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Eagle Creek - State Recreation Area

[East-Central Region](#)

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In east central Illinois--just minutes from Springfield, Decatur, Champaign, Effingham and surrounding communities--the Eagle Creek/Wolf Creek sites, facing each other across the central portion of Lake Shelbyville, provide the perfect setting for outdoor recreation, natural relaxation, and luxurious accommodations for a day, a weekend, or even longer.

Four miles southeast of Findlay, the sites encompass 11,100-acres of water, 250 miles of shoreline and large tracts of carefully maintained indigenous woodland ideal for camping, hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, fishing, water skiing, pontoon boating, windsurfing or just plain bobbing and drifting on the glittering expanse of the lake itself.

In addition to the small, friendly wooded campgrounds and the action on the lake, large herds of deer frequent these areas and are always an exciting and inspiring sight.

Portions of the park have been cleared of physical barriers and are accessible to disabled visitors.

History

Like many other such areas, the Eagle Creek/Wolf Creek sites are perfect examples of the potential benefits of natural resource management. As a means of flood control, water supply and downstream water quality control, the Flood Control Act of 1958 authorized the Shelbyville Reservoir Project, which involved construction of a dam and creation of a lake. These practical necessities, however, would also allow for the actual conservation of fish and wildlife and the development of areas for exciting and varied recreational opportunities.

It was, of course, a monumental undertaking. Before actual work on the dam at Shelbyville could begin, several old mines in the area had to be completely filled in, cemeteries in the path of the planned lake had to be relocated, two gas and oil pipelines and roads rerouted, the old Shelby Power Plant demolished and land cleared and leveled on the west side of the channel which hugs the bluff to the east

of the river bottom. Construction of this \$56 million project began in May of 1963.

The dam itself is an earthen embankment towering 110 feet above the original stream bed. It's 3,025 feet long with a reinforced concrete, gate-controlled spillway to manipulate the water level and manage the 25,300 acres of its flood control pool.

Most of this work was done by the [United States Army Corps of Engineers](#), and the land is now managed by the State of Illinois on a long-term lease from the federal government which began in 1968. By 1972, the area was open to the public providing primitive camping facilities. In the years since then, the State has purchased additional surrounding lands and made extensive improvements in campground, boat launches, day-use areas and hiking trails that make this a beautiful, well-tended and well-managed natural retreat.

The Resort

For those who prefer more comfortable accommodations, there is the [Eagle Creek Resort and Conference Center](#). There are 138 luxurious guest rooms including 10 executive suites with fireplaces. Rooms are furnished with country furniture and charming accents and each has a patio where guests can enjoy views of the countryside and lake area. An indoor swimming pool, whirlpool, saunas and exercise room are available for year round activity.

Fine dining is available in the Wildflowers Dining Room and the Fox's Den Lounge and Grill offers a more casual dining atmosphere. The cocktail lounge is a convenient place to meet friends, catch up on the day's news, or plan the evening's activities.



A special feature of the Clarion Inn at Eagle Creek is the detached Eagle's Nest Conference Retreat. The retreat contains a large conference/lounge area with a fireplace, eight sleeping rooms, a full-service kitchen and wet bar. The Eagle's Nest conference retreat overlooks Lake Shelbyville, offering serene surroundings for a meeting or conference as well as full resort services.

Reservations for lodging can be made with the lodge manager by calling 1-800-876-3245.

Picnicking

The Eagle Creek State Recreation Area, a 2,200-acre site on the west side of Lake Shelbyville, has several fully developed picnic areas--complete with grills, tables, water and sanitary facilities--scattered conveniently throughout the park for the casual day visitor.

Camping

There are 35 Class A [Reservable](#) sites with electricity, showers, water hydrants, fire blocks and picnic tables. Class B/S, and Class D sites are available but not reservable. The Organized Group Camp area is reservable.



Boating and Fishing

From the four-lane launching ramp (adjacent to a 175-car parking lot), you can set out for a variety of water sports or lazy days of angling. In addition, there are two

marinas on the lake providing a full range of boating and fishing supplies.

The miles of flooded brush, timber and rock rip-rap shorelines . . . the many points with submerged ridges . . . the hundreds of tributary streams emptying into Lake Shelbyville . . . provide prime and productive fishing areas, teeming with black and white crappie, largemouth bass, walleye, channel and flathead catfish, bluegill, muskie, bullhead, carp and sunfish.

Hiking

Three marked nature trails are available for tranquil and refreshing sojourns in the forest, as well as a 12-mile backpack trail for the more adventurous hiker and a three-mile cross-country ski trail for invigorating wintertime activity.

Hunting

In addition to designated areas of Eagle Creek itself, hunting is available in the 785-acre Eagle Creek Wildlife Area just to the west. Squirrel, rabbit and quail (shotguns only are allowed) or you can really test your skill stalking deer (bow and arrow only are allowed). A state hunting license is required as well as a seasonal hunting permit which is available for free from the park office. [Hunter Fact Sheet](#)

The Department of Natural Resources also manages the Shelbyville State Fish and Wildlife Area --the 3,000-acre Kaskaskia Unit near Allenville, and the 3,000-acre West Okaw Unit near Bethany. Both are within 10 miles of the park and provide additional hunting opportunities.

Please check with park staff for specific information regarding species, shooting times and dates.

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. Please call ahead to the park office before you make your trip.
- We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs' Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2Connect.
- Telecommunication Device for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Natural Resources Information **(217) 782-9175 for TDD only** Relay Number **800-526-0844**.