

= Brown County State Park =

Brown County State Park is located in the United States in the center of the southern half of the state of Indiana . The park is the largest of 24 state parks in Indiana , and occupies 15 @, @ 776 acres (63 @. @ 84 km2) ? making it one of the larger state parks in the United States . It is Indiana 's most visited state park , and has about 1 @. @ 3 million visitors each year . Although Bloomington , Indiana , is the closest city , the park is closer to the small town of Nashville in Brown County . Brown County is named for General Jacob Brown , who fought in the War of 1812 and became Commanding General of the United States Army .

The park opened in 1929 , and was dedicated in 1932 as a memorial to Indiana humorist Frank McKinney " Kin " Hubbard . Although Hubbard lived and worked in Indianapolis , he was a frequent visitor to Nashville and the surrounding woods . The park 's Abe Martin Lodge is named after Hubbard 's fictional backwoodsmen character used to convey Hubbard 's humor and witticisms .

Brown County and its park are known for their scenic views of the hills of southern Indiana . Both are the home of a wide variety of trees that attract visitors each year when the vegetation transforms to its autumn colors . The park also contains many trees that flower in the springtime . Visitors will find a rustic atmosphere , enhanced by an infrastructure that was mostly constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s . In addition to the park 's lodge , cabins can be rented and campsites are available . The park has trails for hiking , biking and horseback riding . It has two lakes for fishing that complement the surrounding forests and provide a water source for the local wildlife . The area 's beauty attracts artists and photographers worldwide .

= = History = =

= = = Brown County = = =

Brown County was created in 1836 from portions of Monroe , Jackson , and Bartholomew counties , and is named after General Jacob Brown , a hero of the War of 1812 . Early settlers tried farming in Brown County 's hilly woodlands , leading them to clear the forests . Beginning in the 1840s and continuing for the rest of the century , most of Brown County 's forests were cleared . At first , the largest trees were cut for lumber used in the construction industry . In later years , smaller trees were cleared for furniture wood , barrels , railroad ties , and firewood . The rugged land eventually became difficult to farm because of poor quality soil . A combination of poor farming practices and erosion caused by deforestation depleted the soil 's nutrients . Many farmers abandoned the area .

= = = Beginning = = =

At least two people played major roles in the creation of Brown County State Park . Richard Lieber , an Indianapolis businessman who became the first director of the Indiana Department of Conservation , visited Brown County in 1910 . Lieber was so impressed with the beauty of the land that he built a cabin near Nashville and suggested that a portion of the county should be set aside for a state park . Lieber eventually became known as " the father of Indiana 's state parks " , and the state opened 10 state parks (including Brown County) during his tenure as director of the Indiana Department of Conservation . Lieber was not the only one from Indianapolis that was impressed with Brown County . In 1923 , the Order of Elks expressed interest in establishing a state park in Brown County .

Lee Bright lived in the small Indiana town of Nashville in Brown County . Bright believed that creation of a state park would restore the economic health of the region through tourism . His idea proved difficult to accomplish , since Indiana law did not allow purchasing land for a state park using state funds . The law did allow funds to be used for a game preserve . By 1926 , Bright , working as the state 's agent , purchased enough land to start a game reserve in Brown County .

=== Game preserve ===

Brown County 's game preserve was created in late 1924 . During November , 1924 , the Indiana Department of Conservation appointed a game warden to manage the preserve . The new manager was a resident of Nashville , and familiar with the area . It was also announced that much of the land would be reforested . A total of 7 @, @ 680 acres (31 @. @ 1 km²) of Brown County land was designated for the propagation of wildlife . Plans were made to surround the reserve with wire fencing , and game wardens patrolled the area . Deer and small game were brought in to propagate . Additional acreage was added in 1927 , increasing the reserve to over 10 @, @ 000 acres (40 km²) . During the same year , an observation tower was constructed on Weed Patch Hill , the highest point in the area . A dam was constructed in 1928 to create an artificial lake that was expected to cover 10 to 15 acres (4 @. @ 0 to 6 @. @ 1 ha) . It was planned to stock the lake with game fish then allow fishing after two or three years . The lake was completed by the spring of 1929 , and plans were announced to build a second (and larger) lake . By January 1929 , the preserve covered about 12 @, @ 000 acres (49 km²) . Funds from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses were used to acquire the additional land .

=== State Park ===

In 1927 , the Indiana state legislature passed a law allowing county commissioners to acquire land for the purpose of establishing a state park , and donate the land to the state conservation department . Brown County State Park was the fourth such park established after this legislation . In 1929 , Brown County commissioners gave the state conservation department 1 @, @ 129 acres (4 @. @ 57 km²) of land adjacent to the Brown County Game Preserve for the creation of a state park . Four parks had been donated using other means before the legislation , making Brown County State Park Indiana 's eighth state park .

In 1933 , eleven Civilian Conservation Corps groups were established for Indiana 's state forests , game preserves , and state parks . Each group had 200 workers involved in the construction of buildings , bridges , trails , roads , and water supplies . One project was a large shelter in the Brown County game preserve . After training , workers from the Corps arrived in Brown County in 1934 . The Corps began constructing much of the park 's extant infrastructure . They worked to prevent erosion by reforestation with walnut , pine , and spruce trees . A second camp for the Civilian Conservation Corps opened in the park in 1938 . The CCC Trail ? the park 's Trail 2 ? is one built by the Corps .

Beginning in 1941 , the Brown County Game Preserve and Brown County State Park were unified as a single state park . Since that time , two portions of the park have been designated as nature preserves ? giving them additional protection from development . Ogle Hollow Nature Preserve was established in 1970 and consists of 41 acres (17 ha) in Ogle Hollow containing the rare yellowwood tree . The second preserve is the 3 @, @ 349 @-@ acre (13 @. @ 55 km²) Ten O 'Clock Line Nature Preserve . This preserve was designated in 2010 , and is Indiana 's largest . It also contains yellowwood trees , and is the home of some of Indiana 's deep forest species , including the red bat , timber rattlesnake , and broad @-@ winged hawk . The term " Ten O 'Clock Line " refers to a treaty with the Miami Indians from the early 1800s .

=== Kin Hubbard ===

Frank McKinney " Kin " Hubbard (1868 ? 1930) was an American humorist @-@ cartoonist whose humor and witticisms were expressed through fictional backwoods characters living in Brown County . His work (usually a cartoon and a sentence or two) appeared every day on the back page of the Indianapolis News , and was syndicated in about 200 newspapers throughout the country . Hubbard was named to the Ohio Journalism Hall of Fame in 1939 , and the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame in 1967 .

In 1932 , Brown County State Park was dedicated in honor of Kin Hubbard . Abe Martin was

Hubbard 's main character , and Brown County State Park 's Abe Martin Lodge is named in his honor . A picture of Hubbard hangs in the lounge of the lodge , and a collection of Hubbard memorabilia is in a room nearby .

= = Description = =

Brown County State Park is the largest of the 24 state parks managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources . It is in the center of Indiana 's southern half , " just minutes " from the town of Nashville , Indiana . The park occupies 15 @, @ 543 acres (6 @, @ 290 ha) in Brown County . It has three entrances , adjacent to state roads 46 and 135 . The northern entrance is close to the Abe Martin Lodge , Saddle Barn , tennis courts and a swimming pool . Large trucks and recreational vehicles must use the western entrance . Campers bringing horses must use the southeast entrance , which leads to a specialized campground with hitching posts known as the Horsemen 's Camp . Interstate 65 's Columbus exit is about 13 mi (21 km) east of the park . Indiana University and the city of Bloomington , Indiana , are less than 20 mi (32 km) away .

Brown County is nationally known for its outdoor scenery and dramatic views from southern Indiana hilltops . Brown County State Park affords a number of vistas that overlook wide swaths of deciduous forest that display a large array of colors in the fall . Peak visitation is in the fall during the leaf @-@ changing season . In spring the dogwood , redbud , and serviceberry trees are in bloom . About 1 @. @ 3 million people come to the park each year , including overseas visitors .

Brown County State Park is sometimes called " the Little Smokies " because of similarities with the Smokey Mountains . Activities available in the park include camping , fishing , biking , hiking , and seasonal horseback riding . Many of these activities are available all year . Overnight visitors may stay in the campgrounds , rental cabins , or the Abe Martin Lodge . The park has a nature center and a nature preserve . Within the park boundaries are two manmade lakes : the 17 @-@ acre (6 @. @ 9 ha) Ogle Lake , and 7 @-@ acre (2 @. @ 8 ha) Strahl Lake . The park contains nine mountain bike trails totaling 25 miles (40 km) . Four of the trails are rated as beginner trails , two are considered intermediate , and two advanced . The last trail is rated for experts and is 4 @. @ 1 miles (6 @. @ 6 km) long . A total of slightly over 9 miles (14 km) of hiking trails range from easy to rugged terrain . The park has over 20 miles (32 km) of roads and 70 miles (110 km) of bridle trails . The third highest point in Indiana is located on Trail 10 near a 100 feet (30 m) high fire tower . This point , known as Weed Patch Hill , has an elevation of 1 @, @ 056 feet (322 m) . When settlers first arrived at this hill , they found only a patch of weeds ? a tornado had destroyed the trees ? leading to the name . Hesitation Point is another vantage point for scenic views .

= = Natural resources = =

= = = Flora = = =

The most important tree in the park is the yellowwood (*Cladrastis lutea*) . This tree typically does not grow further north than central Kentucky , and has been designated as a state threatened species in Indiana . Other trees found in the park include at least four types of oak (black , chestnut , red , and white) and three types of hickory (bitternut , pignut , and shagbark) . The park also contains at least two types of maple trees : black and sugar . Patches of paw paw trees can be found throughout the park , and these trees produce an edible fruit . In areas with good moist soil , the black walnut tree grows , and this tree is an excellent source of wood for lumber or furniture . Among other trees growing in the park are the American beech , basswood , black cherry , black gum , and red elm . Also the sassafras , sycamore , white ash . The park also contains at least eight kinds of ferns and 20 types of wildflowers , including bloodroot and wild geranium .

= = = Fauna = = =

Mammals typically found in Brown County State Park include white @-@ tailed deer , opossum , eastern gray squirrels , and chipmunks . The larger sycamore trees are sometimes the home of raccoons and flying squirrels . Red bats live in the park 's Ten O 'Clock Line nature preserve . Other animals include the American toad , the eastern box turtle , the spotted salamander , and the red @-@ backed salamander . At least two species of snakes live in the park : the timber rattler and the copperhead . The two lakes contain bass and bluegill .

The park has good bird viewing areas along the trails , near the two lakes , and at the Nature Center . The hooded warbler , pileated woodpecker , and ruffed grouse nest in the park . Goldfinches and northern cardinals can be seen at feeders near the Nature Center . The pileated woodpecker , Acadian flycatcher , eastern wood pewee , white @-@ breasted nuthatch , wood thrush , and yellow @-@ billed cuckoo can all be observed in the park 's Ogle Hollow Nature Preserve . Owls and woodpeckers are known to occupy sycamore trees . The cerulean warbler , whippoorwill , and broad @-@ winged hawk all live in the Ten O 'Clock Nature Preserve . Wild turkeys can be seen (and heard) along the park 's Trail 10 , known as the Fire Tower Trail . Other bird species in the park include the blue jay , the crow , the junco , the white @-@ breasted nuthatch , and the robin .

= = = Geology = = =

Glaciers from the most recent ice ages did not reach south far enough to flatten the land in Brown County , though glacier meltwater helped deepen gullies in the region , and made hills steeper . Brown County State Park 's Weed Patch Hill is the highest point in the area , at 1 @, @ 058 feet (322 m) above sea level . The region is part of the Knobstone Escarpment land form , which consists of steep hills and valleys located between northern Brown County and the Ohio River . The rocks in this area contain significant amounts of silica , and were part of a large delta system over 330 million years ago . Brown County 's minerals are part of the Borden Group , and are mostly siltstone . Limestone , dolostone , and chert are the Borden Group 's secondary minerals .

= = = Climate = = =

The Brown County area has a humid subtropical climate , classified as " Cfa " in the Köppen climate classification system . Precipitation is somewhat evenly distributed throughout the year , and temperatures can be relatively high . The record high temperature over the last 99 years for county seat Nashville is 102 ° F (39 ° C) . The record low over the last 99 years is ? 17 ° F (? 27 ° C) . May is the month with the most precipitation , and February has the least . Most of the area 's snowfall occurs in December , January , and February .

= = Recreation and facilities = =

= = = Places to stay = = =

The park ? s Abe Martin Lodge , built in 1932 , has 30 guest rooms , two lobbies , a gift shop , and a full @-@ service restaurant . An annex to the lodge has 54 more rooms . An indoor water park was added recently . Rental cabins are available nearby . Each of 20 two @-@ story family cabins can accommodate up to 8 people , and 56 rustic cabins are available . Campers have the choice of two classes of campgrounds ? all with restrooms and showers . The Class A campgrounds have electrical hook @-@ ups , while the Class B do not . A horseman ? s campground is available with one portion having electrical hook @-@ ups , showers , and toilets ? while the other portion is more primitive .

= = = Activities = = =

Sight seeing , birdwatching , mountain biking , fishing , hiking and horse riding are all popular activities at Brown County State park . The park has over 25 miles (40 km) of mountain bike trails , including trails endorsed by the International Mountain Bicycling Association and Bike Magazine . Four beginner trails are 1 @. @ 2 miles (1 @. @ 9 km) to 3 @. @ 5 miles (5 @. @ 6 km) long . The expert trail is 4 @. @ 1 miles (6 @. @ 6 km) long .

Fishing is available at two lakes to holders of a state fishing license . Bass and bluegill are stocked at Ogle Lake and the smaller Strahl Lake . Rowboats and electric trolling motors are permitted on Ogle Lake to holders of an Indiana Department of Natural Resources lake permit . Boats are not allowed on Strahl Lake . Licenses and permits are available at the park office , and bait at the park 's country store .

The park has 12 hiking trails that total over 18 miles (29 km) . These trails can be used to access places of interest in the park , including the two lakes , the Ogle Hollow Nature Preserve , Hesitation Point , and lookout towers . The CCC Trail is a moderate difficulty 2 @- @ mile (3 @. @ 2 km) trail built by the Civilian Conservation Corps . This trail " crosses over impressive stone bridges , stairways , and retaining walls and passes by the Lower Shelter and the North Lookout Tower , both CCC projects " .

Horseback riding is one of the fastest growing forms of recreation . Brown County State Park has over 20 horse trails , and 11 are wide enough that riders can ride two abreast . These trails range from 0 @. @ 3 miles (0 @. @ 48 km) to nearly 12 miles (19 km) in length . Horseback riders have their own entrance to the park , in the park 's southeast corner , which leads to the horsemen 's campground ? also in the southeast of the park . There are facilities typical of the park 's regular and primitive campgrounds and hitch rails . A maximum of six horses per campsite is allowed , and horse permits are mandatory . On the other side of the park , a saddle barn is open from late March through October . Trail rides with a guide , pony rides , and hayrides are available . The barn is located on the north side of the park , not far from the Abe Martin Lodge .

Winter sports include cross @- @ country skiing , sledding , and ice fishing . Cross @- @ country skiing can be done in open fields within the park , though the park does not maintain any trails specifically for skiing , and does not rent ski equipment . Some hills suitable for sledding are located near the park 's swimming pool . Ice fishing is allowed at both lakes for those with a state fishing license . Roads to the lakes sometimes closed due to ice or snow .

= = = Other facilities = = =

A country store is open during the warm season with food , firewood , souvenirs , and bait for fishing . The nature center has a bird observation window and nature exhibits . The country store and nature center are located in the southern portion of the park . A swimming pool and tennis courts are located on the north side near the Abe Martin Lodge . The Olympic @- @ size swimming pool is open from Memorial Day to no later than Labor Day . The park has at least 10 picnic areas , with tables and grills and some with nearby playgrounds and toilet facilities . Picnic shelters can be reserved for fees that vary by shelter .