

Keystone Furnace Wetlands Preserve

Bloomfield Township, Jackson County, Ohio



A view of the open water wetlands.

The Keystone Furnace Wetlands Preserve is a planned 750 – 1,000-acre nature sanctuary and youth and disabled persons hunting preserve in Jackson County, Ohio. Approximately one-third of the site contains exceptionally high-quality, Category 3 wetlands that have an ORAM score of 92.5 out of 100. The wetlands contain a diversity of habitats, including open water, wooded wetlands, shrub swamp and emergent wetland areas.

Approximately half of the site is wooded with a predominantly maple-mixed oak-poplar-beech type composition. Much of the woodlands are bottomlands and riparian corridor that periodically flood, providing stormwater retention and filtration and important habitat for numerous amphibian and bird species. Dickason Run, a tributary within the Raccoon Creek Watershed, flows through the site for approximately 12,500 feet and the site contains tens of thousands of feet of additional primary headwater habitat streams. The remainder of the site is composed of grasslands that attract numerous migratory bird, butterfly and other insect species.

Several rare animal and plant species have been identified at the site, including 5 State-listed species. Among these are the Bobcat (Endangered) and Mud Salamander (Threatened). With further study, it is likely that numerous additional rare and endangered species will be identified.

The Ohio Valley Conservation Coalition is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization with a mission to protect ecologically sensitive lands and to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to children and those with disabilities.



A look into the site's vast wooded wetlands system.

Ohio Valley Conservation Coalition

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Hunting, fishing and nature watching opportunities are limited for those with moderate to severe physical disabilities and significant demand exists for such experiences. We plan to serve this need by purchasing specialty hunting, fishing and nature watching equipment for use at this site by disabled persons. Trained, local guides will accompany the participants. This will all be accomplished while also stringently protecting and improving the site's natural and aquatic resources and rare species. Furthermore, new economic development opportunities will be created in Jackson County through increased visitation and job opportunities developed through this endeavor.

The Ohio Valley Conservation Coalition intends to open the property for limited disabled persons hunting in the fall of 2011 if the necessary land, animal surveys and hunting equipment can be purchased in sufficient time. By summer of 2012, we plan to have the site fully operational for such opportunities. Once fully operational, preliminary analyses estimate that the site can sustain approximately 75 – 100 hunters per year for various game species and unlimited nature watching opportunities in the non-hunting seasons.



A view from the site's upland grasslands.

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