



Scioto Grove Backpack Trail Guide

Length: 5.3 miles

Difficulty: Hiking is unusually easy to walk. Route is generally flat with a wide footpath and easy to follow. The surface varies from dirt to gravel with sections of asphalt away from the river. Elevation change from the low point to the highest point on the trail is approximately 40 feet.

Permit/Fees: Camping is permitted only at designated locations and a (free) permit is required. Reservations can be made through <https://www.metroparks.net/parks-and-trails/scioto-grove/> or by calling the Metroparks office. The sites are available only on weekends from mid-April through October.

Contact Information: Scioto Grove contact number (614) 949-1078. Email at info@metroparks.net

Location: The North Canoe Access Parking Lot allows overnight parking for backpackers. (N39° 51.615' W83° 01.338') From I-71, take Exit 100, Stringtown Road and go east about 1.2 miles. Turn right on OH104/Jackson Pike. Park entrance is 1.4 miles on left.

Trail Facilities: Restrooms are located in multiple locations in the park. Each backpacking site has two 10' x 10' tent pads and a fire ring. Collecting of firewood is prohibited, but a supply is provided with the reservation. Trail is marked with orange blazing.

Water: Potable water is available seasonally at the Arrowhead Picnic Area. The trail is often near the Scioto River and also passes by a couple ponds. Always filter/purify water taken from a natural source. In this case, with the hike being short, I would be packing in all the water I needed.

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Local Information:



The hike is located southwest of Columbus within Scioto Grove Metro Park; operated by Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks. The hike consists of several trails that can be linked together. The specific route described below totals 5 ½ miles and utilizes the REI River Trail, Mingo Trail and Overlook Trail. Much of the route travels through floodplain forest along the Scioto River. In addition, parts of the Mingo Trail cross a large meadow away from the water and the aptly named Overlook Trail runs along the slightly higher ground above the river itself. If desired, other trails

in the park can add a few more miles to the hike.

Camping on one of the backpacking sites is a bit different from many Ohio options. Specifically:

- The sites are only available on Weekends, mid-April through October. They must be reserved in advance, though no fee is charged.
- Firewood is provided by park staff.
- You must check in and meet with the Park Ranger before heading back to your site.
- A full list of regulations is available, along with the reservation process, at metroparks.net.

The Hike:

While the surroundings are interesting, the main takeaway is Scioto Grove is a simple and relatively easy hike. Being flat and short, this trip could work well for those testing some equipment or perhaps looking for an option to ease into the sport.



Taking the route clockwise, start at the North Canoe Access and follow the REI River Trail as it meanders downstream along the Scioto River. Three of the authorized campsites are this stretch. Camp #1 is on a short side trail, but the others are on the main route. Posts for hanging hammocks are located on Sites #1 and 2.

After crossing an impressive rope bridge, The Mingo Trail continues along the river leading to the last two Campsites. Backpacking Site #5 is the only site right on the river, but all are relatively close. In addition, Sites 1-3 are close to restrooms, if that's important to you.

After camping, a return trip along the river to the Trailhead is the most straightforward, but utilizing the entire Mingo Trail and Overlook trails adds some new scenery, though not much mileage.

The Trail:

0.0 Trailhead at North Canoe Access parking lot (N39° 51.615' W83° 01.338'). From Parking Lot walk towards the river on the REI River Trail which turns downstream.

0.5 Intersection, continue straight. Trail to the right leads to Backpacking Site #1 in 0.1 mile.

1.0 Backpacking Site #2 and intersection. Bear to the right of the campsite to continue. A sharper right turn, uphill, leads onto the Overlook Trail.

1.1 Backpacking Site #3 is tucked into the woods on the right. Arrowhead Trail intersects from the right. Continue straight, shortly passing Grove Lodge.

1.5 Rope bridge over Grant Run. Soon after, reach intersection with Mingo Trail loop. Turn left to continue towards additional campsites.

1.9 Continue straight at intersection. A right turn is a shortcut to reach Backpack Site #5.

2.3 Backpacking Site #4.

2.4 Shortcut from earlier rejoins the trail from the right.

2.8 Backpacking Site #5

3.0 Reach South Canoe Access. Bear right and follow dirt entrance drive.

3.2 Leave drive on mowed trail to the right.

3.9 Reach end of Mingo Trail loop. Turn left and cross rope bridge, retracing route from earlier.

4.5 Back at Backpacking Site #2, turn left, heading uphill to complete hike via the Overlook Trail. Bear right at top of short climb. There are multiple small overlooks off the right side of the trail over the next 0.4 mile. To the left are multiple connections to various parking lots.

5.1 Pass to the right of two ponds. A trail joins from the right that leads to Backpacking Site #1. Continue straight to return to the Trailhead.

5.3 Another connector trail joins from the left shortly before reaching the North Canoe Access and Trailhead.

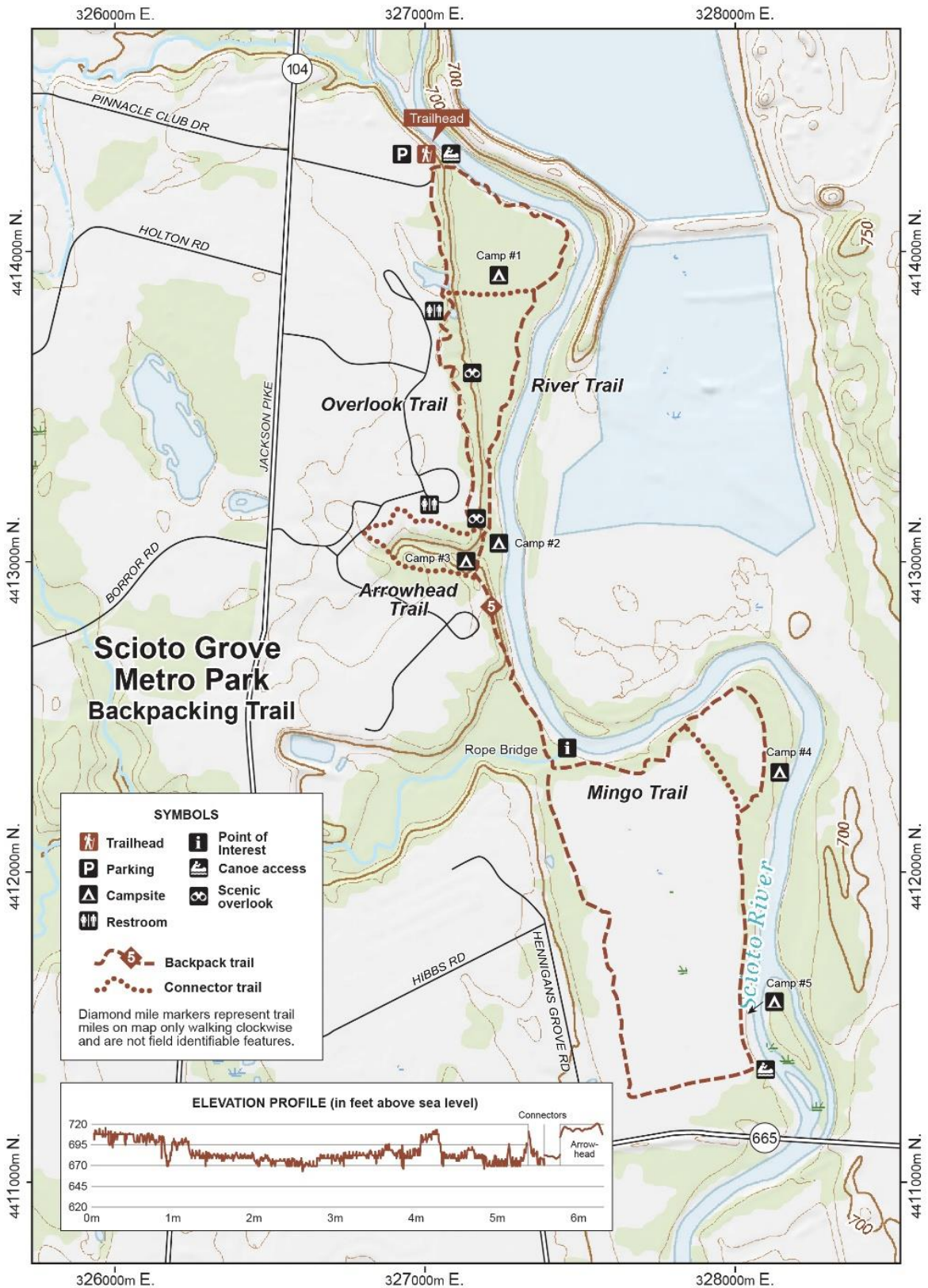


BackPackOhio Scorecards

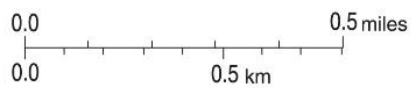
In an effort to provide a better indication of each trail's backpacking "experience," an admittedly "highly subjective" scorecard has been created for each hike. While the score reflects personal preferences, the descriptions will hopefully provide planning assistance and a feel for the trail. All scores are on a 5 point scale with 5 being the highest. The first score, Hiking Difficulty, is strictly an indication of the relative physical challenge and is not considered in the Overall Score.

Scioto Grove Scorecard (Last Hiked 09/21)

Parameter	Score	Logic
Hiking Difficulty	1	It's flat, short and appears to be well maintained.
Facilities	3	Trailhead is a gravel lot with signage. In season there are options for water and restrooms nearby.
Trail Conditions	3	In dry conditions the trail was easy to follow and walk. As much of the route is in a floodplain, things can change dramatically after significant rains. In fact, the trail can be closed with inclement weather.
Camping	3	The five sites are all near the main trail but separate enough that there is nighttime seclusion. The tent pads are a plus and provided firewood makes life easy.
Scenic Value	2	There's river, forest and meadow, but just not enough of it to give a high score.
Backpacking Experience	2	While a pleasant quick getaway, the experience is too short to really immerse yourself in nature.
Overall Score	2	Very handy to the Columbus area, Scioto Grove gives just a taste of the experience, but if that's all you're looking for...



Base map created from USGS Geospatial maps, 2019. Trail path and waypoints from GPS data, 2021.



1000-Meter UTM 16 Grid
NAD 27
6°
contour interval 10'

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