



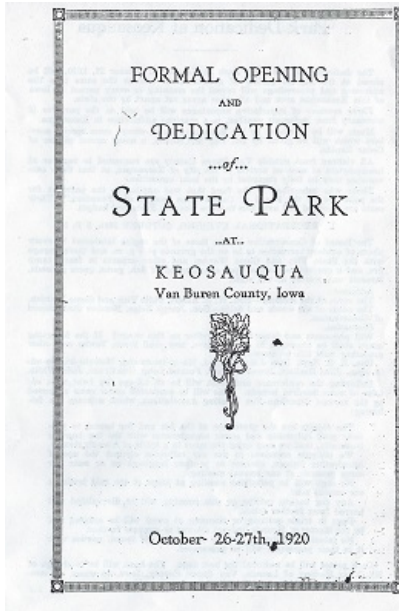
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

State Park News

Conservation and Recreation



Lacey-Keosauqua State Park is Iowa's second to celebrate 100 years



Today marks the 100th anniversary of Iowa's second state park, [Lacey-Keosauqua State Park](#).

Originally dedicated on October 27, 1920, Lacey-Keosauqua followed Backbone by just five months in the state's fledgling state park system. Nestled along a bend of the Des Moines River in Van Buren County, the park is a beautiful combination of natural surprises and historical findings. Here's a few interesting things to discover at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park:

1. Human history dates back thousands of years. The park is the site of several sacred Native American burial mounds and other archeological sites from the Woodland period, dating back 2,500

to 1,000 years. When visiting the park, please be respectful of these areas.

2. The park is named after a nationally renowned conservationist. Originally called Big Bend State Park, it was re-named Lacey-Keosauqua in 1926 in honor of civil war veteran John F. Lacey. While serving in the U.S. House of Representatives in the late 1800s, Lacey championed numerous landmark conservation laws including the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, the Yellowstone Protective Act of 1894, and the Lacey Act of 1900, which was named after him and is considered a cornerstone of today's wildlife protection laws.

3. **Lacey-Keosauqua was an important spot on the Mormon Trek.** The park is home to Ely Ford Crossing, a Des Moines River crossing site for Mormons traveling from Illinois through Iowa on their trek out West during the 1800s. The site is commemorated with a stone placard.

4. **The Civilian Conservation Corp built as many as 46 structures in the park.** Several iconic buildings, bridges and even a 30-acre lake were constructed by the CCC in the 1930s and 1940s, many of which are now on the National Register of Historic Places. The architecture of the stone-and-wood beach house nods to an earlier time, with stone patios and a steep 147-step staircase leading down to a public beach. The original CCC quarry for the park's stone structures can still be found within the park along Wesley Creek.

5. **Take a hike on more than 13 miles of trails.** While the history of the park is compelling, the real star of Lacey-Keosauqua is the natural beauty found in its forests and scenic landscapes. More than 1,600 acres can be explored on numerous trails throughout the park. Follow the River Trail along the entire length of the park's boundary with beautiful views of the Des Moines River. Or check out the park's small waterfall near the quarry.

6. **Enjoy newly renovated camping amenities.** Lacey is home to six cabins and a 65-site modern campground that underwent renovations in 2018. Visitors will enjoy new camping pads, full-hook-up sites, upgraded electrical and a renovated shower/restroom building. Campsites, cabins, lodges and shelters are available for reservation at the [Lacey-Keosauqua reservation site](#).

7. **Lacey-Keosauqua is a fall color destination not to be missed.** The park's white oak forest, with some trees more than 200 years old, is in the heart of the [Villages of Van Buren County](#), a travel destination for fall color enthusiasts. After exploring the park, visit the nearby villages featuring charming shops, restaurants and attractions. The region is known for its Annual Scenic Drive Festival every October.

Find complete details about Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, including maps and amenities on the DNR's [Lacey-Keosauqua State Park web page](#). Or check out the Lacey-Keosauqua State Park [commemorative print created by Iowa artist, Bozz Prints](#).



CCC-era Lodge built in the 1930s at Lacey-Keosauqua.



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