

OLD DAVIDSONVILLE STATE PARK

Among the stately oak trees lining the banks of the Black River and the lovely surrounding woodlands, visitors will discover Old Davidsonville State Park. Located in the northeastern foothills of the Ozark Mountains in Randolph County, Old Davidsonville sits near the confluence of the Black River and the Eleven Point and Spring Rivers.

HISTORY

Old Davidsonville State Park preserves the site of historic Davidsonville, a small town established in 1815 as the seat of Lawrence County which comprised roughly the northern third of Arkansas at that time. Commonly known as the location of Arkansas's first courthouse, post office and land office, Davidsonville flourished through both trade and travel along the Black River and the Old Military Road from St. Louis to Texas. Around 1829, the town began to decline quickly when the county seat was relocated and as more favorable trade routes were established which bypassed its location. Little is known of Davidsonville's history after 1829, other than continued activity on the river. Today there are few remains to be seen above the ground.

The Old Davidsonville townsite and surrounding lands were designated as a state park in 1957 to preserve the historical remnants and natural environment of the area.

In order to learn more about the town's past, the *Arkansas Archeological Survey and the A.A. Society*, in cooperation with Arkansas State Parks, conducted test excavations in the summers of 1979 and 1980. A surveyor's plat (map) of the original town (housed in the archives at Powhatan Courthouse State Park along with other primary source material) was used in locating the remains of homes and businesses at the site. The archeological investigations recovered pieces of plates and cups, crumbled bricks and mortar, plus trash pits, old tools and personal items such as buttons and combs. These material remains, along with available documentary sources such as deeds, birth and death certificates, marriage records, and newspaper articles, are continually being used to compile a picture of life at Davidsonville in the early 19th century.

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Programs ♦ A park interpreter provides programs year-round. Depending upon the season, include

guided history and nature hikes, living history, slide shows, demonstrations, special events, and weekend evening programs. School, scout and other organized groups are encouraged to request special programs year-round. Children 7-12 should inquire about becoming junior naturalists.

Exhibits ♦ A permanent exhibit was installed in the Visitor Center in 1990. The exhibit presents the story of Davidsonville and displays a representative sampling of actual artifacts found during the archeological excavations.

More recently, wayside exhibits were installed along the barrier-free 1/2 mile Historic Townsite Trail in Old Davidsonville. These signs point out known locations of businesses and residences and provide interpretive information about the historic town. A brochure entitled Davidsonville Discovered will help you learn more about this historic town and let you take home a bit of Arkansas history.

Trails ♦ Trappers Lake Trail (1 mile), Easy to Moderate: Meanders around the 12-acre lake for beautiful sights year-round. Black River Trail (1.5 miles), Moderate: This delightful trail lets one leisurely walk through the park while enjoying nature and seeing history. Historic Townsite Trail (1/2 mile), Paved, Barrier-Free: See exhibits above. Scott Cemetery Trail (1/2 mile) historic walk to post-Civil War cemetery

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Camping ♦ Campers with self-contained RV units have a choice of 24 campsites with water and electrical hookups. Tent campers delight in the quiet solitude provided by the "tent only" camp area (25 sites; no hookups). A modern bathhouse and sanitary dump station are located in the campground area.

Fishing and Boating ♦ The Black River and nearby Spring and Eleven Point Rivers are noted for a variety of fighting fish. A free boat launch ramp is available for visitors with their own boats. Visitors are welcome to explore the many shoals and eddies along these beautiful rivers.

Additionally, an earthen dam forms a 12-acre fishing lake. Visitors may rent fishing boats (no motors) or pedal boats (seasonal) at the Visitor Center. A barrier-free fishing pier is located on the lake.

(NOTE: There is no launch ramp on the lake.)

Canoe Rental Service ♦ Canoes with life jackets and paddles may be rented at the Visitor Center for floating on the Black River. (Canoe rental fees include put-in and haul-back service). Please call

before coming, to check on river conditions and availability of rentals (24-hour reservation required).

Picnicking ♦ One of the largest and most popular picnic spots in the area, visitors to Davidsonville enjoy spreading their picnic fare under the shade of the oaks along the lake. An enclosed pavilion can be reserved for a nominal fee for group outings or family get-togethers (deposit required). A playground is nearby.

Visitor Center ♦ In addition to the exhibits, the Visitor Center offers snacks, postcards, t-shirts, other state park souvenirs and camper registration.

NOTE: Campers **must** register at the Visitor Center **before** occupying a campsite. All sites are reservable and may be reserved up to one year in advance. Please call to check availability. No persons shall excavate or search for artifacts or other material on state park property without written permission of the Director of State Parks.

LOCATION

From Pochontas travel 2 miles west on U.S. Highway 62 then south on State Hwy. 166 and go 9 miles to the park.

From U.S. Highway 63 at Black Rock, take State Hwy. 361. Travel 5 miles after crossing the bridge to the park.

For further information on park fees, services or reservations, contact:

Old Davidsonville State Park

**7953 Hwy. 166 South
Pochontas, AR 72455**

Telephone: (870) 892-4708

Fax: (870) 892-0480

e-mail: olddavidsonville@arkansas.com

IN CASE OF IN PARK EMERGENCY

(870) 892-7650 (870) 892-5377

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

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



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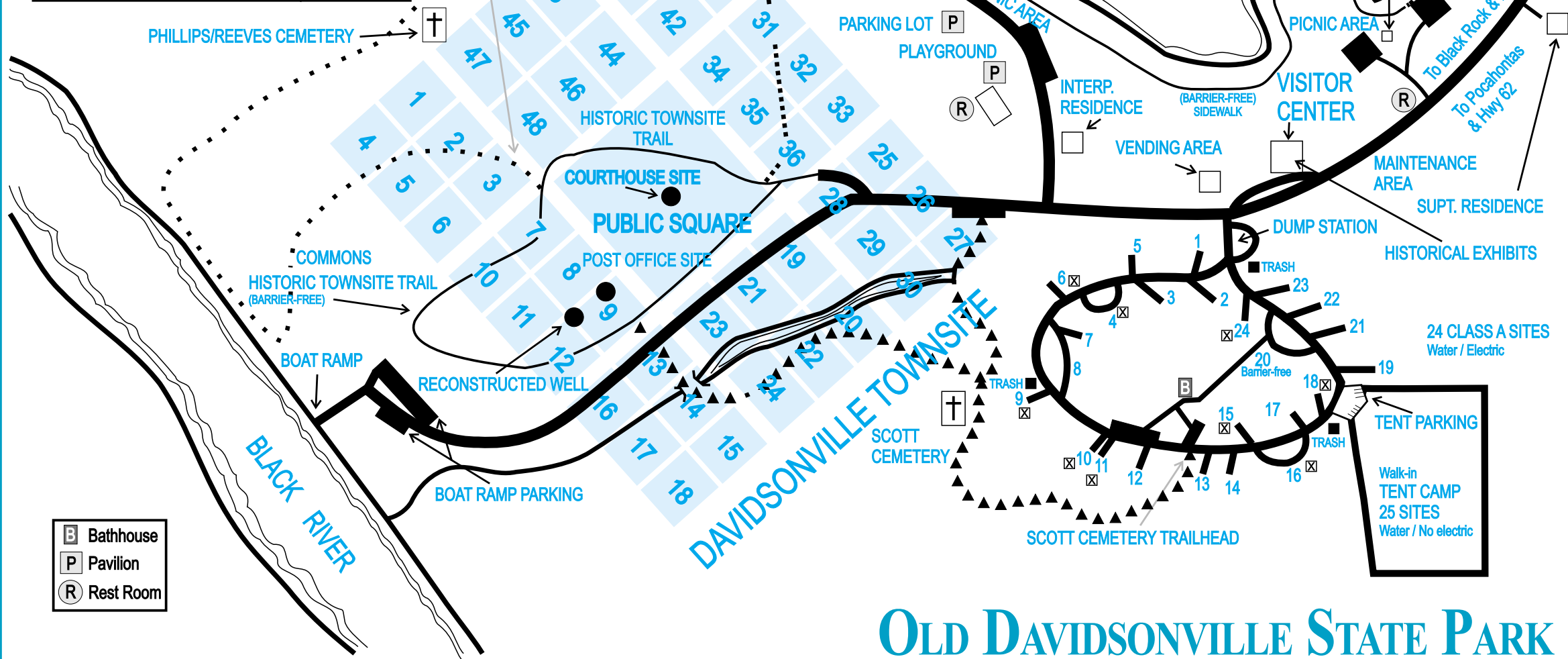
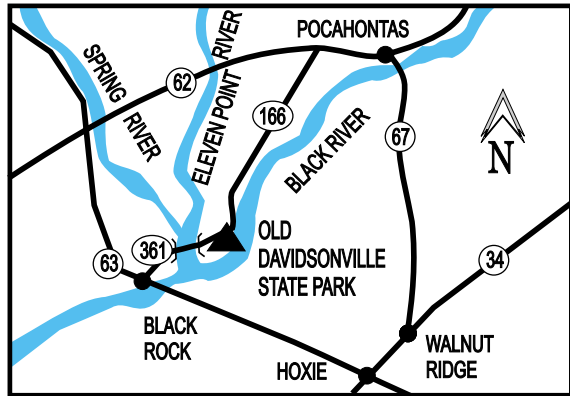
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ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & TOURISM



EXPLORE THE BEAUTY & HISTORY OF ARKANSAS!



- B** Bathhouse
- P** Pavilion
- R** Rest Room

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