

Lincoln Trail State Park

By Jason Edwards, Dave Frayser, Joe Murphy

Whether you're looking for history, fishing, or recreation, Lincoln Trail has something to interest



you. Lincoln Trail is located just west of Illinois Route 1, two miles south of Marshall in Clark County.

Today, visitors to the 1,023-acre park can enjoy the sights of an American Beech woods; wildflowers including the unusual sqawaroot and beech drops; and recreational activities, such as boating, camping, fishing, hiking, and winter

sports. There is truly something for everyone.

Long before Abraham Lincoln passed through the area, it was settled by Native Americans. During the 18th century, the main tribes in the area were the Piankeskew and Wea, of a Miami group. In the early 1700's, the Kickapoo moved south from Wisconsin, pushing the Piantushaw and Wea south and east. The Kickapoos remained in control of the land until it was ceded to the United State in two separate treaties.

The western boundary of the first section is known as the Old Indian Boundary line, or the One O'Clock Line. It runs through Clark County, passing through the Lincoln Trail State Recreation Area near the boat dock and crosses the campground. It is called the One O'Clock Line because it is said that if you look south from Pilot Grove in Vermillion County, the boundary runs in the direction of the sun at one O'Clock in the afternoon. The Kickappo ceded the area west of the original boundary in 1819.

Lincoln Trail State Park derived its name from the travels of the Thomas Lincoln family. They passed through the area in route from Indiana to Macon Country in 1830

The state acquired the first 31.04-acres of the park in 1936. Now the park covers 1,023.62-acres. The majority of the land was purchased in 1947 and 1948. The lake was built in 1955 and 1956. The valve of the dam was closed April 15, 1956, and the lake was completely filled in 1958. The lake is an impoundment that covers approximately 146 surface acres with 7.3 miles of shoreline. The maximum depth is 41 feet near the dam and the average is depth 12.4 feet. A 51-foot high and 1,000-foot long dam was placed across Sandy Branch Creek to form the lake.

The park and lake were opened to fishing May 30, 1958. More than 10,000 fish were caught by the initial anglers. The lake is stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, redear, sunfish, and channel catfish. The park was officially dedicated July 13, 1958, with the Governor of Illinois, William G. Stratton, making the dedication address.

When Lincoln Trail was dedicated, the only campsite was Red Oak Shelter. Over the years, Red Oak Shelter was not large enough for campers, so the park dedicated grounds for camping. Lakeside is an older campground from the '60's. Plain View was a new campsite in 1972. Plain View holds 132 campers and has a shower stall and sewage. Plain View and Lakeside offer something for every type of camper. For those who like the beautiful sights and sounds of the great outdoors but prefer the amenities of home, both areas offer electricity, shower, tables, fire blocks, playground equipment, water, toilet facilities and a sanitary dumping station. For those who wish to appreciate nature without the distraction of modern conveniences, Lakeside Campground also includes a camping area for tents.

During 1975, Lincoln Trail started the road project. This project up graded the roads. Also Lincoln Trail has improved its roads in 1997, which has made a great difference.

Over all, Lincoln Trail State Park began as a 31.04- acre land, which has developed into a beautiful 1,023.62-acre park over the years. The great features about the park are the unusual plant life, family picnicking, camping, boating, fishing, hiking, and the full service concession stand.