

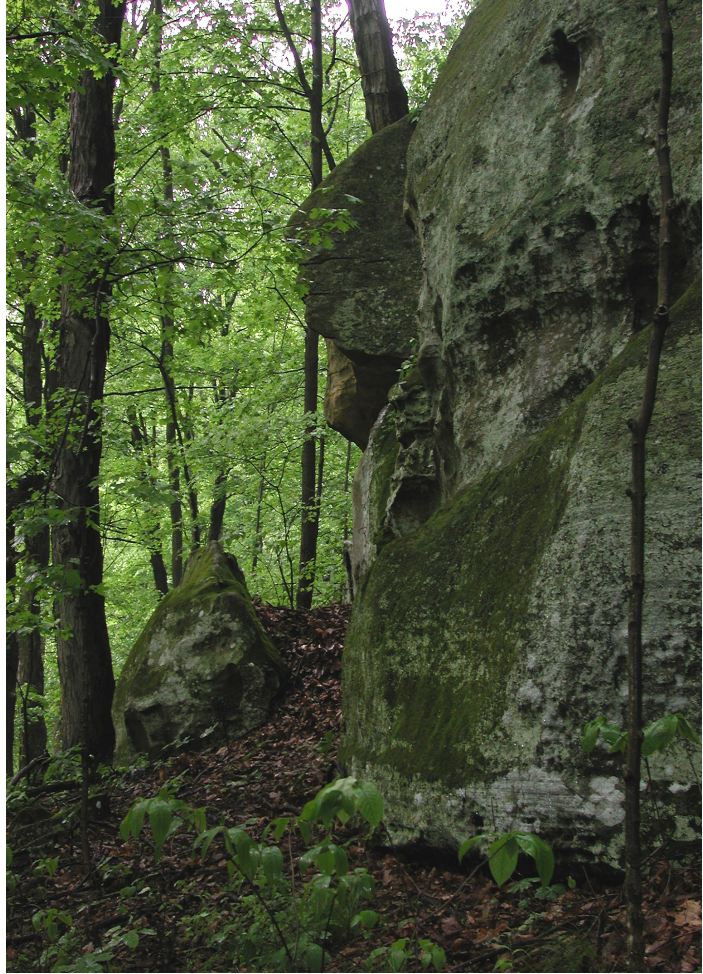
The Athens Conservancy Baker Preserve

The 282-acre Baker Preserve, previously owned by the daughters of Dr. John C. Baker, former president of Ohio University, was transferred to the university in 2023. It is managed as a nature preserve under a conservation easement held by the Athens Conservancy. It is located about a mile east of Dow Lake dam. This scenic preserve is open to the public for recreational and educational activities that don't impact the plants, animals, or natural features of the area—for example, hiking and nature photography.



Vista from Longview Crossing on the Mythical Tree Trail (photo by John Knouse)

The Athens Conservancy developed and maintains about five miles of trails on the property, which are accessible from a parking lot on the west side of OH-690, 0.5 mile north of US-50. The trails are open to hikers year-round. Bicycles, horses, and motorized recreational vehicles are prohibited. Visitors should wear orange during deer season, when hunting is allowed (with written permission) in order to protect the flora from overgrazing by white-tailed deer. Hunting of any other kind of animal is prohibited.



Shrine Rock (photo by John Knouse)

The preserve is mostly forested and stretches from the Hocking River flood plain up to ridge tops. Much of the forest is around 100 years old, but there are also younger woods and brushy habitat, especially along Canaanville Run, a small stream that runs through the middle of the preserve. A major gas pipeline clearing crosses the property, and there are also small gas wells that predate the conservation easement. While the resulting fragmentation of the forest is unfortunate, the pipeline clearing provides some spectacular views where trails cross it.

The Baker Preserve also includes public recreational access to the Hocking River along County Road 24A (South Canaan Road), where canoes and kayaks can be launched.

Baker Preserve

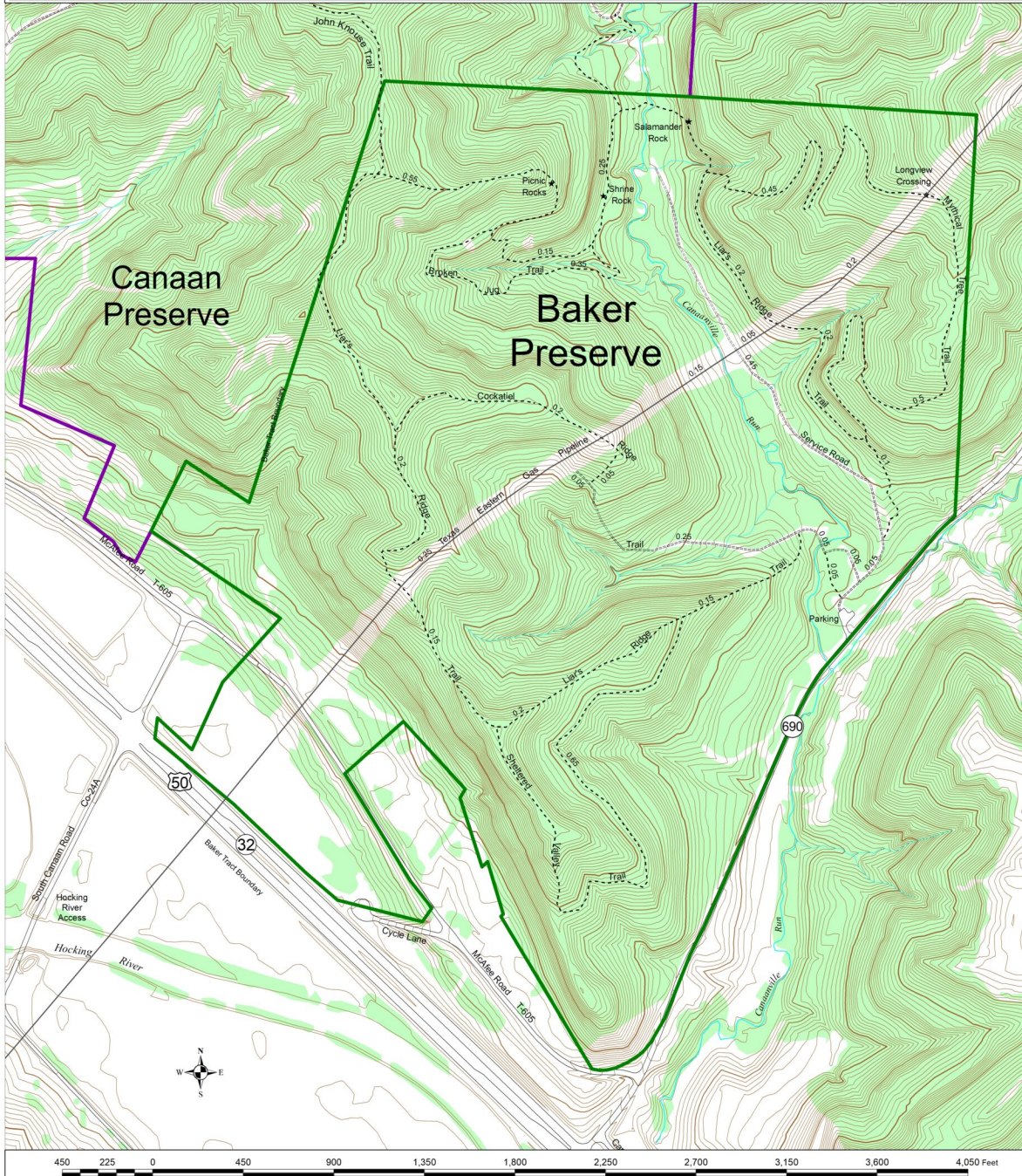
Canaan Township
Athens County, Ohio
269 acres (109 hectares)



www.athensconservancy.org
version of 12 July 2023

The Baker Tract is privately owned, but open for public use.
The Athens Conservancy administers the public usage of
the property. Trails are for pedestrian use only. Deer hunting
is only allowed by written permission.

contour interval = 5' green overlay = forest
mapped on NAD-83 Ohio South grid (foot)



Some of the trail names may arouse curiosity. Liars Ridge Trail refers to the tall tales told by some members of the trail crew while building it. The Mythical Tree Trail refers to a large fallen trunk that was blocking that trail when its route was initially planned, the size of which grew to mythical proportions in the minds of those who were going to have to cut it eventually. When finally cut, it turned out to be less impressive than imagined during the months of procrastination. Four pieces cut from the trunk remain along the trail as seats for hikers. Cockatiel Ridge refers to an incident in 2008 when a Ohio University student doing a project for a botany course saw a Cockatiel in the trees, lured it down, and caught it. Not wanting to keep it herself, she took it to a pet shop a few miles away, which it turned out was the place the bird had escaped from days earlier. The famished Australian bird, unable to feed itself in the wilds of Ohio, eagerly returned to its cage and gorged itself.



Luna moth in Baker Preserve
(photo by Emily Spearman)

Box turtle in Baker Preserve
(photo by John Knouse)

