

INDIANA

# POTATO CREEK STATE PARK



Native Americans once collected plants with potato-like roots on this area's creek banks. The early settlers' English translation for the name those people gave that plant was "wild potato," hence the name "Potato" Creek.

Darcy Worster and fellow conservation club members first proposed a man-made reservoir on Potato Creek in the late 1930s. Their project was halted by World War II. Worster kept that dream alive by sending his hand-crafted insects to state officials to "bug" them about creating a park. His efforts succeeded when the area was designated to become a park in 1969.

Potato Creek State Park, which is 3 miles east of North Liberty on state Road 4, became a reality on June 6, 1977, when the 6-square-mile (3,840-acre) area was formally dedicated. The park's 327-acre Worster Lake is named for Potato Creek's clever early supporter.

In addition to the many recreational facilities that Potato Creek offers, visitors will

find a variety of natural areas. Most were drastically altered by decades of farming and other land uses before the area became a park. In the early 1990s an active resource management program started at Potato Creek. The program's on-going efforts seek to restore and maintain some of the park's natural areas, such as its natural wetlands. The goal is to re-create conditions resembling those of the presentment days of the early 1800s. Several areas are being restored to provide valuable habitat for a variety of plants and wildlife. The wetland types include saturated soil sedge meadows, shallow marshes, swamps and beaver ponds. Today, more than a square mile of the park is covered by wetlands and Worster Lake. These areas abound in wildlife, especially during spring and fall bird migrations. Native prairie also is being returned to the Potato Creek landscape through plantings. The prairie areas will be maintained by periodic controlled burning. These meadows put on a colorful late summer flower and grass display. Other areas of the park are being allowed to grow into hardwood forests. Among the highlights of the forests are the spring wildflower displays and a variety of wildlife, including songbirds, raccoon, fox, coyote and turkey. Swamp Rose Nature Preserve, located in the northeast section, offers a look at the eutrophic process. This means that a lake has slowly, over hundreds of years, become a wetland. A scenic small stream originates in this wetland and flows into Worster Lake. The nature preserve also has several unusual plants and is a favored location for beavers. This blend of wetlands, prairies and forests reflects what was recorded as being here before the first European settlers arrived in the 1830s. Because of the rich variety of natural habitats, Potato Creek was named as an Important Bird Area (IBA) in 2006. This international designation is bestowed on areas critical to birds during some part of their life cycle. Potato Creek's varied natural communities also provide homes for a wide array of other wildlife and plants for today's park visitors and for future generations to enjoy.

## BECOME A PARK VOLUNTEER

If you would like to help support and enhance Potato Creek's facilities and programs, join the Friends of Potato Creek. For more information, see InterpretiveServices.IN.gov.

## THIS IS YOUR PARK

Visitors shall observe the following rules, which are designed to fulfill 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.
- Any firearm (except validly licensed handguns) BB gun, air gun, CO<sub>2</sub> gun, bow and arrow, or spear gun in possession in a state park must be unloaded or un-nocked and stored in a case or locked within a vehicle, except when the owner is participating in an activity authorized by written permit.
- Dogs and cats must be attended at all times and kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Vending or advertising without permission of the Department of Natural Resources is prohibited.
- Camping is permitted only in the campground. No youth groups permitted in the family campground.
- Fires shall be built only in designated places.
- Please comply with the Carry In/Carry Out trash policy in all day-use areas. Overnight guests shall 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 should be taken only from pumps, hydrants or fountains provided 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 road-way. Snowmobiles are prohibited.
- Metal detectors are allowed on main beach between Labor Day and Memorial Day with written permission from the property manager.
- Park is closed from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. No one is allowed in the park, except campers and cabin guests using their sites between these hours.

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

## DESCRIPTION OF TRAILS

1. MODERATE (2.2 miles)—Skirts Worster Lake, passing through old fields and Maple and Oak-Hickory forest. Returns to Nature Center area.
2. RUGGED (2.0 miles)—Accessed either from Trail 1 or Trail 4. Winds through woods, up and down hills, to highest point in park.
3. MODERATE (1 mile)—Travels along ridge overlooking Worster Lake, passing through Beech-Maple forest and down to lake observation deck. Wonderful spring wildflower trail.
4. MODERATE (2.5 miles)—Scenic path along stream through Beech-Maple woods, past the lake and old farm sites.
5. EASY (1 mile)—Rolling trail cuts through old fields. Has small wetland observation deck.
6. EASY (.5 mile)—Short loop passes wetland and woods.

all food and coolers inside cars or campers. Visitors and a danger to themselves. Please lock up who depend on handouts become a nuisance to park wildlife is prohibited. Feeding of all wild animals can result in harm to both animals and people. Animals please let wild animals remain wild. Feeding



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

## PLEASE STAY ON MARKED TRAILS

Developed through a partnership between the Northern Indiana Mountain Bike Association and Potato Creek State Park. Please obey posted signs and ride safely. For increased safety, bikers should ride in the opposite direction. Bikers should always yield to hikers. Helmets recommended.

**MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL** (6.6 miles), BEGINNERS—Developed through a partnership between the Northern Indiana Mountain Bike Association and Potato Creek State Park. Please obey posted signs and ride safely. For increased safety, bikers should ride in the opposite direction. Bikers should always yield to hikers. Helmets recommended.

**BICYCLE TRAIL** (3.3 miles), MODERATE—Trail starts at boat rental and ends near Tulip Poplar shelter. It winds up and down wooded hills, above mint Road along the lake. Cuts through a young woods and rejoins the end of Trail 1.

## ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

**BICYCLING**—There is both a 3.3-mile paved trail with some hilly and curvy stretches and a 6.6-mile beginner-level mountain bike trail. Standard bicycle rentals are available, or visitors may bring their own bicycle. Helmets recommended on mountain bike trail.

**BOATS, CANOES, PADDLEBOATS, KAYAKS & TROLLING MOTORS**—For rental by day or hour. The boat rental is handicapped accessible. Private boats or sailboats may be launched only at the boat launches. Only electric trolling motors, powered by no more than two 12-volt batteries, or hand propulsion, is allowed. A mooring area is available for a nominal fee.

**CAMPING**—Campground is equipped with flush toilets, hot water, showers and electricity. Occupancy is limited to 14 consecutive nights. Sites accommodate six people. No water or sewage hookups. Tent and trailer sites, and a dumping station and water filling station are available. A separate horsemen's campground is available. Reservations are available through the Central Reservation System.

**CAMP STORE**—Open May through October.

**CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING**—Cross-country ski equipment is not provided. There are more than 8 miles of groomed trails when snow-covered. Tubing, sledding and ice fishing are also available.

**FAMILY CABINS**—Open year-round. **No pets allowed.** Cabins accommodate eight people. There are two bedrooms, a bath, kitchen, dining area and screened porch. Cabins are rented Saturday to Saturday, mid-June through mid-August, although two consecutive-night rentals can be made 90 days in advance if available. Friday and Saturday or Saturday and Sunday nights must be rented together the rest of the year. Pots and pans provided. Occupancy limited to 14 consecutive nights. Reservations are available through the Central Reservation System.

**FISHING**—Bass, bluegill, etc. State license required; 14-inch minimum bass limit.

**HORSE TRAILS**—For owners of horses (no rentals available). Trails begin at horsemen's campground. Horses permitted only on bridle trails.

**INTERPRETIVE NATURALIST SERVICE**—Explore the world of natural resources while enjoying interpretive and recreational programs. Full-time naturalist on duty at the Nature Center. Program schedules at InterpretiveServices.IN.gov or (574) 656-8186.

**PICNIC AREAS**—Tables, grills, toilet facilities, playground equipment, playfields, and picnic shelters equipped with electricity. Reservations for all shelters are available through the Central Reservation System.

**SWIMMING**—Free beach, which has a handicapped accessible area. Bathhouse and beach open Saturday before Memorial Day and no later than Labor Day. Lockers available for a 25-cent fee. Conditions may require beach closing before Labor Day. East end of beach is available as a dog beach.

**TELEPHONE**—Public booth in the family campground, general store and office. In emergencies, call 911.

## CENTRAL RESERVATION SYSTEMS

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.

www.camp.IN.gov  
1-866-6campIN  
(1-866-622-6746)



Reservations for the Indiana State Park Inns and Inn-operated cabins can be made online or by calling toll-free.

IndianalInns.com  
1-877-lodges1  
(1-877-563-4371)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Write:** Potato Creek State Park  
25601 State Road 4  
P.O. Box 908  
North Liberty, IN 46554  
**Call:** (574) 656-8186



Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
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, sex, 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 please write to: Department of Natural Resources, Executive Office, 402 W. Washington St., W256, Indianapolis, IN, 46204, (317) 232-4020.

### LOCATION MAP

• Potlato Creek State Park  
• Indianapolis

To South Bend

North Liberty Main St. 4 23 4 31

Gate Entrance



TRAIL	MILEAGE	TRAIL TYPE
1	2.2	Moderate
2	2	Rugged
3	1	Moderate
4	2.5	Moderate
5	1	EASY
6	.5	EASY
B	.5	EASY
1	3.35	Bridle Trail
2	1.5	Bridle Trail
3	2.5	Bridle Trail
Bicycle	3.3	Moderate
Mt. Bike	6.6	Beginners
CT	2.8	Beginners
PL	.9	Easy

LEGEND	
VT	Vault Toilet
Nature	Nature Preserve
T	Telephone
MR	Modern Restroom
Peppermint Loop	Peppermint Loop
CT	Connectors
PL	Peppermint Loop



North Liberty 3 miles

# POTATO CREEK STATE PARK

25601 State Road 4 • P.O. 908 • North Liberty, Indiana 46554  
(574) 656-8186 3,840 acres Established 1969

**WORSTER LAKE**

Trails: Bicycle Trail, Mt. Bike Trail, Peppermint Hill, Slidding Hill, Vargo Hill, Bridle Trails, Horsemen's Day Use Parking, etc.

Facilities: Family Campground, Cabins, Nature Center, Park Office, etc.

Other: Dam, Potlato Creek, Summers Pond, etc.

To Main Gate

To Horse Trails

To South Bend

To Main Gate

U.S. 31 - 4 miles

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