

MAMMOTH SPRING STATE PARK

THE SPRING

Mammoth Spring State Park is situated in the rock-and-forest-covered Ozark Mountains of north central Arkansas. It bears the name of the world-famous natural spring which originates within the park's boundaries. Mammoth Spring flows at an average rate of 9.78 million gallons per hour with a constant water temperature of 58° Fahrenheit.

Local folklore includes the tale of an Indian chief whose son died while searching for water during a drought. While digging his son's grave, a giant stream of water gushed forth. The chief believed this spring would flow forever because his son had died searching for water.

Actually, the main source for the spring's water comes from rainfall over the high plains of southern Missouri. The water seeps into the underground water table and flows along a vast system of interconnected cavities. Eventually, it converges into a main channel and emerges as Mammoth Spring.

Part of this underground "river" system can be seen in one of Missouri's state parks, Grand Gulf - only 9 miles northwest of Mammoth Spring. This collapsed cave has left a spectacular, steep-walled, 130-foot chasm. The surviving cavern roof forms a natural bridge 250 feet long. During wet weather, a creek flows down the chasm and through the cave. Dye tests have proven that this water drains into the underground river and emerges at Mammoth Spring.

The actual spring cannot be seen at Mammoth Spring because it emerges more than 80 feet below the water level of the spring pool. This water forms the scenic Spring River, one of Arkansas' most popular trout rivers. In addition to the rainbow trout found in its upper stretches and the walleye and bass in its lower reaches, the Spring River is rated one of the state's best float streams. White-water shoals and rushing falls challenge the canoeist from its origins to Williford 31 miles away. The constant water flow from the spring makes it a good float stream year-round.

History ♦ Early nineteenth century settlers in the Mammoth Spring area formed a village known as "Head of the River." The town prospered due to an early grist mill powered by the spring's water. In 1886, the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railroad built lines into the area and constructed one of its first

train depots in the town, now called Mammoth Spring. In 1901, the "Frisco Railroad" acquired the line. With the coming of the railroad and the addition of the dam by the Mammoth Spring Milling Company (wheat mill) in the 1880's, the town flourished. The Arkansas-Missouri Power Company bought rights to the dam in 1925 and constructed a hydroelectric plant which provided electricity to the area until 1972. In 1957, legislation established Mammoth Spring State Park.

Facilities ♦ The Mammoth Spring Tourist Information Center features exhibits, brochures, rest rooms and gifts. Here you can reserve a pavilion and learn of the programs and activities taking place in the park. This is a good location to begin the walking trail to the 1886 Depot.

Though railroad passenger service is no longer offered to Mammoth Spring, the depot still stands. Restored in 1999, it houses exhibits of train memorabilia including a Frisco caboose and historical objects from the area. Remnants of the mill and hydroelectric plant still exist near the Spring Lake as reminders of the early days at Mammoth Spring.

Huge oak trees shade the picnic area, playground, and rest rooms which overlook the Spring Lake. A covered pavilion may be reserved (fee) for reunions and group outings. The pavilion must be reserved at the Tourist Information Center in advance. A walking trail with interpretive signs meanders around the Spring Lake and across the dam. A baseball field is also available. (Pedal boat rentals April 1-Oct. 31.)

AREA ATTRACTIONS

One of the most scenic sections of Arkansas surrounds Mammoth Spring State Park. Along the Spring River and its tributaries, resorts and communities offer a variety of excellent facilities. A leisurely drive along paved rural highways will take you past free-flowing streams and towering bluffs to Ozark towns where you can browse for gifts of the unique arts and crafts made in this area. The Federal Fish Hatchery, adjacent to the park, may be toured. Its aquarium offers a close look at native fish. Overnight lodging and camping are not provided at the park; however, motels and campgrounds are nearby, plus restaurants, groceries, and other conveniences. Canoe and boat rental, shuttle service, and fishing supplies are available along the Spring River.

LOCATION

The park is located on the eastern edge of the city of Mammoth Spring off U.S. Hwy. 63, just 16 miles north of Hardy, Arkansas, and 2 miles south of Thayer, Missouri.

For further information on park hours or fees, contact:

Mammoth Spring State Park
P.O. Box 36
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554
Telephone: (870) 625-7364
e-mail: mammothspring@arkansas.com

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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For further information on Arkansas' other fine state parks, contact:

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One Capitol Mall, 4A-900
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