

# **Auto – Walking Tour of Beavers Bend State Park's Historic Structures**

**A guide to some of Beavers Bend State Park's  
distinctive and important historic structures.**



## Introduction

President Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" program in 1933 gave meaningful work to millions of unemployed Americans. Through the New Deal, roads, bridges and dams were built; forests and shelter-belts were planted; and city, state and national park facilities were constructed. The New Deal provided the impetus for the development of Oklahoma's first state parks. Beavers Bend State Park has the distinction of being one of those parks that was built during the New Deal era of the 1930's.

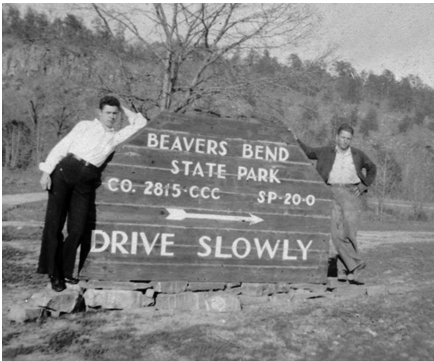
One of the most important programs within Roosevelt's New Deal was the Civilian Conservation Corps. The chief purposes of the CCC were to conserve the nation's natural resources and to provide jobs and job training for unemployed youth.

Through the combined talents and hard work of National Park Service architects, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees, and U.S. Army camp supervisors, new parks were built throughout America.



Seizing on this historic opportunity, the citizens of Idabel and Broken Bow donated the money needed to purchase

1,200 acres of land from the Dierks Co. (also known as Choctaw Lumber Company) for the development of a new state park. In 1935, this land was deeded to the State of Oklahoma for the construction of Beavers Bend State Park. Park construction began in August, 1935 as over 200



enrollees came to CCC Camp No. 2815. At this CCC camp the enrollees were unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 35. Each enrollee received a monthly wage of \$30, of which \$25 was sent home to help their family.



Beavers Bend, as well as other park facilities of this region, were designed by Herbert Maier and his team of architects, engineers and landscape designers. Based on his design work in the 1920's at Yellowstone, Grand Canyon and



Yosemite National Parks, Maier was highly acclaimed for his “rustic” park structures. Maier’s buildings were made of native stone and large timbers. They were designed so as to blend into the landscape.

L. to R. Dr. Bumpus, Kenneth Charley and Herbert Maier at Norris Museum Construction within Yellowstone National Park, 1929. Courtesy of the National Parks Service.

### **Description of the Auto and Walking Tour**

This tour highlights some of Beavers Bend’s historic CCC structures.

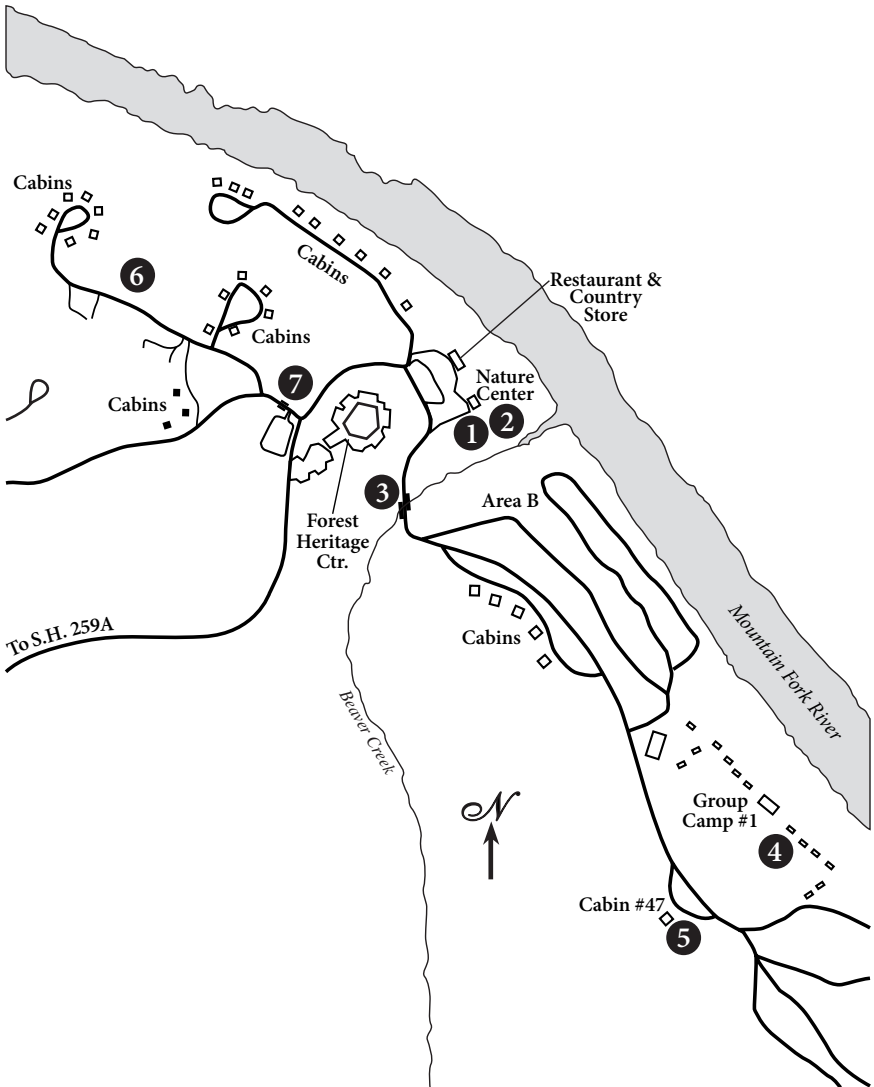
Those facilities that are easily viewed from a car or that have a hard-surfaced walkway are listed in this pamphlet as (Easy View).

Before walking up to cabins, picnic pavilions and group camp facilities, please check with the park office to

determine if these facilities are already being used by other park guests. If they are rented, please do not walk near to the buildings.

**For Your Safety**

Please be careful as you stop your vehicle and walk to each viewing station. Park your vehicle off of the roadway. Always be alert to traffic and never let children walk unattended. Always keep children at your side.



## Station No. 1 Park Nature Center

This building originally served as a bathhouse for those who swam in the cool water of the Mountain Fork River. In the 1930's, long before Broken Bow Lake was built, the CCC's constructed a small



dam across the river. During times of normal river flow, this dam created a shallow pool of water. On hot summer days, this bathhouse was the busiest spot in the park.



In designing Oklahoma's CCC state park facilities, the National Park Service architects used the native materials that were found at each park location. Unlike other Oklahoma parks where

native rock of construction quality is plentiful, the native stone of the Beavers Bend area does not lend itself to large-stone construction. Instead, National Park Service architects designed buildings that used the native material that was abundant, large trees. The CCC structures at Beavers Bend were designed to take advantage of the natural beauty of large, rough-hewn, logs. This bathhouse is one of Oklahoma's most impressive CCC structures.

After Broken Bow Lake was constructed In the 1960's, swimming in the Mountain Fork River below the dam became a dangerous activity. Because the river is used to



generate hydro-electric power, the river's current becomes too strong, and the water too cold, for swimming. The bathhouse initially was converted into the state park office. In the late 1970's it became the park nature center. Just as in the 1930's, this historic building continues to be the hub and heart of Beavers Bend State Park. (Easy View)

## **Station No. 2** **Rockwork at the** **Nature Center**

The slate walkways, sandstone steps and retaining walls at the nature center area reflect the skill and masonry talents of the CCC workers. Visually, this stonework anchors the building into the site. (Easy View)



## **Station No. 3 Bridge Over Beaver Creek**

On leaving the nature center parking lot, cross the bridge to reach the south area of the park. The stone buttresses at each end of this small bridge were built by the CCC. The original CCC bridge, which used 12" and 18" diameter logs, has been replaced with reinforced concrete and asphalt. The log holes of the original bridge are still visible.



## **Station No. 4** **Group Camp #1**

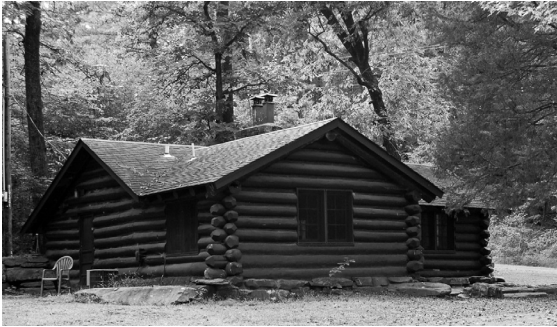
This group camp is on the site of the original CCC camp; however, none of these existing buildings were part of the CCC camp.

In the 1930's, the entrance to this CCC camp featured a log

gateway. Like the other parts of camp #2815, the timber gateway is now just a memory. (Easy View)



### **Station No. 5 Cabin # 47**

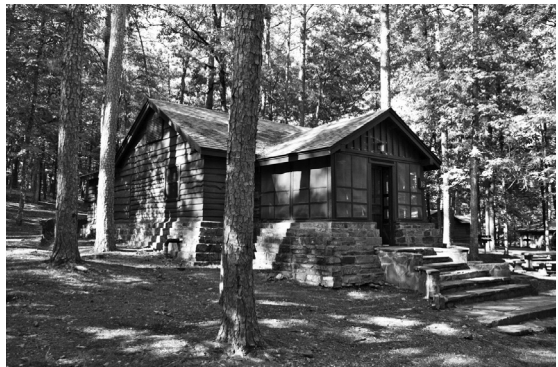


This cabin was built by the CCC and, while the CCC camp was in operation, it served as the residence for the camp's caretaker. Now a rental cabin, this structure serves as

an excellent example of CCC craftsmanship. (Easy View)

### **Station No. 6 Cabin Area**

Cabins #1 thru #13, #16 and #17 were all built by the CCC. The interior of each cabin has been restored, but the structures are true to their original "rustic" architectural design. (Easy View)



### **Station No. 7 CCC Drainage Culvert**

Below the Forest Heritage Center, at the juncture of the park's entrance roadways, there is a CCC-constructed sandstone culvert underneath the road.



**Interested in the Restoration and Preservation  
of this Park's Historic Structures?**

**Contact Oklahoma State Parks at  
(405) 230-8300**

**to find out ways that you can help to preserve  
these irreplaceable structures.**