Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail

THE TUSCARAWAS COUNTY CANAL LANDS COMMITTEE IS MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CANAL TOWPATH. THE EARTHEN SURFACE IS APPROPRIATE FOR HIKING, MOUNTAIN BIKING AND HORSEBACK RIDING. YOU MAY LEAVE YOUR CAR AT THE CANAL LANDS PARK ON DOVER-ZOAR RD, IN THE PARKING LOT BY THE ZOAR BALLFIELDS, FT. LAURENS, OR LEAVE A SECOND CAR AT THE CANOE LIVERY AT THE WEST END OF THE TRAIL IF IT IS OPEN.

You will see a Modern bridge that crosses I-77 and a Historic Iron Bridge crossing the river. In the future, the trail will also connect to the Historic Fink Iron Truss Bridge also known as the Old Zoarville Station Bridge.

When you travel the northern section of the trail you will see Ft. Laurens, the Brick Factory, Power Station, Slackwater Dam, Fish Hatchery and Zoar. Connected to this portion of the trail you will find the Zoar Wetland Arboretum. This casual 3 mile trail follows the level ground of the canal towpath for most of its route. Walking is easy, though at certain times high water, mud, overgrown vegetation or mosquitoes could impede your progress. If you walk at a moderate pace, pausing to see points of interest, you should allow 3 hours.

When you travel the southern section you will find railroad trestle and a more natural trail surface. You may find this segment a bit rougher to hike. There are plans to extend the trail to Route 800 with a trail head. Other sites in this area include Ehler’s Store, the Zoarville Station Bridge and Camp Tuscazoar. This segment is part of the Buckeye Trail (which continues east from Zoarville) as well as the Boy Scouts’ Zoar Valley Trail.

On your visit you may wish to just hike the trail, or to make the hike a portion of visiting one or both of the Ohio Historical Society sites adjacent to it. These sites include Ft. Laurens and Zoar Village.

Lodging in the area ranges from a modern motel to bed-and-breakfasts located in historic homes. (Form more information, phone the Tuscarawas County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-527-3387).

Contact:

SCOTT REYNOLDS, TREASURER
125 E. HIGH AVENUE ROOM 212
NEW PHILADELPHIA, OH 44663
PHONE: 330.365.3219
FAX: 330.364.1368
APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL USAGE PERMIT
Canal Park Lands

GUIDELINES:
1. This application must be received by the Tuscarawas County Commissioners at the address listed above at least 21 days in advance of the requested date of your visit.
2. Indemnification Agreement and Evidence of Insurance must accompany this permit request.
3. **Permits will be issued and mailed to the applicant at least 7 days before the scheduled visit.** Any special stipulations concerning the use of the Canal Park Lands will accompany the permit.
4. Any questions regarding your application should be directed to the Tuscarawas County Commissioners at (330)365.3240 or 125 E. High Avenue New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663.
5. All visitors must follow the Rules and Terms of Use. Copies of the Rules and Terms of Use are available from the Tuscarawas County Commissioners.
6. You must carry a copy of this permit with you while on the premises.

**FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN A DELAY IN ISSUING THE PERMIT OR PERMIT DENIAL.**

I have read and completely understand the above guidelines and terms of use. I agree to assume full responsibility for all actions of the listed group while visiting the Canal Park Lands.

Applicant’s signature _______________________________ Date __________________

NAME OF APPLICANT: ______________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: __________________________________________________________________________

CONTACT PERSON: _________________________________________________________________

CONTACT NUMBER: ________________________ EMAIL: _________________________________

NAME OF EVENT: _________________________________________________________________

ACCESS IS REQUESTED FOR DATE(S): _______________________________________________

TIME: __________________

TYPE OF GROUP & EXPECTED SIZE: _________________________________________________

PURPOSE OF YOUR VISIT: (add additional sheets if necessary) ________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS (add additional sheets if necessary)______________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

For Office Use Only
CANAL LANDS COMMITTEE: RECOMMENDED/DENIED DATE____________

SIGNATURE: _________________________________

COMMISSIONERS OFFICE: APPROVED/DENIED DATE: _____________

SIGNATURE: _________________________________
Zoar Valley is a restored village established in 1817 by German Separatists seeking religious freedom. For many years, they sustained a successful communal society. The village contains several historic buildings operated for the public by the Ohio Historical Society. These are open April through October. The village also has numerous historic homes, many of which have been restored. Some are private homes while others are open as shops, bed and breakfasts and restaurants. Phone the Zoar Village State Memorial at 330-874-3011 or 800-283-8346 for hours and more information.

Fort Laurens

Fort Laurens, established in 1776, was the only Continental Army Revolutionary War fort in Ohio. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday during the summer and weekends during the fall. It displays artifacts from the fort and continued museum has an audio-visual program. The grounds contain memorials to the soldiers and a pleasant picnic area. For hours and more information, phone 330-874-2059 or 800-243-9814.

For more information on either site phone 1-800-BUCKEYE or visit the website at http://ohiodak.org

Multiple Use of Trail

There are five trails used to travel the towpath that you are walking today. The “Zoar Valley Trail” (ZVT) is a 17 mile trail set up by the Buckeye Trail Scouts of America. It connects Fort Laurens to Schoenherr Nature Park in New Philadelphia, with an overnight stop at Camp Tuscarawas. For more information on campsites or on this section of the trail, phone the Zoar Society’s headquarters, PO Box 306 Zoar Ohio 44686-0306. The Zoar Reservoir trail is reached at 33089-1928 or www.OhioNature.org. The first six miles of the trail are also part of the 1200 mile long “Buckeye Trail.” This trail, started in 1959, is planned and maintained by the volunteer efforts of the Buckeye Trail Association. PO Box 254, Washington, Ohio 43083. The trailway is also part of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Corridor, which runs from New Philadelphia to Cleveland. Congress established the corridor in 1995.

Zoar Levee

In 1935, a flood control dam was constructed near Dover to keep out southern Ohio from flooding. However, the completed dam plus the levee would later go on to flood 16 feet of water. Due to the urging of residents and the Ohio Historical Society, a large earthen levee was built in 1935 to preserve historic Zoar Village.

Ohio & Erie Canal

Ohio in the early 19th century experienced a great need for an effective system to transport the goods of a growing population. In 1825, two separate railroads were completed, one from the Ohio River to Cleveland and the other from Cincinnati to Columbus. Workers were fed, lodged in shanties and given a cash payment of $7 to $10 a month in exchange for work. The canal resumed revenue to surplus for 26 of each 30 days. After the completion of the canal in 1832, the local economy improved. Easy access to markets doubled grain prices several times in a short period.

The Zoarites financially benefited from the building of the canal. They played a very special role in the building of this 7 mile section. The Zoarites agreed to pay a daily rate of $1.50 for each man working on the canal. For this they received $2,000 to build this part of the canal. Everyone in the community worked toward the completion of the canal, including the women. The women section was completed in 1824. The finished canal gave Zoarites access to outside markets such as Cleveland and Portland.

Hard Cash

During its existence, the Ohio Canal provided more than just transportation. It gave local farmers badly needed cash to pay taxes. While some laborers were paid in gold or silver, the workers who spent the winters working on canal construction were paid in cash. The exact meaning of the name Zoar is still being debated. The exact meaning of the name Zoar is still being debated. In 1870’s, the canal was closed and derelict. In 1913 was the deathblow to the remaining canals. This section of the canal was in use until 1913.

Old Zoar Bridge

One hundred yards west of County Road 82 (Dover-Zoar Rd.) you will pass under the old Country Road 82 bridge. This is an example of a small quarry truss bridge and was built in 1905 by the Wright Iron Bridge Company of Canton. Each span is 60 feet long, an overall length of 240 feet. The bridge has at least one, possibly two, glue joints, constructed in the 1200 mile long “Buckeye Trail,” an excellent walking trail for those who enjoy nature and history.

Tuscarawas River

The Native Americans called this river “Moakangan,” meaning “eels’ eye.” Soon after the completion of the canal, the term hoggee was derived from a derogatory English term (Hooper) that applied to low class field workers. The mule’s hoggees drove down the towpath pulling the canal boats along at a pace of about 3-4 miles an hour. Hoggees were generally children about 10 to 12 years old. Their life was hard; they worked in all sorts of weather and were often under-nourished. Many hoggees never lived past their 16th year.

Backward Flowing River

If you were instantly transported back in time to 220,000 years you would find yourself suddenly 50 to 100 feet in the air above the banks of 220,000 years ago. You would be looking at the ancient river. The exact location of the river is unknown, but it came from the Tuscarawas tribe, whose main camp was at the present site of Bolivar.

Power Station

The foundation of Zoar community constructed numerous factories and mills along the banks of the Ohio & Erie Canal. After the 1898 fire, a successful operation was established next to the Zoar flood control levee, constructed in 1913.

Brick Factory

The Zoar Seabury was a brickyard that operated next to a canal, taking advantage of the rich deposits of clay found nearby.

Canal Locks

Four canal locks can be seen along the trail—they are marked on the trail log and map with this guide. The locks served two purposes. They provided a means for lowering or raising the boats up or downstream. The locks also provided a convenient point for tolls to be collected which helped pay for the canal construction and maintenance.

Blackwater Dam

The Separates brought up part of the canal by their construction and guard lock in 1832. Canal boats could dock next to the woolen mill and other industrial buildings, which are now gone and replaced by the Zoar Village State Memorial.

Slack water Dam

A small dam is also constructed near the Zoar reservoir. The water is controlled to keep the water level constant.

Watch Out For Hoggees!

Hoggees is a slang term used for the mule drivers who worked on the Ohio & Erie Canal. The mule’s hoggees drove down the towpath pulling the canal boats along at a pace of about 3-4 miles an hour. Hoggees were generally children about 10 to 12 years old. Their life was hard; they worked in all sorts of weather and were often under-nourished. Many hoggees never lived past their 16th year.

Ehlers Store

At the intersection of State Route 212 and State Route 800, the village of Fairfield was established in 1854. It was renamed Zoar Station and finally Zoarville, which it is still called today. The Ohio Canal provided a means for lowering or raising the boats up or downstream. The building foundation remains. Phone the Zoar Village State Memorial at 330-874-3011 or 800-874-4336 for hours and more information.

Zoar Fish Hatchery

The remains of “Zoar Fish Farm No. 12” can be seen between the old Wheeling & Lake Erie railroad and the County Road 82 bridge. In 1921, the Ohio Division of Wildlife constructed six rearing ponds in the abandoned canal. Clear Canal Lands Park. Cross the small bridge and get on to the towpath. Head northwest to follow this guide. However, the bridge abandoned to auto traffic during the 1960’s. Missing or rusting railings and an occasional hole in the deck make the safety of this bridge questionable.

Ehlers’ Store

If you continue across Route 800, following the railroad that marks the old SR 212 and the Buckeye Trail’s “Blue Blazes,” you will reach the Ehlers Fish Trough Bridge, also known as the Zoarville Station Bridge or Old Zoarville Bridge, crossing Conotton Creek. This bridge has currently been restored and is slated for restoration by the Camp Tuscarawas Foundation. The design for this bridge type and the B&O Railroad adopted it. The design was based on construction to avoid burning of the bridge by locomotive sparks. This particular Ehlers Trough Bridge was built in 1868 in Dover and moved to its present location in 1906. You may note the bolted, tubular, wrought iron “Phoenix Columns” which were expensive to build but very strong. This is the only Elk Bridge still standing anywhere in the United States. An excellent article on this and other early metal bridges in Ohio appears in the February/March 1989 issue of TimeLine magazine published by the Ohio Historical Society. Text and map modified 2002 by Tuscarawas County Canal Lands Development Committee from an earlier format written in 1985 by Robert C. Glotchover of the Ohio Historical Society Maps courtesy of Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition Printed through a Heritage Areas Program Grant from the Ohio Department of Development.

Tuckersbridge Station Bridge

The Separates in Zoar brought part of the canal to their town by constructing this dam and guard lock in 1832. A simple and important method for minimizing both property loss and soil erosion from wandering banks is by establishing banks. This is an example of a small quarry truss bridge and was built in 1905 by the Wright Iron Bridge Company of Canton. Each span is 60 feet long, an overall length of 240 feet. The bridge has at least one, possibly two, glue joints, constructed in the 1200 mile long “Buckeye Trail,” an excellent walking trail for those who enjoy nature and history.

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