



Favorite Hikes in State Parks and Reservoirs

Check out an “insider’s view” of some of our hiking trails from the DNR staff who work at these properties.

Brookville/Whitewater Complex (Link to stateparks.in.gov/2962.htm)

I enjoy the Memorial Loop at our complex. It is a nice trail that both adults and children enjoy. One of starts to this trail is at the Naturalist Cabin. It takes you down by the lake and then loops back around to the Cabin. It usually takes us about 2 hours to hike and there is a bridge over a stream where you can stop and explore the creek bed. It is always a fun time. – Tracy Havens & Jim Trumbull, Interpretive Naturalists

Clifty Falls State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2985.htm)

Clifty Falls' State Park's Trail #5, "Brough's Trace", is steeped in Hoosier history and geologic splendor. In any season, especially fall and winter, it will give your hiking boots a true workout as you feast on the best of Indiana's waterfall and limestone cliff country while exploring a fascinating chapter in Indiana railroading. An interpretive brochure is available on request. – Dick Davis, Interpretive Naturalist

Fort Harrison State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2982.htm)

My favorite trail in our park is and has always been Fall Creek Trail. In the spring there are always beautiful flowers, in the fall - amazing foliage. The creek and woods are always teeming with wildlife. Just past the lookout platforms, you have a small hill to challenge you which takes you to the top of Harrison Trace Trail. My border collie, Lucy, is very fond of the Fall Creek Trail, as well. She appreciates the softer dirt trail on the pads of her feet and the ability to stop along the way and get drinks out of the fresh running water in the safe areas along the edges when it is flowing clean and clear after spring rains. We have seen many deer together on our walks, and she enjoys meeting the occasional passing hiker or dog sharing the trail. – Carolyn Keller, Office Manager

Hardy Lake (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2958.htm)

My favorite trail at Hardy Lake is the Cemetery Loop Trail because of its local history and impressive mature trees. It is an outstanding example of eastern deciduous forest with mature trees dominated by hickory and oak. The highlight of this trail is the McClain pioneer cemetery, demonstrating it once was a farmstead many years ago. –Steve Knowles, Property Manager

I enjoy hiking Hardy Lake's Cemetery Trail to the Island Trail in mid-summer. Hiking these trails provides the opportunity to see a variety of plants. It is amazing how much the species of trees and plants change as you travel out onto the "Island". – Leslie Grow, Interpretive Naturalist

Harmonie State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2981.htm)

My favorite hike is on Trail 5 around the lake below the cabins. It runs along the top of a forested ridge of beech and maple trees and ferns. Dropping down toward the lake, the path is lined with horsetails and water loving plants. The turtles sun on the logs and the kingfishers and woodpeckers fly about. It is an easy walking path with several bridges made of recycled materials. -Jim Gray, Property Manager

Any time of year is great for hiking Trail 2, which is a hilly creekside trail. Lots of rare plants thrive on the hillsides and there's always fish in the creek. There is easy access to the creek to cool your heels in the summer. We call this the “air conditioned trail” in the summer! As you descend one



of the giant hills from either end, the air gets noticeable cooler. Too bad you have to go back up. This trail is 1.5 miles and used to be county roads. There is still some gravel in places, and some really cool bridges. One concrete bridge has a USGS benchmark on it; I forget how low we really are. There are some giant cottonwood trees along the creek that always impress me. There's also a little access road to the river that makes it accessible from the campground. It is a nice hike to watch the sunset on the Wabash. You'll pass by Maude's Barn, leftover from settled days and in the dark it's quite spooky! Once I heard a loud slam after I had passed and practically ran the rest of the trail back to the campground. Haunted? Maybe. A really cool trail any time of the year? Definitely. - Amelia Wildeman, Interpretive Naturalist

Indiana Dunes State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2980.htm)

My favorite hike is Trail 8 at Indiana Dunes State Park. Though it is a relatively short & linear trail (1.5 miles), it is very strenuous due to the height of the 3 major dunes that it traverses. The loose sand surface adds to the challenge as well, but the scenic views of the landscape and Lake Michigan that you “earn” while hiking Trail 8 make the effort totally worthwhile! – Brandt Baughman, Property Manager

My favorite hikes is Trail 9 along the ridge to the Beach House Blowout it is just as breathtaking looking east above tree canopy and great marsh as it is looking west over the lake September is the best when colors start. This has been voted Indiana’s greatest trail hike according to USA Today! – Doug Stukey, Assistant Manager

The 200+ stair climb down from Mt Tom along Trail 4 into the interdunal cove near the lake is always a fascinating exposure to the grandeur of the dunes. – Brad Bumgardner, Interpretive Naturalist

McCormick’s Creek State Park (Link to <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2978.htm>)

I love to hike Trail 7 in the fall. You go from canyon rim to river bottom and back. There’s nothing like the autumn colors you experience as you seemingly walk among the tree tops! – Sam Arthur, Interpretive Naturalist

Mounds State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2977.htm)

My favorite hike at Mounds would be our Trail 5 perimeter hike because you get to see all of the different habitats represented within the park and you also get to see the historical features like the Great Mound, too. – Steve Thompson, Interpretive Naturalist

O’Bannon Woods State Park

My favorite trail is the Adventure Hiking Trail (AHT). Being on the AHT reminds me of being out west, especially in the fall and winter. It has great views, the ability to see long distances in the woods, and no bugs then - especially ticks! Any hiker who wants to enjoy the backcountry experience should visit this trail. – Stanley Baelz, Assistant Manager

Potato Creek State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2972.htm)

My favorite trail at Potato Creek State Park is Trail 3 in the spring time. This 1 mile woodland trail offers the greatest variety of spring wildflowers. It also has great observation pier on the lake where basking turtles, frogs and a variety of other wildlife can be observed. – Tim Cordell, Interpretive Naturalist



Salamonie Lake (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2952.htm)

One of the best hikes is completed in winter, with enough snow for cross-country skiing or just a nice winter stroll. Start at the entrance to the Salamonie River State Forest and follow the Blue Trail north of the entrance road. The trail leads along the edge of a large ravine and brings you to a scenic overlook at a pine plantation overlooking the Salamonie River Gorge. Across the river you see rock cliffs with frozen waterfalls formed from leaking bedrock. At the base of the overlook are the remains of an old abandoned mill. Continue east along the bluff with the pine plantation on your right and the river gorge on the left, then descend to the river level to see what animals are using the river in winter. Continue hiking east back up to the bluff to a walnut plantation established in the 1960's to study the walnut tree genetics of some of the most impressive, straightest walnut trees you'll find anywhere. Turn south on the Red Trail, take a left at the "T", a right at the next fork in the trail and you will end up connecting to Fire Lane #2. Follow Fire Lane #2 south, cross the Forest Rd. onto Fire Lane #1, turn right at the first opportunity, cross a white pine plantation then go right again at the next fork in the trail to end up across the road from where you began your trek. Along the way you will have seen what the CCC workers envisioned in the 1930's as a riverside forest created when overworked land was reclaimed using modern forest practices. You will have also seen one of the most scenic, seldom visited river gorges in NE Indiana. Total length is perhaps 2 miles. Or... maybe it's just a nice cross-country skiing trip made more impressive by the passage of time.-Dennis White, Property Manager

I enjoy the Tree Trail in the fall. It's only a mile, gentle hills and has great scenery. - Daneen Grove, Office Assistant.

The Marsh Trail is my favorite in the spring and fall because of the different birds seen. - Karla Borrer, Office Manager

I like the Tree Trail in the spring and fall. You can see different habitats, spring wildflowers, migrating songbirds, and it has lots of shade! It is gorgeous during the fall season. Lynnanne Fager, Interpretive Naturalist

I like to spend time on the Salamonie Horse Trail in spring because of all the flowering trees. - Laura Whiteleather, Interpretive Naturalist

Any trail and any time of year is nice at Salamonie River State Forest. The Kin-ti-on-ki Trail at Salamonie Lake has huge massive trees and great points to look out over the reservoir. - Christine Storey, Grounds Crew Leader

Shades State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2970.htm)

My favorite is Trail 1. After descending many stairs into the Devil's Punchbowl, the trail follows a canyon bottom streambed surrounded by beautiful sandstone formations, and winds up at the unique Silver Cascade Falls. – Barbara Tibbets, Interpretive Naturalist

Summit Lake State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2967.htm)

I love walking trail 1's wooded section at least once a season. It is so different every time you go. In the spring, there are several different species of wildflowers, including drooping trillium. In the summer, the songbirds find safe haven in the shade of the trees. Indigo bunting can be seen and heard in abundance. The fall offers up some beautiful color and different birds. The yellows of the maple trees create such a beautiful change to the sunlight as it filters through. In winter, the barrenness of the trees allows the light to shine through to the forest floor. You can see the

wetlands at the back of the trail and the bright reds of the northern cardinals as they forage for seed. It's just a beautiful walk. – Amber Hook, Interpretive Naturalist

Turkey Run State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2964.htm)

I really enjoy trail #2. Since it not located in the Rocky Hollow Nature Preserve, it is often overlooked by our guests. Even during our peak visitation, this trail can allow an individual to feel somewhat secluded. If I'm looking for an escape and an experience rich in natural diversity I will often hike this trail. – Chris Newcomb, Assistant Manager

My favorite is Trail 2. This very rugged trek takes hikers just under cliff edges, through beautiful sandstone formations, behind a thin waterfall, past thick coal seams and past old-growth trees. – Barbara Tibbets, Interpretive Naturalist

Versailles State Park (Link to stateparks.IN.gov/2963.htm)

My favorite hike is the Creek Side Trail. It runs parallel with Laughery Creek for a mile or so before turning into the woods. I usually see lots of wildlife on this hike. We have a pair of nesting eagles that frequent the creek so you can watch them fish and fly back and forth to their nest. I expect it to be quite a breath taking hike in the fall where the water and the woods meet. – Brad Walker, Assistant Manager

Looking for more information or hiking ideas? Visit www.stateparks.IN.gov.

