

FORT DEFIANCE

Fort Defiance State Park's 181 acres of rugged woodland provide a beautiful contrast to the gently rolling surrounding farmlands. The park's hiking and bridle trails, picnic areas and scenic overlooks provide a great place to relax. Its lush cover of vegetation includes hawthorn, plum, locust and many species of the state tree — the oak. In the spring, the slopes are speckled with trillium, bloodroot, hepatica, and violets. A small prairie with native grasses and flowers, including the endangered prairie bush clover, thrives on a secluded knoll.

During the winter months, the park is a popular place for cross-county skiing and snowmobiling.

HISTORY

Fort Defiance State Park is named for the fort that once stood in the nearby community of Estherville. In March of 1857, 40 men, women and children were massacred near Spirit Lake and Okoboji. In 1862, a wounded 15 year old boy stumbled into town with the story of an Indian massacre in Jackson, Minnesota. This brought terror into the community and Captain W. H. Ingham and Company A of the Northern Border Brigade were dispatched to Estherville to construct Fort Defiance. The townspeople eventually moved into the enclosure, but the feared Indian attack never came. Over time, the fort was taken apart and the timbers used to build cabins.

PICNIC SHELTER AND LODGE

An open picnic shelter may be reserved for \$15 through the park ranger. An enclosed shelter or lodge constructed in the style of an old army outpost is an excellent place for group occasions such as reunions and wedding receptions. It is available for rental by reservation through the park ranger.

CAMPING

Fort Defiance State Park has 32 campsites. The camping area is non-modern, as no flush toilets or showers are present. However, electrical hookups are available at eight sites. All camping permits are obtained through self-registration.

NEIGHBORING TOWNS

Estherville is one mile northeast on Highway 9.

Iowa Great Lakes Region is 12 miles west.

STATE PARK USER PERMIT

Motorized vehicles parked in state parks, recreation areas, and state forest campgrounds are required to have either annual or daily user permits on display. Annual permits are available at the park rangers' offices, county recorders, state park concessions, and other locations. Daily permits, good through 10:30 p.m. the following day, may be purchased on a self-service basis at posted locations in each park. Vehicles with Iowa Department of Transportation handicapped license plates or rear-view mirror tags are exempt from the user permit requirement. Iowa residents 65 and older, on Medicaid, or receiving food stamps, are eligible for free user permits available only at county recorders' offices. Park user permits are not required for simply driving through a park without stopping. All funds raised through the sale of user permits are deposited in a trust fund to be utilized solely for the renovation and replacement of state park facilities.

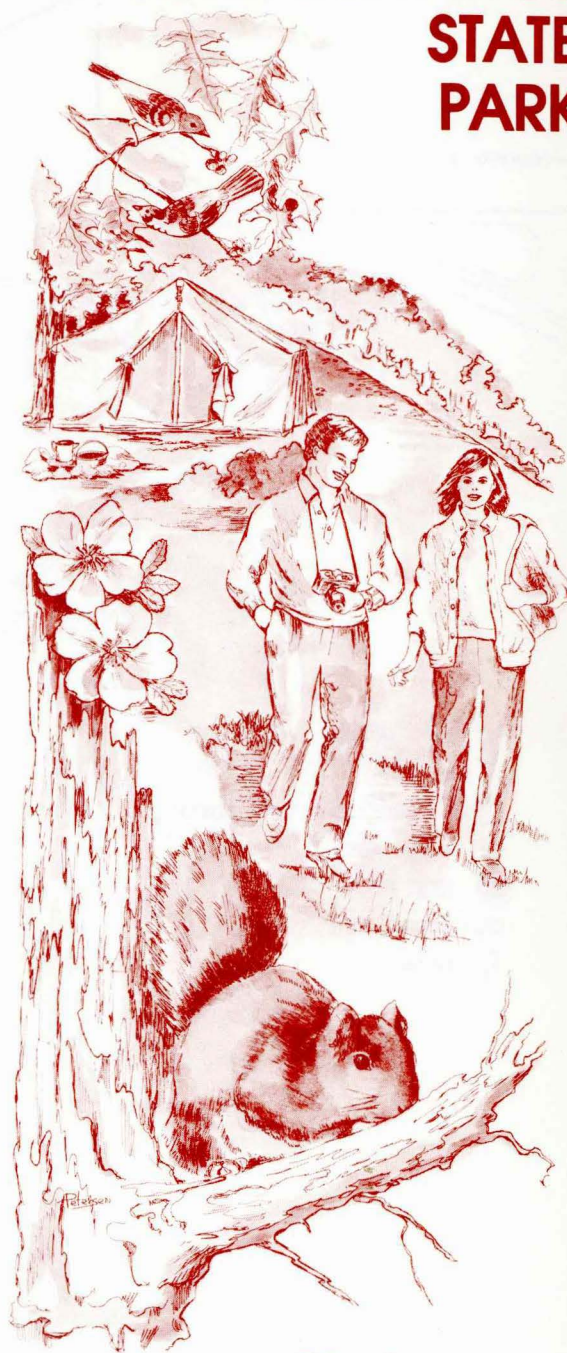
EQUAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

All persons are entitled to full and equal enjoyment of the recreational opportunities, privileges and advantages available in Iowa's great outdoors.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034



FORT DEFIANCE STATE PARK



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