

KICKAPOO STATE RECREATION AREA

10906 Kickapoo Park Road
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Once a scarred wasteland ravaged by turn-of-the-century strip-mine operations, Kickapoo State Recreation Area's 2,842 acres have been turned into an outdoor playground for outdoor enthusiasts. Twenty-two deep water ponds provide over 220 acres of water for boaters, canoeists, and anglers. The Middle Fork of the Vermillion River runs through the park, which provides for scenic canoeing and hiking. The lush forests provide habitat for birds, wildlife, and wildflowers. The park was also the first in the nation built on strip-mined land, and one of the first to be subsidized through public contributions. The state's initial purchase of 1,290 acres of mined lands from United Electric Coal Co. in 1939 was largely underwritten with contributions collected from Danville area residents.

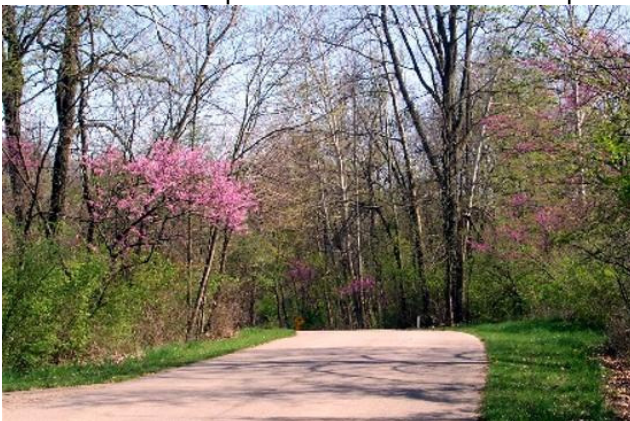


History: The Kickapoo Area has a long cultural history. Excavations have uncovered evidence of a prehistoric village on the Middle Fork River near the park that was home to the Woodland and Mississippian Indians between A.D. 500 and 1500. Another village, located at the confluence of the Middle Fork and Salt Fork rivers, was home of the great Kickapoo prophet, Kennekuk. Kennekuk was a Christian prophet, teaching temperance, and, as a mediator between the Native Americans and European settlers, signed several treaties with the United States. European settlers were drawn to the area by the presence of salt springs (salines), discovered in 1819. Wells were dug for salt brine, which was then boiled to obtain salt. One of the original iron rendering kettles can be seen in a small memorial at Salt Kettle Rest Area on I-74.

Camping Availability: Kickapoo has two major campgrounds, with 184 sites. About half of the sites have electrical hookups. Two shower buildings and a sanitary dump station is available. A limited number of walk-in sites are available for primitive campers. Campsites cannot be reserved anymore. But, if you are bringing more than 25 people, the park requires advance reservations for the group site to prevent overcrowding.

Water Availability: Shower houses and water pumps are turned off November 1st (or earlier if bad weather dictates), and turned on again May 1st.

Activities in the Park: Kickapoo is well known for its water-based outdoor activities. The park contains 22 lakes and access to the Middle Fork River. Fishing is excellent for largemouth and smallmouth bass, channel catfish, bluegill, crappie, redear sunfish, and rainbow trout, which provides an opportunity to fish for catchable-size trout. There are 12 launching ramps on nine of Kickapoo's lakes, and boat and canoe rental is available for Clear Pond. If you want to canoe the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River, a canoe rental and shuttle service is available. One unique feature of Kickapoo State Recreation Area is the opportunity for scuba diving. Divers must register and show proper certification to scuba dive into the deep waters of Inland Sea and Sportsman's Lake.



There are also plenty of activities out of the water as well. The park contains a 7.6 mile Out & Back running and hiking trail, which is rated "difficult". It is designed to meet the demands of experienced outdoor hikers and runners, passing through forests, bottomlands, and the edges of abandoned croplands. There are also a number of easier trails in the park that are well marked. If you enjoy a challenging bike ride, Kickapoo boasts 12 miles of a single mountain biking track. The trails are rated easy to very technical. And for those hardcore winter camping enthusiasts, you can enjoy cross-country skiing, sledding, ice fishing, and ice skating at Kickapoo.

Authored by Chris Brown