

America's State Parks

Arkansas's Devil's Den State Park

Devil's Den State Park is a 2,500-acre Arkansas state park near West Fork. The park was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps beginning in 1933. Devil's Den State Park is in the Lee Creek Valley in the Boston Mountains which are the southwestern part of The Ozarks. The park, with an 8 acres CCC built lake, is open for year-round recreation, including, hiking, mountain bike and equestrian trails. Devil's Den State Park also has several picnic areas, a swimming pool, cabins and camping site ranging from modern to primitive. Fossils of coral and crinoids can be found along the banks and within Lee Creek at Devil's Den State Park.

Devil's Den State Park protects the largest sandstone crevice area in the United States. The valley is littered with numerous sandstone caves, bluffs, ravines, rock shelters and crevices that provided an excellent hiding place for outlaws on the Butterfield Stage Line from 1858 until the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861. With the onset of the war the rocky area was used by bands of Confederate guerillas as a hide out and staging area for conducting raids on the Union Army's supply lines as well as civilian targets. The roads of the Butterfield State Line were also used by regular troops during the Civil War. Confederate and Union forces used the road during the Battle of Prairie Grove and for the Raid on Van Buren. The former town of Anna is contained within the park. It was destroyed by a flood in 1893. All that remains of the town is a cemetery, a well, and some foundations. The remnants of Anna can be seen along the Butterfield Hiking Trail near Junction Camp.

Lee Creek Valley was identified during the Great Depression as a site for a state park. Construction on the park began in 1933. Devil's Den State Park was built by young men working for the Civilian Conservation Corps which was established during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide work for unemployed young men from throughout the United States. The park underwent an extensive renovation in the 1970s when the CCC built structures were refurbished. Devil's Den State Park is recognized as one of the best preserved CCC projects in the United States. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

The park features 17 full-service cabins and 143 camp sites and app. 64 miles of trails that are open to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. Due to the spread of White Nose Syndrome, a fungal infection in bats, the park's caves have been temporarily closed to the public since April 16, 2010 to help slow its spread.

