



Observation tower offers perspective on ancient earthwork.

Wild

Prairie program, trail
stuff in two states

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90 feet above wooded Ohio
Creek.

Some claim the shape of the
mouth open swallowing an egg
chasing a frog. Others say it
represents a horned snake of In-
dian culture. Of course, no one
knows.

The head of the snake is
aligned to the summer solstice
and the coils may point to
the winter solstice sunrise and
the equinox sunrise.

Some claim the Indians may
have built it in the wake of Hal-
ley's Comet appearing in the
year 1066.

The mound has gained a rep-
utation for being a spiritual place
where strange things occasional-
ly happen. It is a New Age pow-
er center, believers say.

The mound - it is managed
by the Ohio Historical Society -
makes a great stop for casual
travelers.

Good vistas

Serpent Mound State Memo-
rial is off state Route 73 about 10
miles north of Peebles in Adams
County. It is six miles north of

state Route 32 and 20 miles south
of Bainbridge in Bratton Town-
ship.

You walk on a paved path
that is up to 3 feet high that takes
you around the mound. You can
climb a 25-foot tower to get an
aerial look at what may be an an-
cient sky calendar. There is a
small museum at the 54-acre
state memorial.

The grass-covered mound is
from 2 to 6 feet in height and
from 20 to 25 feet in width as it
stretches and roils nearly a quar-
ter mile. The bottom of the
mound is yellow clay from near-
by pits and rock covered with
soil.

The serpent's head and tail
both lie along cliffs on the south-
west. The northeast edge of the
effigy slopes sharply away. That
creates an isolated feeling and
provides good vistas of the Ohio
Brush Creek Valley.

There is no evidence of the
Indians who created it burying
their dead on the serpent
mound. They were buried, in-
stead, in other nearby mounds.

The Serpent Mound was built
atop a unique geological feature:
an underground explosion that
jumbled the rocks under and
around the area.

Some rock formations rose
1,000 feet above ground and oth-
ers sank 400 feet for reasons that
baffle geologists.

Whatever happened - a mete-
or or asteroid or volcano or un-
derground explosions - occurred
about 200 million years ago. It



Visitors walk near the Serpent Mound in southern Ohio, a National Historic Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places.

affected a 15-square-mile area
around where the Serpent
Mound is now.

Similar underground phe-
nomena have been recorded
elsewhere with no mound-build-
ing activities. But experts are un-
sure if there is a tie between the
effigy and whatever happened
around the site.

There are similar serpent effig-
ies in Ontario and Scotland.

Elaborate calendar

The Ohio site was first sur-
veyed in 1846 by Ephraim Squire
and Edwin Davis of Chillicothe.
They published their work.

Harvard University archaeol-
ogist Frederic Ward Putnam vi-
sited the site in 1885 and was so
worried that it would be de-
stroyed by vandals and erosion
that he purchased the site in the
name of Harvard's Peabody Mu-
seum.

He spent three years from
1887-1889 excavating the effigy
and nearby conical mounds. He
found no human bones or arti-
facts in the serpent mound. He
concluded that the builders of
the effigy, along with two nearby
burial mounds, were from the
mound-building Adena culture
(800 B.C. to A.D. 100).

A third burial mound at the
park and a village site near the
serpent's tail belong to the later
Fort Ancient culture from A.D.
1000 to 1550.

More recent radiocarbon dat-
ing of charcoal from the Serpent
Mound dates not to the Adenas
but to the Fort Ancients in the
11th century.

In 1993, researchers Robert
Fletcher and Terry Cameron
theorized that the Serpent



Akron Beacon Journal

Mound forms an elaborate astro-
nomical calendar.

Harvard turned the site over
to the Ohio Archaeological and
Historical Society in 1900.

For more information, con-
tact the Serpent Mound, 3850
state Route 73, Peebles, OH
45660; 937-587-2796 or 800-752-
2757. See www.ohiohistory.org/places/serpent.

Park hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
daily. Closed Thanksgiving,
Christmas and New Year's Day.

Park hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
on weekends from April 1 to Me-
morial Day weekend and in Sep-
tember and October. Also from
10 a.m. to 8 p.m. from Memorial
Day weekend through Labor
Day.

Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5
p.m. daily from April 1 through
Oct. 31.

Admission is free but there is
a \$6 parking fee.

Prairie colors

The Ohio Department of Nat-
ural Resources will hold a prairie
program on Aug. 7 in Adams
County.

The program from 10 a.m. to
3 p.m. will be at Chaparral Prair-
ie State Nature Preserve

It will be an open house-
style event when the prairie
flowers are at their colorful best.
State staffers can also direct you
to other protected prairies in
Adams County.

The preserve is near West
Union. Call 937-544-9750 for
more information.

It is part of the 2004 Natural
Areas Discovery Series that is
being presented by ODNR's Di-
vision of Natural Areas and Pre-
serves.

Call 937-767-7947 for more
information.

Ohio confab

The North Country Trail As-
sociation will hold its annual
meeting Thursday through next
Sunday in Marietta in southern
Ohio.

There will be hikes, work-
shops and presentations focusing
on the trail that stretches from
upstate New York through Ohio
and other states to central North
Dakota.

For more information, call
866-445-3628 or see www.northcountrytrail.org.

You can also write to the
North Country Trail Association
at 229 E. Main St., Lowell, MI
49331.

Hatfields, McCoys

There's something new in
southern West Virginia.

It's the Pinnacle Creek trail
system near Pineville in Wyo-
ming County. It is the fifth and
newest addition to the still-de-
veloping Hatfield-McCoy Trails
and opened to the public

on May 26.

The trails cover 100 miles
all-terrain vehicles and dirt bi-
cles and is part of the system man-
aged by the Hatfield-McCoy Re-
gional Recreation Authority. Ac-
cess is via the Castle Rock
Trailhead.

The trails are also open to
mountain bikers and hikers, but
ATVs and mountain bikes ac-
count for 92 percent of the per-
mits sold.

The four other trailheads are:
• Bear Wallow, with 100
miles of trails in the Dingess
Run trail system east of Logan
in Logan County.

• Rockhouse, with 100 mil-
ions of trails in the Browning Run
Fork trail system east of Man-
gion in Logan County.

• The Rev. Compton Park
with 100 miles in the Buffalo
Mountain trail system between
Williamson and Matewan in
Mingo County.

• Water Ways, with 100 mi-
les in the Little Coal River trail sys-
tem near Danville in Boone
County.

More Ohioans are using the
trail system than people from
any other state. Ohioans ac-
count for 21 percent of the trail users
compared with 20 percent for
West Virginians.

Plans call for the trail sys-
tem - now at 500 miles - to reach
2,000 miles in eight counties in
southern West Virginia.

The fee is \$100 a year for out-
of-staters and \$25 a year for W.
Virginians. A one-day permit
costs \$15 and a permit for three
to seven days costs \$35.

Last October was the biggest
month, with 3,674 permits sold.

Permits sold have grown
from 5,219 in the first year to
11,056 in the second year to 16,
in the third year. Those permits
accounted for \$390,908 in fees
last year.

For more information, con-
tact the authority at P.O. Box
539, Rich Creek Road, Lyburn
WV 25632; 304-752-3255 or 800-
592-2217; www.TrailsHeaven.com.

Bob Downing can be reached at 330-996-3333
or bdowning@thebeaconjournal.com

Monorail gamble for Las Vegas

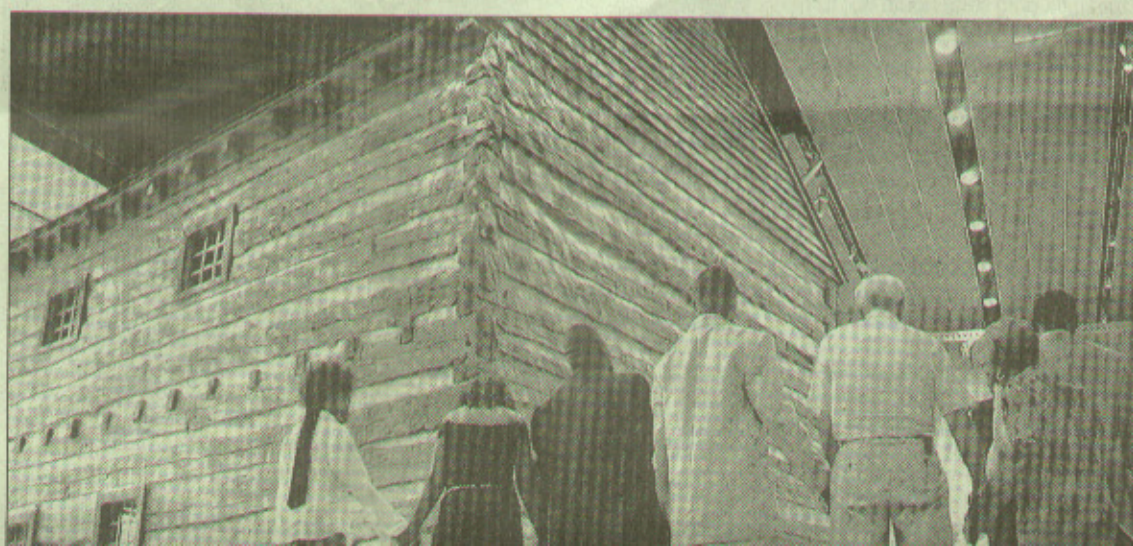
City hopes public
transport cuts traffic
problems, adds to fun

By Andrea K. Walker
Baltimore Sun

Las Vegas is looking to its
new monorail to ease traffic con-
gestion, hoping it will be the so-

rails, but U.S. cities didn't. It
never was taken seriously
enough."

Jacksonville, Fla., has a 2.5-
mile system. Miami has a nearly
five-mile loop around down-
town to the city's business dis-
tricts. Seattle plans to extend the
milelong monorail it originally
built for a World's Fair.



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