

4. Big Harmonie Pond

This pond is no quiet retreat! In the summer months, aquatic turtles can easily be spotted basking in the warm sunshine. Bullfrogs and green frogs may give an alarm call at your approach and then leap in the water to safety. Listen for the “yEEP!” If you are hiking at night, listen for Barred Owls and if you are lucky, you can catch their eyes reflecting your light.

You can also see many chimney crayfish burrows along the edge of the water. These crustaceans place one exit in water and one on land, so escape is twice as easy.

As you cross the next three bridges, look closely and you will notice they are made of plastic. On Earth Day in 1995, in cooperation with GE Plastics, five structures were built made from recycled lumber using 150,000 milk jugs. Throughout the rest of the trail, look for plastic steps, bridges and observation areas. This is human recycling at its best!

5. Around the pond

As you continue around the pond, take your time and notice the little things. Look for a shelf fungus on a rotting log, a water strider scooting along the water’s surface or a tiny ant on a mission. There’s also a good population of Ironwood (Blue Beech) trees along this trail. Smooth, muscle-like wood and oval, coarsely toothed leaves are its characteristics. Maples, American beech, and even Kentucky Coffee Trees dot the landscape. Many ferns and Paw-paw trees can handle the low light conditions and fare well on the slopes. A changing

array of wildflowers is usually visible from late April through September.

One last set of wooden steps will soon join you with the main part of Trail 5 and connect you with the family cabin road within the campground.

We hope this guide helped you slow down and enjoy a closer look at nature here at Harmonie State Park. Come again soon and discover another trail.

Observation Notes:



Harmonie State Park
3451 Harmonie State Park Rd.
New Harmony, IN 47631
(812) 682-3658

Harmonie State Park Self-Guided Nature Trail

**A guide to the cut-through
section of Trail 5**



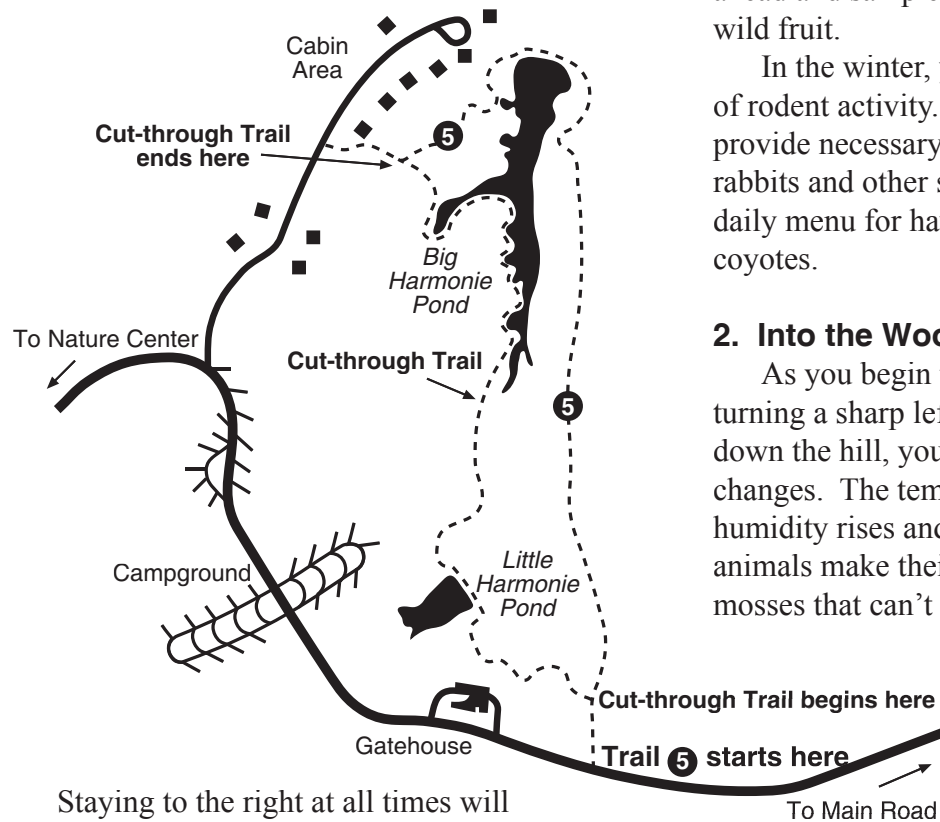
DNR

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks and Reservoirs
Interpretive Services

Trail 5 Guide

Welcome! This brochure is like having an interpretive naturalist by your side, while allowing for hiking at your own pace any time of the year. We hope you enjoy your hike!

Trail 5 begins near the campground gatehouse, and winds through open grassland, into forest, past the levee of the big pond and finally up the hill to the cabins. This guide describes an extra piece of the trail that cuts through the main loop of the trail. See the map below.



Staying to the right at all times will keep you on the trail. You will end near the cabins at the official end of Trail 5.

Here are some things to observe as you hike along.

1. Open Grassland

Before Harmonie State Park was established, the majority of these 3,465 acres of land were used for farming. Some steep ravines made by glacial meltwater from the last Ice Age were untillable and were forested or grazed. Now this land has been left to recover from its plowing days.

In late June and early July, look for ripe blackberries all along the fields. When these berries are ripe, they are included in almost every animal's diet from insects and birds to deer, raccoons and opossums. Go ahead and sample the sweet ripeness of this wild fruit.

In the winter, you may see evidence of rodent activity. These brushy places provide necessary shelter for mice, voles rabbits and other small mammals on the daily menu for hawks, owls, foxes and coyotes.

2. Into the Woods

As you begin the cut-through by turning a sharp left onto the path leading down the hill, you will notice many changes. The temperature drops, the humidity rises and different plants and animals make their homes here. Ferns and mosses that can't tolerate high levels

of sunlight grow under the long bridge. Shade tolerant tree species are found here, but many others are left to struggle

for every bit of sunlight their leaves can capture. It's a battle that all plants fight, but not all can win. When a large tree

falls, it means great opportunity for other small trees. It also means homes for many insects, birds and small mammals.

Almost every living creature visits the forest habitat at some point to look for food and water, to nest, to sleep or to hide.

The forest is an extremely busy place no matter the season. You may hear warblers singing in the spring and deer passing through in the summertime. In the winter you may find evidence of animals such as woodpecker holes or animal tracks in the snow.

3. Little Harmonie Pond

This pond is manmade and stocked with bluegill and red-ear sunfish as well as bass and catfish.

It is a great place to relax with some fishing and do a little soul searching! However calm it may seem, there is much happening here. Listen for frogs calling mates in the spring. Watch dragonflies cruise their territorial boundaries in the summer in search of their next meal. Don't worry, they can't pick you up and carry you away, but they can put a dent in the local mosquito population! Bats also help keep those pesky insects under control. All bats in Indiana are insectivores, and, in summer can be seen just after sunset flapping overhead. They are not blind, but depend more on sonar for catching their meals on the wing. Eastern red and little brown bats are the most abundant here.

