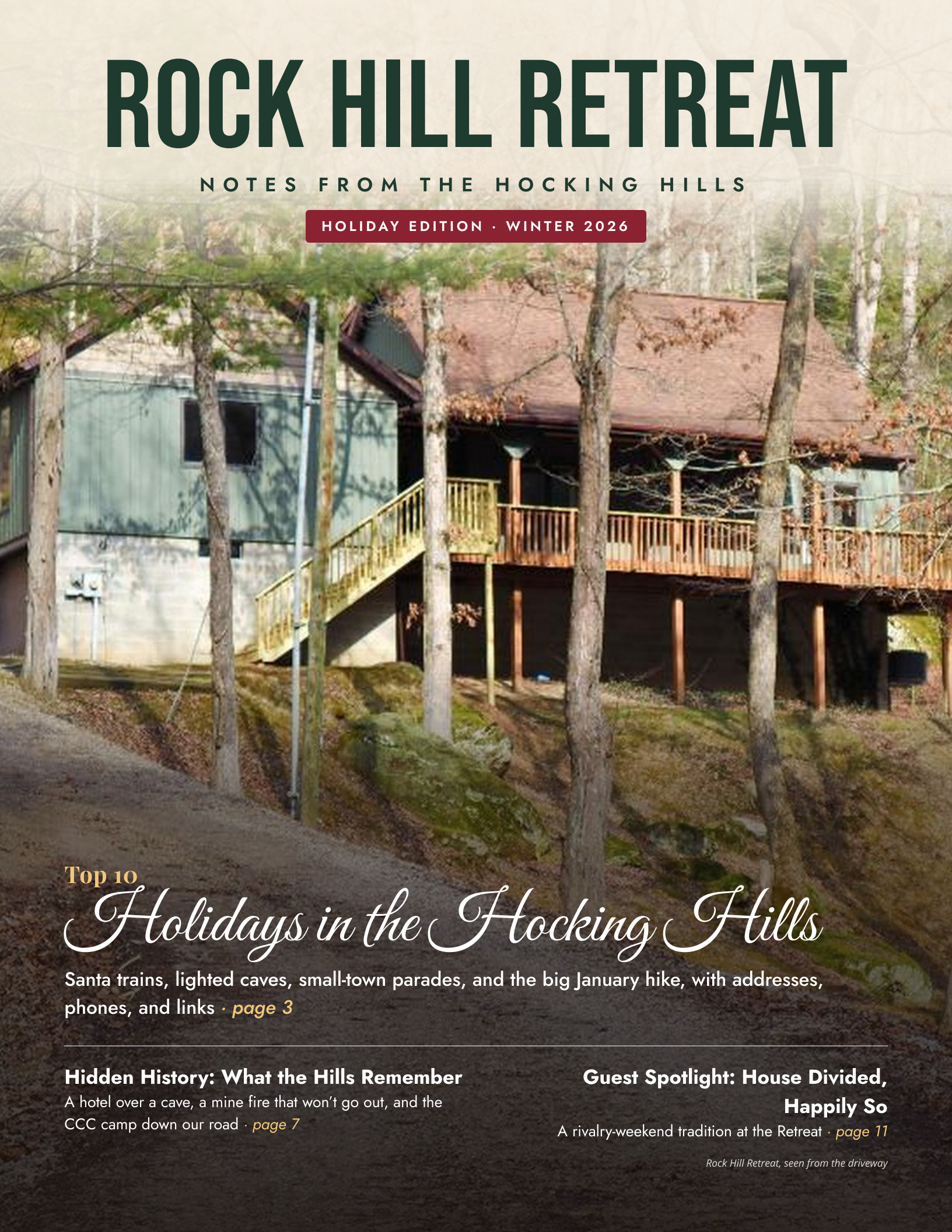
ROCK HILL RETREAT

NOTES FROM THE HOCKING HILLS

HOLIDAY EDITION · WINTER 2026



Top 10 Holidays in the Hocking Hills

Santa trains, lighted caves, small-town parades, and the big January hike, with addresses, phones, and links · *page 3*

Hidden History: What the Hills Remember
A hotel over a cave, a mine fire that won't go out, and the CCC camp down our road · *page 7*

Guest Spotlight: House Divided, Happily So
A rivalry-weekend tradition at the Retreat · *page 11*

Rock Hill Retreat, seen from the driveway

ROCK HILL RETREAT

HOLIDAY EDITION · WINTER 2026



The rock hill outside the upstairs windows at Rock Hill Retreat

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Caves, a Santa train, parades, lights, and New Year's Eve, with every address, phone, and link.

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Same house, no booking-site service fees.

Welcome

Welcome to the holiday edition of our guest magazine! We open with our ten favorite ways to enjoy the Hocking Hills in December and January, then wander into the hills' lesser-known history, from a hotel built over a cave to a Civilian Conservation Corps camp on top of Cantwell Cliffs, just down the road from us. Next comes a game-day tradition from one of our returning groups, followed by photos from around the house. We close with how to book direct and save on booking-site service fees. Thanks for making Rock Hill Retreat part of your story.

Aaron Conrad

Rock Hill Retreat

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Dec. 5	Logan Christmas Parade (#6)
Dec. 12	Holidays in Ash Cave (#9)
Dec. 31	Glass Town Countdown (#10)
Jan. 16	62nd Annual Winter Hike (Bonus)

10 Things to Do in Hocking Hills for the Holidays



Late fall in the hills, from the Rock Hill Retreat photo files

Lighted cave walks, a Santa train, small-town parades, a living advent calendar, and a glass globe at midnight, all an easy drive from the Retreat.

Summer brings the crowds, but winter is when the Hocking Hills really show off. With the leaves down you can see the full sweep of the cliffs and gorges, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources calls the park "stunning in every season," with "stunning ice formations in winter." Add a calendar full of small-town traditions up and down Route 33, and December may be the hills' best-kept secret.

We picked our ten favorite ways to spend a holiday stay, starting with three trails close to the Retreat and moving through the season's events in date order, plus a bonus for anyone staying into January. Every listing has the address, phone, and website so you can check details yourself.

Please note: dates, times, prices, and phone numbers below were checked on the organizers' and parks' own websites on November 5, 2026. Weather and plans change, so please confirm before you head out. Miles are approximate driving distances from Rock Hill Retreat.

The List at a Glance

1. **Cantwell Cliffs** · Year-round · closest to the Retreat
2. **Rock House** · Year-round
3. **Old Man's Cave & the Park Visitor Center** · Year-round · Visitor Center daily
4. **Hocking Hills Holiday Treasure Hunt** · Now–Dec. 12
5. **Santa Train, Hocking Valley Scenic Railway** · Nov. 28–Dec. 20
6. **Logan Christmas Parade & Celebration of Trees** · Sat., Dec. 5
7. **Advent Window Walk, Lancaster** · Dec. 1–31, nightly
8. **Winterlights at Alley Park, Lancaster** · Dec. 10–13
9. **Holidays in Ash Cave** · Sat., Dec. 12
10. **Glass Town Countdown, Lancaster** · Thu., Dec. 31

Bonus **62nd Annual Winter Hike** · Sat., Jan. 16, 2027

● On the trails ● Holiday happenings

How Close Is the Retreat?

≈ 3 mi	≈ 7 mi	≈ 10 mi	≈ 11–13 mi	≈ 12 mi
Cantwell Cliffs	Rock House	Downtown Logan	Lancaster	Old Man's Cave

Approximate driving miles from Rock Hill Retreat. Lancaster and Logan are a straight shot up or down Route 33; take the County Road 33/Miller Road exit coming home.

ON THE TRAILS

1 Cantwell Cliffs

OPEN YEAR-ROUND · ½ HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE TO ½ HOUR AFTER SUNSET

The closest corner of Hocking Hills State Park to the Retreat, and one of its most remote. High rim trails give big views over the gorge, while the valley trail runs along the base of the cliffs. With the leaves down, winter shows off the full sweep of the rock. ODNR rates the 2-mile trail difficult, so save it for a dry, daylight hour.

ADDRESS
13640 State Route 374, Rockbridge, OH 43149
PHONE
(740) 385-6842 (park office)
WEBSITE
https://www.explorehockinghills.com/parks-trails/parks/cantwell-cliffs/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 3 miles

2 Rock House

OPEN YEAR-ROUND · ½ HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE TO ½ HOUR AFTER SUNSET

The only true cave in Hocking Hills State Park: a tunnel-like corridor about 25 feet high and 200 feet long, set midway up a sandstone cliff, with a row of natural stone "windows." People have sheltered here for thousands of years. The 1-mile trail is rated moderate.

ADDRESS
Rock House parking area, State Route 374, Logan, OH 43138
PHONE
(740) 385-6842 (park office)
WEBSITE
https://www.explorehockinghills.com/parks-trails/parks/rock-house/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 7 miles

3 Old Man's Cave & the Park Visitor Center

VISITOR CENTER DAILY 10 A.M.–4 P.M.; GIFT SHOP 10 A.M.–3 P.M. (HOURS CAN CHANGE SEASONALLY)

The park's showpiece: Upper Falls, Middle Falls, Lower Falls, and a gorge cut through 150 feet of Black Hand sandstone, all on a 1-mile moderate loop. Start at the Visitor Center for exhibits, restrooms, and the resident hawks and owls in the raptor enclosure out back. Cedar Falls is just down the road.

ADDRESS
19852 State Route 664 S, Logan, OH 43138
PHONE
(740) 385-6842
WEBSITE
https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/hocking-hills-state-park
FROM THE RETREAT
About 12 miles



Back from the trail: the fire pit and its built-in log seating

Winter Trail Smarts

- ODNR notes that trails are typically covered in ice in winter. Ice cleats are recommended, along with good boots and layers.
- Trails are open ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. Gorges get dark early, so be back at the car well before sunset.
- Stay on the marked trails (many are one-way; follow the signs) and keep a close eye on young children.
- Check the park's page or call the park office for closures before you go.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

4 Hocking Hills Holiday Treasure Hunt

NOW THROUGH SAT., DEC. 12 · ENTRIES DUE BY 5 P.M. DEC. 12

The 12th annual shop-local hunt covers 31 shops, boutiques, and galleries across the region. Find the hidden holiday ornament in each shop, collect stamps at any six, and turn in your form for a chance at a Hocking Hills getaway for four. No purchase necessary. Christmas Treasures, Hocking Hills Candleworks, and the Wind Chime Shop share one stop at 29205 Ilesboro Rd.

ADDRESS
Entries: Explore Hocking Hills Regional Welcome Center, 13178 State Route 664 S, Logan, OH 43138
PHONE
1-800-HOCKING (462-5464) or (740) 385-9706
WEBSITE
https://www.explorehockinghills.com/holiday-treasure-hunt-2026/
FROM THE RETREAT
Shops are spread across the region

5 Santa Train, Hocking Valley Scenic Railway

NOV. 28–DEC. 20 · SAT. & SUN. 11 A.M. AND 2 P.M.; 6 P.M. ON NOV. 28, DEC. 3–5, 10–12 & 17–19

A family tradition for more than 40 years. Heated, decorated coaches leave the Nelsonville Depot for a round trip of about two hours to East Logan and back, with Christmas music on board, a visit from Santa for every child, and a candy cane after. Adults $26, kids 3–12 $21 (under 3 free on a lap), seniors/military $22. Trains tend to sell out, so book early and arrive 30 minutes ahead to pick up paper tickets.

ADDRESS
Nelsonville Depot, 33 W. Canal St., Nelsonville, OH 45764
PHONE
Reservations 855-32-DEPOT · Depot (740) 753-9531
WEBSITE
https://www.hvsry.org/train-rides/santa/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 21 miles

6 Logan Christmas Parade & Celebration of Trees

SAT., DEC. 5 · PARADE AT NOON; BOWEN HOUSE OPEN HOUSE 1–5 P.M. · TREES: DEC. 5, 10–12, 17–19 & JAN. 2

Make a day of it in downtown Logan. The free Christmas Parade (come see Santa) steps off at noon from the Fairgrounds and ends at W. Hunter St. and State Route 664. Right after, The Bowen House opens its Celebration of Trees: decorated trees, wreaths, and mantels, a People's Choice vote, cookies, hot cocoa, spiced cider, and Christmas music. Free.

ADDRESS
The Bowen House, 196 N. Market St., Logan, OH 43138
PHONE
(740) 385-0344 (Bowen House)
WEBSITE
https://bowenhouse.org/celebration-of-trees/
ALSO
https://www.explorehockinghills.com/festivals-events/downtown-logan-christmas-parade/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 10 miles

7 Advent Window Walk, Lancaster

DEC. 1–31 · WINDOWS LIT NIGHTLY 6–10 P.M.

A "living advent calendar" in historic downtown Lancaster, and the organizers say it is the only event of its kind in the country. Each night in December a new window is revealed, building to 27 displays in historic homes and three nonprofits celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. You can see them all on foot in under 30 minutes, or slowly from the car.

ADDRESS
Square 13 Historic District; parking lot at 163 E. Wheeling St., Lancaster, OH 43130
PHONE
1-800-626-1296 (Visit Fairfield County)
WEBSITE
https://www.adventwindowwalk.com/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 13 miles

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

8 Winterlights at Alley Park, Lancaster

THU.–SUN., DEC. 10–13 · 6–8 P.M. · FREE

Four nights only. Park in the field across from the entrance, then walk the lit lane back to the Goslin Nature Center past thousands of lights, with festive music, bonfires, hot cocoa, and hot dogs to roast. Thursday through Saturday, peek into Santa's Workshop and the Snow Globe; Sunday is the Winter Lights Hike around the lake. Please leave pets at home.

ADDRESS
Charles Alley Memorial Park, 2805 Old Logan Rd. SE, Lancaster, OH 43130
PHONE
(740) 687-6651 (Lancaster Parks & Recreation)
WEBSITE
https://lancasterparks.com/events/winterlights-free-outdoor-event/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 11 miles

9 Holidays in Ash Cave

SAT., DEC. 12 · 3–5 P.M. · FREE

A can't-miss for families. Bundle up for a lighted stroll back to Ash Cave, then warm up with refreshments by an open fire. There's holiday music, an old-fashioned Santa for the kids, and a Christmas tree to decorate for the wildlife. ODNR lists the Ash Cave Gorge trail as a ¼-mile, easy, wheelchair-accessible walk.

ADDRESS
26400 State Route 56, South Bloomingville, OH 43152
PHONE
(740) 385-6841
WEBSITE
https://www.explorehockinghills.com/festivals-events/christmas-in-ash-cave/
FROM THE RETREAT
About 20 miles

10 Glass Town Countdown, Lancaster

THU., DEC. 31 · 10 P.M.–1 A.M. · RAIN OR SHINE

Ring in 2027 in downtown Lancaster. Warm up with hot chocolate at Zane Square, browse local restaurants and shops, and get your photo with the giant glass globe before it is lit and lifted at midnight, followed by fireworks. Can't make it? Organizers plan a live feed.

ADDRESS
Zane Square, downtown Lancaster, OH 43130
PHONE
(740) 277-6607 (Destination Downtown Lancaster)
WEBSITE
https://www.destinationdowntownlancaster.com/events/glasstowncountdown
FROM THE RETREAT
About 13 miles

BONUS · SAVE THE DATE

62nd Annual Hocking Hills Winter Hike

SAT., JAN. 16, 2027 · GATHER 9–11 A.M.

The big one, and Grandma Gatewood's favorite hike. Hikers gather at the Hocking Hills State Park Campground, walk in small groups to the Upper Falls of Old Man's Cave, then go at their own pace about 6 miles past Cedar Falls (bean soup, cornbread, and hot drinks at the halfway point) to Ash Cave, where rides return you to Old Man's Cave. The hike is free; donations for food and the ride back are encouraged.

The Hocking Hills tourism site lists this date; ODNR had not posted its own 2027 notice when we checked. Confirm before you go. Winter Hike weekend books up fast — if you're thinking about it, now is the time to grab your dates.

MEET AT
Hocking Hills State Park Campground, beside Old Man's Cave (park address: 19852 State Route 664 S, Logan, OH 43138)
PHONE
(740) 385-6842 (park office)
WEBSITE
https://www.hockinghills.com/winter_hike.html
ALSO
https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/hocking-hills-state-park
FROM THE RETREAT
About 12 miles to the start



The sandstone rock formations behind the back deck at Rock Hill Retreat

HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE HOCKING HILLS

What the Hills Remember

Ash piles three feet deep, a hotel over a cave, a mine fire that has burned since the 1880s, and a CCC camp on the cliffs a few miles from our driveway. A short, fact-checked tour of the Hocking Hills you won't find on the trail signs.

Written in Sandstone

Every famous spot in Hocking Hills State Park, from Old Man's Cave to Cantwell Cliffs, is carved from the same rock: Black Hand sandstone. According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), it was laid down more than 350 million years ago and once covered all of Ohio. Millions of years of uplift and stream erosion did the carving.

The name has nothing to do with the hills themselves. The Ohio History Connection says Blackhand sandstone is named for a black handprint petroglyph near Newark, in Licking County.

The rock has a hard top layer, a hard bottom layer, and a softer middle. That soft middle is the secret behind the park's famous overhangs: ODNR says the recess caves at Ash Cave, Old Man's Cave, Whispering Cave, and Cantwell Cliffs are all carved into it.

The glaciers left their mark too, even though, per ODNR, they never actually reached the park. Glacial runoff brought the eastern hemlocks, Canada yew, and yellow and black birch that still shade the gorges.

Not Actually a Cave

Most of the "caves" in the Hocking Hills are not caves at all. They are recess caves, or rock shelters: shallow overhangs worn into the soft middle layer of sandstone. A 1953 ODNR Geological Survey circular called Rock House "the only true cavern in the region." ODNR describes it as a passage about 25 feet high, 200 feet long, and 20 to 30 feet wide, with seven "windows" in the wall.

Down Our Road

Closer to home: the same 1953 circular says Cantwell Cliffs was carved by the headward erosion of Buck Run, the creek that shares its name with our road. It describes a horseshoe-shaped cliff about 150 feet high and says winter is the best time to see it.

The People of the Rock Shelters

People were here long before the trails. ODNR says the earliest evidence of humans in the Hocking Hills is about 7,000 years old, and that the Adena culture thrived in the Hocking River valley from roughly 500 BCE to 100 CE. From 1600 to 1800, the Delaware, Shawnee, and Wyandot lived and hunted here. The Wyandot had a village called Oldtown near today's Logan.

Ash Cave holds the deepest record. ODNR calls it the largest recessed cave in Ohio: nearly 700 feet wide, 100 feet deep, and 100 feet high. The ash pile measured about 100 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 3 feet deep. Digs later turned up tools, pottery, corn cobs, and bones, including bones of the now-extinct passenger pigeon.

> *"not less than three or four hundred bushel of clear ashes"*
>
> An 1837 visitor to Ash Cave, quoted by ODNR

Nobody knows for certain where all that ash came from. ODNR lists several theories: centuries of campfires, ceremonial use, or saltpeter making. In the 1800s, Ash Cave also served as a church, and the rock the preacher stood on is still called Pulpit Rock.

At Rock House, ODNR says researchers found "hominy holes" used for cooking and rock troughs cut to collect rainwater.

A Name That Stuck

Hocking
The Delaware called the river "Hockhockin," meaning "bottleneck," because its waters fall into a narrow, gourd-shaped gorge (ODNR).

Ash Cave
Named by settlers for the huge piles of ash they found inside (ODNR).

Cedar Falls
A misnomer. Explore Hocking Hills says early settlers mistook the hemlocks for cedars.

Conkle's Hollow
Named for W. J. Conkle, who carved his name and the date 1797 into the cliff (Ohio History Connection; ODNR Geological Survey).

Rockbridge
A canal-era guide to the Hocking Canal lists Lock 11 near "Millville (Rockbridge)." Nearby is the natural bridge ODNR calls the largest in Ohio, more than 100 feet long.

Cantwell Cliffs DISPUTED
Local accounts credit a Cantwell family, but they disagree on the first name, and we could not confirm it with a park or state source.



Solar lights on the rocks behind Rock Hill Retreat after dark

The Old Man, Three Ways DISPUTED

Old Man's Cave is the park's most famous name, and the sources don't agree on who the old man was. Here are the three accounts we found:

1. ODNR
An early pioneer, a trapper who settled here around the 1790s, was likely the "old man" and was buried there. ODNR adds that no one knows for sure who he was.

2. OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION
A hermit named Richard Rowe, from the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee, is said to have lived in the cave and been buried there.

3. ODNR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 1953
The cave is named for "a fugitive from West Virginia by the name of Rowe," who lived there for many years after the Civil War.

Hotels, Horse Thieves & Gunpowder

Hocking Hills tourism is older than you might think. ODNR's Rock House page says Levi Friend built the Rock House Hotel around 1835, and that in 1878 Colonel Rempel of Logan bought it. It grew to 16 rooms, with a ballroom and a livery stable. The 1953 circular says the hotel stayed in use until 1925 and once housed a U.S. post office.

That same circular says Rock House was once a "Robbers Roost" for horse thieves and bootleggers. Today the hotel is long gone, and a shelter built by CCC Company 505 in 1934 stands on its site.

Nearby caves had a more explosive use. The circular records an 1835 powder mill at Gibisonville, near Rock House, that made gunpowder from saltpeter dug from local caves, and grist mills at Cedar Falls around the same time.

Rock House was once a "Robbers Roost" for horse thieves and bootleggers.

ODNR Geological Survey, 1953

Who built the hotel? DISPUTED

ODNR's main Hocking Hills page credits a "Colonel F. F. Remple" with opening the hotel in 1835, while its Rock House page credits Levi Friend, with Colonel Rempel buying it in 1878. We've gone with the more detailed Rock House account, but even ODNR doesn't agree with itself.



The drive in to Rock Hill Retreat, late in the season. Rock House is about 7 miles away.

Canal Boats & Coal Towns

For most of the 1800s, the hills were working country. According to an Explore Hocking Hills canal timeline, the Hocking Canal reached Nelsonville in 1840 and carried its first boatload of coal that year. It reached Athens in 1843, and by 1857 it was moving 2 million bushels of coal. Lock 11 sat near the town the timeline lists as "Millville (Rockbridge)."

The Civil War came, too. The same timeline says that in 1863, Confederate General John Hunt Morgan's raiders burned a covered bridge and a dozen canal boats at Nelsonville. The Ohio History Connection says local iron was used to make ammunition and cannons for the Union. ODNR says the county's iron furnaces used up to 8,448,000 cubic feet of lumber a year. ODNR notes those industries did a great deal of harm to the environment.

The canal never really made money, according to the Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council. The railroad reached Nelsonville in 1869, and the canal was abandoned in 1894.

With the railroad came coal towns. The Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council says Nelsonville was the first town to be called a "little city of black diamonds," New Straitsville was founded in 1870 on the 12-to-14-foot "Great Vein," and more than 70 coal towns sprang up within 20 years.

The Fire That Never Went Out

The Ohio History Connection says the story goes that on November 13, 1884, striking miners pushed burning coal cars into a mine at New Straitsville. The fire spread through the seams and has never been put out. WPA crews built barriers in 1936, and smoke was still rising in Wayne National Forest in 2003. (Some sources date it to 1884 or 1885.)

How the Hills Became a Park

By the early 1900s, the gorges were at risk. ODNR credits the Rev. Pascal Bright, who grew up in Hocking County, with pushing to save them. Ohio passed a state forest law in 1915, and ODNR says the Department of Forestry began buying land here in 1917. In 1924 the state bought 146 acres, a purchase the 1953 circular says included Old Man's Cave. Conkle's Hollow followed in 1925.

In the 1930s, two Civilian Conservation Corps camps opened, segregated by race, as most were at the time. Camp Hocking, Company 505, was for white workers and was near today's Conkle's Hollow. Camp Logan, Company 526, was for Black workers and sat on top of Cantwell Cliffs, a few miles from the Retreat. Company 526 improved Cantwell Cliffs, Rock House, and Rock Bridge, and Company 505 worked at Old Man's Cave and Conkle's Hollow. Together, ODNR says, they planted nearly 500,000 trees.

Camp Logan closed in 1937. Camp Hocking closed in 1942 and later became a minimum-security prison, the Hocking Honor Camp, whose inmates helped care for the parks until 1973. Hocking Hills State Park was created in 1949, the same year Ohio formed ODNR. Conkle's Hollow was dedicated as a state nature preserve in 1977.

A CCC camp of Black workers, Company 526, sat on top of Cantwell Cliffs, a few miles from our driveway.



The view from the rock hill behind Rock Hill Retreat

Grandma Gatewood's Hills

In 1955, Emma "Grandma" Gatewood became the first woman to hike the entire Appalachian Trail alone in one season. ODNR says she felt a special connection to the Old Man's Cave area, and from 1967 to 1973 she took part in the annual Hocking Hills winter hike. The park's Grandma Gatewood Trail is named for her.

Of the cliffs here, ODNR says she found them "more interesting than anything I saw on the Appalachian Trail".

≈ 7,000 yrs ago	500 BCE–100 CE	1797	≈ 1835	1840	1884	1924	1930s	1949
Earliest evidence of people	Adena culture	Conkle carves his name	Rock House Hotel opens	Canal reaches Nelsonville	Mine fire begins	State buys 146 acres	CCC camps open	State park created

These notes were checked against park and historical sources in November 2026. Where sources disagree, we've said so.

- ODNR, Hocking Hills State Park: ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/hocking-hills-state-park
- ODNR, Rock House, Ash Cave, Conkles Hollow, and Rockbridge pages; Ash Cave marker news release (Oct. 2025): ohiodnr.gov
- ODNR Geological Survey, Information Circular No. 8 (Hall, 1953): dam.assets.ohio.gov
- Ohio History Connection, "A Brief History of Hocking Hills State Park" and "New Straitsville Mine Fire": ohiomemory.ohiohistory.org
- Explore Hocking Hills, Cedar Falls page and Hocking Canal route and locks timeline: explorehockinghills.com
- Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council, coal mining history: lcbdohio.org



Game-day HQ: Brutus on duty, a house divided in scarlet and maize, and the living room ready for kickoff.



All eyes on the screen from the big sectional — rivalry weekend, seating optional.

GUEST SPOTLIGHT

House Divided, Happily So

For the Ohio State–Michigan game, a crew of friends packs Rock Hill Retreat — scarlet on one side of the couch, maize on the other, and a whole house built for the rivalry.

Some weekends are one-offs. This one is a tradition. When the Ohio State–Michigan game lands on the calendar, the same circle of friends loads the cars, claims the Retreat, and turns 13032 E. Buck Run Rd into the friendliest house-divided headquarters in the Hocking Hills.

One couch leans scarlet and gray. The other answers in maize and blue. Between them: an inflatable Brutus standing tall in the living room, a banner on the wall, and a sectional long enough for the whole crew to watch every snap together.

> *The game is the excuse. The weekend is the point.*

More Than Kickoff

Between the pregame buzz and the final whistle — and long after — the house stays loud in the best way. The game room fills with ping-pong rallies beside the pool table, an arcade machine waiting its turn, and trash talk that somehow never settles the score. Around the farmhouse dining table, board games take over. In the bunk room, a plush campfire and pretend s'mores steal the show.

Outside, the weekend finds its slower gear: a cookout on the grill, a soak in the hot tub under the rock face, and stories traded around the fire pit until the stars take over.



Ping-pong mid-rally, pool table at the ready, arcade humming in the background — the game room earns its name.

A House Built for the Group

Rock Hill Retreat was made for gatherings like this. The big living room pulls everyone into the same moment. The farmhouse dining table seats a crowd for dinner and doubles as game-night central. The bunk room gives the kids — or the kids-at-heart — a place to pile in and play. And when the Ohio air cools down, the hot tub and fire pit keep the night going outdoors.

That mix is why this crew comes back for rivalry weekend, and why the Retreat works just as well when there is no scoreboard at all.



Board games and big smiles around the farmhouse dining table.



Bunk-room s'mores — no open flame required, laughter included.

Any Occasion, Same Warm Welcome

Football Saturdays are only the beginning. The same spaces that hold a house-divided watch party are ready for reunions, birthdays, holidays, and friend getaways with nothing on the agenda but being together. Bring the people you love. We'll keep the couches deep, the games close, and the fire pit waiting.

FOOTBALL WEEKENDS | REUNIONS | BIRTHDAYS | HOLIDAYS | FRIEND GETAWAYS

Start a tradition of your own

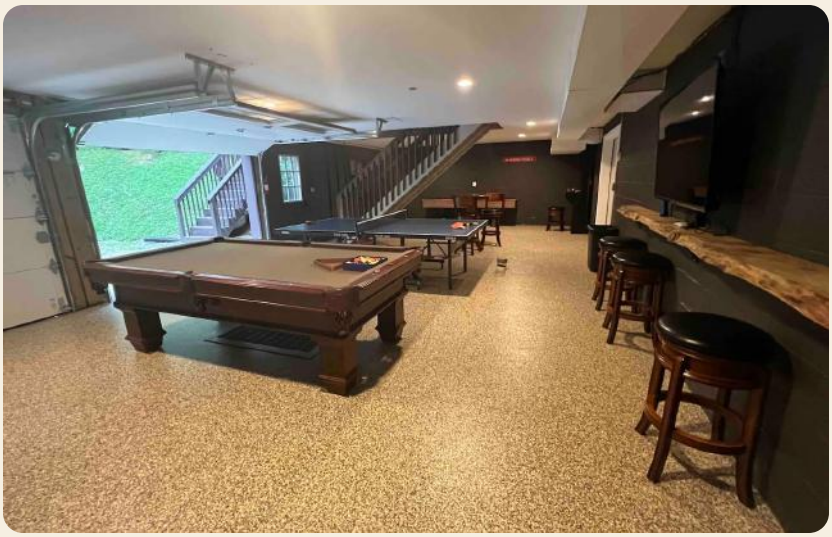
Book Rock Hill Retreat direct and skip the booking-site fees (page 15). Want your group to be our next Guest Spotlight? See page 14.

The retreat in the rocks of Hocking Hills

PHOTO FEATURE

A Look Around the Retreat

Five bedrooms, three game rooms, and 11 acres of woods against a wall of natural rock.

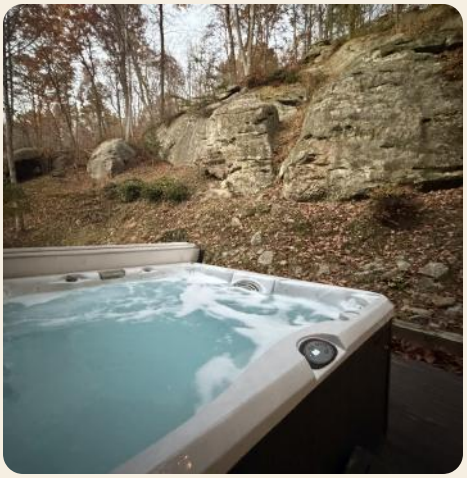


Garage doors up in the party room

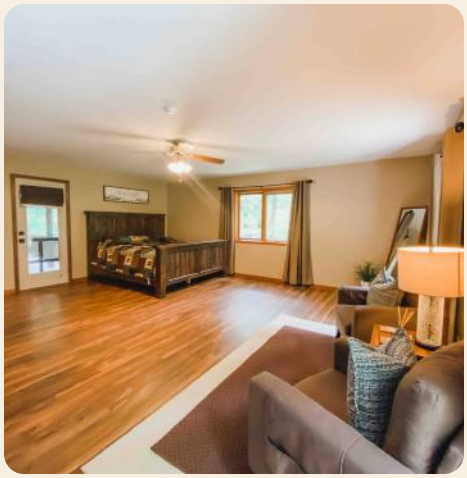
Hot Tub, Cocoa, Repeat

Our holiday playbook, in short: stock up on groceries (and cocoa) before you head into the hills, claim the big dining table for the holiday meal, settle the Rock Hill Cup over pool, ping pong, shuffleboard, and darts, and finish the night in the seven-person hot tub under the lit-up rocks. Please keep an eye on kids; the hot tub doesn't have a gate or lock.

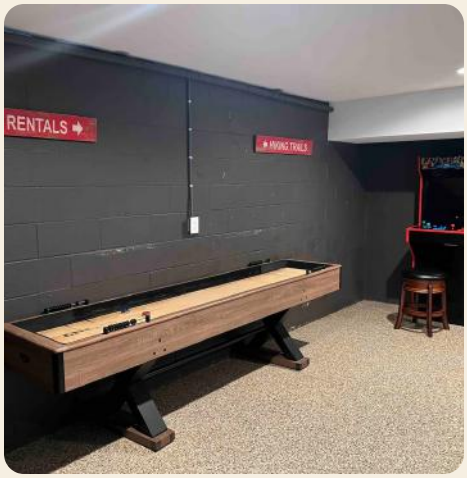
Happy holidays!



The seven-person hot tub, with the rock hill right behind it



Master suite



Shuffleboard & arcade



Fall seating on the front porch



The house, deck, and hot tub at dusk



The bunk room's play fire pit

Around the Retreat

Where this issue's top 10 sit in relation to our driveway. Lancaster and Logan are a straight shot up or down Route 33.



Map drawn from OpenStreetMap data; locations and routes are approximate and not for navigation. The Treasure Hunt (#4) covers 31 shops across the region.

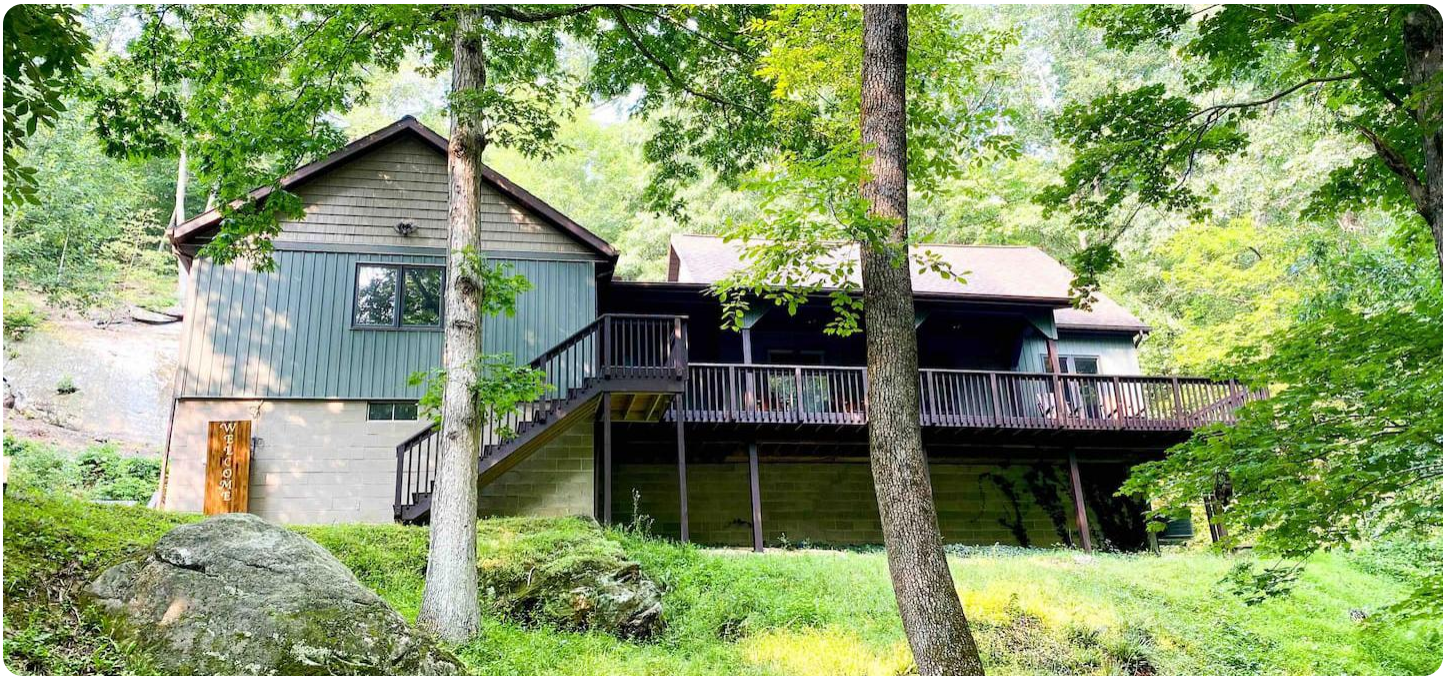
#	QUICK REFERENCE	PHONE	MILES
1	**Cantwell Cliffs**	(740) 385-6842	≈ 3 mi
2	**Rock House**	(740) 385-6842	≈ 7 mi
3	**Old Man's Cave & the Park Visitor Center**	(740) 385-6842	≈ 12 mi
4	**Hocking Hills Holiday Treasure Hunt**	1-800-HOCKING	Region-wide
5	**Santa Train, Hocking Valley Scenic Railway**	855-32-DEPOT	≈ 21 mi
6	**Logan Christmas Parade & Celebration of Trees**	(740) 385-0344	≈ 10 mi
7	**Advent Window Walk, Lancaster**	1-800-626-1296	≈ 13 mi
8	**Winterlights at Alley Park, Lancaster**	(740) 687-6651	≈ 11 mi
9	Holidays in Ash Cave	(740) 385-6841	≈ 20 mi
10	**Glass Town Countdown, Lancaster**	(740) 277-6607	≈ 13 mi
★	**Winter Hike (Jan. 16, 2027)**	(740) 385-6842	≈ 12 mi

Your photos could be in our next edition

Email your favorite shots (originals, not screenshots) to **aaron@rockhillretreat.com** with your name, stay dates, and a line about the moment.

By sending photos, you confirm you took them and give Rock Hill Retreat permission to share them, with credit, in this magazine and on our website and social media. Please check with anyone pictured first.

Scan to email us



Rock Hill Retreat, tucked into the woods on 11 acres

BOOK DIRECT & SAVE

Skip the Airbnb and Vrbo service fees.

Booking directly with us means no Airbnb or Vrbo service fees. Same house, same hot tub, same 4.89-star stay our Airbnb guests rate it (66 reviews).

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5	3	18	11
BEDROOMS	FULL BATHS	SLEEPS UP TO	WOODED ACRES

About the Retreat

Rock Hill Retreat sits on 11 wooded acres against a wall of natural rock outside Rockbridge, about 3 miles from Cantwell Cliffs. There's room for the whole crew, a big table for the holiday meal, and a hot tub under the rocks for the end of the day.

Questions about dates or group size? Email Aaron at aaron@rockhillretreat.com or visit rockhillretreat.com.

Before You Arrive

- Take the County Road 33/Miller Road exit off Route 33; other GPS routes are narrow and winding.
- Check-in is after 4 p.m. with a keypad on the front door; we'll send your entry details before you arrive. Checkout is before 11 a.m.
- Please don't park on the shared first stretch of the driveway; bigger groups can use the grassy area to the left of the driveway at our entrance.
- No pets, no smoking, and no parties or events.



Deck nights under the string lights at Rock Hill Retreat

ROCK HILL RETREAT

The retreat in the rocks of Hocking Hills

Scan to book direct

Rock Hill Retreat

Rockbridge, Ohio 43149 · Hocking Hills

5 bedrooms · 3 baths · sleeps up to 18 · 11 acres

aaron@rockhillretreat.com

rockhillretreat.com

Book direct: **rock-hill-retreat.hosted.ownerrez.com/book**

Rock Hill Retreat is owned and operated by Conrad Vacation Properties LLC. Event dates and details were checked on organizers' and parks' websites on November 5, 2026 and may change; please confirm before you go. History notes were checked against park and historical sources in November 2026. Property photos are Rock Hill Retreat's own. Guest photos are shared with permission. Happy holidays from all of us!