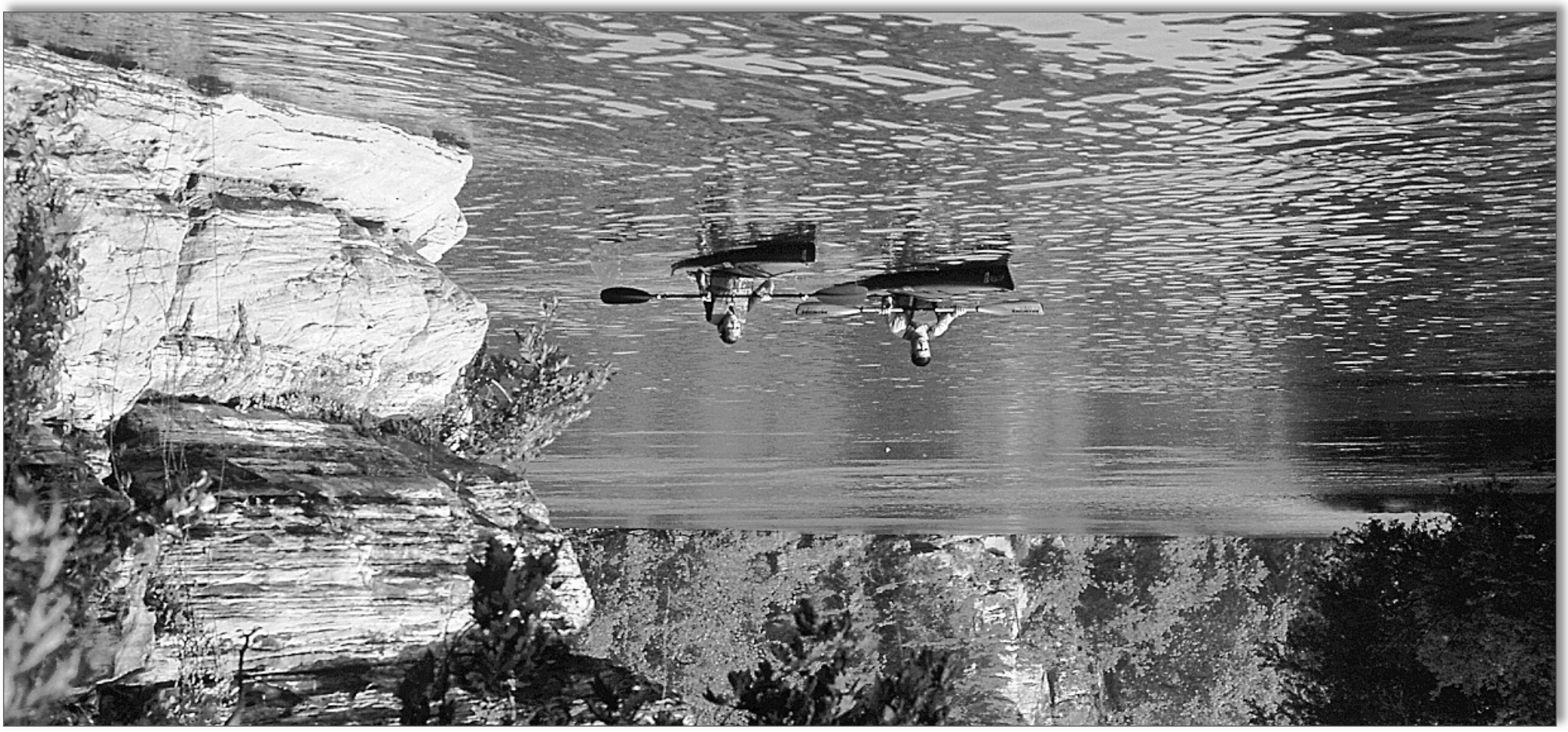


The Park

Located three miles south of Oregon on Illinois Route 2 in Ogle County, Castle Rock State Park sits on the west bank of the Rock River. The park is very representative of the Rock River Hills area, with rock formations, deep ravines, and unique northern plant associations. A sandstone bluff, adjacent to the river, gave the park its name.

Castle Rock is set in a large sandstone butte situated between the Rock River and Highway 2. The rock is St. Peter sandstone. There are only a few places in Illinois where St. Peter sandstone comes to the surface, even though it underlies practically the entire state.

History

The region was inhabited by Illinois tribes of Native Americans until Sauk and Fox tribes being pushed westward by colonists invaded in 1730. They stayed until the early 1800s, when they were forced to move again, this time to Iowa.

In 1831, Blackhawk, the Sauk chief, led his people in a series of raids back into Illinois to reclaim their ancestral lands. The battles that followed were known as the Blackhawk Indian wars. Chief Blackhawk was captured in 1832 and confined to a reservation.

The Castle Rock area was settled by New Englanders early in the 19th Century. This area was proposed as a

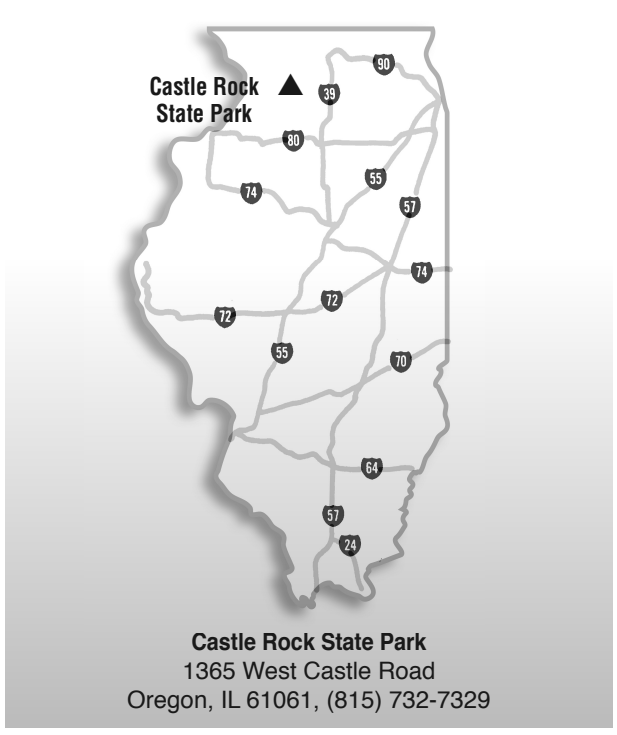
state park in 1921 by the "Friends of Our Native Landscape," who were able to acquire some of the land they described as "a unique wilderness remnant of great natural beauty and scientific interest." In 1964, the Natural Lands Institute, a non-profit natural lands preservation group, conducted a public fundraising campaign to preserve part of the Castle Rock area.

Castle Rock was recognized by the State of Illinois as an area of major scientific importance in 1965. It was established as a project area, and land acquisition by the state was started in 1970.

Castle Rock State Park consists of approximately 2,000 acres, 710 of which are designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The site was dedicated as a state park in 1978.

Natural Area

Castle Rock State Park contains natural resources that are unique to Illinois. A thin layer of glacial till covers this region, and several distinctive plant species, remnants of the native forest and prairie, still exist. In one valley, 27 different types of ferns have been identified.



Castle Rock State Park
1365 West Castle Road
Oregon, IL 61061, (815) 732-7329

- 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. 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, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271 visit our website at www.dnr.state.il.us.
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

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 Resource Way, Springfield, IL. 62702-1271; 217/785-0067; TTY 217/782-9175.

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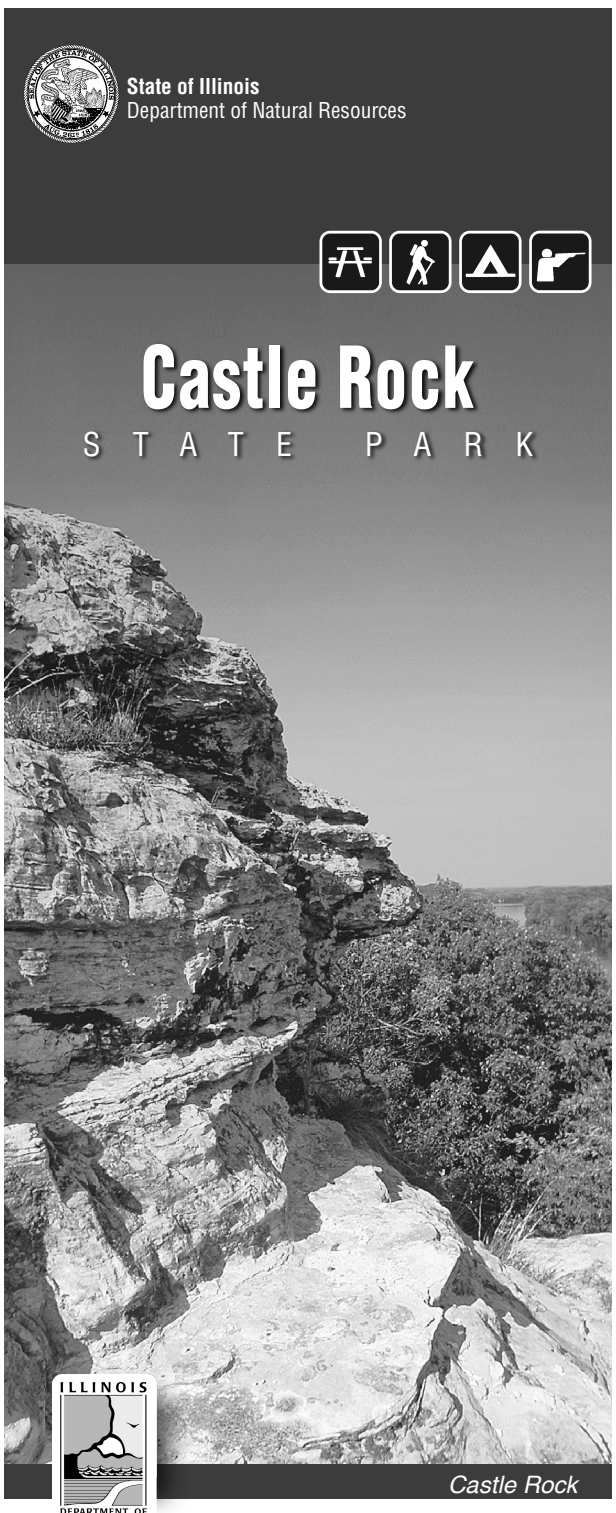
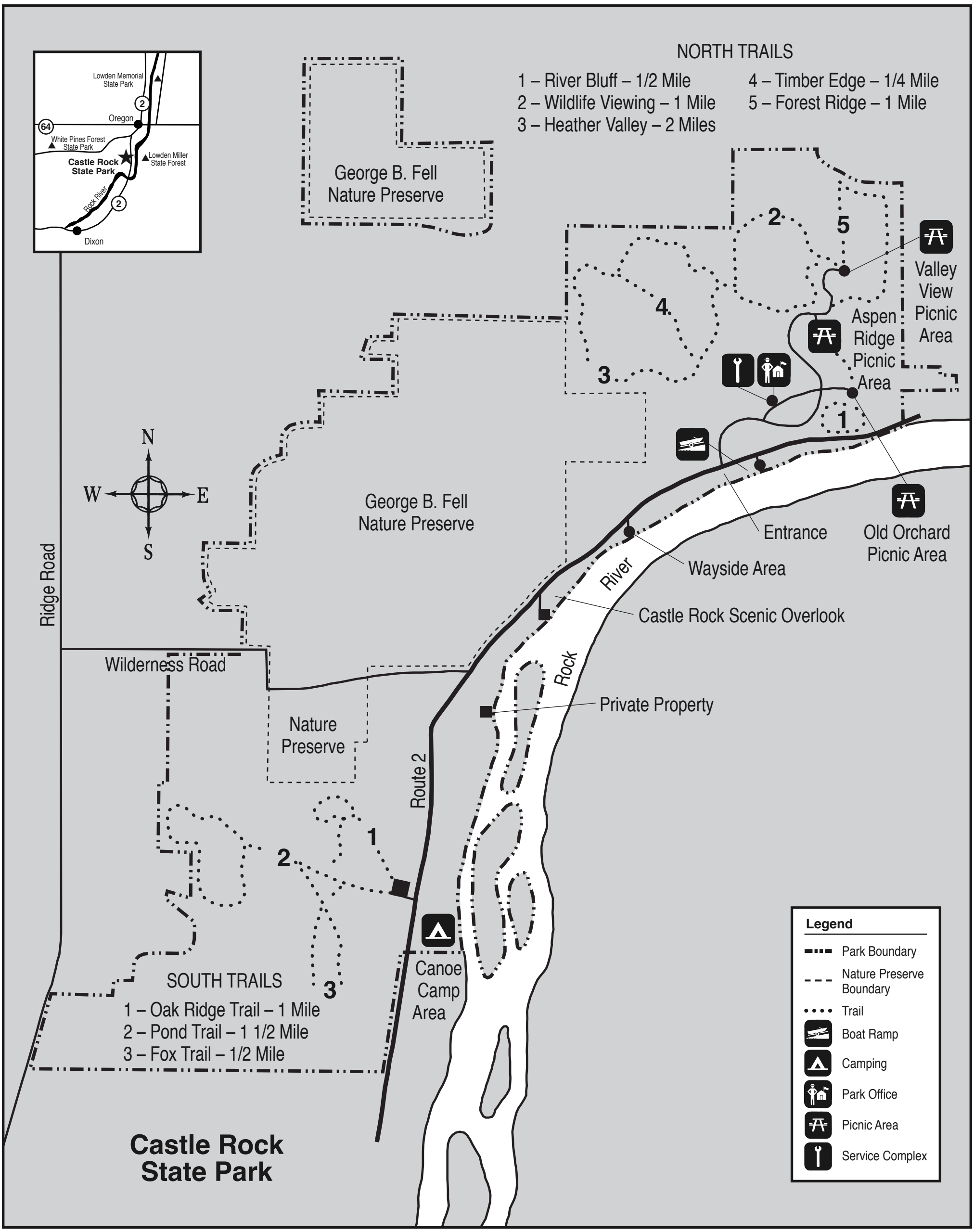


The park is one of the largest significant natural areas in the northern part of Illinois.

Most of the outstanding natural features are located in the dedicated Nature Preserve, which is protected by state law. Use of the 710-acre preserve is restricted to scientific study and limited interpretation activities.

Facilities

- *Picnicking*—There are three picnic shelters, with tables, playground equipment, grills, toilets and drinking water. There are also scattered tables for use along the river. Two of the park's shelters may be reserved with a fee.
- *Trails*—There are seven miles of marked hiking trails offering the opportunity to view woodland animals and birds and scenic views. Cross-country skiing and sledding are also available when weather permits.
- *Fishing*—All fishing is in the Rock River. The park offers 1 1/2 miles of bank fishing. There is also a boat ramp available for public use. Boat size is limited due to the varying depth of the river. Catfish are the most commonly caught fish, but some bass, northern, walleye and crappie may also be taken.
- *Camping*—Castle Rock does not have a campground except for a primitive canoe camping area. Access to the area is by canoe or boat only.
- *Hunting*—Limited squirrel, turkey and deer hunting is available at the park. For more information, please contact the park office.