

MISSISSIPPI PALISADES STATE PARK

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The Mississippi Palisades offer scenic bluffs and trails along the Mighty Mississippi. Palisades is a word used to describe a line of lofty, steep cliffs usually seen along a river. Located near the Mississippi and Apple rivers, this park is rich in Native American History. Stop in at the Visitor's Center to educate yourself in the history of this beautiful park during your stay.

For those geologists out there, the Mississippi Palisades is a great place to study and learn about the effects of wind and water erosion. Many fantastic rock formations have been created from millennia of erosion, which can be admired while hiking the trails of the park. Indian Head (pictured to the left) and Twin Sisters are just a couple of the many scenic wonders that can be viewed at the Palisades.

Hiking, Geology, and Nature merit badges are excellent badges to work on while at this park. For those older scouts, find an outfitter and you can enjoy some rock climbing along the Mississippi. The Palisades are also dotted with caves, and Maquoketa Caves is less than an hour away, so there are several high adventure opportunities in the area. Boating, fishing, and even cross-country skiing and sledding in the winter are encouraged, so there is something for every troop.

Water: Showers and flush toilets are available May 1 – October 31.

Group Sites: 2 youth group sites are available for reservation June 1 – October 31. Any group over 25 must get permission from site personnel before entering the park. 241 Class A and B sites are also available, but are non-reservable.

Seasonal Information: During the winter, cross-country skiing and sledding is available at the park. Ice fishing is permitted when the ice is thick enough.

Activities inside the park: The Mississippi River and its backwaters is the perfect habitat for so many kinds of fish. Catfish and carp are the most commonly caught fish, but bluegill, crappie, and bass are out there as well. If you're really good, you might even catch some Walleye or Northern Pike. There is no motor size on boats, and the boat launches in the park are free. The park has many magnificent trails, so be sure to take a least one hike while staying at the park. Also available is rock climbing, with such climbing routes as The Sentinel, Twin Sister, Butter Walls, and Buzz Off (originally named for a beehive that was nestled in a nearby rock crack, which is gone now).



Interesting fact about the park: Indie music artist Sufjan Stevens referenced to it in his song "The Predatory Wasp Of The Palisades Is Out To Get Us!"

Must do before you leave: Check out the great rock formations. There are 15 miles of hiking trails in the park, and they are packed with great sites. If you are into high adventure, you can see these formations while rock climbing, but either way, make sure you spend some time to stop and admire them a bit.

Authored by Chris Brown, Contributions from John Lorenzen