



The trail system at Rock Cut offers opportunities for hiking (40 miles), mountain biking (23 miles), and equestrian (14 miles) and has been completely remarked. Trail users will find updated trail head/information signs at picnic areas and trail access points for trail information and regulations. Only certain trails are designated for mountain biking and equestrian use and are identified by colored trail markers. Blue trails are for mountain biking and hiking, yellow trails are for equestrian and hiking and red trails are restricted to hiking only.

Trails ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Settlement of Winnebago County began after the Black Hawk War. The region that is now Rock Cut State Park was settled partly by Scots around Argyle—named for their Scottish home of Argyllshire—and partly by Canadians, New Yorkers and New Englanders around the town of Harlem—named for New York City's Harlem. The Illinois version of Harlem was moved in 1859 when the Kenosha-Rockford Rail Line was built. The dammed waters of Pierce Lake now cover much of the railroad bed within the park, although portions of the railroad grade are visible along Willow Creek below the spillway. But blasting operations in a rock outcrop that railroad crews conducted during the 1859 construction left lasting impressions here—they cut through rock to provide a suitable roadbed and gave Rock Cut its name.

The Park's Present ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Because water serves as a welcome mat to birds and animals, wildlife watchers to the area won't be disappointed. Birds report good viewing, with waterfowl being abundant. Deer, fox, muskrat, woodchuck and beaver inhabit Rock Cut State Park, as do opossum, raccoon and both gray and fox squirrel. Over 100 types of wildflowers offer a showy display each spring and summer, while the hardwood trees dazzle you with their reds and golds every fall.

By the middle of the 17th century, Miami-speaking tribes of Native Americans entered the region of Rock Cut State Park after the Iroquois drove them from territory on the southern end of Lake Michigan. From about 1655 until 1735, the Rock River was within the range of the Mascouten, who were also pushed westward by the Iroquois. The Winnebago ranged southward from Wisconsin to the Rock River from the 1740s until 1837, while the river's upper portion was on the periphery of the Fox and Sauk territory from about 1765 to 1833. By 1800, the Potawatomi, Ottawa and Chippewa nations had extended their range into the area, but they ceded their land to the United States 32 years later following the Black Hawk War.

The Park's Past ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



Chiseled out of the state's far northern region is Rock Cut State Park in Winnebago County. Nearby are other "rocky" landmarks—the mighty Rock River and the place where wagons once forded it, Rockford. It's an area of rolling plains, interesting history and recreational variety.

Two lakes set off the park's 3,092 acres. Pierce Lake, with 162 acres, is a retreat for people wanting to fish, ice fish or ice skate. A second 56-acre lake, Olson Lake, is especially for swimmers. Rounding out the park's recreational options are camping, biking, hiking, horseback trails, and cross-country skiing. Whatever the season, you can be sure there's quite a bit of activity going on at Rock Cut State Park.

Rock Cut State Park ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

For those who want to include an overnight stay in their visit to Rock Cut, the park offers 215 Class A sites and 60 Class B sites. Open year-round, the campgrounds provide water, electricity, sanitary dump stations, showers, toilets, a boat launch and playground equipment. Only electricity and pit toilets are available in the winter season. A youth group area is available May 1 to Oct. 31 by reservation only.

Camping ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Wide quality seasonal programs. The "summer program" (mountain biking and equestrian) trails are open April 1 – November 30. These regulations for mountain biking and equestrian use will be strictly enforced and violators are subject to fines.

The "winter program" provides for groomed cross-country trails as conditions permit. The groomed trails are best accessed at the Lions Club Picnic Area. As a courtesy, hikers and snow shoers are asked to use other trails that have not been groomed for classical skiing and those groomed for freestyle/skiing.

Rock Cut offers access (at the Pierce Lake spillway) to the Willow Creek Bike Trail and Perryville Path, and Puri Trail (at Puri Crest Picnic area), a paved trail system connecting the local communities of Loves Park and Rockford to Rock Cut State Park.

Equestrian camping is restricted to a site on Hart Road. Groups of more than 25 persons need advance permission from the site superintendent before they can enter the park, and all campers require a permit from park personnel. Alcohol is prohibited in the campground.



Fishing and Boating ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

One of the park's most popular activities is fishing Pierce Lake – named for state Rep. William Pierce of Rockford, who served in the legislature from 1951-1966 and who proposed the first land acquisition for the park in 1955. The lake is stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish, as well as bullhead, northern pike, muskellunge and walleye. There is boat rental, docks and two launching ramps available. Olson Lake also offers excellent fishing. Only carry-on watercraft and electric motors are allowed on Olson Lake.

Swimming ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Swimmers, take note. Although your sport is not allowed in Pierce Lake, Olson Lake is specifically designed for swimming. Located in the eastern part of the park, the lake is open Memorial Day through Labor Day. The beach area features showers and parking. Alcohol is banned throughout the park including at the swim beach and the campgrounds.

Picnicking ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Knowing that a visit to a state park is more fun when there's food to be enjoyed, Rock Cut has picnic areas scattered throughout



- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, Clearinghouse, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271 visit our website at www.dnr.state.il.us.
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other nonmerit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; (217) 785-0067; TTY (217) 782-9175.

State of Illinois
Pat Quinn, Governor

Department of Natural Resources

Rock Cut
STATE PARK

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES

the park. Each is complete with tables, outdoor stoves and toilets. Pick up items you might have forgotten at the concession stand in the boat launch area.

Barrier-Free Facilities ■■■■

Several features make Rock Cut State Park accessible to disabled individuals. Two fishing piers are available, including a covered pier at the Lions Club day-use area. The area, which is totally accessible, features paved walkways, toilets, water and a picnic shelter with electricity. The park's campground area has flush toilets and showers that are barrier free. Handicap parking spaces are located in all the day-use areas.

Winter Sports ■■■■

Take to the trails in the winter. A winding system of cross-country ski trails lets you take in the park's natural beauty. But there's more winter fun—ice fishing is a great Rock Cut pastime.



Enjoy Your visit ■■■■

Please abide by park rules during your visit. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the park. Do not pick any flowers, and keep your pet leashed at all times.

For more information contact Rock Cut State Park, 7318 Harlem Road, Loves Park, IL 61111, phone (815) 885-3311.

Exotic Species ■■■■

Plants and animals not native to Illinois are exotic species. Most of them are harmless to our state; however, some can be very invasive to native plant communities and can overwhelm or wipe out native species. Prevention and control of exotic, invasive species requires tremendous cooperation between managers and all users of parks, natural areas, and privately owned land.

To learn more about exotic and invasive species and how you can help prevent their spread, visit the IDNR Exotic Species Website at: <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/ExoticSpecies/exoticspintro.htm>.

Recreational Trails Program ■■■■

This trail brochure was made possible due to funding provided by the Federal Highway Administration through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Monies are funded through the Federal Motor Fuel Tax and administered through the National Recreational Trails Fund Act. Trail projects are supported by the federal government, which provides up to 80% reimbursement of cost. State funds provide the balance of the funding for the projects. The trails program encourages trails management practices to serve a wide variety of trail users. The program is administered in Illinois by the Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation.



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