Welcome to Gibraltar Island and Stone Laboratory. The Ohio State University’s north coast campus is the oldest freshwater biological field station and research laboratory in the United States. Since its establishment in 1895, significant research has been conducted by both student and professional biologists on the ecology of Lake Erie and the Great Lakes region.

The summer instructional program incorporates both basic and applied field studies in biology, geology, and natural resources. Classes take advantage of the Laboratory’s unique location on Gibraltar Island in western Lake Erie to provide students with practical field experience. Students have opportunities to conduct individual and group research projects in a variety of natural and human-made aquatic habitats. During the 1990s, students from 71 colleges (40 from Ohio) and 265 high schools (260 in Ohio) took courses for college credit at Stone Laboratory.

Research focuses on environmental and economic issues of the Lake Erie region. Major spawning grounds in the island region afford opportunities to study fishery problems. Lake Erie provides an ideal setting for the study of pollution issues, shoreline erosion, the introduction and impact of exotic species, and population studies of native species. The Laboratory’s island location on the border of the Western and Central Basins is perfect for training in the investigation of these topics and many others.

Spring and fall programs provide opportunities for student groups (grade 5 and older) and adult groups to participate in educational tours, and aquatic ecology workshops and field trips. A variety of activities are offered to meet the needs of each group. This program accommodates over 170 groups and 5,500 individuals, annually. Conference facilities are also available.

Please be our guest in this self-guided tour of Gibraltar Island.
The tour covers about one quarter of a mile and takes about an hour to complete.
It is intended to provide you with an overview of the history, heritage, and future of Gibraltar Island and Stone Laboratory.
Stone Cottage
Built in 1930, Stone Cottage houses instructors, visiting scientists, and laboratory guests.

Dining Hall
Built in 1929, the Dining Hall, along with Stone Cottage and Gibraltar House were part of the first University development on Gibraltar.

Dedication Stone
This commemorates the gift of Gibraltar Island to The Ohio State University by Julius F. Stone.

Glacial Grooves
Look carefully along the shore for deep-cut striations running northeast-southwest. These glacial grooves, telltale remnants of the last great glaciation in North America more than 10,000 years ago, were gouged by the abrasive force of granite and other rock materials buried under nearly a mile of ice and moved by the glacial advance and retreat.

To the west on South Bass Island’s Peach Point is more of The Ohio State University’s research complex. Originally a federal fish hatchery, Peach Point Laboratory now houses an analytical chemistry laboratory, holding tanks for aquatic organisms, offices, general field support space, and, depending on the season, an Ohio State University bookstore.

Bayview, our main office, is located across the road from the Peach Point Laboratory. There are also two cottages nearby that house the Laboratory Manager and instructors. The former Coast Guard Lighthouse, located near the Lime Kiln Dock on the south side of the island, is a year-round housing facility for the Laboratory.

Cooke Castle

In 1865, Cooke erected on Gibraltar an elaborate 15-room Victorian home, which he called his castle. Part of the lumber and millwork used is reported to have been aboard the steamer “Island Queen” when it was captured by Confederate soldiers on 19 September 1864 as part of the Johnson Island plot.

An ardent admirer of Commodore Perry, Cooke adorned the walls with pictures of the Battle of Lake Erie and its renowned hero. Everything about the mansion and its furnishings were in keeping with his outstanding position in the financial world. Cooke visited often from his estate in Philadelphia and entertained financial magnates from the East as well as notables from Washington, including General Sherman, Salmon P. Chase, Presidents Rutherford B. Hayes, Grover Cleveland, and Benjamin Harrison.

The Cooke family first visited their summer home in June 1865. Visits were regular until 1873, and resumed in 1880, after which the family spent time in the Castle every year until Jay Cooke died in 1905. In 1966, it was designated a Registered National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, the only building on the entire Ohio State Campus with this designation. Efforts are underway to restore this building.

Barney Cottage

Jay Cooke’s daughter, Laura, and her husband, Charles B. Barney, built Barney Cottage o use as a second residence or children, grandchildren, nd guests.

Waldock Gazebo & Lakeview

Jack Waldock, a long-time advisory committee member and friend of both Ohio Sea Grant and Stone Laboratory, donated funds in 1996 to construct a gazebo (to be used for outdoor classrooms and special events) and speaker’s pavilion on Gibraltar Island. With assistance from the University’s Office of Physical Facilities, these structures were complete and ready for dedication during a ceremony on 24 August 1996 to dedicate the Laboratory for the next 100 years of service. A time capsule was placed in the base of the gazebo.

Perry’s Lookout

From this point Commodore Perry watched for the British fleet prior to the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. The Battle took place to the west of Middle Bass Island.

Below the overlook and to the west, you will see fallen rocks and a hole in the rock, known as Needle’s Eye. These features tell the story of ceaseless weathering and erosion from freezing, thawing, wind, and water, which have been at work for thousands of years reducing the size of Gibraltar Island.

Gibraltar House

Built in 1930, Gibraltar House was the caretaker’s residence. It now provides housing for laboratory staff.

Harborview House

Constructed in 1985 and completed and occupied in 1986, this building is now the main residence hall for students and staff. This building consists of 12 four-person units and a laundry and vending area.

Bat House

A boat house, used for boat storage from Jay Cooke’s time until 1967, stood at this location until 1991. While it wasn’t fit for human use, it was a covey for bats. During their 1991 spring work weekend the Friends constructed the bat house that stands today from a blueprint provided by Dr. Barry Valentine and material from the old boat house.

Perry’s Cornerstone

In 1852, Alfred P. Edwards supported an active program for establishing a monument on Gibraltar to commemorate Commodore Oliver H. Perry’s 10 September 1813 naval victory on Lake Erie. He agreed to supply the stone for the structure and granted the use of half of the island for that purpose. In 1865, Jay Cooke built the small monument that was to serve as a cornerstone of a larger monument.

In 1868 the Perry’s Monument Association proposed that the monument be built at Put-in-Bay. Construction of Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial began in 1913, one hundred years after the victory.
The Friends of Stone Laboratory (FOSL) began in 1981 as a support group to “bring Stone Laboratory into the 21st century with the best possible facilities, equipment, and professors, and make this unequaled learning experience available to all outstanding students.” The organization provides mechanisms for former students and supporters of Lake Erie and Stone Laboratory to donate their time and money to the program and facility to make it the best freshwater biological field station in the country. They have created 10 special accounts and endowments to support all aspects of the program, including scholarships, equipment purchases, research support, visiting professors, and more.

For more information, contact:
Stone Laboratory, The Ohio State University, 1314 Kinnear Road, Columbus, OH 43212-1194, 614.292.8949, Fax 614.292.4364
www.sg.ohio-state.edu.