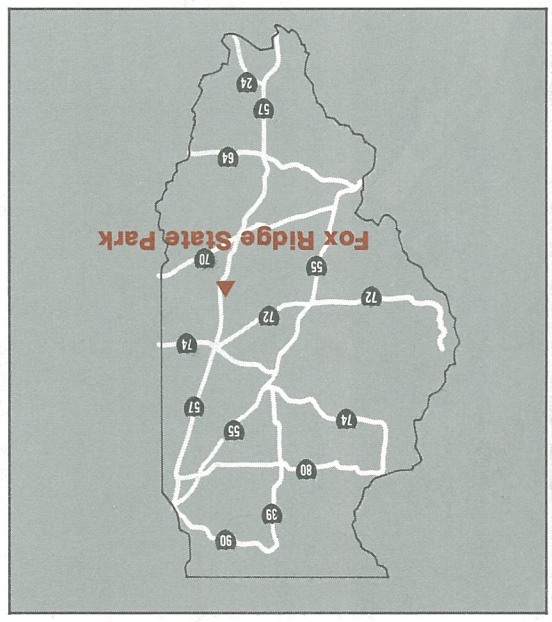

Fox Ridge State Park
18175 State Park Rd., Charleston, IL 61920, 217-345-6416

■While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site 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.
■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 Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Public Services, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, Ill., 62701-1787, or call (217) 782-7454.
■For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs' Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.

Telecommunication Device for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Natural Resources Information **(217) 782-9175 for TDD only** Relay Number **800-526-0844**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate based upon race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability in its programs, services, activities and facilities. If you believe you have been discriminated against or if you wish additional information, please contact the Department at (217) 785-0067, TDD (217) 782-9175, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Employment, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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Illinois
Department of
Natural Resources

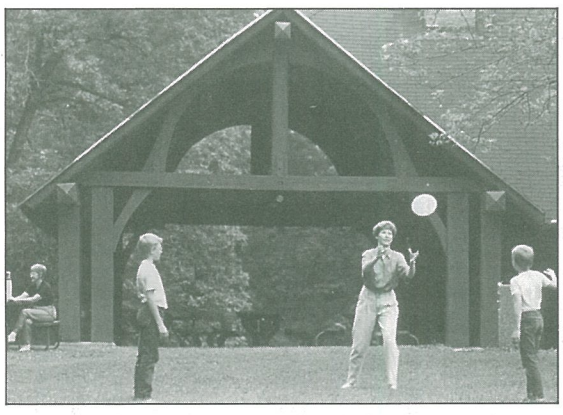
Fox Ridge STATE PARK

Fox Ridge State Park

Fox Ridge State Park, just 8 miles south of Charleston in east-central Illinois is known for its steep, thickly wooded ridges, broad, lush valleys and miles of rugged, scenic hiking trails.

In sharp contrast to the flat prairies of most of this section of Illinois, Fox Ridge is set amid rolling hills along the forested bluffs of the Embarras (pronounced "Ambraw") River.

At any time of year, Fox Ridge State Park is a great place to visit. In winter, the snow-softened ridges are alive with birds and animals. In the spring, a panoramic blanket of multi-hued wildflowers and blooming, budding trees celebrate the resurgence of growth. By summer the dense vegetation and new generation of wildlife are thriving in the sun, and autumn brings its brilliant display of color as nature enhances the woodlands with yellow, red, purple and orange.



History

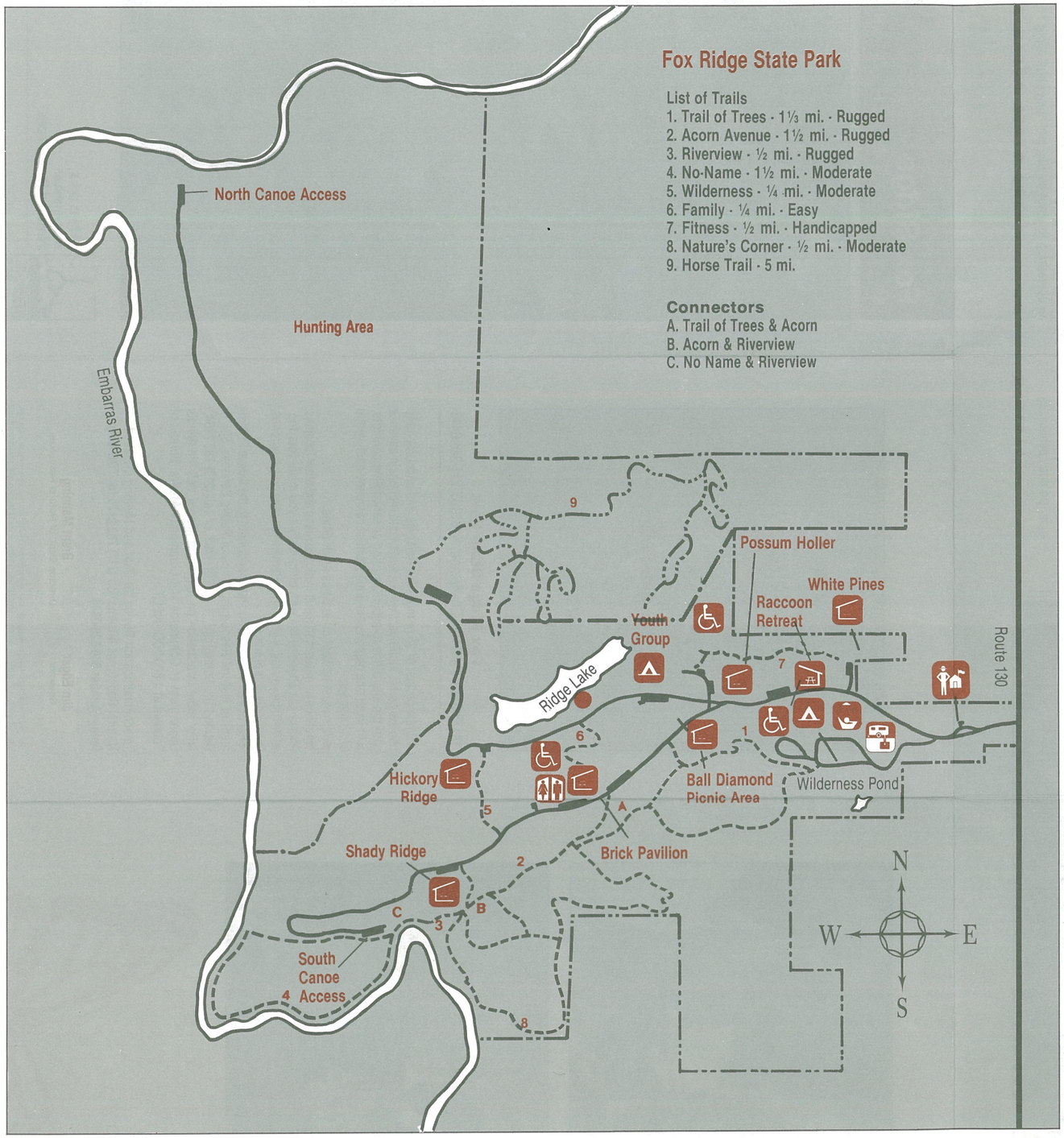
Arrowheads and artifacts uncovered in this area indicate habitation by prehistoric Native American cultures. Early historic tribes included the Piankashaw and the Illinois, both of whom were pushed out when the Kickapoo migrated into the region from Wisconsin in the late 1600s.

European settlers in the area originally were centered around the Embarras River, which provided their main source of transportation, fishing, trapping and, of course, water. Before the development of the railroad, much of the economy of the area also depended on the river, where flatboats carried livestock and manufacturing materials downstream to the Wabash, Ohio and Mississippi rivers and on to New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico.

In the late 1930s, the State of Illinois took over management and ownership of Fox Ridge, then a small parcel of land, and residents of the Charleston area helped preserve and develop it as a state park. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed a residence/workshop complex, a Natural History Survey laboratory, 4 miles of hiking trails, a large brick pavilion and a dam and spillway which created the 13-acre Ridge Lake.

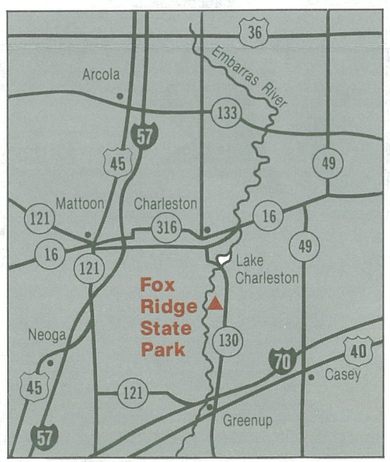
The red brick laboratory, completed in 1941 and currently administered by the Illinois Natural History Survey in Urbana, is used for the study of lakes, ponds and streams to improve fishing in Illinois waters. Studies at the lake (the first at which Natural History Survey technicians were able to control the water level) include investigations of the effects on resident fish populations of lake drawdowns, supplemental feeding of bluegill and channel catfish and introduction of supplemental predators such as muskellunge and walleye. These constitute the most thorough and longest continuous fish reports in the United States.

To further enhance the development of the Park, the Fox Ridge Foundation was founded and dedicated to the improvement and promotion of the area. Governed by local citizens interested in the park's future, the foundation sponsors several annual events (a nature walk, a 6K run, and the popular "Volksmarch"), publishes a quarterly newsletter and organizes and administers fund drives for specific or general park improvements. Supported by the general public through membership dues and donations, the foundation is a tax-exempt charitable organization. For further information contact the park office or write to the Fox Ridge Foundation, P.O. Box 714, Charleston, Ill., 61920.



Legend

- Campground
- Handicapped Access
- Hiking Trails
- Horse Trail
- Hunting Area Boundary
- Natural History Survey Lab and Residence
- Park Boundary
- Park Office
- Picnic Shelter
- Restrooms
- Sanitary Dumping Station
- Shower



Picnicking

For the day visitor there are many designated picnic areas situated throughout the park, with tables and grills (ground fires are not permitted), restrooms, drinking water, playgrounds, volleyball courts and a baseball diamond. A large, brick outdoor pavilion and five similar shelters are available for reunions and group gatherings. Four shelters are available on a reservation basis. Please contact the park office.

Camping

For longer stays, there is a Class B/S trailer camp area, a group tent camp area, a "rent-a-camp" cabin (with bunks for six, electricity, table, chairs and a deck) and a large, group tent camp area which also has a 30-occupant capacity youth group cabin with a stove and refrigerator. Picnic tables, cooking grills, drinking water, toilet facilities, showers and a sanitary dumping station are located in the main campgrounds.

Hiking

Due to the rich, abundant plant and animal life in the park and its dramatic hills and bluffs, the 6-mile meandering trail system is the natural focus for most visitors. Each of the nine separate trails has a descriptive marker at the entrance to assist you. Fox Ridge is situated on a glacial moraine and many of these trails are steep, although 18 picturesque wooden bridges and numerous rest benches make them easily negotiable. Seeing turkey, deer, fox, squirrel, raccoon, rabbit, turkey vulture, hawk, owl, quail, pheasant and the lush foliage will make your journey both exciting and restful.

Fishing and Boating

Ridge Lake is well-stocked with bluegill, largemouth bass and channel catfish. However, since it is a research facility, fishing is permitted by reservation only, from 6 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Contact the Illinois Natural History Survey at (217) 345-6490.

Fishing in the Embarras River is open to the hardy angler. Lake Charleston, about 4 miles from the park, also is recommended.

The Embarras is a very scenic river and there is a take-out point for canoes in the park. During the summer, however, the water sometimes is too shallow, so be sure to contact the park office before planning your adventure.

Hunting

In the northern area of the park there are 929 acres open for public hunting. Sign in at the park office before using the area. Fox Ridge has a fact sheet available showing the boundary lines and describing the area and species most abundant.

For more information contact Fox Ridge State Park, park office, 18175 State Park Road, Charleston, Ill., 61920, (217) 345-6416.