

Special Sites to Visit as You Hike in the Falls of the Ohio State Park



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1. Views from river observation deck by visitor center. Superior panoramic views of park, Ohio River, Goose Island, McAlpine Dam, historic Railroad Bridge, downtown Louisville, waterfall, Shippingport Island, entrance to Portland Canal, the river channel where boats once shot the rapids.
2. Upper limestone flat rock below visitor center steps. (See two large sycamore and cottonwood trees on top). Excellent variety of fossils, easy place to view them, visible in multiple layers.
3. Extensive lower flat limestone shelf filled with fossils. (Seasonal viewing. Below limestone cliffs outcropping). Superior views of Ohio River, Goose Island, McAlpine Dam, Conrail Railroad Bridge, downtown Louisville. Seasonally accessible and sections often covered with river mud, but this broad vast shelf features some large colonial corals, many other types of corals such as horn coral, knee cap coral, branch & worm coral, potholes with aquatic life and sometime trapped minnows, Asiatic clam shells, eroded pieces of coal and at low water, glimpses of Silurian geological strata; plus views of the limestone cliffs outcroppings on Indiana shoreline and the dramatic setting of the unique environmental interpretive center building that blends in with the geological strata.
4. Limestone cliffs outcropping along Indiana shoreline. These cliffs feature multiple layers of fossils, lots of good sitting spots with river breezes and shade of cottonwood trees. These are also nice rocks for scrambling, climbing, observing layers. Also, you can walk easily below them on relatively flat terrain or above them on rougher surfaces, but certainly manageable exploration. Beware of poison ivy.
5. Fisherman's Point Rock Overlook. As you follow the limestone cliff line downstream from the visitor center, the cliff line curves sharply north paralleling the sharp curve of the river. This flat-topped rock at the turn offers spectacular views upstream and downstream. You can see Goose Island across the river, the old 1880s stone dike, Wave Rock in the middle of the river (when river is low), the sharp turn of the river channel towards the Indiana shoreline where boats once shot the original rapids for 2 ½ miles, the boat ramp at the lower end of the park. In dry season, there is a flat limestone shelf from which many fishermen like to fish. (seasonal viewing). You can continue walking on the flat-topped cliff line for another 100 yards or below it, then reach the old road/path which takes you back to the visitor center.
6. Riverbank path. (seasonal). You can follow the river downstream several hundred yards on riverbed rock, walking under tall cottonwood and sycamore trees.

Heading upstream

7. Greenway Walking & Biking Path. An asphalt walking/biking/jogging path that extends from Ashland Park along top the river levee for 2 ½ miles to the lower end of the park and George Rogers Home Site, picnic area and boat ramp.
8. Indiana river shoreline to McAlpine Dam (seasonal). You can walk upstream along the Ohio River to the McAlpine Dam along the shoreline or weaving in and out of the willow woods and sandy beach. This area can be very muddy and you have to carefully pick the area for the best footing. Higher up is generally drier, particularly on the sandy areas. Seasonal walking. Excellent views of the river, rapids, migratory shore birds (herons, egrets, plus ducks, eagles, osprey, sandpipers, gulls, peregrine falcon). Sometimes when water is running high throw the gates of the dam, you can see Asiatic carp jumping out of the water going upstream.
9. Limestone outcropping upstream. Excellent flat-topped and multi-layered rocks with fossils, pleasant shaded sitting rocks, sandy and marshy areas, river driftwood.
10. Historic railroad Bridge and McAlpine Dam upstream.
11. Overlook of historic railroad Bridge and McAlpine Dam by walking up to road.
12. Greenway River path on top of grass levee that passes by the Visitor Center and ends at Clark Cabin.