



CLEVELAND LAKEFRONT NATURE PRESERVE

UNIQUE URBAN ASSET. The 88-acre man-made peninsula is on the Lake Erie shoreline in the heart of Cleveland. It is adjacent to Cleveland Lakefront State Park and located at the northern end of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The Preserve is a haven for a variety of migratory birds, butterflies and animals. It also provides one-of-a-kind recreational and educational opportunities for children and adults to connect with nature on the waterfront. The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority manages this community asset, formerly known as Dike 14, and opened it to the public in February 2012. The Port Authority plans to work with other stakeholders to maximize educational opportunities and lead implementation of a master plan. The Preserve is open during daylight hours and is free to the public.

WILDLIFE HABITAT. Over time, researchers and other visitors have identified more than 280 species of birds, 29 species of butterflies, 16 species of mammals (including red fox, coyote, mink, and deer) 2 species of reptiles, 26 Ohio plant species (including wildflowers and grasses) and 9 species of trees and shrubs. The diverse mix of habitats includes grasslands, a forest area, meadows, mudflats, shrub lands, and wetlands. Audubon Ohio has designated the site as an Important Bird Area.

EDUCATION. Various educational programs have been undertaken over the years through the Environmental Education Collaborative, which was formed in 2003 to provide multi-interdisciplinary environmental education for students, teachers and families, and to promote environmental stewardship of what was then Dike 14. The Collaborative has continued to play an important role at the Preserve, creating experiential learning activities such as activity kits in backpacks that teachers and families can use to foster problem solving, an understanding of environmental sustainability, and critical-thinking skills through environmental education.

In addition, members of the Student Environmental Congress at Cleveland's John Hay High School designed and are planting a 'sample garden' at the Preserve containing a small collection of plants that grow on site. Their work will provide information about the plant species and will complement a Boy Scout made kiosk at the entry gate that highlights the history and creation of the Preserve.

RESEARCH. The Collaborative has also partnered on research work done by Baldwin Wallace College, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Ohio Lepidopterists and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. That research has included the following: surveys of amphibians, invertebrates, and snakes; a plant inventory; a long-term butterfly monitoring project; and, a bird-banding project to better understand migratory and resident bird populations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION. Contact the Port Authority at (216) 241-8004 or visit: www.portofcleveland.com
A 2005 field guide is available at www.dike14.org

Thanks to the Environmental Education Collaborative for information contained in this fact sheet. Aerial photo courtesy of Don Nottage.

HISTORY

The Preserve is a land mass created over time as sediment dredged from the Cuyahoga River and Cleveland Harbor was placed within dike walls along the lakeshore. From 1979 to 1999 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers managed the site – then known as Dike 14 – as a sediment disposal facility. After the site was closed to dredge material in 1999, nature took hold. The Preserve has 1.2 miles of shoreline.