

INDIAN CAVE STATE PARK

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Indian Cave State Park



NEBRASKA
GAME PARKS

WWW.OutdoorNebraska.org

Named for the large sandstone cavity that is the main geologic feature of the area, Indian Cave State Park straddles the Nemaha-Richardson county line in southeast Nebraska. The first tract was acquired in 1962, and the park now covers over 3,399 acres, including 2,386 acres of timber.

The mighty Missouri River edges the eastern border of this unique natural and historic park. Development carefully maintains the pristine character of this uncommon area, while offering camping at its finest.



CAMPING

The RV campground can handle 134 units with 30 amp electrical hookups (22 of which also have 50 amp). Other amenities include: showers, laundry, picnic tables, fire rings, and dump station.

Camping is available year-round, including campsites with electricity. Modern camping facilities are open from Apr. 15-Oct.31, (longer if weather permits) There are Adirondack shelters along the trails for back-to-nature enthusiasts.

Half of the modern campsites at Indian Cave State Park can be reserved prior to arrival; the remainder are available on a first come, first serve basis. Reservations may be made up to a year in advance of arrival date, and can be made on-line, by phone or in person.

To make reservations online, go to www.OutdoorNebraska.org. Phone reservations can be made through the reservation call center at (402) 471-1414. The call center is open from 9 am to 6 pm Monday-Friday.

There is a nonrefundable \$7 (plus tax) reservation fee for each site reserved by phone or in person. The reservation fee applies to each site or unit reserved, regardless of the length of time of the reservation.

Non-reservable campsites are available first-come, first-served, and stays are limited to 14 days in any 30-day period. Group camping is available for organizations such as Scouts, church groups, etc.



ACTIVITIES

Indian Cave offers horseback trail rides on Friday - Sunday and a variety of living history activities during the summer and fall on weekends. Visitors may bring their own horses to ride the park's 12-mile round-trip trail.

There are over 22 miles of hiking trails. Day hikers will find a variety of trails to suit their tastes, with the most scenic along the river. There are several shelters along the way. Trails range from 3/4 to 7 miles and wind up and down hill. They can be quite strenuous, since the very things that make this rugged area so picturesque can also require a lot of stamina in the walker.

Anglers can find some good bank fishing in the Missouri River. Three parking lots offer handy access. There is a boat ramp on the park as well as at Brownville SRA, 15 miles north. Cross-country skiing and sledding are major snow-time activities.

THE CAVE

Indian Cave dates back several thousand years. Created by silt and fine-grained sand deposits in a Pennsylvania rock channel, the cave walls are etched with petroglyphs or ancient Indian picture writings. The cultural origin and period in history remain a mystery. They depict forms, shapes and scenes, mostly of elements of nature and wildlife. The cave is readily accessible although there are many steps.

Unfortunately, many petroglyphs have been obscured or destroyed by gouging made by later-day visitors. Please help guard the fragile history of this unique spot and discourage any defacing of the sandstone.

HISTORY

If history is your thing, you'll find plenty to stir your imagination at Indian Cave. The now reconstructed mid-19th Century river settlement of St. Deroin shows the first townsite in Nemaha County. In 1804, Lewis and Clark recorded passing a small trading fort, about 23½ miles above the mouth of the Big Nemaha River.

On July 15, 1830, 125,000 acres were set aside by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien for the homeless offspring left by

traders and trappers who married Indian women. Son of a French man and an Otoe woman, Joseph Deroin moved onto the tract from the Platte River in the 1840s to set up a trading post. In 1853 he laid out the village that bears his name.

In its early days, St. Deroin's 232 mixed heritage residents, included 50 Iowas, 47 Omahas, 21 Otoes, 3 Sioux plus 111 orphans. The village was one of a chain of small trading settlements and supply posts for river traffic in the 1870s. A bustling town of 300 people before the turn of the century, it was doomed by the ever-shifting river channel and an outbreak of cholera. By the 1920s, St. Deroin was virtually abandoned except for the one-room school.

Legends still abound about the once thriving village. The "Saint" was attached to the name sometime after it was established, probably to attract more settlers. Joseph Deroin was a colorful, controversial character, described as "overbearing and tyrannical." Those traits eventually proved fatal, when he determined to collect \$6 for a pig from a settler, James Biddow. Warned by Biddow to stay off his land, Deroin was dropped with one shot when he failed to heed the warning. Biddow was later acquitted of any crime. According to local lore, Deroin was buried astride his horse in the town cemetery.

Another "graveyard" legend centers on one A. J. Ritter, who lost an arm doing a little "fishing" with dynamite. His arm was buried west of town. When Ritter later died, he was buried in the St. Deroin Cemetery. Some locals say that on certain nights, Ritter still rises to search for his lost arm.

You can learn more about this fascinating area at the interpretive log cabin, located near the original townsite. Although rebuilt, the cabin was carefully constructed by methods used in the 1850s. Note the split wood shingles, handmade iron hardware and the fireplace built from limestone found on the park.



JOSEPH DEROIN

The son of French trader Amable Deroin and an Otoe Indian woman, Joseph Deroin was born about 1819 near Bellevue. He lived at home until 1836, when he moved to the main Otoe village near the mouth of the Platte River. He married an Omaha woman, Meek-Ka-Ahu-Me, and their only child, Mary, was born about 1841 near Council Bluffs, IA.

In 1842, they moved to the tract created by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, and were among the first to claim land there. Later that year, Joseph took two more wives Julie and Soula (Su-See) Baskette, daughters of Frenchman Balone Baskette and an Iowa Indian woman. He had 8 children by the Baskette sisters. About 1843, his first wife returned to the Omaha Reservation.

Although 1854 is the first record of his trading post, without doubt, he operated one much earlier. He also ran a trading post at the Otoe Reserve in Gage County from the mid-1850s until his death on Apr. 21, 1858. At that time, he held notes totaling \$4,079.06 (quite a sum then), including one for \$1,500 by 11 Otoe chiefs. Most were uncollectible, including that of the Otoe chiefs. In 1862, Soula and the children moved to the Iowa Reserve in Kansas, and the children attended the Kickapoo Training School at Horton, KS.



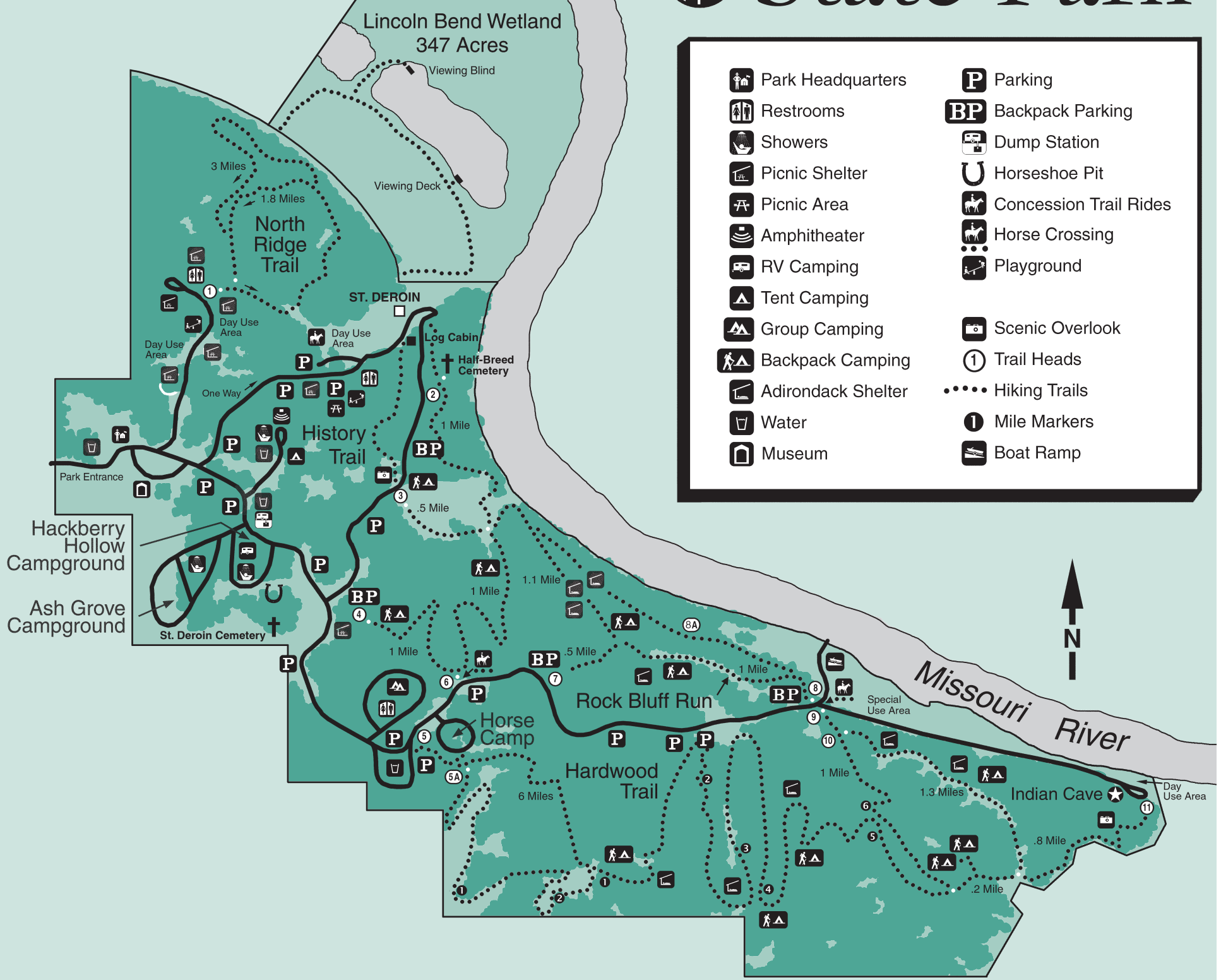
AMERICAN HERITAGE

Special in many ways, the park boasts an intriguing Heritage Program, beginning on Memorial weekend and running throughout the summer on weekends only. Near the old log cabin, you can see such old-time crafts, such as how to make Granny's Lye Soap and candle-dipping. The St. Deroin General Store features broom making, using an 1879 machine. The one-room schoolhouse gives a glimpse of how the Three Rs were once taught. Built in 1908, the school was restored in 1978.



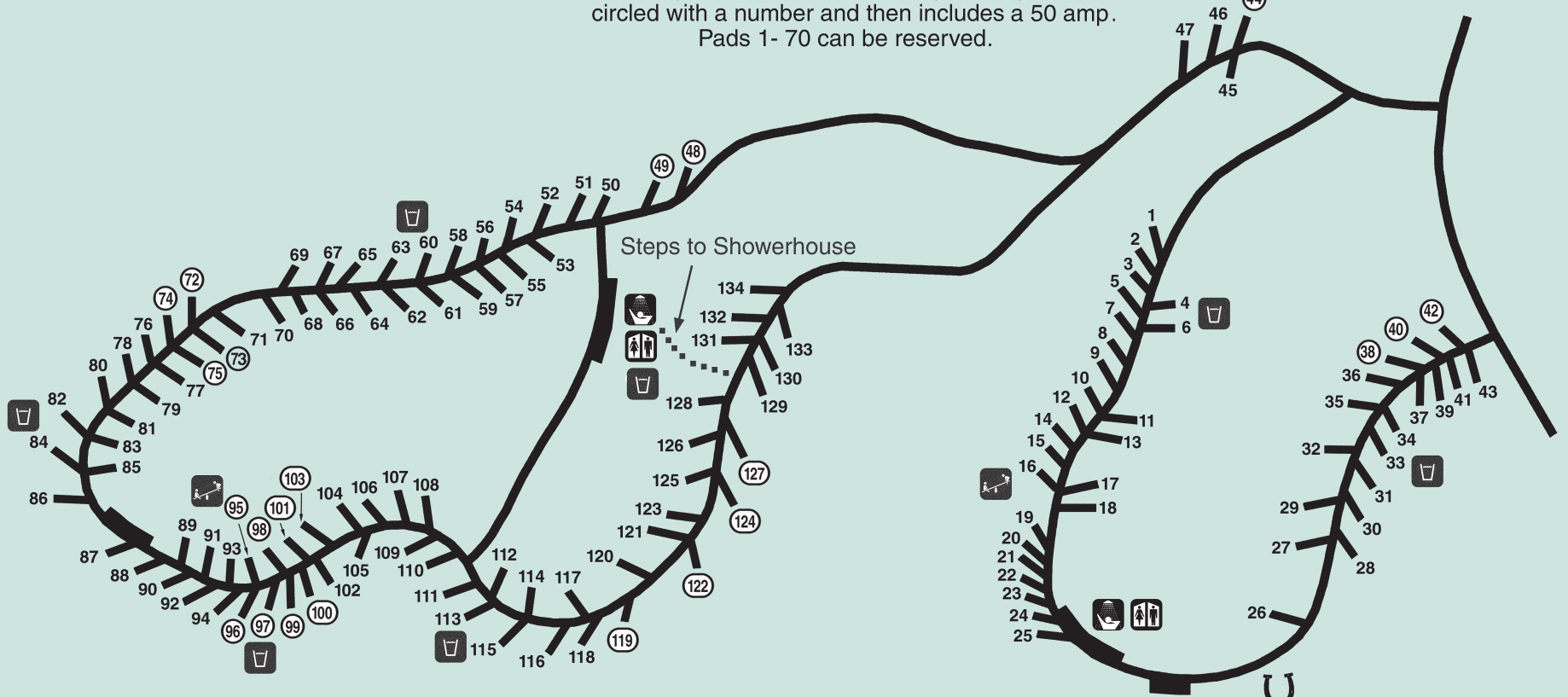
Visit us on the Web
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Nebraska's Best Kept Secret Indian Cave State Park



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|--------------------|------------------------|
| Park Headquarters | Parking |
| Restrooms | Backpack Parking |
| Showers | Dump Station |
| Picnic Shelter | Horseshoe Pit |
| Picnic Area | Concession Trail Rides |
| Amphitheater | Horse Crossing |
| RV Camping | Playground |
| Tent Camping | Scenic Overlook |
| Group Camping | Trail Heads |
| Backpack Camping | Hiking Trails |
| Adirondack Shelter | Mile Markers |
| Water | Boat Ramp |
| Museum | |

All pads have 20 and 30 amp hookups unless circled with a number and then includes a 50 amp. Pads 1- 70 can be reserved.



Ash Grove Campground

Hackberry Hollow Campground