

Iowa State Parks

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In this first effort at permanent expression in symbolic sculpture made from the impulse of the recent war, the Historical Department feels that it has fully embraced its opportunity and has achieved a good result.

IOWA STATE PARKS

No other line of public work in Iowa in the last four years has shown such marvelous results as has that of the acquisition of state parks. It is something for any state, but it is remarkable for so young a state as Iowa, to step out of its ordinary economic and governmental course and create places for amusement, recreation and scientific research. The older states had made but little progress in this direction, when Iowa, with but meager precedent, enthusiastically entered upon the work. Public opinion, the great director of state policies, demanded it.

The state park work is closely associated with the Historical Department whose functions embrace that of conservation of natural as well as historical resources. The fact that parks frequently have memorial and historical qualities, and that they contribute to scientific and aesthetic thought, make the connection natural. The legislative department of our government recognized this connection in making the office of Curator of the Historical Department a member of the Board of Conservation.

There are at present fifteen areas that are or will be known as state parks. The method of acquisition divides them into four classes, namely, those purchased entirely with state funds, those purchased in part with state funds and in part with funds contributed by local citizens, those purchased entirely with funds contributed by local citizens, and those given entirely by single individuals. Besides these, one area belonging to the state was turned over to the Board of Conservation for park purposes.

There are three park areas that have been purchased entirely with state funds: Backbone, Delaware County; Oakland Mills, Henry County; and Morehead Caves, Jackson County.

Backbone State Park was the first area acquired. It consists of about 1300 acres along the Maquoketa River in the northwest township of Delaware County. The land is hilly, some precipi-

tous, and is mostly covered with many varieties of fine timber. The "backbone" is a narrow ridge around which the Maquoketa River forms a loop. The summit is 140 feet above the stream. The rocks rise perpendicularly at the side of the river, in some places for nearly 100 feet. There are good camping opportunities. Improvements have been made in the way of roads and buildings.

Oakland Mills area is four miles southwest of Mount Pleasant on the Skunk River. It consists of seventy-seven acres and is mostly wooded. There are limestone outcroppings from the bluffs and several deep gulches. The place has long been used as picnic and camping grounds. It has been noted for good fishing since settlements began. A considerable fund was pledged to help the state pay for it.

Morehead Caves area is located on a small ravine about a mile from the Maquoketa River and eight miles northwest of the city of Maquoketa. The caves and caverns constitute rare phenomena exhibiting the great erosive and dissolving power of running water. A natural bridge of majestic proportions spans a little stream and great subterranean rooms and caverns are close by. The wild and impressive surroundings are made more beautiful by the luxuriant plants and trees. Some fifteen acres have been acquired and some adjacent lands will likely be secured.

Six park areas have been purchased in part with state funds and in part with funds contributed by local citizens. They are Lacey-Keosauqua, Dolliver Memorial, Ledges, Pilot Knob, Eldora-Steamboat Rock, and Ft. Atkinson.

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park contains about 1400 acres and is on the west and south side of the great oxbow bend of the Des Moines River in Van Buren County. Here the state's largest river has assumed its most majestic proportions, the scenery is picturesque and beautiful, the woods have great varieties of trees, and the animal and bird life is plentiful. The locality is rich in scenery, history, and tradition.

The Dolliver Memorial State Park has 457 acres and is eight miles southeast of Fort Dodge. It includes what has been known locally as "Boneyard Hollow" and "Woodman's Hollow," and is nearly, though not quite, all on the west side of the Des Moines

River. It has good camping facilities, a bathing beach, fine trees and plants, and interesting exposures of geological formations. An appropriate tablet or monument to the memory of the late Senator Dolliver is planned to be placed there.

The Ledges State Park is five miles south of Boone. It contains about 600 acres and is located mainly on the east side of the Des Moines River. The "Ledges," from which the area takes its name, are along Pease Creek, which enters the river from the east. They are massive sandstone cliffs, often overhanging, along the extremely narrow creek valley. The area is beautiful and has long been frequented by botanical and geological students and nature lovers.

Pilot Knob is three miles southeast of Forest City and in the northeast part of Hancock County. There are 235 acres in this tract and it contains what has been locally known as Dead Man's Lake and Pilot Knob. The lake contains about nine acres, has considerable elevation, is of fine clear water and good shores, and nestles among dense woods. Nearly the whole tract is covered with twenty or more varieties of trees. Hazel brush and wild shrubs abound. The "Knob," a glacial relic, rises to about 300 feet above the general level of the surrounding country and presents a view in all directions of from ten to twenty miles.

Eldora-Steamboat Rock area is along the Iowa River between the towns of the above names. It has picturesque scenery, sandstone cliffs some sixty feet high jutting out to the river, and splendid growth of wild plants and timber. The area contains some 200 acres.

The Fort Atkinson area is adjacent to the town of Fort Atkinson, Winneshiek County. The area embraces about five acres and contains the historic old fort built in 1840 and the Mission School buildings.

Two parks have been purchased entirely by money contributed by local citizens and the areas presented to the state. They are at Farmington and Anamosa.

The Farmington State Park is close to the town of Farmington, Van Buren County, embraces about 100 acres, and includes a famous lotus lily pond. It will make, when the roads leading to it are completed, a beautiful and interesting resort.

Anamosa State park is a mile south of Anamosa and is on the southwest side of the Wapsipinicon River. It contains 168 acres and has the shore of a beautiful stream, high and precipitous ledges of rock, canyons, caves, fine trees and plants, and is very attractive. Help from the prisoners in the State Reformatory is being used in constructing roads through the tract.

Three parks have been presented to the state by individuals, Theodore F. Clark Park, Lepley Park, and Roosevelt Park.

Theodore F. Clark Park contains twenty-four acres. It is of the "roadside park" type and is on a main highway on Wolf Creek, four miles northeast of Traer, Tama County. It was given by Mrs. May Clark McCornack and F. A. McCornack, her husband, in honor of her father, Theodore F. Clark, who settled on this identical spot in 1854. It is finely wooded and has long been used as a picnic and camping ground.

Lepley Park is on a main traveled road between Eldora and Marshalltown, two miles north of Union, Hardin County, and is a heavily wooded tract of nine acres near the Iowa River. It is much used as picnic grounds. It is a gift from Mr. Irvin Lepley. His people settled in that neighborhood in the '50's.

Roosevelt Park is near the automobile road, three miles northwest of Greene, in Floyd County. It is on the banks of the Shell Rock River, contains fifteen acres, mostly wooded, was locally known as Round Grove Park, and has long been used as picnic and camping grounds. It is a gift from C. M. Mather.

Gitchie Manito is a tract containing approximately forty acres, situated in the northwest corner of Lyon County, consequently is in the extreme northwest corner of the state. It was purchased some years ago by the Board of Control with the intention of using the granite which is on it for road building material. This plan was abandoned and Sec. 4, Chap. 135, Acts of the Thirtieth General Assembly turned it over to the State Board of Conservation for park and scientific purposes. Sioux quartzite outcrops there. The Big Sioux River bounds the area on the west. The place has great beauty and is of much historic, pre-historic, scientific and fictional interest.

The details of account, that is, the actual acreage, cost per acre, amounts respectively paid upon each area from public

funds and from subscriptions of individuals and associations, the amounts of monies and labor laid out toward roads and other improvements, are in the hands of the Executive Council and not the Board of Conservation. These details, it is assured by the public state accountant, will be available soon, and will be presented in the next number of the ANNALS.

The Backbone, Morehead Caves, Lacey-Keosauqua, Dolliver Memorial and Anamosa Parks each had a custodian on the grounds in the summer season, and some improvements have been made in all these parks, but the policy has been to spend little money at present in improvements, and much in the acquisition of park lands.

Most of these areas are of superior scenic, scientific, recreational, or historic interest. Nearly all of them are located in quiet places of natural beauty. It is planned to keep them as nearly as possible as nature made them. Only two formal dedications have occurred—Backbone and Lacey-Keosauqua. Each was made a notable occasion. It is planned to dedicate some of the other areas soon.

ABSTRACT OF THE MINUTES OF THE STATE BOARD OF CONSERVATION

JULY 28, 1920

Resolutions.—Resolutions were adopted as follows: That the Board recommend to the Executive Council that the Carlisle area be immediately acquired; that the Board recommend to the Executive Council that the Wild Cat Den area in Muscatine County be acquired, and also certain adjoining tracts belonging to Mr. Welsh and Mr. Fitchner, these to augment the gift of fifty-five acres from Clara and Emma Brandt; that the Board ask the Executive Council to purchase or condemn an area of virgin timber on the Little Sioux River near Peterson; that the Board hereby tender its thanks to the ladies of the Lamont Commercial Club, to the Lamont Commercial Club, to Senator B. W. Newberry, to E. W. Williams of the Manchester Commercial Club, and to others associated, for their co-operation in making a success of the opening exercises of the Backbone State Park in Delaware County, May 28, 1920; that the proceedings of the dedication of the Backbone State Park be published as a separate document; that the Board ask the Executive Council and the State Fish and

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