Beechwood Nature Preserve - Along the east edge of the park, Trail 8 crosses the border and enters the 89-acre, Beechwood Nature Preserve, a unit of the ACRES Land Trust. A 1.5-mile loop continues over rolling hills of old meadows now sporting thickets of gray dogwoods and remnants of an old apple orchard. From the loop, a short section of the trail continues to the Beechwood parking lot at State Road 127. A boardwalk traverses a lowland swamp, featuring rare yellow birch, red maple, blue beech and skunk cabbage.
AN ICE AGE LEGACY

During an age when the climate was approximately 10 degrees cooler, more snow fell in the winter than melted in the summer. As an accumulation piled up over thousands of years, it formed an ice sheet that flowed from Canada over northern Indiana. That glacier began melting 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. The landscape we enjoy today resulted.

That glacier was the last one of four to cover Indiana and has been named the “Wisconsin.” The Saginaw lobe of this massive, one-mile thick, ice flow was the last to leave a lasting impression on the face of the lands of Pokagon State Park.

While walking on many of the park trails, you will notice piles of rocks, and individual rocks, that seemingly came from nowhere. These are known as glacial erratics. They are made up of the total mass of earth brought down from the north, which is known as glacial debris or glacial till. There are more lakes in Steuben County than in any other county in the state. All are natural and all were formed from the massive earth moving and gouging glaciers. Where sunken blocks of ice broke away as the glaciers melted, alluvial, or sand hole lakes. Lake LINDON on Trail 3 is a perfect example. The variations of plant and animal species, and the topography that they cover, is typical of glaciated regions. For this reason, Pokagon, in many ways, resembles parks you may expect to find farther north. Although relatively small, Pokagon has a tremendous variety of ecotypes, including lakes, marshes, fens, swamps, deciduous woodlands, pine groves, old fields, and meadowlands. Take time to explore and enjoy this ice age legacy.

ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

BIKE TRAIL—Accessible (1.6 miles). Connects campgrounds, Nature Center, saddle barn, Inn and park entrances.

BOAT RENTALS—Available at Inn beach summer months. Limited spring and fall hours. No launching facilities for private boats are provided; however, docking slips are available, first-come/first-served.

CAMPING—Campground equipped with flush toilets, hot water and showers. Occupancy limited to 14 consecutive nights. Each site with table and fire ring. Electricity available. Reservations available through the Central Reservation System.

CONCESSIONS—General store, beach, open seasonally.

FISHING—Bass, bluegill, walleye, crappie, catfish, northern pike, etc. State license required and available at park office.

GROUP CAMP—Capacity 120 in summer, 50 in winter. Reservations available through the Central Reservation System.

HIKING—13.7 miles of trails, easy-to-moderate invite you, year-round.

INN—Inn rooms, Inn cabins and an indoor swimming pool, whirlpool and sauna available. Great setting for diners and banqueters. Rates do not include food. Reservations are available through the Inn reservation system.

INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST SERVICE—Explore the world of nature and the park's natural and cultural history. Piney Woods, wetlands, birding and hiking programs are offered. For more information call: (260) 833-2012.

NATURE CENTER—Exhibits on park’s natural and cultural history. Woodland and auditorium. Open daily most of the year.

PICNIC AREAS—Tables, grills, toilet facilities, playground equipment and SADDLE HORSES—Hayrides available. Two-mile bridle trail plus short pony ride. Inquire at saddle barn.


TOBOGGAN RUN—1,780-foot refrigerated twin track. Operates weekends, from Thanksgiving weekend through February, with extended hours into March.

WINTER SPORTS—Sledding, ice skating, cross-country skiing (rental), camping and ice fishing.

THIS IS YOUR PARK

Visitors shall observe the following rules, which are designed to fulfil the purpose for which state parks were established, namely, to preserve a primitive landscape in its natural condition for the public’s use and enjoyment.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

• Do not injure or damage any structure, rock, tree, flower, bird or wild animal. Do NOT gather limbs, brush or trees (either dead or alive) for firewood because they rebuild the natural humus.

• Any firearm (except lawfully possessed handguns), BB gun, air gun, CO2 gun, bow and arrow, paint gun or spear gun in possession in a state park must be unloaded or un-loaded and stored in a case or locked within a vehicle. It is prohibited for any person to be participating in an activity authorized by written permit.

• Dogs and cats must be attended at all times and kept on a leash not longer than 6 feet.

• Vending or advertising without permission of the Department of Natural Resources is prohibited.

• Parking is permitted only in the campground. Youth groups must be under adult supervision. Each campsite must have one responsible member at least 18 years of age.

• Fires shall be built only in designated places.

• Please comply with the Carry In/Carry Out trash policy in all use-areas. Overnight guests must put waste in receptacles provided for that purpose.

• Motorists shall observe posted speed limits and park only in designated areas.

• Swimming is limited to places and times designated by the Department of Natural Resources.

• Drinking water shall be taken only from pumps, hydrants or four-footed or similar for that purpose. This water is tested regularly for purity.

• Report lost or found articles to the park office.

• All motorized vehicles shall remain on paved roadway. Snowmobiles are prohibited.

• Metal detectors allowed on main beach between Labor Day and Memorial Day with written permission from property manager.

For a complete list of rules and regulations, inquire at park offices.

YOUTH TENT—Youth tent camping under adult supervision. Reservations available through the Central Reservation System.

CENTRAL RESERVATION SYSTEM

Reservations for all types of camping, family cabins, and shelters at state parks, reservoirs and forests can be made online or by calling toll-free.

Online: camp.IN.gov
Call: 1-866-6camplnd
(1-866-622-6746)

POTAWATOMI INN

OPEN ALL YEAR

Rooms, cabins, and conference facilities available. Diners room open to the public. Information toll-free: 1-877-768-2928
Reservations: 1-877-lodges1
(1-877-563-4371)
Online: IndianaTravel.net

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Write: Pokagon State Park
450 Lane 100 Lake James
Angola, IN 46703
Call: (260) 833-2012
Online: dnr.IN.gov

SPECIAL NOTE

Receipts from admission and service charges are used to help defray the operation and maintenance costs of the park. List of fees available in the park office.

The programs, services, facilities, and activities of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are available to everyone. DNR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability if you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information about how to file a complaint, please write to: Department of Natural Resources, Executive Office, 402 W. Washington St., W256, Indianapolis, IN 46204. (317) 232-4020.

Please carry out all trash you produce in order to keep your park clean and beautiful for others to enjoy.

DESCRIPTION OF TRAILS

1. MODERATE (2 miles)—Trail from Inn past Nature Center to Apple Orchard picnic area through hard-wood forest. Crosses road at bridge, continues as the bicycle trail to saddle barn and back to Inn. A good trail for woodland birds and spring flowers.

2. MODERATE (2.2 miles)—Begin on main park road near gateway house, goes through rolling land, past Spring Shelter, through hardwood forest. Terminates at Campground 1.

3. MODERATE (2.2 miles)— Interesting trail leading through Potawatomi Nature Preserve, with varied habitats of marsh land, deep wood forests, pines and sand hills, panoramic view of area from trail overlook at Hell’s Point. Returns to Potawatom Inn.

4. EASY (1.4 mile)— Begins near gateway house (with Trail 2) and extends to Trail 7 through campgrounds near amphitheatre. A variety of habitats is offered in pine trees, hardwood forest and rolling land.

5. EASY (.7 mile)—Begins near Campground 1 and goes past past Group Camp to beach; passes through deep woods; a good trail to observe birds and spring flowers.

6. MODERATE (.7 mile)—Trail through primitive area, including area Bends and begins on Trail 3. A good trail for observing marshland plants and animals.

7. MODERATE (1.8 miles)—BLUEBIRD HILLS TRAIL—The trail starts just below Hell's Point on Trail 3 and makes a large loop before returning to the starting point. This is mostly open, rolling hills. Grasslands support native prairie plants typical of the land before it was farmed. Restored wetlands among the hills provide homes for many species that prefer this habitat.

8. MODERATE (1 mile)—Our newest trail leaves Trail 3 just west of Hell’s Point and heads north, crosses a county road, and traverses open, rolling hills, which are being managed to return to meadowlands. Future plans will connect the trail to the nearby ACRES Land Trust Beechwood Nature Preserve.

9. RUGGED (1.7 miles)—Leaves Trail 3 and goes east through wooded swamps and young forest. Touches the former site of the “Pokagon Motel” on State Road 122 near I-69, passes by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-built stone dams, and returns to Trail 3.

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

On the shores of Lake James and Snow Lake, amid the rolling hills of Indiana’s lake country, Pokagon State Park offers unexcelled opportunities for outdoor recreation during all seasons. In a region where the Potawatomi ruled for many years, the park takes its name “Pokagon” from their last two most notable leaders, Leopold and Simon Pokagon (father and son). By treaty, the Potawatomi transferred to the federal government approximately 1 million acres of land, including the present site of Chicago, at the price of three cents an acre. The lakes form an attractive background for Pokagon, offering excellent fishing, boating and swimming throughout the summer, and spectacular viewing for many winter sports. There are two beaches, 13.7 miles of trails, and ample opportunities to enjoy lake shores, wooded hills, wetlands and open meadows.

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