Ferne Clyffe State Park

Located on Illinois Route 37, just 1 mile south of Goreville and 1271; (217) 785-0067; TTY (217) 782-9175.

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 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Equal Opportunity Office: IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271.

History

In 1899, two Cairo brothers purchased a part of the park known as the “Cherokee Farm.” They called it Ferne Clyffe because of the ferns that grew in abundance. The area soon became known for its beauty. It eventually sold to Emma Rebman, a local schoolteacher and Johnson County school superintendent, who opened the park to the public on Sunday, July 20, 1907. In 1908, Rebman died, leaving the park to her son, Lee. In 1923, the park was sold to the Debets, who operated the hotel and store within the park for nearly 100 years. An abundance of ferns, rare geological features and unusual plant communities create an atmosphere that enhances the many recreational facilities offered at the park. Designated trails wind through picturesque woods, allowing visitors to experience the natural beauty of the park. Only park grills or personal cookstoves should be used for cooking. Only park grills or personal cookstoves should be used for cooking.

Flora and Fauna

Flora at Ferne Clyffe State Park is a mosaic of forest, prairie, and bottomland habitats. Each season brings its own beauty to the area, but spring and fall are the most spectacular. Spring brings the beauty of wildflowers, while fall foliage adds vibrant color to the groundcover in the spring. Fall’s cooler temperatures change the deep greens of the summer tree foliage to a spectacular mix of reds, purples, golds and browns that cover every hillside. Within the preserve, hiking is restricted to marked trails only. All plants and animals within the preserve are protected by law.

Camping

Campers must be on leashes at all times. Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. We recommend that you stay on marked trails and leave nature the way you find it. If you disturb nature, you may be charged a fee. Ferne Clyffe State Park has good populations of deer, squirrel and turkey. Quail and rabbits are also present. Deer Ridge campground is a well-shaded Class A facility offering gravel pads with electricity, picnic tables and cooking grills. Drinking water, showers, flush toilets and a sanitary dump station complete the setting for campers who prefer to include a few comforts of home with their outdoor adventure.

Picnicking

Bank fishermen will be impressed by populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish and redear in the lake. Hunters will appreciate the 1,750 acres of forested habitat, which has good populations of deer, squirrel and turkey. Quail and rabbits are also present. Deer Ridge campground is a well-shaded Class A facility offering gravel pads with electricity, picnic tables and cooking grills. Drinking water, showers, flush toilets and a sanitary dump station complete the setting for campers who prefer to include a few comforts of home with their outdoor adventure.

Fishing and Hunting

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P.O. Box 10, 90 Office Drive
Goreville, IL 62939; (618) 995-2411

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past one of the largest shelter bluffs in Illinois.

River to River Trail, which cuts across southern Illinois from the Ohio River to the Mississippi River, passes through Ferne Clyffe and open to foot traffic and horseback riding only, and the trail is closed to horses from Nov. 1 to April 30. Equestrian use is allowed only on equestrian-designated trails. Equestrian trails are closed to horses from Nov. 1 to April 30.

Big Rocky Hollow Trail is an easy hike with a round-trip distance of 1 mile. It is accessible from the horseback campground. Portions of the trail are closed to horses.

Waterfall Trail is a moderately difficult 0.75-mile hike that begins at Deer Ridge Campground and also leads to the primitive campground parking lot, these woodland sites have cooking and grills. Water and trash receptacles are available at the sites, and open to hikers and equestrians. This trail splits off of the Cedar Bluff Trail and the Big Buck Creek Trail.

Blackjack Oak Trail is a moderately difficult 1-mile trail that leads hikers past rare plants and impressive rock formations. This is a nature preserve, and hiking should be kept on the equestrian-designated trails only.

Rebman Trail is an easy 0.25-mile hike. A plaque dedicated to Emma Rebman marks the beginning of the trail. This trail links with the Cedar Bluff area. Difficulty is considered moderate. Backpackers enjoying their commute with nature will appreciate the solitude of the individual campsites in the Class C Backcountry. Trails for horseback riders can ride directly to their own Class C Equestrian campsites.

Happy Hollow Horse Trail is an 8-mile equestrian route accessed through the park office. This trail splits off of the Bobcat Loop Trail and travels high along a ridge through the woods.

Bobcat Loop Trail is a secluded 1-mile loop in the heart of Ferne Clyffe State Park. This trail also provides foot access to a designated climbing/rappelling area, located at the southwest end of Cedar Grove Road.

Clyffe Lake Trail is an easy 1-mile hike that provides access to the base of the waterfall. This is an easy hike to the top of the bluff with the portion of the Happy Hollow Trail marking the beginning of the trail. This trail is moderately difficult.

Shawnee National Forest

Giant City

Makanda

Anna Jonesboro

Goreville

Goreville Road (To I-57)

Crawford Street

Sullivan Road

Cedar Grove Road

Round Bluff Nature Preserve Trail

Rocky Branch Trail

Happy Hollow Trail

Happy Hollow Horse Trail

Rebman trail

Bork's Waterfall Trail

Hawk's Cave Trail

Blackjack Oak Trail

Waterfall Trail

Big Rocky Hollow Trail

Clyffe Lake

Park Entrance

Restricted Area

No Hunting

U.S. Forest Service Property

Trails

Ferne Clyffe State Park

Legend

Watermark

Images

Tables

Diagram

Explanations

Legend

Como Park Campground

Equestrian Camground

Horseback Trail

Picnic Area

Picnic Shelter

Park Office

Equestrian Camping

Dump Station

Future Campground

Park Boundary

Picnic Shelter

Horseback Trail

Hiking Trail

(continued)