



Bison Hollow Becomes Ohio's 146th State Nature Preserve

The first preserve in Vinton County represents very best of Hocking Hills.

LOGAN, Ohio — As snow frosted the trees and ice formed over the creek, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) joined the Appalachia Ohio Alliance to officially declare Bison Hollow as a state nature preserve last week. The 375 acres of land—etched in the rolling hills of Hocking and Vinton counties—is now permanently protected.

“State nature preserves play a significant role in protecting Ohio’s natural wonders,” Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said. “From the cliff faces to the towering trees, there are so many features at Bison Hollow that sum up the beauty of this state.”



(from left to right) ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves Chief Jeff Johnson, Appalachia Ohio Alliance President Al Alfater, Ohio Department of Natural Resources Director Mary Mertz, Appalachia Ohio Alliance Executive Director Steve Fleegal after officially dedicating Bison Hollow as a state nature preserve.

Bison Hollow, which weaves from Hocking County to Vinton County, is the first nature preserve to be dedicated in Vinton County.

“It’s exciting to celebrate the new year, which is also ODNR’s 75th anniversary, with a new nature preserve,” ODNR Director Mary Mertz said. “Bison Hollow State Nature Preserve is a phenomenal natural area with an amazing array of geological features, views of waterfalls, and healthy habitat for rare plants.”

Located just a few miles away from some of the most celebrated tourist spots in the Hocking Hills region, including Ash Cave and Old Man’s Cave, Bison Hollow harbors some of the most undisturbed land and water in the region.



Bison Hollow State Nature Preserve features a winding creek, geological features, waterfalls, and more.

The preserve's gorge and hollow feature sheer sandstone cliffs and rock faces, steep hemlock-dominated slopes and ravines, impressive rock formations, and numerous natural waterfalls.

The remarkable biological diversity of the gorge is like other Hocking Hills attractions. Wooded areas of the preserve showcase white oak, red oak, chestnut, oak, beech, tuliptree, sugar maple and other hardwoods. The site is home to rarities such as long beech fern, Sullivantia, and round-leaf catchfly.

"We are so excited to be collaborating on habitat protection with ODNR's Division of Natural Areas and Preserves at Bison Hollow," said Steve Fleegal, AOA executive director. "We couldn't have created and protected this special place, Bison Hollow, without the assistance of ODNR and other agencies including the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance and the Ohio Public Works Commission, Clean Ohio Program."



ODNR Southeast Ohio Regional Preserve Manager Levi Miller stands near a tall wild black cherry tree in Bison Hollow State Nature Preserve.

Bison Hollow is comprised of 20 tracts of land totaling more than 1,000 acres in Hocking and Vinton counties. One of the best features of the new preserve is the lack of human disturbance across the property. Examples of the impressive high-quality habitats including the cold water habitat stream of the South Branch of the East Fork of Queer Creek, and the lack of invasive plants in the northern reaches of Bison Hollow's gorge.

The preserve will continue to be owned and managed by AOA; visitation to the preserve is limited to safeguard its fragile natural features. To learn more about the site or obtain a permit to visit, click [here](#).

Appalachia Ohio Alliance is dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of our land and water as sustainable natural resources that are an asset and legacy for our community.

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves is dedicated to preserving and protecting Ohio's unique natural heritage and restoring the finest land and water resources in the state by managing a system of 146 state nature preserves and 15 scenic rivers. To learn more, visit naturalareas.ohiodnr.gov.

The ODNR ensures a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all. Visit the ODNR website at ohiodnr.gov.

Editor's note: High resolution photos from above

[Photo 1](#)
[Photo 2](#)
[Photo 3](#)
[Photo 4](#)

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