

# Grant Park's Natural History Hike!

## Grant Park!

Grant Park was established in 1963. The area was once the country estate of Richard H. Grant and it was called Normandy Farms. Mr. Grant made his fortune in business — farming was his hobby. Much of this land was farmed. The rest was used for recreation or kept natural.

The Centerville-Washington Park District operates eight community parks, nine nature parks, and 34 neighborhood parks encompassing more than 1,000 acres in Centerville and Washington Township. Our mission is to deliver fun, healthy and outstanding park experiences that connect the community to the outdoors.



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Explore your community's BIG backyard!

## Welcome to

You are about to embark on a 1.1 mile journey through history! Along the way, you'll learn how the park has changed through time.

We are able to enjoy the park today because of decades of responsible stewardship, planning and management of resources!



## 6 Rhino Tree

Some say it looks like a rhino, but the growth is actually called a burl. Burls are caused by bacteria, fungi or a virus. All have the potential to impact a tree's growth pattern. Over time the wood grain will become gnarled and unusually patterned. What does it look like to you?



## 7 Wonderful Wetlands

Unfortunately, less than 25% of Ohio's wetlands remain today. Wetlands slow down the flow of water and absorb moisture into the soil, reducing the impact of droughts and helping keep water sources clean. They provide breeding ground for insects which feed frogs, birds and bats. They also act as a layover for migratory birds.

## 8 Prairie Power

This prairie was once a farm field, but has been converted back into a flourishing ecosystem! These grasses and forbs provide food and shelter for animals like the Eastern cottontail rabbit, meadow vole and fox. Native wildflowers offer seeds and nectar to birds and butterflies.



## 9 Old Farm Lane

You are walking on the remains of the Grant family's farm lane that went from Paragon Road to Alex-Bell Road. The lane crossed Holes Creek twice and went through the woods. Can you spot leftover fencing or any other clues about this path's former use?

## 5 Reynolds Foundation

The concrete structure before you is an abandoned house foundation! The Reynolds family started to build on this site, but decided on land more convenient to roads. They never finished this house, but in the end, it became a fun place to play and explore!



## 4 Nature's Apartment Complex

We've looked down, now look up! You might notice dead trees. When a tree dies, insects move in, attracting woodpeckers. They are uniquely adapted to bore into trees looking for a meal and carve their homes into the trunk. The cavities woodpeckers make are also excellent homes for bluebirds and flying squirrels!



## 3 Hill Top

As you walk to the top of the hill, look beneath you. Do you notice a tangle of exposed roots? This is evidence of erosion. When rain falls, water runs downhill making its way to the creek. It carries small pieces of dirt and debris with it. Over time, roots are revealed! Foot traffic contributes to erosion as well. From time to time, the Park District alters the trails to reduce erosion.

## 2 Chimneys

The chimneys are all that remain of the Grant family's weekend cabin, built around 1927. The main structure was lost to a fire in the late 1960s. The stone was taken from the banks of Holes Creek. A small section of water was diverted into a swimming hole to the northeast of the cabin. A section of rock wall from the edge of the swimming hole is still visible a few feet off the path!

## 1 Bridging the Gap

How is your balance? Before construction of this bridge, visitors crossed into the park by walking on large logs across the creek! Holes Creek collects rain from much of Washington Township, carries it to the Great Miami River and eventually all the way to the ocean. What a journey!



Your journey begins  
**HERE!**

## 10 Trap Shoot

The Grants used this structure to fire at airborne clay targets with shotguns. They kept the equipment and clays in a small building behind the trap shoot. As you can see, the plants have started to take over these structures.

## 11 Sit with Owlexander

Snap a photo with Owlexander before you head home! In an effort to turn a negative into a positive, this sculpture was carved into the remains of an ash tree that was lost due to emerald ash borer — an invasive beetle from Asia.

