

## Summer HOCU Sites Hike Descriptions:

### **Spruce Hill Summer Hikes**

*First Saturday of each Summer Month: June 7, July 5, August 2, and September 6, 2008*

*9:00 – 11:00 am*

*Meet at Seip Mound on U.S. Rt. 50 by Paint Valley High School, 2.5 mi. east of Bainbridge, 5 miles west of Bourneville.*

*Length: 2 ¼ miles*

*Difficulty Level: Moderate, Uphill*

Mysterious Spruce Hill is the world's largest Hopewell hilltop enclosure and one of only three such rare hilltops surrounded by a mound of stone. Why did prehistoric hunter-gatherers build a mounded wall of stone around such an enormous area, a 140 acre plateau, but never live or farm there? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this hike which begins at the foot of Spruce Hill and ascends a gravel road through beautiful forested slopes to the remains of an entrance at the edge of the mesa. From there, the route proceeds through flat but uneven former farm fields to an ancient man-made pond in the middle of the plateau and returns by the same route. Though little remains of the stone walls, hikers will get a sense of scale for the prehistoric project when standing in the middle of the mesa. Spruce Hill is not normally open to the public without prearrangements, so this is an uncommon opportunity to explore this flat-topped finger of stone that thrusts into the scenic Paint Valley.

### **Seip Earthworks Summer Walks**

*Second Saturday of each Summer Month: June 14, July 12, August 9, and September 13, 2008*

*9:00 – 11:00 am*

*Meet at Seip Mound on U.S. Rt. 50 by Paint Valley High School, 2.5 mi. east of Bainbridge, 5 miles west of Bourneville.*

*Length: 2 miles*

*Difficulty Level: Easy, Flat*

Southern Ohio boasts the highest density of large prehistoric earthworks in the world. Two thousand years ago, the prehistoric Hopewell people built carefully designed earthworks, typically in the shape of perfect circles and squares. The earthen walls that outline these geometric shapes enclose huge areas, the purpose of which is still largely a mystery. Seip Earthworks, one of the area's most famous Hopewell sites, is an ideal example of Hopewell activity. Come walk the grounds of this ancient sacred area with a National Park Ranger to learn what archaeologists have discovered about the Hopewell culture through excavations here over the last century. Though little remains of the original earthen walls, Pricer mound is one of the largest restored Hopewell burial mounds in existence. Walking the grounds of Seip Earthworks will give the visitor a sense of the enormity of this Hopewell endeavor. The route will lead participants to the base of Little Copperas Mountain, where the Paint Creek has carved a steep shale cliff in the side of this beautiful, hemlock shrouded hill.

### **Hopewell Mound Group Summer Walks**

*Third Saturday of each Summer Month: June 21, July 19, August 16, and September 20, 2008*

*9:00 – 11:00 am*

*Meet at Hopewell Culture National Historical Park Visitor Center, Mound City Group, 16062 State Rt. 104, 2 mi. north of Chillicothe.*

*Length: 2 ¾ mile*

*Difficulty Level: Easy, Mostly Flat*

Among Southern Ohio's renowned prehistoric earthworks, Hopewell Mound Group is superlative in many respects. Once the farm of Captain Mordecai Hopewell, this location is the "type-site" for this period of Native American development – meaning the place where this prehistoric culture was first described. No one knows what these people called themselves 2,000 years ago, but they have ever after been referred to as Hopewell Indians by scientists. Enclosing 120 acres, these earthworks cover the largest area of any Hopewell project ever found. The burial mound inside the enclosure is the largest discovered from this era. Though most of the earthworks have been destroyed by farming and excavation activity over the years, the walls of the largest enclosure run up into the adjacent wooded hills, where they are still visible today, nearly two millennia after they were built. This walk over flat and rolling terrain will encircle the entire earthworks.