

Why can't I collect rocks and fossils at the Falls of the Ohio?

The Falls of the Ohio contains over a mile of shoreline and 200 acres of fossil beds when the river is low. Over the last two centuries, scientists have described hundreds of fossil species. The exposure of fossils is unique in the world!

Why is it illegal to take rocks and fossils home from here? The quick answer is that rock and fossil collecting is illegal in *almost* every park and wildlife conservation area in the country. They are considered non-renewable natural resources. With over 500,000 visitors to the Falls of the Ohio every year, it would not take long for the rocks and fossils to disappear if everyone took one or two.

While the river rock is "ordinary" by most standards, the rule applies. River rock can be purchased at landscape and sand/gravel suppliers for a nominal cost. The fossils are widespread in the Louisville metropolitan area. There are plenty of places one can collect fossils. The Falls of the Ohio is **not** one of them.

The Indiana DNR rules are as follows:

312 IAC 8-2-10 Preservation of habitat and natural and cultural resources
Section 10

"Except as authorized by a license, a person must not do any of the following within a DNR property:

- (5) Damage, interfere with, or remove:
- (B) an artifact;
- (C) a rock or mineral.
- (10) Dig or excavate any material from the ground."

The United States Army Corps of Engineers rules are as follows:

Title 36, Chapter III, Section 331.6 Public Property

"Unless otherwise authorized in writing by the District Engineer, the destruction, injury, defacement, removal, or any alteration of public property including, but not limited to natural formations, paleontological features, historical and archaeological features and vegetative growth is prohibited. Any such destruction, removal, or alteration of public property shall be in accordance with the conditions of any permission granted."

Persons found collecting at the Falls of the Ohio will be asked to return them to the spot they were found. Violators may be subject to a fine and ejection from the park.

If you wish to collect rocks and fossils, the State Park has a pile of Waldron shale and soil with Devonian fossils from Hanson Aggregates. These piles are for the annual Falls Fossil Festival in September, but are left throughout the year so fossil collectors might find something that they may keep. **This is the only place at the Falls of the Ohio that rock and fossils may be collected!**