Ohio's Sand Country
We call it the Oak Openings
One of America's last great places

Place yourself inside the photos of the Oak Openings exhibit by following G.P.S. coordinates to places similar to those in the photos!

**Image:** Sand Cherry

**Coordinates:** 41°33.313'N  83°51.203'W

**Park:** Oak Openings Preserve

**General Location:** Opening in Roadside Fence at Girdham Rd. Sand Dunes

**Tidbit:** As an endangered species in Ohio, Sand Cherry can be very hard to find. Oak Openings Preserve Metropark, with its rare ecosystems, has a population that survives on the harsh sand dunes within the park.

**Image:** Sand Barrens

**Coordinates:** 41°33.209'N  83°51.088'W

**Park:** Oak Openings Preserve

**General Location:** Red Trail

**Tidbit:** Approximately 13,000 years ago Northwest Ohio was covered by Lake Erie's grandfather, Lake Warren. The sand barrens and dunes of the Oak Openings are the remains of this lake's coastline.

**Image:** Red-Headed Woodpecker

**Coordinates:** 41°33.038'N  83°50.987'W

**Park:** Oak Openings Preserve

**General Location:** Red Trail

**Tidbit:** To spot a Red-Headed Woodpecker all you have to do is take a short walk on Oak Openings Preserve's Red Trail. Like many woodpeckers the Red-Headed’s tongue wraps around its skull to cushion the blow from hammering at trees.
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**Image: Skunk Cabbage**

**Coordinates:** 41°32.977'N  83°50.692'W

**Park:** Oak Openings Preserve

**General Location:** Blue Trail

**Tidbit:** While Skunk Cabbage is not the most attractive name, this plant has many special attributes. During the winter the flowers from Skunk Cabbage can produce enough heat to melt the snow around them!

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**Image: Mary's Savannah Burn**

**Coordinates:** 41°33.130'N  83°50.309'W

**Park:** Oak Openings Preserve

**General Location:** Orange Trail

**Tidbit:** Controlled burns in the Oak Openings have helped park managers restore lost ecosystems. Preventing invasive woody shrubs from encroaching on rare habitat is essential to protecting the region.

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**Image: Lark Sparrow**

**Coordinates:** 41°33.016'N  83°50.309'W

**Park:** Oak Openings Preserve

**Trail:** Orange Trail

**Tidbit:** The Oak Openings region is home to one of Ohio's endangered bird species, the Lark Sparrow. Lark Sparrows make their nests on the ground so respect nesting grounds marked by the park district from April to July.
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Image: Slow Burn

Coordinates: 41°32.332’N 83°50.415’W

Park: Oak Openings Preserve

General Location: Silver Trail

Tidbit: Slow, creeping fires provide life for many prairie species in the Oak Openings. Controlled burns are just that, controlled.

Image: Oak Savannah

Coordinates: 41°32.182’N 83°50.675’W

Park: Oak Openings Preserve

General Location: Silver Trail

Tidbit: Take a look around. You are in one of the rarest ecosystems in the United States. The unique combination of geology, biology, and ecology has made this a special place.

Image: Large Pile Controlled Burn

Coordinates: 41°32.275’N 83°50.353’W

Park: Oak Openings Preserve

General Location: All Purpose Trail

Tidbit: Fire has been an important aspect of the Oak Openings since its beginning. Native Americans, nature, and now park managers have used fire for various purposes.
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Image: November Fog

Coordinates: 41°30.101'N 83°47.764'W

Park: Blue Creek Conservation Area

General Location: Orange Trail

Tidbit: Without a supporting cast the oak tree couldn't be the lead role in the oak savannah. Blue jays and squirrels support the ecosystem by dispersing acorns in just the right ways.

Image: Prairie Grasses

Coordinates: 41°30.059'N 83°47.594'W

Park: Blue Creek Conservation Area

General Location: Orange Trail

Tidbit: Tall grass prairies once dominated much of the central United States. Human development and farming have reduced prairies to small patches, like those found in the Oak Openings.

Image: Vernal Pool

Coordinates: 41°30.061'N 83°47.581'W

Park: Secor Metropark

General Location: Close to the N.C.N.P. Trailhead

Tidbit: To live in a vernal pool organisms have to be prepared for extremes. During spring pools fill up with water but by the end of summer the pool is gone. Adaptations and specializations are the key when living here.
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Image: Rattlesnake master
Coordinates: 41°40.240’N 83°47.032’W
Park: Secor Metropark
General Location: Orange Trail

Tidbit: Rattlesnake Master is one of the unique plant species found in Oak Openings prairies. This potentially threatened species is one of over a hundred state listed plant species in the Oak Openings.

Image: Barred Owl
Coordinates: 41°40.792’N 83°40.430’W
Park: Wildwood Preserve
General Location: All Purpose Trail

Tidbit: Made for stealth, Barred Owls swoop through the night looking for prey. Even within Wildwood Preserve, surrounded by the city, Barred Owls thrive.

Image: Ruby-Throated Hummingbird
Coordinates: 41°40.807’N 83°39.910’W
Park: Wildwood Preserve
General Location: Wildwood Visitor Center

Tidbit: The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird weighs less than a nickel! Contrary to popular belief, hummingbirds have the ability to stop flying but they prefer to be on the go foraging for nectar.
Image: Savannah Dawn

Coordinates: 41°40.032'N 83°47.108'W

Park: Secor Metropark

General Location: All Purpose Trail

Tidbit: When settlers first found the Oak Openings they could not believe their eyes. For weeks and even months they had been slogging through the Great Black Swamp.

Image: Tiger Swallowtail

Coordinates: 41°40.032'N 83°39.913'W

Park: Wildwood Preserve

General Location: Meadow across from Metroparks Hall

Tidbit: Oak Openings prairies support many butterfly species. Flowering plants are essential to butterflies and the prairies provide a wide variety of species.

Image: Blandings Turtle

Coordinates: 41°40.804'N 83°39.719'N

Park: Wildwood Preserve

General Location: All Purpose Trail

Tidbit: Blandings Turtles are a threatened species in Ohio. Within Oak Openings waterways, Blandings Turtles are occasionally spotted.
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Image: Field of Lupine

Coordinates: 41°37.204′N 83°47.540′W

Park: The Nature Conservancy Kitty Todd Preserve

General Location: Kitty Todd Loop

Tidbit: Kitty Todd Preserve boasts beautiful fields of the potentially threatened plant Wild Lupine. You will need to be there at the right time of year to find it. During the end of May and the beginning of June the flowers are at their peak.

Image: Wet Prairie

Coordinates: 41°39.172′N 83°46.396′W

Park: Irwin State Nature Preserve

General Location: Board Walk Trail

Tidbit: Wet prairie is an especially rare aspect of the Oak Openings. Human development has led to draining standing water, thus depleting habitats such as this from their most important resource.

Image: Sedge Meadow

Coordinates: 41°39.239′N 83°46.627′W

Park: Irwin State Nature Preserve

General Location: Board Walk Trail

Tidbit: Sedge Meadows are yet another unique plant community found in the Oak Openings. Much like wet prairie, they need protection because of human development.
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Image: Swamp Forest

Coordinates: 41°39.284'N 83°46.879'W

Park: Irwin State Nature Preserve

General Location: Board Walk Trail

Tidbit: Northwest Ohio has an extensive history with swamps. Most notably, the Great Black Swamp deterred settlers from moving into the area. In small patches remnants of this habitat can be found in areas of the Oak Openings that drain poorly.