

America's State Parks

Missouri's Bennett Spring State Park

Bennett Spring State Park is located in Bennett Springs, Missouri, approximately 12 miles west of Lebanon.

In 1837 the James Brice family built a mill at the stream and the spring became known as Brice Spring. The town that built up was known as Brice. The family of Peter Bennett soon settled near the spring and started their own mill. Originally, the families were rivals, but they soon intermarried. Both of these mills were eventually destroyed in a flood.

During the Civil War years, another mill was constructed by Peter Bennett. This Bennett Mill was larger and more successful than the Brice mill. The spring soon took on the Bennett name. Peter died in 1882 and his son William Sherman Bennett took over. The Bennett Mill burned in 1895.

In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) made various improvements to the park. The CCC built the dining lodge, cabins, trails, roads, shelters, gauge station, and the arched stone bridge across the spring branch. The bridge has 3 distinctive sideways "C's" to memorialize the men of the CCC who built it. The CCC also channelized the spring branch and constructed the dam just upstream of the stone bridge to make the spring more habitable to the non-native trout. The dam is used to divert water through the fish hatchery and to maintain a constant water level at Bennett Spring to this day.



The park offers trout fishing for both rainbow trout and brown trout in the natural spring that is the namesake of the park. The fishing area is divided into three zones, each with its own set of regulations. During the regular season, fish may be caught and kept. Catch and release regulations are in effect during the winter months. Daily fishing begins and ends with a whistle or siren. The opening march of the angler can sometimes resemble a Civil War-style battle line as the anglers progress into the water with rod in hand.

There are 12 miles of hiking trails. The park also offers canoeing on the Niangua River, campsites, cabins, a swimming pool, nature center, dining lodge, and park store.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bennett_Spring_State_Park]

