

LACEY - KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park is one of the largest and most picturesque of Iowa state parks and recreation areas. The park's 1,653 acres of hills, bluffs and valleys wind along the Des Moines River in Van Buren County.

During the middle of the last century, the great Mormon trek westward across Iowa occurred. Ely Ford, now the site of a beautiful picnic area, was a river crossing point. It is now a component of the Mormon Pioneer Trail.

Originally, the park was named "Big Bend," but when it was dedicated in 1921, a more colorful name was sought. For the next five years, it was called Keosauqua, an Indian term meaning "the stream bearing a floating mass of snow, slush, or ice." In 1926, the name was changed to Lacey-Keosauqua in honor of Major John Fletcher Lacey who fought in the Civil War, was elected to Iowa House of Representatives in 1868, and by 1888, was a member of Congress. Lacey campaigned for conservation legislation long before Teddy Roosevelt and was instrumental in the establishment of a state park system in Iowa.

INDIAN MOUNDS

A series of 19 mounds overlook the Des Moines River in the northwest section of the park. These were built by an ancient group of Woodland Culture Indians in order to bury their dead. Such mounds are usually found on hilltops overlooking river valleys.

TRAILS

The park's hiking trails wind among the valleys and cliffs along the Des Moines River. On the trails, it is often possible to see many types of wildlife including deer, raccoons, opossums, gray squirrels, red foxes, and numerous species of birdlife. The variety of plants, trees and shrubs, many of them more than 200 years old, make hiking at Lacey an exciting and educational experience.

CAMPING

Lacey-Keosauqua's beautiful, shaded campground features 113 campsites (45 with electrical hook-ups), modern rest rooms, and shower facilities, and a trailer dump station. Camping permits are obtained by self-registration at the campground.

CABINS AND LODGE

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park offers six family cabins. These are available for reservation through the park ranger. Cabins provide all of the comforts of home while bringing visitors a great outdoor experience. All cabins include modern facilities and dishes and cooking utensils.

An enclosed shelter or lodge may also be reserved through the park ranger. The lodge is an excellent place for group events such as wedding receptions and family reunions.

PICNICKING

Lacey-Keosauqua is a wonderful place for a family cook-out. It is one of the prettiest parks where you can get together and enjoy a meal in the outdoors. Three open picnic shelters are available and may be reserved for \$15 through the park ranger.

FISHING, BOATING and SWIMMING

The picturesque 30-acre lake is a favorite spot for swimmers during the summer. There is a bathhouse at the beach and lifeguards are on duty. Boats may be rented and a ramp provides easy access to the lake. Boating is limited to electric motors only. The lake is popular with fishermen as is the scenic Des Moines River which runs the length of the park.

NOSTALGIC SIDE TRIPS

Lacey-Keosauqua is within convenient distance from several picturesque towns and villages on the Des Moines River.


Keosauqua, the county seat of Van Buren County, is located just across the river from the park. Keosauqua was founded in 1839 and is one of the oldest communities in the state.

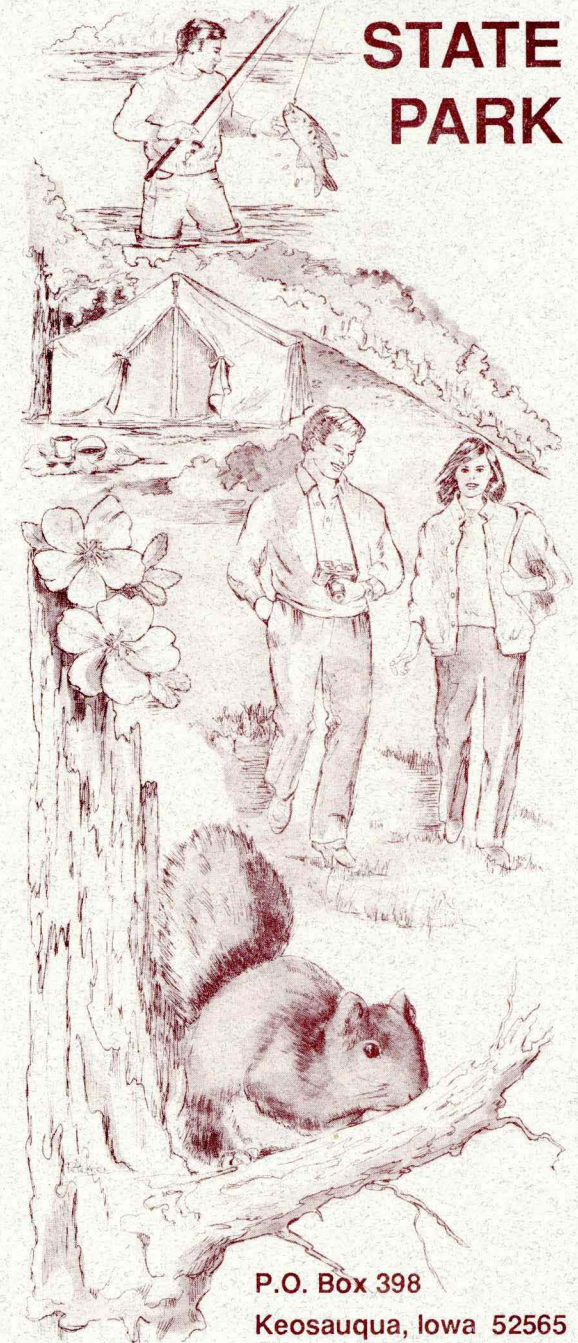
Nearby historic settlements are **Bentonsport** and **Bonaparte**. These charming settlements are a tourist's delight. The lower Des Moines River was once used by steamboats and remnants of old dams and locks, as well as power mills may also be seen.

EQUAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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

The picnic shelter near the east entrance of the park is accessible to the mobility impaired.

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