

LOUISIANA PURCHASE



Louisiana Purchase Historic State Park, a National Historic Landmark, preserves the initial point from which land surveys of most of the Louisiana Purchase Territory were made. This 37.5-acre park also protects a headwater swamp - a vanishing natural environment once common in the mid-South. This State Natural Area is at the corner of Lee, Monroe, and Phillips Counties, 22 miles south of Brinkley off U.S. Highway 49, then east on Arkansas Highway 362 just two miles to the park.

A 950-foot barrier-free boardwalk, with wayside exhibits, provides access to the granite monument marking the initial point of the survey of what became 13 states.

With Hernando de Soto's expedition in 1541, Spain became the first European power to send explorers into the vast territory west of the Mississippi River. The Spanish came as treasure seekers rather than colonizers.

In 1682, La Salle explored the Mississippi from French Canada and 'discovered' the mouth of the Mississippi at the Gulf of Mexico. En route, at the mouth of the Arkansas River, he claimed all the lands drained by the Mississippi in the name of King Louis, XIV, of France, naming the region Louisiana. The French controlled this territory until 1762 when the land was returned to Spain in exchange for their assistance against England during the French and Indian War.

In 1800, Spain's King Charles IV

returned the territory to France under pressure from Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1803, for \$15,000,000, Napoleon sold the entire Louisiana Territory to the United States. The Louisiana Purchase added 830,000 square miles to the United States, at a cost of less than 3¢ an acre!

President Thomas Jefferson was very interested in this new land and sent several expeditions into the territory, including Hunter and Dunbar and Lewis and Clark. These expeditions collected specimens and recorded their observations. The results of their

findings stimulated interest in the region, its resources and its wildlife.

The movement of settlers west of the Mississippi River increased after the War of 1812 and an official land survey was begun in 1815 to facilitate distribution of the land to war veterans. Prospect K. Robbins and Joseph C. Brown were commissioned by the United States to begin this survey by establishing a point from which other surveys would originate.

For more than 100 years, this site went unnoticed until discovered by Tom Jacks and Eldridge P.



Douglass as they resurveyed the Phillips and Lee County lines in 1921. The two surveyors recognized the pair of large trees marked as 'witness trees' by Robbins and Brown in 1815 to initiate the survey of the Louisiana Purchase Territory.

The significance of this find was recognized by the L'Anguille Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution of Marianna, Arkansas. On October 27, 1926, the DAR dedicated the monument you see in the swamp in commemoration of the United States' acquisition of the Louisiana Territory. The Arkansas General Assembly passed legislation in 1961 designating the area a state park, however, no funds were provided for acquisition or development.

In 1977, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission recognized the area's natural value, added it to the Registry of Arkansas Natural Areas and provided funds to purchase the land. Arkansas State Parks, in turn, granted the Natural Heritage Commission an easement that provided additional legal protection for the natural and historic site.

Today a barrier-free boardwalk meanders through the upland swamp to the granite marker. Along the way, wayside exhibits provide information about this unique habitat and the history of this National Historic Landmark.

Please follow these regulations so others may enjoy the park as much as you.

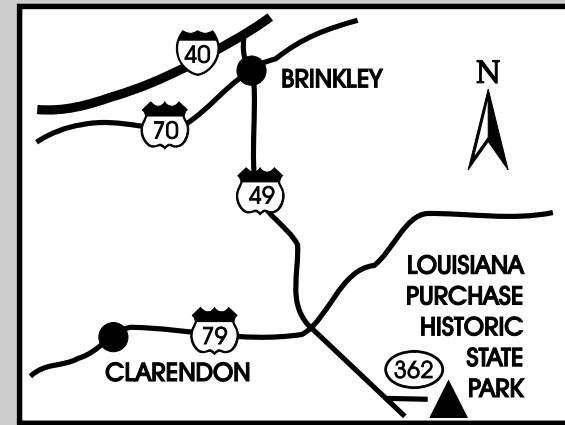
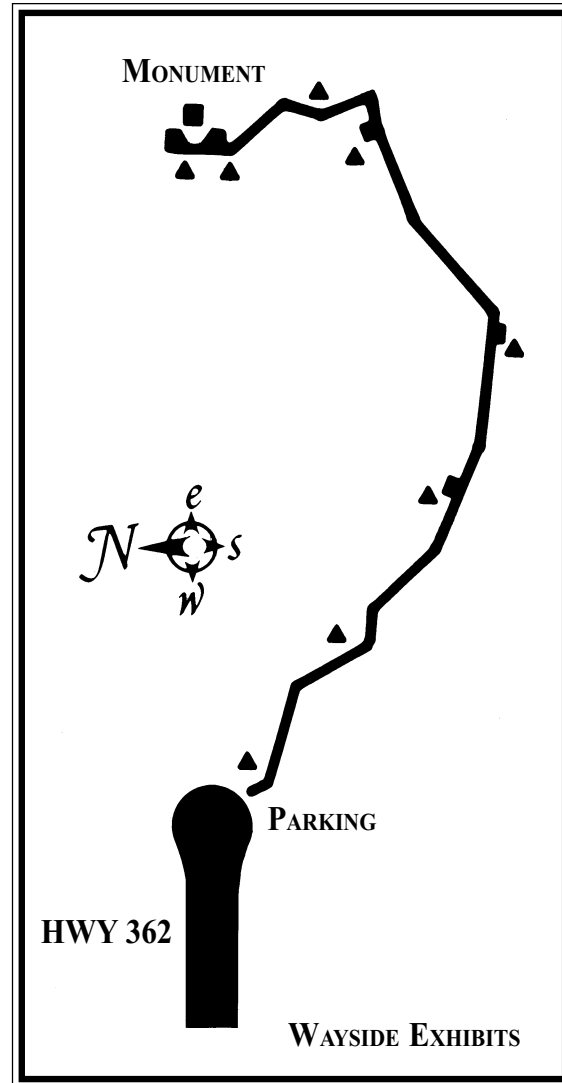
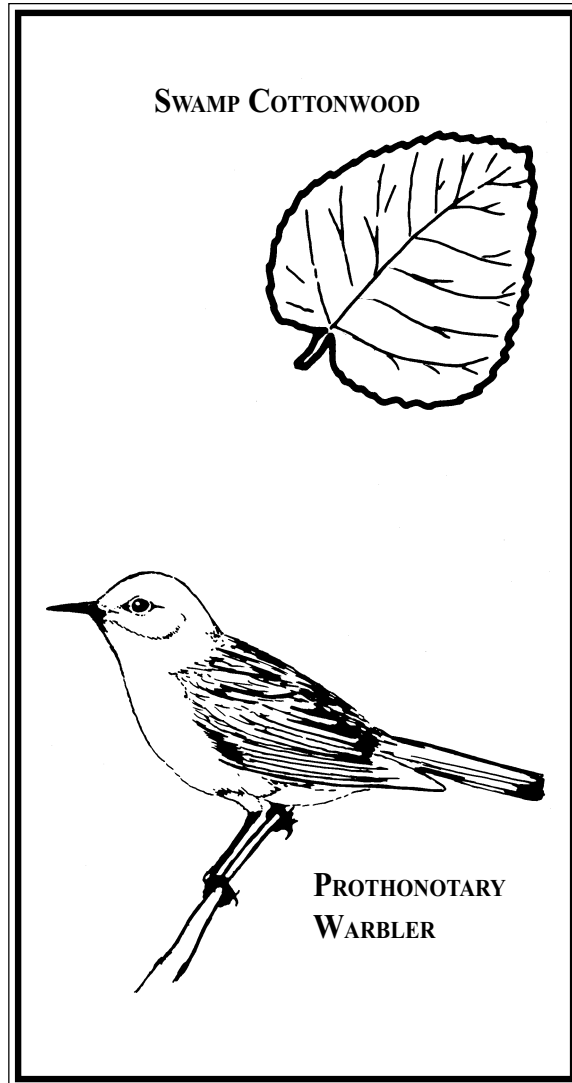
- ◆ Stay on the boardwalk.
- ◆ It is unlawful to collect, deface or destroy any plants, wildlife, or public property.
- ◆ Cans, bottles, or littering are not permitted on the boardwalk.
- ◆ Horses, motorcycles, and bicycles are not allowed.



Along the boardwalk you will see a variety of animal and plant life. The bright yellow and gray prothonotary warbler is likely to be the most visible bird. Others you might see or hear are: pileated woodpecker, green heron, and wood duck. Swamp cottonwood is found at several points along the boardwalk; it is rarely found elsewhere in Arkansas. Two of the most common trees, indicators of a true swamp, are bald cypress and water tupelo. Several species of reptiles can sometimes be spotted from the boardwalk and the rare bird-voiced treefrog might be heard from high in the treetops.

A headwater swamp seldom floods deeply, yet rarely dries up. Because of these conditions, unusual plant and animal populations have developed. This habitat was once common in eastern Arkansas before the days of intensive land reclamation when swamps were drained and cleared.

Such swamps have become rare, making it important to preserve this small remnant of an ecological system for us and our children, and for the plants and animals that live only here.



LOCATION

From I-40 at Brinkley, take Highway 49 south about 21 miles to Arkansas 362, go east 2 miles to the park.

For a self-guided interpretive brochure of the park or further information on this or other fine state parks in Arkansas, contact:

Arkansas State Parks
 One Capitol Mall, 4A-900
 Little Rock, AR 72201
 Telephone: (501) 682-1191
www.ArkansasStateParks.com



For information on Arkansas's natural areas, contact:

Natural Heritage Commission
 1500 Tower Bldg.
 323 Center St.
 Little Rock, AR 72201
 Telephone: (501) 324-9150



NOTICE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.



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Arkansas
 Department of Parks & Tourism