

Welcome to Crowley's Ridge State Park

Rising in some places two hundred feet above the delta region of northeastern Arkansas is a narrow strip of gently rolling hills known as Crowley's Ridge. Two hundred and ten miles in length and situated between Cape Girardeau, Missouri and Helena, Arkansas, this unique geological feature is one of the most beautiful and fascinating areas within the United States.

The ridge was formed when two ancient river systems, the Mississippi and Ohio, cut vast trenches across the plains of eastern Arkansas. Crowley's Ridge was once a giant sand and gravel island left between these two rivers. Through time, wind blown dust, called loess, built up on the area left behind, in some areas forming a cap of fine, sandy soil sixty feet deep.

Crowley's Ridge State Park occupies the former homestead of influential pioneer Benjamin Crowley and the ridge bears his name. A large monument in Shiloh Cemetery, the oldest cemetery in Greene County, marks his grave. The cemetery is located in the park just east of the CCC Pavilion.

Belle Hodges Wall, Secretary of the Paragould Chamber of Commerce, and W.R. Heagler, a civil engineer, persuaded the National Park Service to select the badly eroded Crowley homestead for a park site in 1933. The Civilian Conservation Corps remained here from 1933 to 1938 and provided funding and manpower to build the park. The men planted trees, built trails and Lake Ponder. Mr. Heagler later became the park's first superintendent.

Among some of the projects undertaken by the CCC was the construction of trails. They were built to blend in with the surrounding terrain creating the appearance of natural woodlands paths. Years later, two other government programs somewhat similar to the CCC were used to assist with trail construction and maintenance. The first was the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) in the late 70's, and the second was Americorps whose members worked on the trail system in 1996.

We hope you take the time to enjoy the history and beauty found on Crowley's Ridge State Park's trails!

