

DECOMPRESSION DRIVE OAK OPENINGS TO SECOR



Begin your scenic drive in the beautiful Oak Openings Preserve Metropark. Oak Openings is the largest park in the Metroparks Toledo district. It's almost 5,000 acres and has numerous activities and areas for you to explore. You can hike, bike, fish, bird and camp there just to name a few. The phrase Oak Openings was coined by the early settlers to our area. When they arrived to this part of our State, they could easily drive their wagons around the scattered oaks after coming out of the dense forests of the East. The Oak Openings region has more rare plants and animals than anywhere in our State.

Your drive will start in the South part of the park entering off of Rt. 64 on Jeffers Road. As you drive down this beautiful road you will notice the expansive restoration that has been going on in the park. We have removed large areas of Red Pine trees that are not native to our area and are restoring it to beautiful, native Oak Openings habitat. On Jeffers Rd, you will pass the horse riders center. Oak Openings is the only park in the district where you can ride horses. This area offers a large parking area for trailers and the trailhead for the horse trails.

At the end of Jeffers Rd. you will get to Reed Road. In the park it is called the Parkway. Turn Right onto the Parkway. This road will take you through the heart of the park. Follow the Parkway to Mallard Lake. This is a great place to get out and stretch your legs and have a picnic. There are restrooms there, as well as the main trailhead for the park. There is also a Window on Wildlife there where you can sit and relax and watch birds.

After your rest stop, continue down the Parkway towards St. Rt. 295. Before you get to 295, you will pass one of the camping areas, White Oak. When you get to St. Rt. 295 turn Left. You will be out of the park, but then entering again from Reed Road. Turn Left onto Reed Road. You will see more evidence of restoration on this road. Turn Right onto Wilkins Road. This is a great road for fall color. Turn Right onto Monclova Road. Follow Monclova Road to one of our newest Metroparks, Cannonball Prairie Metropark. Once home to a 1,000 acres farm, almost 100 acres of this land is being restored to a rich habitat for birds, frogs and turtles. Bring your bicycle, kayak or tent to truly experience this Metropark. The park has planted prairies, a lake for boating (and eventually fishing), three campsites secluded in the woods, walking paths and a connection to the Wabash Cannonball Trail, which runs through the park. Whether you like trains, bicycles, music or prairies, there's something for everyone in Cannonball Prairie's past.

Built in 1855, the northern leg of the Wabash Railroad ran from Toledo to Chicago until 1969. In the mid-1990s, it became part of the rails-to-trails project and today is the bicycle trail you see transecting this Metropark. This historic railroad has a musical connection as well. Folklore tells us that "Cannonball" comes from a fictional train created by the songwriter J.A. Roff in 1882. The song was so popular that the rail line named a passenger train after it – the Wabash Cannonball. Take a break at this park before continuing on your drive.

From Cannonball Prairie continue on Monclova Rd to Eber Rd. Turn left on Weckerly Rd. and then right on to St. Rt. 20A and left onto Crissey Road. Follow Crissey Road until you cross over Airport Hwy and turn left onto Geiser Road. This road will take you to Westwinds Metropark. This park offers archery ranges and the country's only Girl Scout trail. From Westwinds, turn right onto Eber Road and then left onto Old State Line Road. You are now heading to Wiregrass Metropark. Turn right onto Schwamberger Rd and then right onto Angola. Turn left onto Eber to Wiregrass Metropark. The namesake lake is the first thing you will notice at Wiregrass. The scenic water is open for canoeing and kayaking, as well as fishing from the shore or the dock. An accessible launch with rollers is available to assist paddlers entering or returning from the lake. Waves of fun. But there is more to Wiregrass than the lake. The restored natural areas include rare wet prairie. Naturalists marvel at the variety of dragonflies found on the property—a collection of these beautiful insects that is unmatched anywhere else in Ohio. Attractions and activities at Wiregrass lake include the lake itself, the boat dock with canoe and kayak launch and three primitive camping sites near the lakeshore.

Your drive will now take you to the last park on the decompression drive, Secor Metropark. Continue down Eber. Turn right onto Frankfort Rd. Take a left onto Irwin Rd. Take Irwin to Wolfinger Rd which will take you into the park. Secor opened in 1953, made possible from the revenue from a parking lot bequeathed by Arthur J Secor. The land had once belonged to the Jacob Wolfinger Farm, and a family cemetery is still maintained onsite. It is the only cemetery in existence in Richfield township. The amenities include large picnic areas, playing fields, indoor meeting rooms and picnic shelters, and wildlife feedings stations with indoor viewing areas, called Windows on Wildlife. As you drive through the park, enjoy the beautiful colors of fall.

Metroparks Toledo hopes you have enjoyed this Decompression Drive of its West Region!

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 **PICNIC LOCATION**

 **POINT OF INTEREST**

