

SELF GUIDED TOUR of HISTORIC MARION COUNTY PARK & LAKE

Marion County Park & Lake is the result of two FDR New Deal programs that were born during the 1930s depression. The Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration's goals were to put men to work and conserve our natural resources. In 1934 when Marion County was designated a drought area, voters passed a bond issue for \$15,000 to buy land for a lake project. County Engineer James Meisner, site designer; Lt. Robert Horsley, commanding officer of CCC Black Veteran Co. #4755 and Supt. Edward C. McBurney, Soil Conservation Service engineer of the dam, were responsible for its completion in three years. The area is a tribute to those who constructed the dam, sandboxes, skating rink, skeet and trap shoot, stone structures, ball field, swimming area, parapets, entrance gate, arched bridges, checkers, tennis and croquet courts. The Park and Lake continues to provide great pleasure for the public as it exhibits the history of an era.

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places - 2002
Marker funded by the Edward C. McBurney Family - 2006

Note: Initially all of the settings included at least one oven, an incinerator, and table. Some of them had more. As you take the tour you will see that many are missing. However, the ones that exist have been repaired or in the process of being repaired.

① The tour starts at the Civilian Conservation Corps Worker Statue south of the intersection of Upland Rd. and Lakeshore Dr. There is a green marker with a brief history of the lake and a plaque on the statue's base that honors all of the CCC men. Continue on the gravel road where you will pass the trap and skeet shoot grounds.

They are no longer used, but the high and low houses, concession stand, a dugout for shooting clay pigeons and a toilet still remain. Near the shelter house there are horseshoes and a tennis court. As you leave this setting you will see one of the two stone arch bridges. The other is under water in the next cove. Turn left on Lakeshore Drive and turn left onto the next gravel road.

② This setting has a cement roque court, a game similar to croquet. The remains of the steel wickets are still visible. A pair of tables were to have been enclosed in a shelter. The foundation is evident. The stone was ready for the construction of the toilet, but with the onset of WW II it was built with cement blocks.

The next gravel road is a picnic area with RV hookups.

③ Continuing on Lakeshore Drive you will see the swimming area, office and lake hall on your left. Continue past Office Drive.

④ Turn left through the stone main gate. Most of the area to the left is the site of the original CCC camp barracks, dining hall, showers, and water tower. The small stone building was built by industrious CCC workers for the purpose of providing a camp laundry and dry cleaning business. It is presently being used as a museum for lake history. As you go across the dam note the parapets and stone pillars which are an example of the workers' mark of individuality.

⑤ You will come to the spillway at the end of the dam. You may want to pull off here and walk to the right to view the stonework.

Continue on Lakeshore Drive where the next two roads have no stone structures, but are good fishing spots.

⑥ The following road has two settings. Staying to the right you will pass a toilet, where there is a setting with a sandbox and a stone bench. Veering left on the road there will be stone guard posts. The next setting has all the structures plus an outdoor checkerboard. The road will lead you back to Lakeshore. Along this area a 9 hole golf course was constructed.

⑦ The next turn will be where there is a toilet. Stay on the road that takes you near the shore. Here you will see the only remaining stone boat dock. Go to the picnic area that contains an incinerator, sandbox, and a stone viewing bench. Then back to Lakeshore.

You will travel a very short distance passing a small setting before turning left on Lakeshore.

⑧ As you follow Lakeshore you will discover a very nice setting of a shelter house, croquet court and a skating rink. The rink was filled in to be used for square dancing...later a basketball court.

⑨ Soon you pass another roque court, and notice that all of the units are present.

⑩ Look ahead to the right as you pass Rock Road and there you will find on the hill a complete setting which also includes a sandbox. Notice the worker's original touch of placing a star on the oven.

⑪ The next gravel road setting has two areas, one is the largest which includes 5 tables, a stone bench, sandbox, a shuffleboard court and a ball diamond on the right used by the CCC and local teams. Have a seat on the bench, there is a great view of the dam.

Proceed to the cement slab. This is where spring water feeds the lake along with run off.

⑫ As you continue back to the statue you will see other settings and an old stone farm house on the right that was built before the lake existed.

⑬ At the bottom of the hill turn left onto the gravel road. You will see two settings, a stone bench and a sandbox.

Proceed back to the statue which completes your tour.