 400 million years old. The Bowling Green Fault—an 100-mile vertical fault-- runs from near Findlay, Ohio into Michigan. Farnsworth Metropark is the only site where it is exposed and visible.

The state-owned islands between Farnsworth and Bendview Metroparks are named Missionary, Butler and Indian Islands.

The islands, as well as a large, visible boulder in the river known as Roche de Bout (sometimes spelled Roche de Beouf) were used as landmarks by Native Americans, settlers and armies.



Former interurban bridge



Bowling Green fault



Redbud tree



Bladdernut



Wild ginger



Halberd-leaved mallow

One famous army that used the area by the rock was General Wayne's Legion, who built Fort Deposit, just prior to the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Captain Zebulon Pike and 200 soldiers stayed back and guarded supplies there while General Wayne's troops advanced to the Fallen Timbers battlefield on August 20, 1794.

Farnsworth, Bend View and Providence Metroparks all are part of what used to be the Miami-Erie Canal and its towpath. The canal operated the late 1820's until the early 1900's, and connected northwest Ohio to Cincinnati.

The abandoned Interurban Bridge at the eastern edge of Farnsworth was once the world's largest earth-filled, concrete reinforced bridge. Part of a commuter railway system, it was supported in part by the Roche de Bout boulder.

The stone shelters at Farnsworth were the work of the Great Depression era Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps, two federal initiatives to help put Americans back to work. Today two of the Adirondacks can be reserved as campsites.

Plant Life

Wildflowers at Farnsworth include:

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| Bloodroot | Trout lily |
| Spring beauty | Wild ginger |
| Wild geranium | Jack-in-the-pulpit |
| Water willow (aquatic) | Stinging nettle |
| Halberd-leaved rose mallow | Common white aster |
| Canada goldenrod | Virginia knotweed |

Common trees and shrubs include:

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| Northern hackberry | Eastern cottonwood |
| American sycamore | Ohio buckeye |
| Box elder | Bladdernut |
| Paw Paw | Fragrant Sumac |

Red bud, a small native tree that brightens many areas along the Towpath Trail, flowers in mid-April to May.

Wildlife

Notable reptiles and amphibians include:

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| Common water snake | Midland painted turtle |
| Snapping turtle | Green frog |
| Eastern cricket frog | |

Insects at Farnsworth include:

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| Firefly species | Spittlebug |
| Spring & summer azures | Hackberry butterfly |
| Ebony jewelwing (damsselfly) | American rubyspot (damsselfly) |
| Common whitetail (dragonfly) | Eastern amberwing (dragonfly) |

Aquatic macroinvertebrates live under rocks at the Roche de Bout Rapids and are monitored as indicators of water quality.

Birds include:

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| Great blue heron | Great egret |
| Spotted sandpiper | Solitary sandpiper |
| Greater and Lesser yellowlegs | Ring billed gull |
| Herring gull | Osprey |
| Bald eagle | Great horned owl |
| Wood duck | Belted kingfisher |
| Cedar waxwing | Baltimore oriole |

Cliff swallows nest in the stonework of the historic Inter-urban Bridge.

Cranes are not commonly seen at our river Metroparks. Heron species are much more common.

Fish include:

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| Yellow perch | Smallmouth bass |
| Green sunfish | Orangespotted sunfish |
| Walleye | Emerald shiner |
| Channel catfish | Tadpole madtom |
| Gizzard shad | Greenside darter |

Mammals include:

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| Coyote | Raccoon |
| Eastern chipmunk | Red squirrel |
| Muskrat | Mink |
| Striped skunk | Virginia opossum |
| Big brown bat | |

American beaver have occurred at Farnsworth, but no known populations currently exist.

Staying on trails will protect park visitors and pets from: Poison ivy, chiggers, American dog ticks, and mosquitoes. Protection also includes covering up with light-weight clothing and using insecticide when necessary.

(Note: There is no poison oak in Northwest Ohio.)



Water willow



Amberwing dragonfly



Cliff swallow



Common water snake



Bald eagle



Cedar waxwing