

PORTAGE LAKES

Summit County



HISTORY

In 1825 the Ohio Legislature appropriated funds for the construction of a large network of canals and reservoirs to supply water for the canal system. The Portage Lakes, a series of lakes south of Akron, were created as part of this network of water supply reservoirs. They were formed by the construction of dikes and dams to raise the water levels of some of the swamps and small lakes typical of this heavily glaciated southern part of Summit County.

The use of the Portage Lakes as a water supply for the canal system ceased in 1913 when the canal was abandoned as a means of transportation. However, during this period the rubber industry was expanding in Akron, and the demand for industrial water increased. The Portage Lakes and a portion of the canal system were used to meet the water demands for industrial development along the canal and Summit Lake. During the dry years of the early 1930s the Portage Lakes were drawn down to such an extent that a new reservoir - Nimisila - was built to direct water from Nimisila Creek into the Portage Lakes.

DESCRIPTION

The Portage Lakes are at three topographical levels. Long Lake, the lowest lake, was formed by flooding a swamp area which had a small pothole lake at its south end. North Reservoir, and the middle level, was formed by a dike flooding a flat area of land and a small pothole lake known as Hower Lake. At the highest level, and impounding the largest acreage of water - 1,192 acres, are three separate reservoirs: East, West, and Turkeyfoot. Turkeyfoot Lake is connected to West Reservoir by a channel. West Reservoir overflows into North Reservoir and is connected to East Reservoir by a channel. East Reservoir has a control structure from which water is released into a channel which flows into Long Lake.

- Turkeyfoot Lake: 483 surface acres - 12.6 feet average depth
- West Reservoir: 105 surface acres - 11.3 feet average depth
- East Reservoir: 208 surface acres - 14.8 feet average depth
- North Reservoir: 165 surface acres - 10.0 feet average depth
- Long Lake: 231 surface acres - 16.3 feet average depth

FISHES OF INTEREST TO ANGLERS

Largemouth bass, black and white crappie, bluegill, redear sunfish, pumpkinseed, warmouth sunfish, yellow perch, channel catfish, bullhead, white sucker, and carp are found in the Portage Lakes.

Crappie and bass fishing is particularly productive during April, May, and June; bluegill and catfish angling during the summer. Ice fishing for bluegill and crappie is also very popular in the Portage Lakes.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Fishing, boating, water skiing, picnicking, and swimming are the most popular forms of recreation in the area. Boat rentals, bait, food service, a golf course, and cottages are available.

FISH OHIO

Anglers who catch a big fish should enter their prize in the Fish Ohio angler recognition program. A fish qualifies for an award if it meets the minimum size requirement set for the Fish Ohio program. Applications are available from the ODNR Division of Wildlife and from many bait and tackle stores.

FISH MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Electrofishing, trap-netting, and gill netting surveys are performed periodically to assess various fish populations. Yearling (9"+) channel catfish are stocked in alternate years in the Portage Lakes. Fish concentrating structures may be placed as necessary to provide better fishing opportunities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The nearest Wildlife District Office is located at 912 Portage Lakes Drive, Akron, Ohio 44319 (phone number: 330-644-2293). The Division also has a website for information on fishing regulations, tips, maps, and other wildlife related material (www.wildohio.com). To get other maps or publications call toll free 1-800 WILDLIFE.

TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.



ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE DISTRICT OFFICES

WILDLIFE CENTRAL OFFICE
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. G
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693
Phone: (614) 265-6300

WILDLIFE DISTRICT ONE
1500 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 644-3925

WILDLIFE DISTRICT TWO
952 Lima Avenue
Findlay, Ohio 45840
Phone: (419) 424-5000

WILDLIFE DISTRICT THREE
912 Portage Lakes Drive
Akron, Ohio 44319
Phone: (330) 644-2293

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FOUR
360 East State Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
Phone: (740) 589-9930

WILDLIFE DISTRICT FIVE
1076 Old Springfield Pike
Xenia, Ohio 45385
Phone: (937) 372-9261

ODNR Division of Wildlife Internet address: www.wildohio.com
Toll free 1-800-WILDLIFE

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