

Official Firelands History Trail Guide

Firelands Scout Reservation



Welcome to Firelands Scout Reservation! Thank you for visiting our great camp; we hope that you enjoy the trails here. The History Trail is a constellation of GPS coordinates that mark historic sites across Camp Avery Hand at Firelands Scout Reservation. It can also be used as a challenging 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ -mile long orienteering course (see First Class requirement 4).

When hiking the History Trail, in addition to the Ten Essentials (see your Scout Handbook), hikers will also need a cell phone or other device with photograph capability to complete the trail program requirements.

This trail guide provides a list of the GPS coordinates, compass bearings for orienteering, and a short historical explanation of each site. Because most of our historic sites remain commonly used places in camp, the names of these places spoil the challenge of orienteering or geocaching. Therefore, the leader (adult or youth) of your hike on the History Trail should only provide the hikers either GPS coordinates or compass bearings, and only read the historical passage (including the site names) after arrival at the coordinates.

At each site, hikers should take a selfie or group picture with the  marker in the background. After completing your hike, share your selfies and other pictures with the Camp Master or Director and on social media.

If following the orienteering course option, hikers should calibrate their pace by counting their steps between the NE corner of the Cub Handicraft Shelter and the SE corner of the latrine (due north), which are exactly 125' apart.

Also, note that straight-line bearings on the History Trail include several obstacles. These obstacles can be sorted into 3 categories: buildings (often the historic sites themselves), terrain features (particularly ravines and steep hills), and property borderlines. Scouts are required to stay on Camp property at all times and it is impossible to climb over the Dining Hall, so navigation around these obstacles is a mandatory aspect of the orienteering option of this trail. Refer to the Orienteering Merit Badge pamphlet for detailed instructions to navigate around obstacles.

Regarding ravines, with the approval of the adult volunteer responsible for the hiking group, Scouts may optionally follow straight-line bearings across ravines or down/up steep hillsides. The LNT principal of "travel and camp on durable surfaces" does not forbid traveling cross-country, but extra precaution is necessary to prevent damage to vegetation and erosion. Groups should spread out while hiking off-trail so that new trails are not created.

Due to these obstacles, the first 3 bearings of this orienteering course are very challenging. If this course is being used for First Class requirement 4 (rather than the History Trail pin), it can be made easier by starting at site #4 (Frohman Cabin), or by telling Scouts the site names for the first 3 sites. Beginning at #4, the remainder of the course is still 1-mile long and fairly challenging.

0. Begin your hike at Cub Handicraft Shelter (41.28829 N x 82.33039 W)

Firelands Scout Reservation, as it is now known, was acquired by the former Firelands Area Council, BSA, *circa* 1938. Scouts from this three-county council had previously used Camp Lake Shore, land leased from the Lake Shore Electric Railway near Huron, but that company went bankrupt during the Great Depression. Camp Lake Shore was small, only about 20 acres, and it is now on the property called Chaska Beach.

In the late-thirties, the new Camp Firelands only included about 90 acres. The land had previously belonged to the Rosa family who operated an apple orchard here. Back then, camp also included land on the east side of Gore-Orphanage Road, north of Becker Road, but that portion was traded to a neighbor for land to the north of the original Rosa property, but south of the gas line which runs along the north border of camp.

The original Rosa house stood just south of the present Camp Avery Hand entrance on Gore-Orphanage. The camp ranger lived there until it was replaced by the present ranger's house in 2001.

Before 1960, the Rosa's barn stood where the Cub Scout Handicraft Shelter and Woodshop⁰ is today. This building served as the Trading Post for many years. The original building was relocated to this site from a nearby crossroads outside of camp. Remember not to go off camp property yourself, as you follow the compass bearings!

This building also served as the home of the Brian T. Murray Scouting Museum. The Handicraft Shelter was added later by Troop 431 of Amherst (predecessor of Troop 494, Amherst). The Museum room was eventually converted into storage for Cub Scout craft projects and the store area was turned into a woodworking shop. The former porch has been enclosed and now houses power tools. Most of the signage and small wood projects used in camp are produced here.

1. Proceed 650' at 282° (41.288647 N x 82.332718 W)

In the 1980's and early '90s, the former Ski Lodge¹ served as a center for winter sports at Camp Firelands – thus its name. This included cross-country skiing, ice skating on a shallow pond located between Schroeder and Cotton, and sledding and tubing down the hill into the Vermilion River valley.

The Ski Lodge cabin was moved several times during its life. It originally stood off camp property, and was first moved to a location near the Camp Wyandot lake. Later, it was moved a second time to this location where it stood for 37 years, from 1979-2016.

2. Proceed 155' at 321° (41.288982 N x 82.333085 W)

Across the road, Schroeder Cabin² was built in 1978. It was named for Eagle Scout William Schroeder of Troop 306, Lorain, who was killed on May 4, 1970 at Kent State University when Ohio National Guard troops opened fire on anti-war protestors.

A short distance north (not part of this hike), the Lorain Exchange Cabin is older than either Ski Lodge or Schroeder. It was donated by the club of that name. It was built in 1952. The small storage building across the road was originally built as the camp shower house, but it was never completed for that purpose.

3. Proceed 470' at 314° (41.289878 N x 82.334307 W)

The first cabin at Firelands was the Oberlin Cabin³ which stood on the trail between Frohman and Hernia Hill. It was built in 1940 by Oberlin Troop 1 (now Troop 401), the oldest troop in the former Heart of Ohio Council. Troop 1 was first chartered before World War I and has been continuously chartered since 1919. The cabin featured an upstairs loft for sleeping, and a hardwood floor that originally came from the Oberlin Junior High School gym. In its later years, this cabin was the home of the Brian T. Murray Scouting Museum, named for a former Lorain Scout killed in action in Vietnam. The cabin was eventually turned back into a camping cabin because it could not be secured, and finally it was razed in 1995 when it was no longer repairable for habitation.

4. Proceed 100' at 42° (41.290075 N x 82.334068 W)

Nearby, the Frohman Cabin⁴ was built in the early 1970s as the camp Health Lodge. It has a room built as a dispensary (medical clinic), along with a shower and indoor plumbing.

5. Proceed 275' at 12° (41.290811 N x 82.333866 W)

The present CAH Dining Hall⁵ was built in 1956 at a cost of \$60,000! A new kitchen was added in 1987, and the old kitchen roof was rebuilt on the island at Camp Wyandot as the new Chapel. Originally, the dining hall had a screened front porch, but this was enclosed in 2000 to provide more space for seating.

6. Proceed 850' at 308° (41.292235 N x 82.336317 W)

The second oldest cabin in camp is the Lorain Nature Cabin⁶. It was originally built by Troop 6 (later 306) of Lorain, and previously stood in what is now Mill Hollow Metro Park. It was moved to Camp Firelands in 1940 and was used as the camp dining hall. The kitchen was located in a wing (since removed) on the northwest corner. Although it seems too small to be a dining hall, remember that a typical summer camp week was only attended by 50-60 Scouts. The front porch was added in 1998. Flag ceremonies were held around the steel flagpole which still stands between Lorain Nature and the old Chapel. When the current Camp Avery Hand Dining Hall was built *circa* 1956, this building was converted into the camp's nature lodge, thus its present name.

7. Proceed 440' at 358° (41.293442 N x 82.336384 W)

Jubilee Cabin⁷ was originally used as a temporary school building in Lorain. It was relocated in pieces and rebuilt on its present site in 1970 – Scouting's Jubilee Year – the 60th anniversary of Scouting in the USA. During summer camp in the 70's, it was the camp Trading Post and handicraft building. When the winter camping season began, a wall would be inserted between the two sections, dividing it into Jubilee A and Jubilee B. The gas furnace was added later.

8. Proceed 328' at 283° (41.293644 N x 82.337547 W)

Scouts don't only sleep in cabins at Firelands; there are also a large number of tent sites across the Reservation. The northernmost site is Fauver⁸. The Fauver site sits at the top of Gas Line Hill. Decades ago, Friday night campfires were held at the foot of this hill. Scouts would enter the area silently and sit on the side of the hill east of the river in a cleared area. The staff, dressed as Indians, would enter down the hill from the west, following flaming torches which were then used to light the twin campfires. The Scouts would then be entertained by the "Tribe of Many Feathers" who

performed various Indian dances accompanied by drums. The final part of the evening was a Potlatch Ceremony where Scouts could give gifts and their thanks to adult volunteers and staff for providing a great week at camp. (This traditional location changed abruptly in 1969 when the gas company called the Camp Ranger on Saturday morning to notify him of a gas leak in the area – following the Friday night campfire!).

9. Proceed 435' at 147° (41.292645 N x 82.336670 W)

None of the pine trees growing in camp are here naturally. Some were planted by Scouts, many were planted soon after the land was acquired, especially those near the CAH Dining Hall and those in the old Chapel⁹ area. Pines standing in the area of Eco-Con and Eagle's Nest are the remains of two Christmas tree farms which were purchased in the early 1960's. The pines that now grow west of the Scoutcraft in the Tecumseh Pines areas were planted by Scouts later when that land was acquired.

The original camp Rifle Range was located in the valley between the Chapel and the Dining Hall. There was a shelter covering the six firing positions, and Scouts fired at targets located in front of the backstop which was below the trail. Scouts got to the range by going down an old school fire escape, which went down into the valley from a point about 130 feet north of the gate. Only remnants of the stairway remain. The range was closed in 1963, and the new range was opened at the present location in 1964.

10. Proceed 950' at 156° (41.290269 N x 82.335247 W)

Campfires were held at several locations at old Camp Firelands. Sunday night and Wednesday "Parents Night" events were held at what we now call the Akela Ring¹⁰. There was no stage then. That structure was brought from the former Camp Avery Hand near Ontario, Ohio, when that camp was closed.

11. Proceed 465' at 80° (41.290474 N x 82.333585 W)

In the mid-50's, a steel swimming pool was installed southeast of the CAH Dining Hall. It was expected to last 20 years, but survived until 2012. The original Shower House had an open roof and stood next to the pool. The current Shower House¹¹ was built in 1999. Before the pool was built, Scouts swam in the Vermilion River! The area north of the present steel bridge between CAH and Camp Wyandot was dammed to make the water deep enough for swimming every summer after the spring floods; however, Scouts complained of leaches in the water.

12. Proceed 260' at 87° (41.290512 N x 82.332649 W)

Before the Camp Wyandot lake was opened *circa* 1967, Scouts canoed and rowed in Green Pond¹². This was located in the shallow valley between the present Webelos Area and the CAH Dining Hall. A dam located about where the present bridge across the valley held the water back. Green Pond was also the source of the water used to fill the old swimming pool.

13. Proceed 330' at 342° (41.291373 N x 82.3330122 W)

The 2 acres for the Bill and Ara Lou Waldock Aquatics Area¹³ was donated in 2009 so that Cub Scouts would have a place to swim, fish and go boating. The new pond, opened in 2012, replaces the old swimming pool which was closed the same year.

14. Proceed 210' at 308° (41.291716 N x 82.333606 W)

Gilwell Field¹⁴ was originally a cow pasture, separated from the camp by an electrified fence. Older Scouts would sometimes dare new Scouts to touch it! It was acquired in a trade with a neighbor in return for some wooded land at the north end of the property. It is named now for Gilwell Park, the original British Boy Scout volunteer training center where Wood Badge originated. The shelter at the east end is called the Stewards Shelter in honor of those who have donated so much money to the camp since 1992.

15. Proceed 720' at 162° (41.289833 N x 82.332794 W)

In the early years, many Scouts camped in “adirondacks” in addition to tents and cabins. These were three-sided structures with flat roofs built on concrete slabs. They typically had four bunk beds built-in, and some had fireplaces too. Those without fireplaces were heated by reflector fires built out front. The remaining concrete slabs can still be seen at Cotton¹⁵ and at Willard.

There was another adirondack site called Kiwanis which was across the Vermilion River and was accessed from Green Road. A tragic fire at Kiwanis in January of 1971 severely burned two Sandusky Scouts and doomed these adirondack shelters at Camp Firelands. While the cause of the fire was never confirmed, it was decided to remove the remaining shelters of this type for safety reasons.

16. Proceed 265' at 37° (41.290412 N x 82.332216 W)

Tent sites at CAH included “Apache”, now called the Webelos Area¹⁶. The shelter there was built in 1971. Another tent site was called “Sioux”, where the Schroeder Cabin is now located. Other tent sites were only used during the summer. “Boone” was down the path from Frohman across from the old Oberlin Cabin, and “Crockett” was across the road from Lorain Nature.

17. Proceed 200' at 148° (41.289950 N x 82.331829 W)

The present Camp Master's Cabin¹⁷ replaced a quonset hut that stood on the same location and served as the Camp Director's Cabin and Camp Headquarters. It was originally built as the Explorer Post 73 Cabin. Post 73 was composed of summer camp staff members. The cabin was upgraded in 2005 and the present camp store was added. It is now heated and air-conditioned. There has been a plan to add a new camp museum to this building, but that has yet to be brought to fruition.

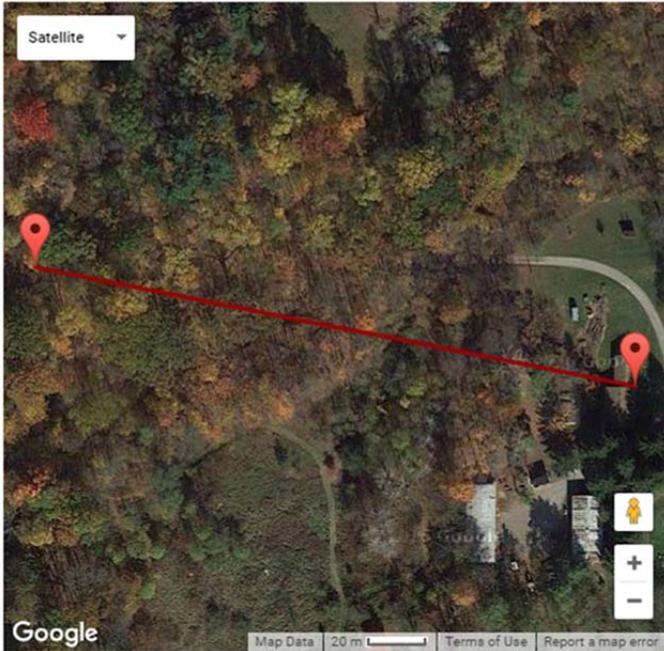
Upon completion of the Firelands History Trail, visit the Camp Master or Camp Director to share the selfies, group pictures, and other photos that you took while learning the history of your camp.

0. Begin at the Cub Handicraft Shelter (41.288290 N x 82.330390 W) and follow the bearings or GPS coordinates below:

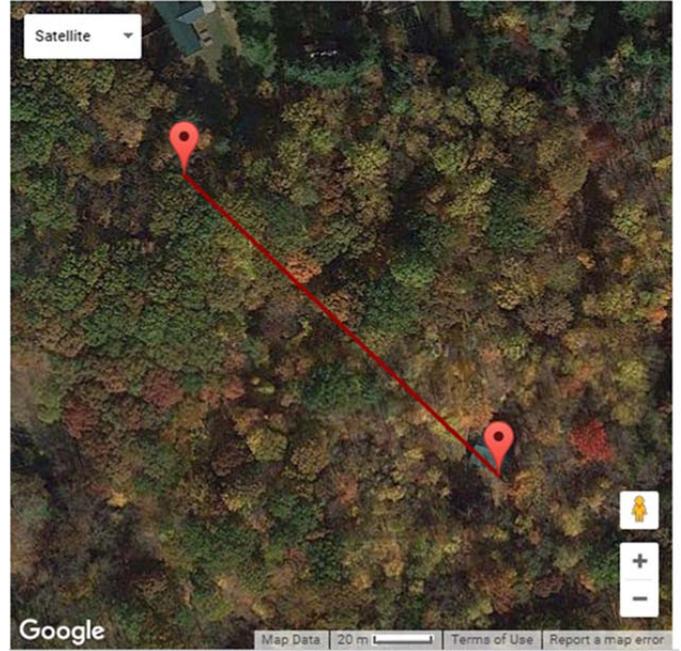
Site	GPS		Orienteering		
	Latitude	Longitude	Bearing, °	Distance, ft	Total Distance, mi
0	41.288290	-82.330390	Start		0.0
1	41.288647	-82.332718	283	652	0.1
2	41.288982	-82.333085	321	158	0.2
3	41.289878	-82.334307	314	469	0.2
4	41.290075	-82.334068	42	98	0.3
5	41.290811	-82.333866	12	274	0.3
6	41.292234	-82.336317	308	850	0.5
7	41.293442	-82.336384	358	441	0.6
8	41.293644	-82.337547	283	328	0.6
9	41.292645	-82.336670	147	437	0.7
10	41.290269	-82.335247	156	951	0.9
11	41.290474	-82.333585	79	465	1.0
12	41.290512	-82.332649	87	257	1.0
13	41.291373	-82.333012	342	330	1.1
14	41.291716	-82.333606	308	206	1.1
15	41.289833	-82.332794	162	722	1.3
16	41.290412	-82.332216	37	264	1.3
17	41.289950	-82.331829	148	199	1.3

An “answer key” appears on the following pages.

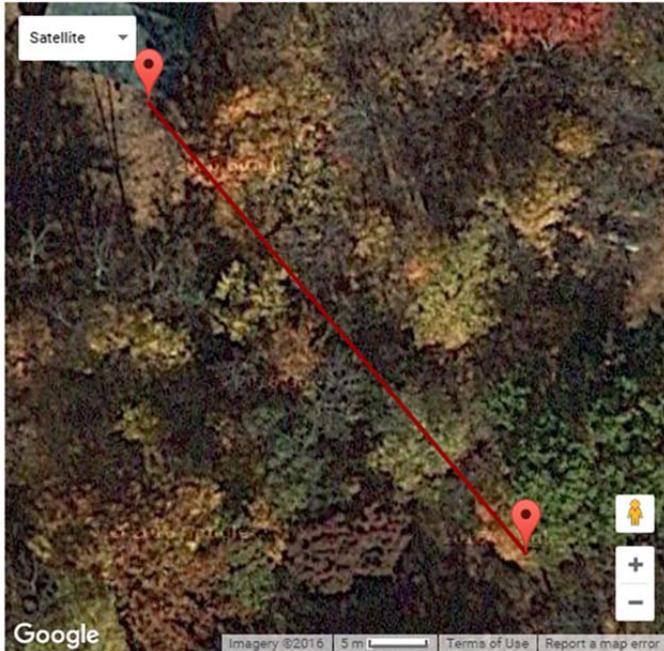
1. Proceed 650' at 285°
to Ski Lodge
41.2886467 N x 82.3327179 W



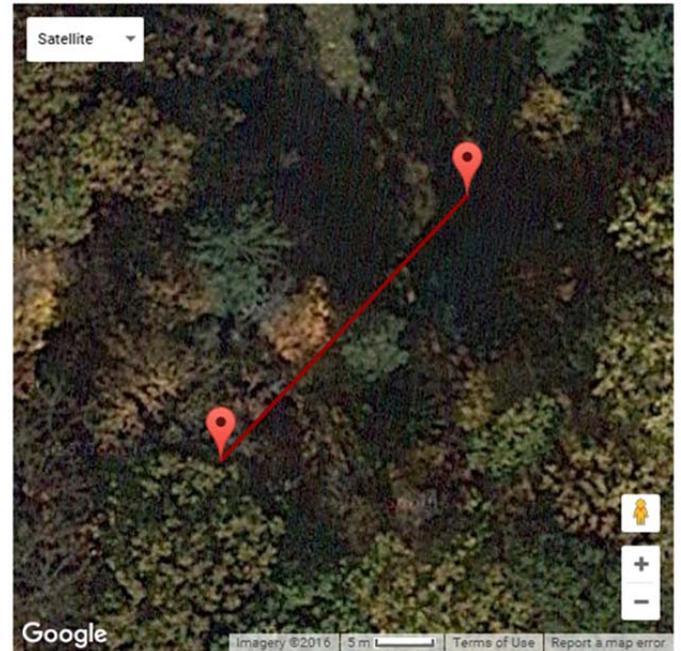
3. Proceed 470' at 314°
to former Oberlin site
41.28987758 N x 82.33430699 W



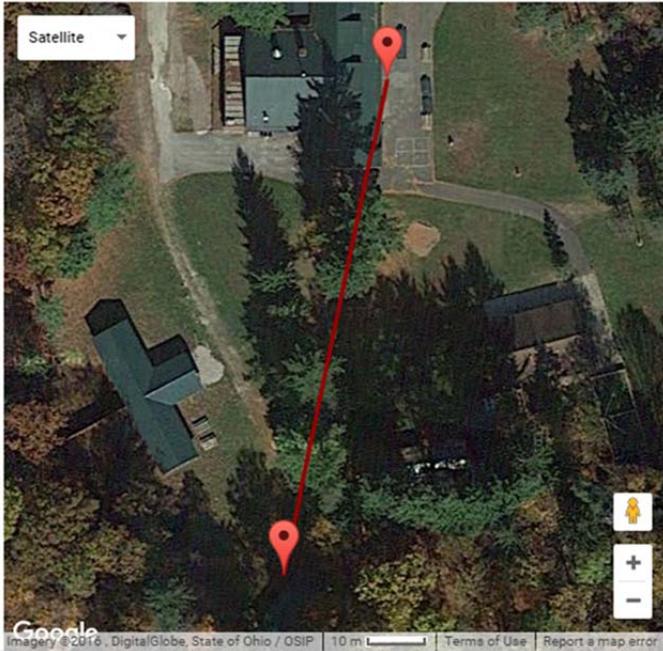
2. Proceed 155' at 321°
to Schroeder
41.28898174 N x 82.33308457 W



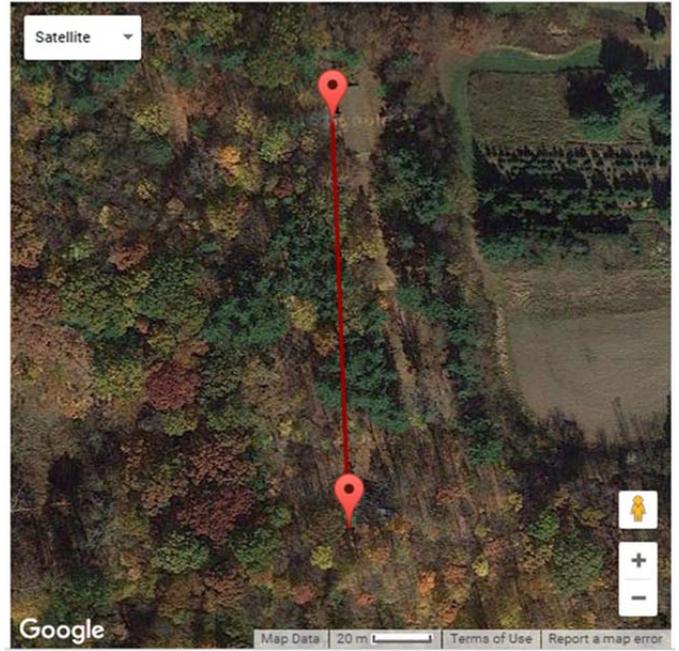
4. Proceed 100' at 42°
to Frohman
41.29007508 N x 82.33406760 W



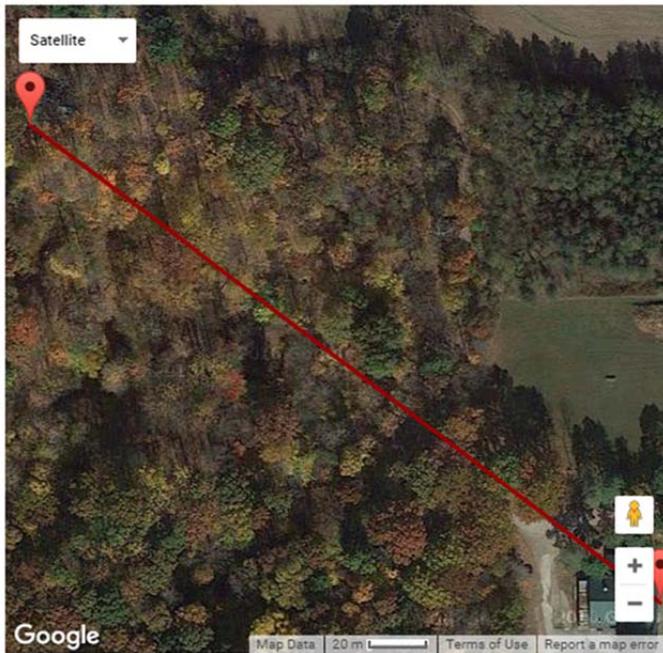
5. Proceed 275' at 12°
to Dining Hall
41.29081068 N x 82.33386643 W



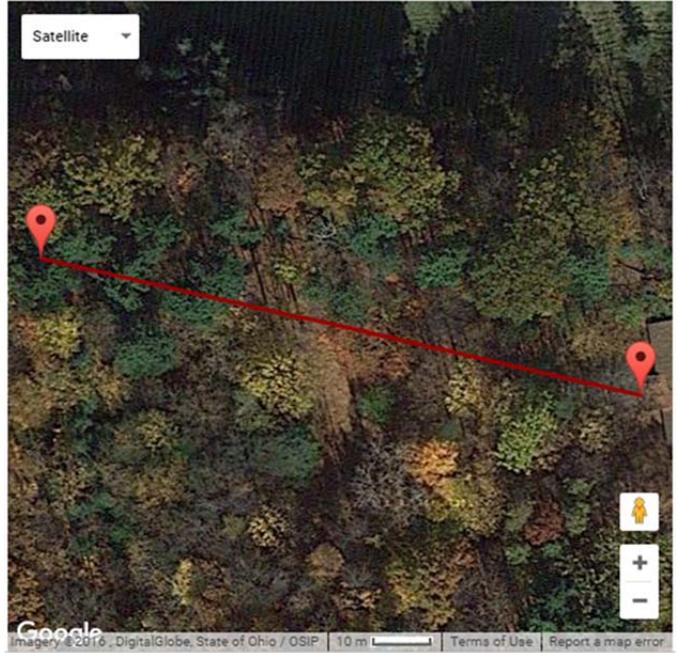
7. Proceed 440' at 358°
to Jubilee
41.29344164 N x 82.33638369 W



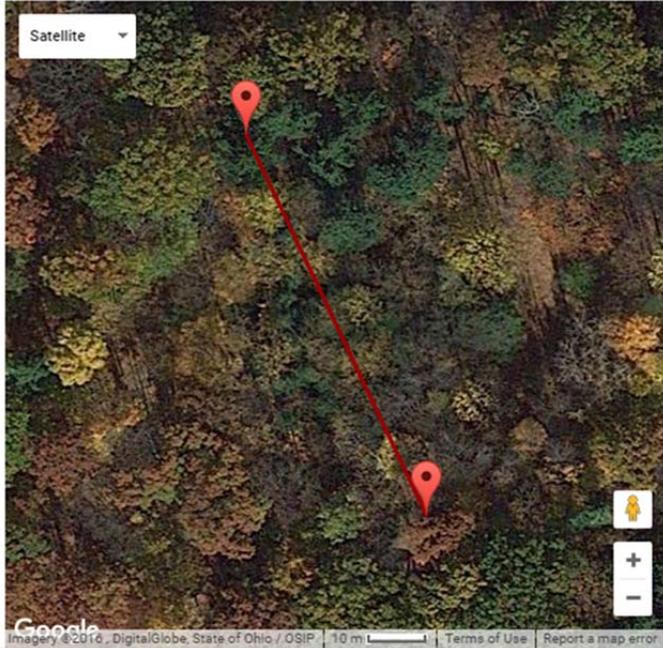
6. Proceed 850' at 308°
to Lorain Nature
41.29223450 N x 82.33631663 W



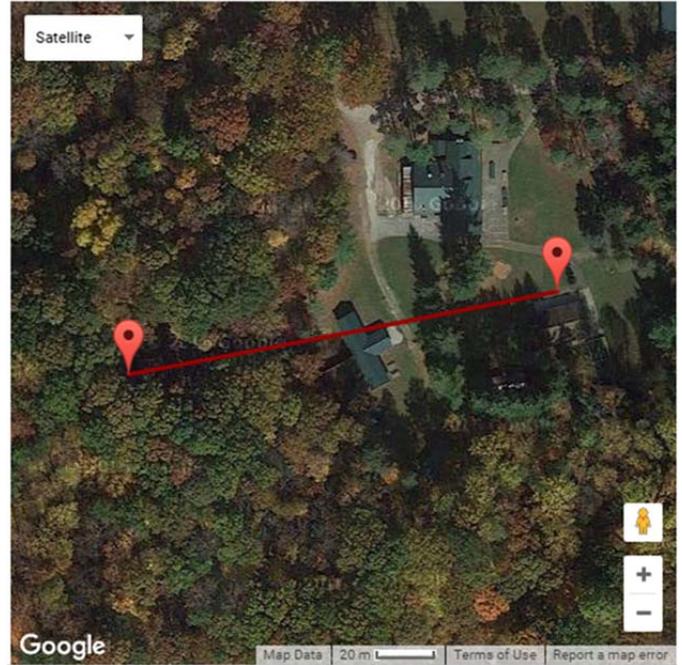
8. Proceed 330' at 283°
to Fauver
41.29364418 N x 82.33754709 W



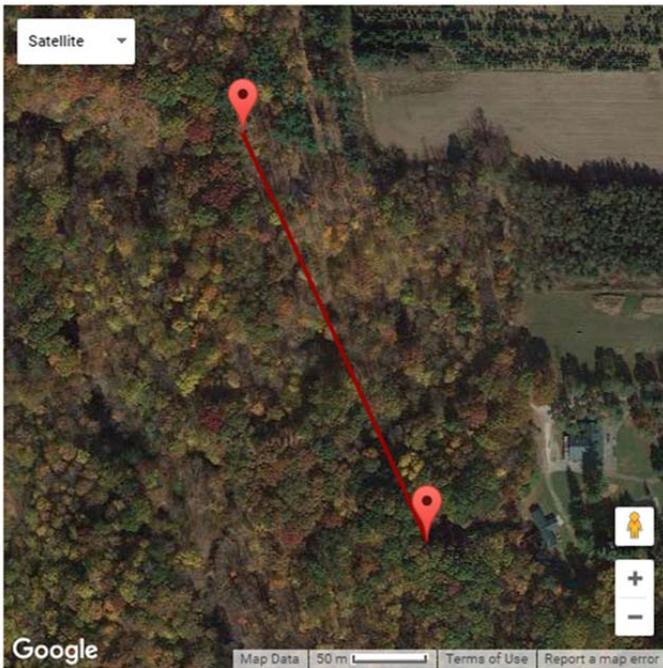
9. Proceed 440' at 147°
to Chapel
41.29264461 N x 82.33667001 W



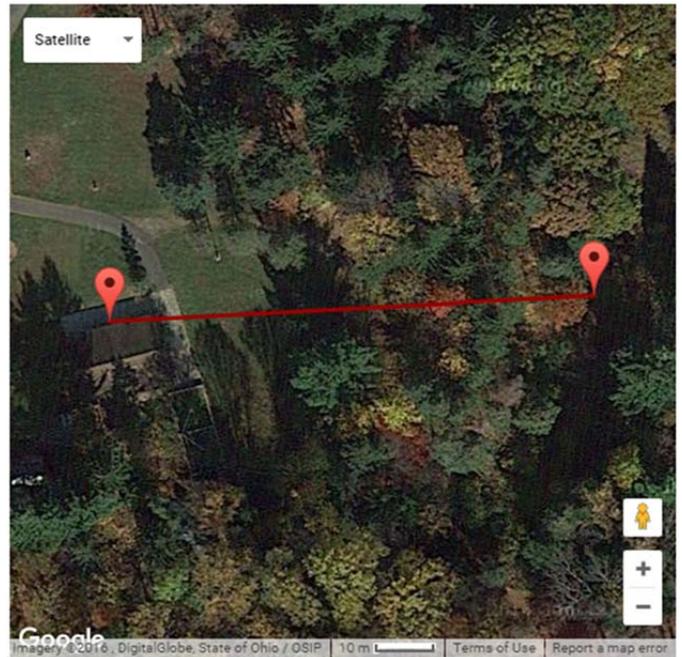
11. Proceed 465' at 79°
to Shower House
41.29047412 N x 82.33358480 W



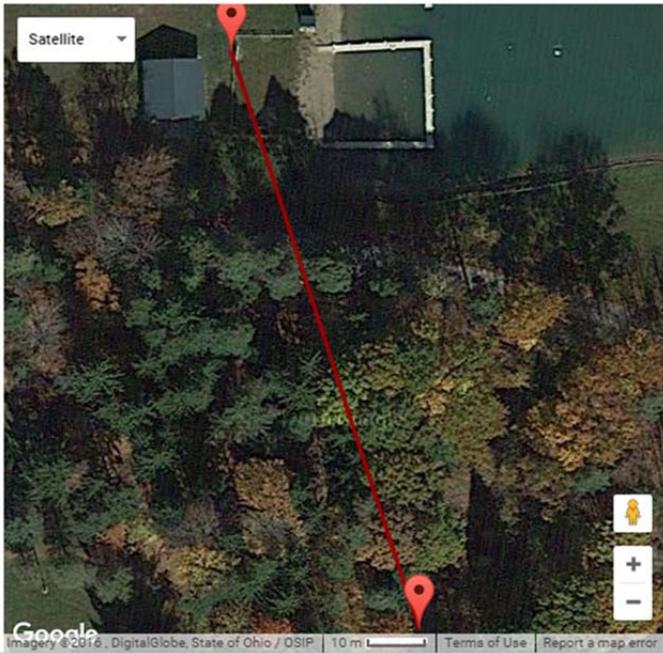
10. Proceed 950' at 156°
to Akela Ring
41.2902690 N x 82.3352470 W



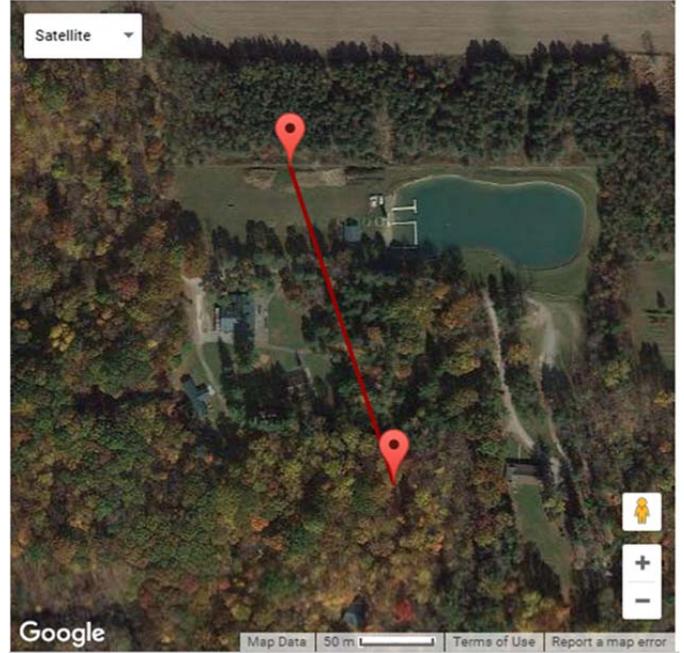
12. Proceed 260' at 87°
to former Green Pond
41.29051210 N x 82.33264920 W



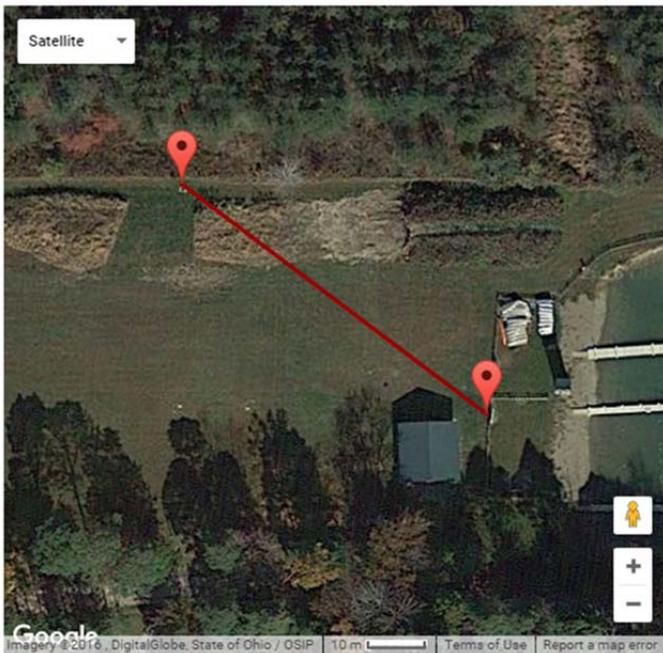
13. Proceed 330' at 342°
to Waldock Pond (entrance)
41.29137296 N x 82.33301215 W



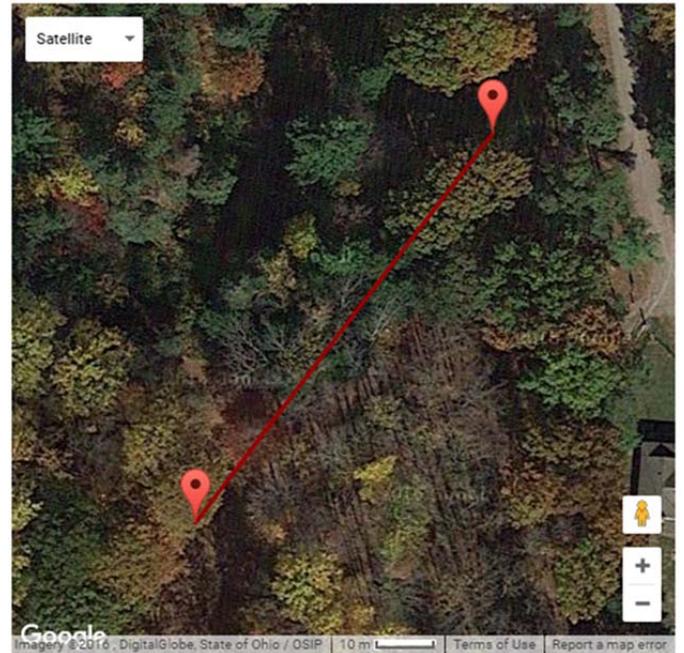
15. Proceed 720' at 162°
to former Cotton adirondacks
41.28983310 N x 82.33279420 W



14. Proceed 210' at 308°
to Gilwell Field (flagpole)
41.29171556 N x 82.33360626 W



16. Proceed 720' at 162°
to Webelos shelter
41.29041164 N x 82.3322162 W



17. Proceed 200' at 148°
to Camp Master Cabin
41.2899501 N x 82.3318293 W

