

Today, Fort Massac is a captivating reminder of days gone by, a fascinating excursion through the entire course of American history, and the perfect place to relax in soothing natural surroundings and explore life as it was lived when our country was young. The reconstructed timber fortification—a replica of an 1802 American fort site next to the original fort site. The original site is the location where both the French and American forts were built at Massac. What remains of the original site are the earthen works with the outline of the first French fort. Since the original site is on the National Register of Historic Places, the replica is built to the east of the site.

With all this, and the picnicking, camping, hiking, boating and hunting opportunities available in the rest of the 1,450-acre area, Fort Massac State Park is an alluring, complete and self-contained family vacation spot.

## Fort Massac State Park

Experience the scenic splendor of Southern Illinois with plenty of outdoor fun and time-telling events at Fort Massac State Park. Overlooking the mighty Ohio River from the southern tip of Illinois, this majestic location has been preserved and maintained since 1908, when it became Illinois' first state park.

It was not until 1757, however, that the French built Fort De L'Ascension, during the French and Indian War, when France and Great Britain were fighting for ultimate control of central North America. Rebuilt in 1759-60, the structure was renamed Massac in honor of the then French Minister of Colonial Affairs, 42nd Royal Highland Regiment, arrived to take possession, all he found was a charred ruin.

The British anglicized the name to "Massac" but, despite the counsel of their military advisers, they neither rebuilt nor regarrisoned the fort. This oversight left them vulnerable and

## History

The rich history of this site begins before recorded history, when Native Americans undoubtedly took advantage of its strategic location overlooking the Ohio River. The French were interested in building a fortification as early as 1745 because of the location on the Ohio River near the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.



Although archaeological and historical excavations were conducted on the site from 1939-42 and again in 1966 and 1970, actual reconstruction of the 1802 structure was not begun until 2003 and continues today. The original site, where all three forts were built, is in the archaeological outline of the 1757 French Fort.

In addition to the fort itself, is a visitor's center. A museum facility also has been constructed to house and display many of the findings of earlier excavations, re-creations of historical clothing and implements. There are also video presentations highlighting the area's diverse historical significance. Fort Massac State Park is fortunate to have an interpreter on staff. This natural resource

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In 1903, through the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 24 acres surrounding the site were purchased by the state and on Nov. 5, 1908, it was officially dedicated as Illinois' first state park.

Using the fort as an encampment. The Third Illinois Cavalry and the 131st Illinois Infantry, who were 1861-62 claimed the lives of a substantial number of soldiers at the site. The fort was abandoned after a measles epidemic in the Civil War, marking the last time U.S. troops were stationed The site served briefly as a training camp during the early years of the New Madrid earthquake in 1811-12, the

Although ravaged by the New Madrid earthquake in 1811-12, the fort was again rebuilt in time to play a minor role in the War of 1812, only to be abandoned again in 1814. Local citizens dismantled the fort for timber, and by 1828 little remained of the original construction. In 1839 the city of Metropolis was platted about a mile west of the fort.

U.S. Vice President Aaron Burr and Gen. James Wilkinson, who allegedly drew up plans to personally conquer Mexico and the American southwest, met at Fort Massac during the summer of 1805. Edward Everett Hale later used the setting of Fort Massac and the Burr-Wilkinson plot as basis for his classic historical novel, "The Man Without a Country."

In 1778, during the Revolutionary War, Colonel George Rogers Clark led his "Long Knives" regiment into Illinois at Massac Creek and was able to capture Kaskaskia, 100 miles to the north, without firing a shot—thus taking the entire Illinois Territory for the State of Virginia and the fledgling United States.

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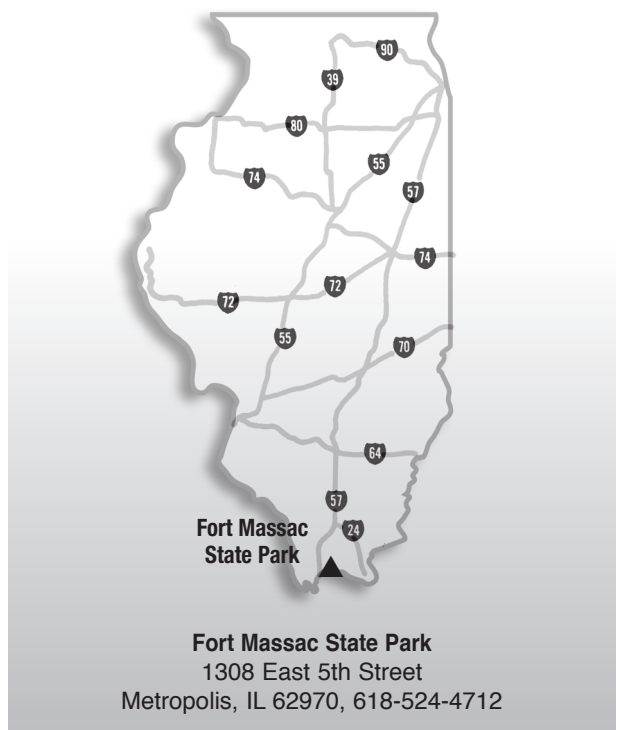
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- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group 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, Office of Land Management, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, or visit our website at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://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 nonmerit 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 Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; (217) 785-0067; TTY (217) 782-9175.



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources



# Fort Massac

STATE PARK



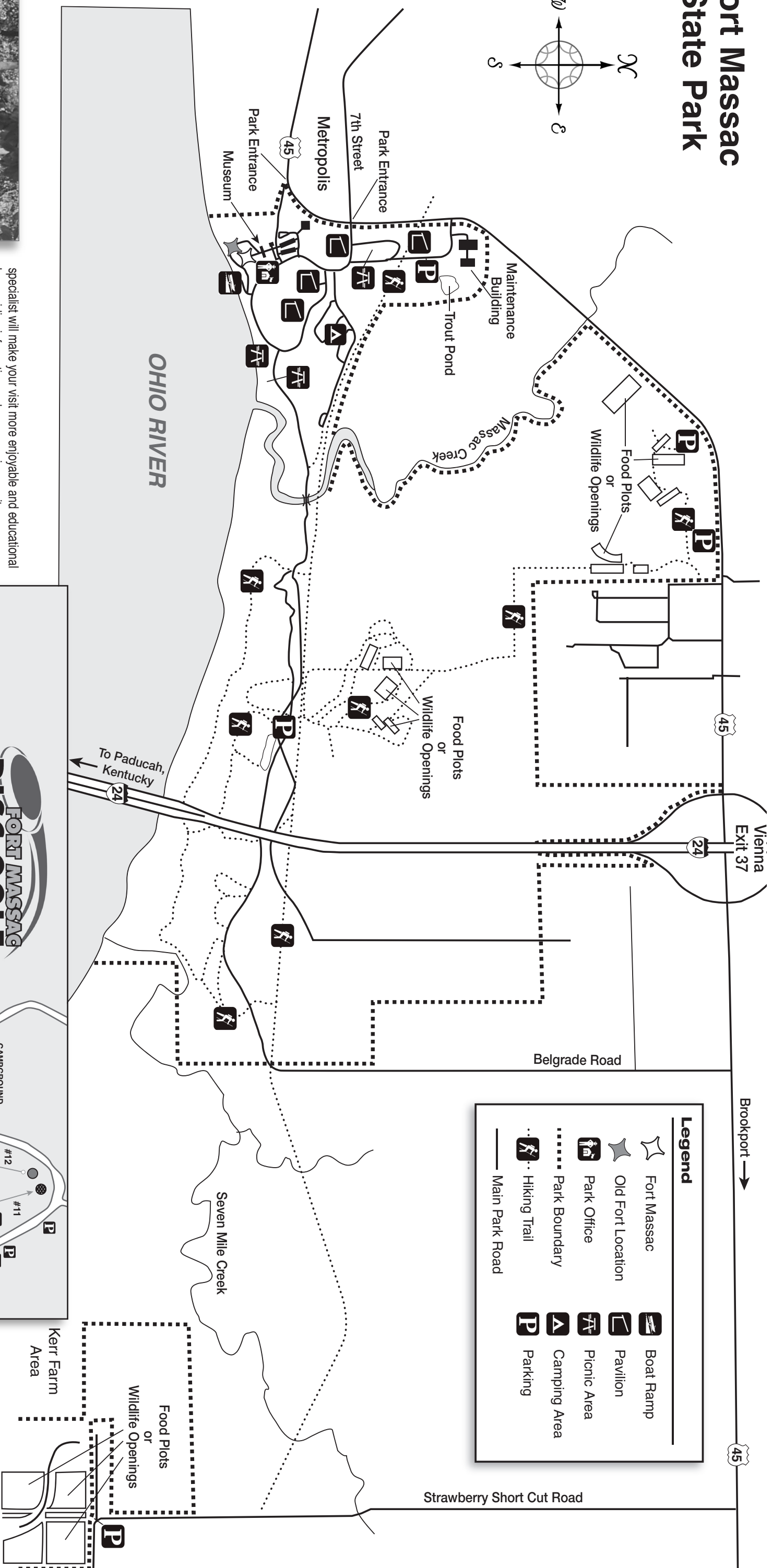
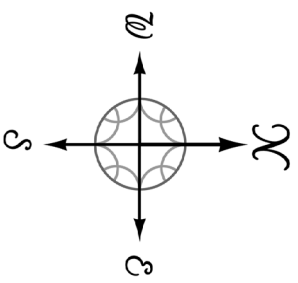
### Hours of Operation

Thursday – Monday	9:00 am to 4:30 pm
Tuesday – Wednesday	8:30 am to 3:30 pm



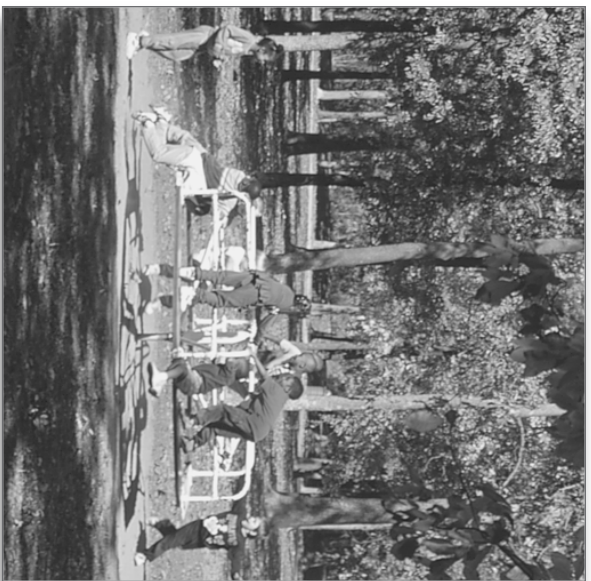


# Fort Massac State Park



**Legend**

	Fort Massac		Boat Ramp
	Old Fort Location		Pavilion
	Park Office		Picnic Area
	Park Boundary		Camping Area
	Hiking Trail		Parking
	Main Park Road		



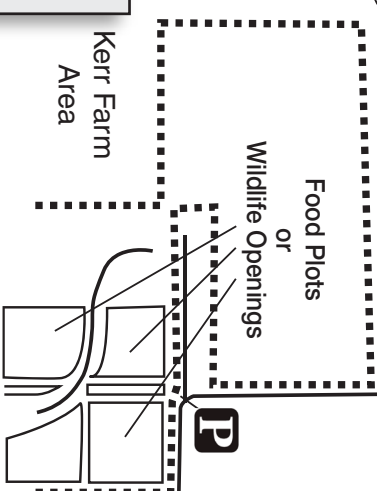
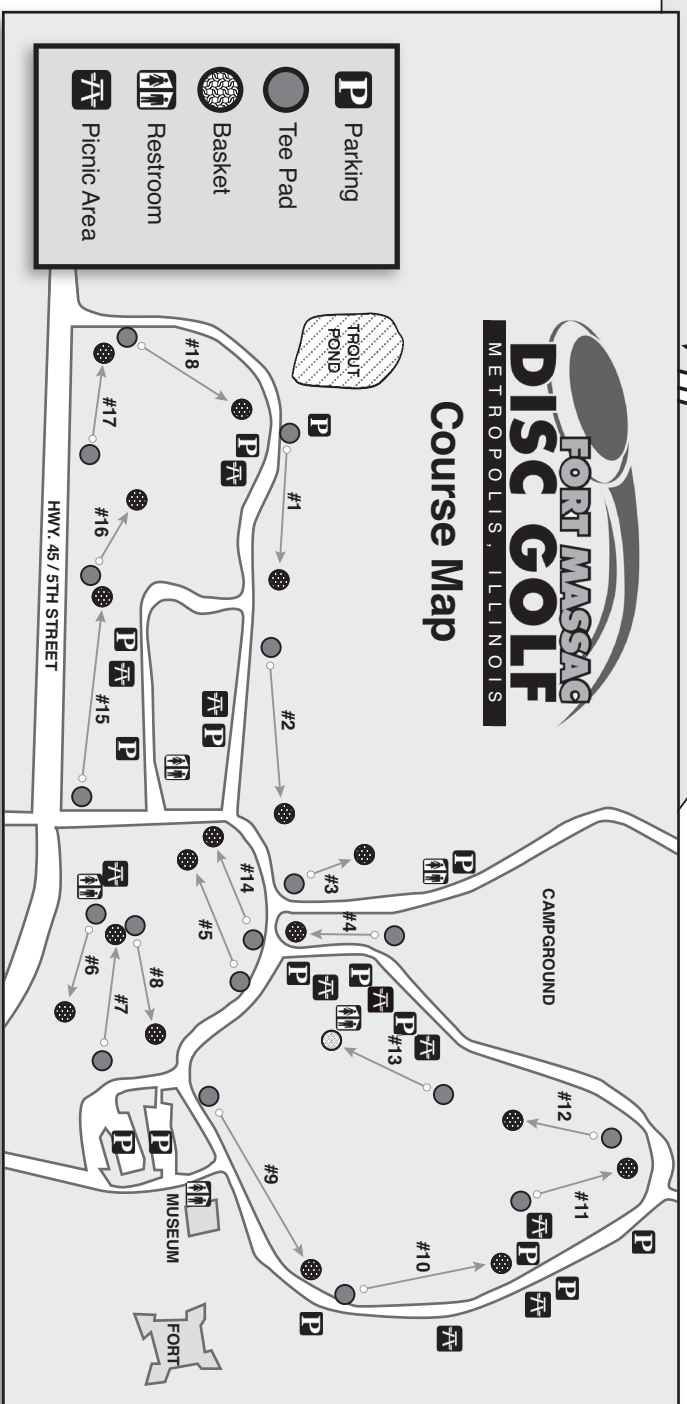
specialist will make your visit more enjoyable and educational by providing information and programming on site.

## Picnicking

Fort Massac is the perfect place to bring along a picnic lunch. Tables, grills and drinking water are scattered throughout the grounds and there are three playground areas for the children. Four covered picnic shelters are available: shelter 1912 and the Fairground shelter can be reserved through [reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com); the other two smaller shelters are first come, first served.

## Camping

There are 50 Class A vehicular campsites with electricity, a disposal station and a shower building, tent camping, and a separate group campground. Campsite reservations can be made at [reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com), from April 15th through September 30th each year.



**18-hole disc golf course**  
 Opened in 2013 this course runs through the heart of the park.