

King's Domain Project Summary

8/15/19

Fort Ancient Earthworks and Nature Preserve located in Washington Township on State Route 350, is one of the gems of Warren County and the Little Miami River watershed. It is the largest of several hilltop enclosure earthworks built nearly 2,000 years ago by the American Indians of the Hopewell Culture. It is one of eight earthworks that constitute the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthwork World Heritage nomination. Together, these eight earthworks represent the best-preserved, most significant Hopewell earthworks remaining from the hundreds once constructed in the land we now call Ohio.

In addition to its cultural significance, Fort Ancient is also visually prominent in Warren County. The property stretches nearly from the Jeremiah Morrow Bridge of I-71 to the north to the Stony Run tributary of the Little Miami River to the south. Fort Ancient is therefore highly visible to both travelers and local residents and serves a key role in maintaining the natural beauty of this entire area.

However, a large 120-acre parcel intrudes into the center of the Fort Ancient property north of S.R. 350. Known formerly as King's Domain, this property also contributes significantly to maintaining the rural character of the area: its forested slopes are seen from the Jeremiah Morrow Bridge, the North Overlook at Fort Ancient, S.R. 350 and from many local residents' backyards. King's Domain also provides essential buffer to protect the earthworks from nearby development; it offers plant and animal habitat along the river corridor; and it includes the Little Miami River's Ferris Run tributary, the health of which impacts this important state scenic river. Today, King's Domain is covered mostly in forest. However, the property is for sale and future use is, therefore, uncertain.

For all of these reasons, the Ohio History Connection seeks to acquire a portion of the King's Domain property (and perhaps more at a future date) through the Clean Ohio Fund's Green Space Conservation grant program. The Clean Ohio Fund restores, protects, and connects Ohio's important natural and urban places by preserving green space and farmland, improving outdoor recreation, and cleaning up brownfields to encourage redevelopment and revitalize communities. The 56 +/- acres (of a total 120) that Ohio History Connection proposes to buy at King's Domain consist mostly of steep hillslopes surrounding Ferris Run. This portion of the property contains no buildings or improvements, and the Ohio History Connection plans to maintain the land in forest to protect the earthworks and preserve views and habitat. The organization will also look to add a rustic trail to the property so that the public can enjoy this beautiful natural setting with minimal impact. This acquisition and proposed hiking trail would complement other amenities in the area, including the Little Miami Scenic Trail, existing hiking trails at Fort Ancient, and boating on the Little Miami River.