

THE GEOGRAPHY OF STATE PARKS

A Comparison between Indiana and Washington

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During the past thirty years a great development of state parks has occurred in most states of the Union. The universal ownership of automobiles, the construction of paved highways and the resulting expansion of tourism were important factors in this. There has been also an awakened consciousness of the desirability for the preservation of historic spots, scenic areas not in national parks or national forests, the conservation of accessible areas of virgin timber, suitable provision for the protection of wildlife, and the establishment of recreation areas and facilities convenient to centers of population.

The states of Indiana and Washington offer interesting contrasts in the character and development of state parks. Washington is favored by having rugged mountains, picturesque seacoast, remarkable lakes and forests of huge trees. There are two national parks, Mount Rainier and Olympic, and numerous mountain and timbered playgrounds in the national forests. Indiana lacks mountains and only one area, that of the Indiana sand dunes, has ever been suggested as worthy of national park status. The scenery of the state is on a modest scale. The southern third of the state, in a driftless area, is hilly and well timbered, and the northern tiers of counties possess many glacial lakes, but there is nothing that compares with the scale of the scenery available in the state of Washington. Nevertheless in its state park system and in the development of the parks for use by tourists and residents, Indiana has been a model which has been studied with profit by all those in other states interested in worthwhile development of recreational areas that will serve the needs of the public.

INDIANA PARKS

The state park system of Indiana began in 1916 with McCormick's Creek Canyon and Turkey Run areas in the west-central part of the state. In 1922 Clifty Falls in the southeast and Pokagon in the northeast corner were added. Other state parks followed, the required land being generally donated by communities and individuals. In 1919 the State Department of Conservation was established with various divisions, of which that of State Parks, Lands and Waters had jurisdiction over the parks and memorials. The director was Richard Lieber (1869-1944) who substantially contributed to the securing and development of the park system during the early years. The human factor of this man's work did more than any other one thing for the expansion and usefulness of the state parks to the people of Indiana.

By 1946 there were 14 state parks in Indiana totaling 37,501 acres and 8 memorials with a total of 253 acres. A nominal charge of ten cents is made for admission to most of the parks and some memorials which is used in maintaining the areas. A charge was first made at one park in 1919 when there were 33,134 paid admissions. In 1937 paid attendance in ten parks had increased to over one million and reached a maximum of 1,285,628 in 1941, of whom 42 percent were from outside the state. War and gasoline rationing caused a considerable decrease in 1942-44 but admissions began to pick up in 1945 when over 800,000 persons visited the parks and by 1946 over one million again paid admission.

Seven of Indiana's parks possess large modern hotels and in two others there are lunchrooms and cabins for overnight

accommodations. Cottages and campgrounds care for additional visitors. In Illinois opposition by hotel interests has so far prevented building of hotels by the state in its state parks, but the experience of Indiana is that there is enough business for both the hotels in the parks and those in nearby towns, the privately owned hotels benefitting by the overflow from state parks whose accommodations are inadequate to care for the swarms of visitors. Natural lakes occur in several parks but where they are absent artificial lakes and swimming pools have been provided. Helped in part by the Civilian Conservation Corps and other Federal work agencies in the nineteen-thirties many improvements have been made including roads, bridle paths, trails, fireplaces, tables, drinking water, comfort stations, etc. Museums and naturalist guide service are sometimes available.

Indiana receives over a quarter of a million dollars from admissions and concessions annually. In Spring Mill State Park there is a replica of a pioneer village including an old mill from whose grindstones are sold over \$5,000 worth of corn meal each year.

Indiana state parks were selected primarily for scenic and historic reasons but also there has been an attempt to secure wide geographical distribution for recreation purposes. Without such intent, the parks also provide a fairly complete sequence of the state's geological formations, together with examples that illustrate a majority of physiographic principles.

Each park has different noteworthy features. Clifty Falls State Park is situated on the west flank of the Cincinnati Arch that diagonals northwest across Indiana. The falls have retreated 11,000 feet from the Ohio valley since the glacial period, and the Ordovician strata in the park are famous collecting ground for fossils. Brown County State Park is a wooded, hill region within the driftless area. It is famous for the beauty of its autumn foliage and the artist colony that perpetuates this fall glory on canvas. In central Indiana west of Brown

county are the McCormick's Creek and Spring Mill state parks. The bedrock of both parks is limestone of Mississippian age which is soluble and has permitted the formation of caves and sinkholes by underground water. At Spring Mill the stream in one of the caves contains blind fish. The famous Marengo and Wyandotte caves of southern Indiana are formed in the same rocks but are not yet included in state parks. Turkey Run State Park contains post-glacial gorges over 100 feet deep that in some places are narrower than their depth. Shakamak Park occupies the site of a former strip coal mine with the unsightly pits now being artificial lakes well stocked with fish. National championship swimming and diving contests are often held here. Pokagon State Park includes a lake and other features of glacial origin. The Indiana Dunes, very popular with residents of Chicago, are in the northwest corner of the State. The dunes reach heights of 200 feet above Lake Michigan and the area contains plants that are rare in the Middle West. Mounds State Park contains Indian mounds and is located near Anderson. Angel's Mounds near Evansville is similar and is now being excavated. Memorials include one to Abram Lincoln, the old capitol building at Corydon, one to George Rogers Clark at Vincennes, and others of historic interest.

Hoosiers are very proud of their state parks and willingly support them. The parks are exceedingly popular with the residents of nearby states especially Illinois, Michigan and Ohio, and the Indiana state park system has often served as an inspiration to promoters of similar projects in other states. The success of state parks in an area with only modest scenery suggests that similar effort in regions with greater scenic attractions would be attended with at least equal success.

Both the Division of Forestry and the State Highway Commission in Indiana have supplemented the recreational facilities provided in the state parks. There are nine state forests that usually include land that has been ruined by erosion with the worst areas replanted

to pine. The state forests are useful in game and bird conservation and are open to limited hunting. Three of the forests contain artificial lakes stocked with fish. All are provided with picnic grounds. The State Highway Commission has provided numerous overlooks on scenic hilltops to give safe places for parking while enjoying the view, and has also built many roadside tables in shady spots for use by the traveling public.

WASHINGTON PARKS

In Washington the first state parks were donated in 1915. One was Larrabee, near Bellingham on picturesque Chuckanut Drive, that covers 1350 acres, and the other was the Old Courthouse near Chehalis. Two years later a timbered area near the courthouse was donated for picnic purposes in honor of Matilda N. Jackson, a pioneer of the region. Other state parks were rapidly secured, largely by donations, until by 1946 there were 68 state parks with a total acreage of 46,871. The control over these is in the hands of a State Park Committee that includes the Secretary of State, the State Land Commissioner, and the State Treasurer. Admission is not charged to state parks and few people register compared to the total number of visitors but attendance is conservatively estimated at around one million.

The parks vary greatly in size. The largest park is Mount Spokane that covers 15,858 acres, mostly well timbered. This park has a stone lodge, vista house, picnic grounds and a scenic highway to the summit from which a wide view of forests, cities, lakes and mountains in three states can be enjoyed. It is a popular site for winter sports and a ski lift has been built and a ski lodge provided for members of a club. Other large parks are: Ginkgo, 5,979 acres, east of Ellensburg, famous for its petrified forest with hundreds of specimens; Riverside, 5,380 acres near Spokane, that is being developed into a popular picnic area and includes the curious rock formations called the Bowl and Pitcher; Moran of 4,803 acres on Orcas Island in Puget Sound; Beacon Rock, 3,025 acres

along the Columbia River near Bonneville Dam; and Deception Pass, 1,724 acres, a scenic, timbered, coast area near Anacortes. The other parks are mostly small, 41 of them being under 100 acres in size, and have been established to preserve places of peculiar geologic and scenic interest, several sites of historical importance, a few memorials, and most common of all reasons—local recreation and picnic spots. Among the most visited of all the state parks is Dry Falls State Park in the Grand Coulee which is seen by around 300,000 persons annually. Lake Chelan, Palouse Falls, Steptoe Butte, and Kamiah Butte, the last three all in Whitman County, are interesting examples of geologic work. Lake Chelan, Dry Falls, and Palouse Falls have resulted from glaciation while the two buttes are high remnants of an old topography that was buried by enormous lava flows except for a few hills that were surrounded by lava but never covered by the flows.

Accommodations in the Washington state parks are inferior to those of Indiana. Seventeen of the Washington parks have camp accommodations. Thirty-five of the parks, just over half, have been "developed." This usually means they are provided with trails, drinking water, picnic tables, stoves and comfort facilities. A pressing need is for more lodges or hotels for those desiring to stay overnight in good quarters. Only Mount Spokane and Dry Falls state parks have overnight accommodations, the first in a lodge, the second in cabins. Only two parks, Ginkgo and Dry Falls provide naturalists who lecture to visitors. Some have a museum but mostly nature itself is the museum. At Dry Falls State Park the lakes have been stocked with fish, a golf links built, many trails and roads constructed, beaches and boats made available and over two dozen cabins finished. A hotel was projected but the legislature declined to make an appropriation for this. There is much need for further development of all the Washington parks to make them more useful to citizens and visitors from outside the state. Considerable work was done by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the nineteen-

thirties, especially in trail and road construction, but construction stopped during the war and has been only partially resumed since.

Most of the park areas in Washington have been donations by individuals, groups of citizens and a few by corporations. For example, the women's clubs of the state donated a tract of virgin timber along the Snoqualmie Pass Highway but blowdowns of the trees compelled the sale of the original tract and another timbered area was purchased with the money near Enumclaw. The Bloedel Donovan Lumber Mills gave three acres near Alger, convenient to Bellingham. Several parks include or adjoin lakes where fishing, boating and beach sports may be enjoyed. Some of the most popular parks are along the shores of Puget Sound, and being easily reached from Seattle and Tacoma, serve as picnic and vacation spots for urban residents. Saltwater State Park in King county and Deception Pass State Park are examples. Few state parks are lo-

cated in the Cascade Mountains which considering their scenic attractiveness, seems unexpected at first thought, but the explanation is simple, the Forest Service has provided the needed facilities at no direct expense to the state. In the Chelan Forest there are 74 improved forest camp and picnic grounds, in the Columbia Forest there are 51, in the Mount Baker 76, in the Snoqualmie Forest 114, and in the Wenatchee Forest 78 improved camps are located. On the Olympic Peninsula besides a national park there are 27 improved camps in the Olympic Forest.

It is obvious that to date Indiana has accomplished more than Washington in the development and popularization of its state parks. However, with the recognition of the importance of tourists from a business standpoint, and of recreation areas for local residents, it can be expected that the state of Washington will in the near future expand and develop its parks to a much greater extent than it previously has done.