

Chain O'Lakes became a state park in 1946 when the state Conservation Corps camp became the Chain O'Lakes Conservation area. This land was incorporated into the state park in 1957.

Joliet and Marquette passed through what today is Chain O'Lakes State Park in 1673 as they traveled the Fox River during their Illinois Explorations. French trappers and traders were the first Europeans to explore the area. The first European settlement was at Fort Hill, near Mundelein, a large mound rising out of the prairie that native peoples used as a lookout point.

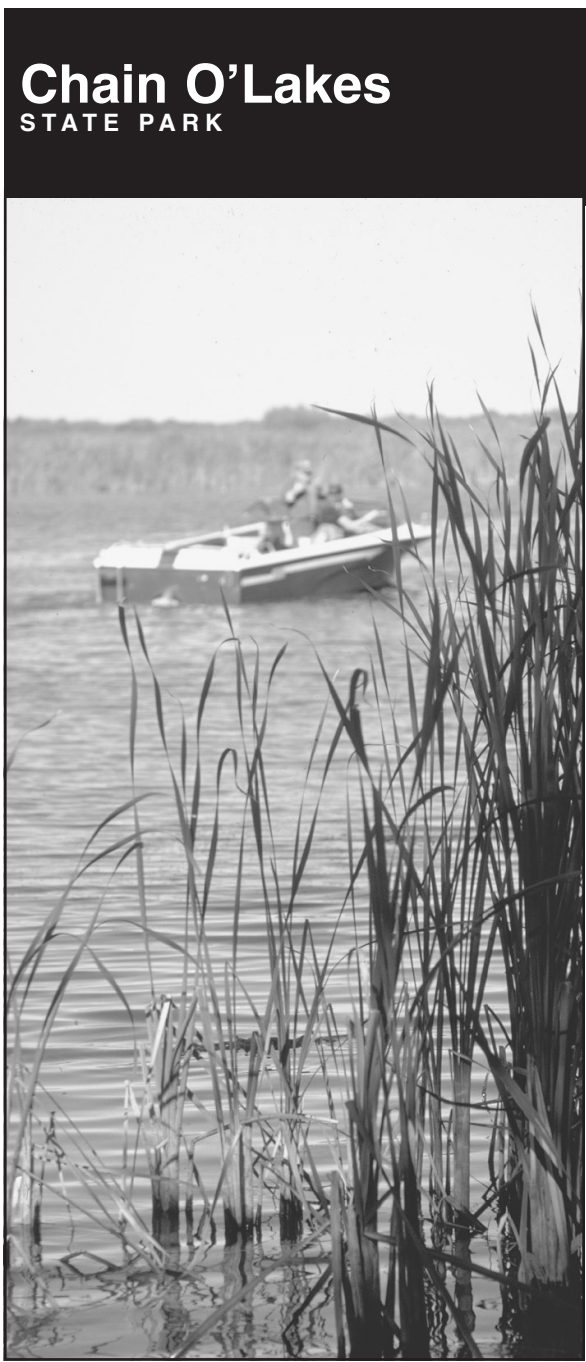
and gathered wild plant foods. led a semi-nomadic lifestyle and grew corn, hunted, fished Mascouten and Potawatomi. These Native American groups predominant tribes in the region at that time were the Miami, tribes when Europeans first arrived in the mid-1600's. The Chain O'Lakes area was inhabited by central Algonquin

History

The 2,793 acre state park and adjoining 3,230 acre conservation area are located in the northeastern corner of Illinois in McHenry and Lake counties. The park is 60 miles northwest of Chicago, 20 miles west of Lake Michigan and only 2 2/1 miles south of the Illinois/Wisconsin border. With access to nearly 6,500 acres of water and 488 miles of shoreline on the chain, Chain O'Lakes State Park is the heart of a water wonderland.

Located in the heart of Illinois' Largest concentration of natural lakes, Chain O'Lakes State Park is a water-oriented recreation area with outstanding opportunities for boaters, anglers and skiers. The park borders three natural lakes - Grass, Marie and Nippersink - and the Fox River that connects the other seven lakes (Bluff, Fox, Pistakee, Channel, Petite, Catherine and Readehead) that make up the chain. In addition, the park contains a 44 acre lake within its boundaries, Turner Lake.

Chain O'Lakes State Park



Chain O'Lakes has hiking, biking and horse trail systems, all of which can be used by cross-country skiers in the winter. The Nature's Way hiking trail starts at Oak Grove Picnic Area and is 2 1/2 miles in length. The Pike Marsh North Picnic Area has a trail specifically designed for disabled users that is 1/4 mile long. The park also features an equestrian trail with three loops that has a total length of 8 miles. Visitors can bring their own horses, a parking lot for horse trailers with access to the equestrian trail is located near the park entrance. Four biking/hiking trails with a total of 6 miles in length can be accessed at any picnic area between the concession stand and the park office.

Trails

The park features seven picnic areas, Oak Point, Deer Path, Hickory Grove, Pike Marsh, Oak Grove, Cattfish Cove and Maple Grove, with tables, grills, water fountains and toilets. The Oak Grove and Oak Point areas have playground equipment, have shelters. ment, Oak Point, Oak Grove, Cattfish Cove and Deer Path

Picnicking

Please place all litter in trash cans. Special recycling receptacles for aluminum cans and glass bottles are located in the Honeysuckle Hollow camp area. Other recycling containers are available throughout the park.

Recycling

Chain O'Lakes State Park is open every day except Christmas. Summer hours, observed April 1 through October 31, are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. During the winter, the park is open from 8 a.m. until sunset. Entrance gates are locked after hours, you may exit the park after hours but re-entry is not possible. The park is closed for all activities except hunting from end of October/beginning of November through December. Hunting is by registration only.

Park Hours

The park's concession stand is open April through mid-October and offers food, soft drinks, ice cream, ice, firewood, fishing equipment, baits and camping supplies. Kayak, boat and canoe rentals are also available. The required safety equipment must be provided by the user or rented from the concessionaire.

Concession/Boat Rental

There is no charge to launch boats at the park. However, the Fox Waterway Management Agency charges a user fee for all boats using lakes in the Chain. Stickers are available at the park concession stand. While there are no horse power limitations on boats using the Chain O'Lakes, only boats with electric trolling motors are allowed on Turner Lake, A 44-acre lake in the park.

Boating

The park's Class A campground, with 150 sites, has electricity, disposal stations, flush toilets and shower houses. Chain O'Lakes three Class B campgrounds, with a total of 87 sites, have water, vault toilets and access to showers. The park accepts advanced reservations for 25 percent of its camping sites. There are also 5 youth group sites that can accommodate a total of 150 youngsters, which is available by advanced reservations through the park.

Camping

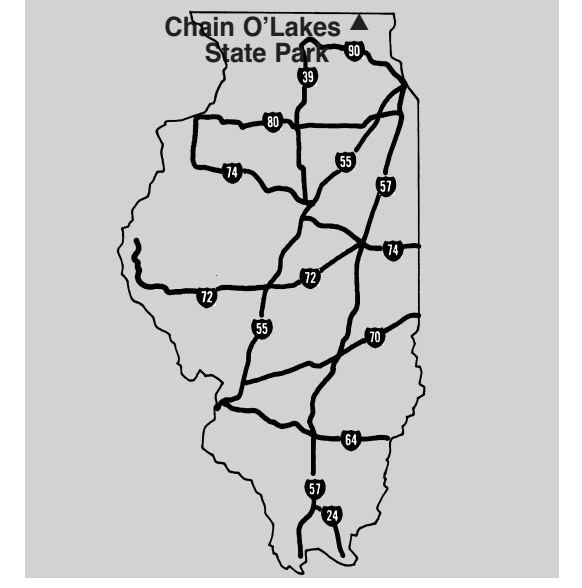


Fishing

Among the popular fishing available to anglers in the Chain O'Lakes are bluegill, largemouth bass, walleye, crappie, muskie, northern pike, bullhead, catfish and yellow and white bass. Due to the marshy nature of much of the park's shoreline, most fishing takes place from boats or fishing piers.

Hunting

Dove, waterfowl, archery and firearm deer, pheasant, squirrel, rabbit and falconry hunting are available at the park by registration only. A hunting fact sheet containing all hunting regulations is available at the park office.



Chain O'Lakes State Park
8916 Wilmot Road
Spring Grove, IL 60081, 847-587-5512

- While groups of 20 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the sites office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times, this is due to the amount of ground nesting birds within the park.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. Please call ahead to the park office before you make your trip.
- We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, Clearinghouse, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, call 217-625-8366, email dnr.clearing@illinois.gov or visit our website at www.dnr.illinois.gov.
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, visit the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism online at www.enjoyillinois.com

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other non-merit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; (217)785-0067; TTY (217)782-9175.
This information may be provided in an alternative format if required. Contact the DNR Clearinghouse by phone (217) 625-8366 or email dnr.clearing@illinois.gov for more assistance.

Winter Sports

Ice skating, snow shoeing, sledding and ice fishing are popular activities when the temperature drops and the ice thickens. Ice fishing is available on the Chain O'Lakes and Turner Lake. Sledding is another popular winter activity, a sledding hill is available at the park office. Chain O'Lakes State Park also ties into McHenry County snowmobile trail near Wilmot Rd, no access for parking to unload or load snowmobiles. When snowfall is sufficient, cross-country skiers can use the horse trail, bike trails and the Nature's Way trail. Snowmobiling is not permitted in the park, but access to the frozen lake water is provided for snowmobile enthusiasts, parking is available at the boat launch.

Facilities for Disabled Visitors

The Pike Marsh North picnic area and its 1/4 mile hiking trail have been developed with disabled and elderly visitors in mind. We have 6 class A accessible sites.

For more information, contact Chain O'Lakes State Park, 8916 Wilmot Road, Spring Grove, IL 60081, (847)587-5512.

