

Auto-Walking Tour of Roman Nose State Park's Historic Structures

**A guide to some of Roman Nose State Park's
distinctive and irreplaceable historic structures.**



OKLAHOMA
STATE PARKS

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. Roman Nose 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 for New Deal projects, the citizens of Watonga passed a bond issue so that Roman Nose State Park, along with a city park, post office and National Guard armory could all be built. Park development began in 1935. Like most CCC camps, Camp #2819 consisted of about 200 unmarried, men between the ages of 18 and 25. Each enrollee received a monthly wage of \$30, of which \$25 was sent home to help their family.

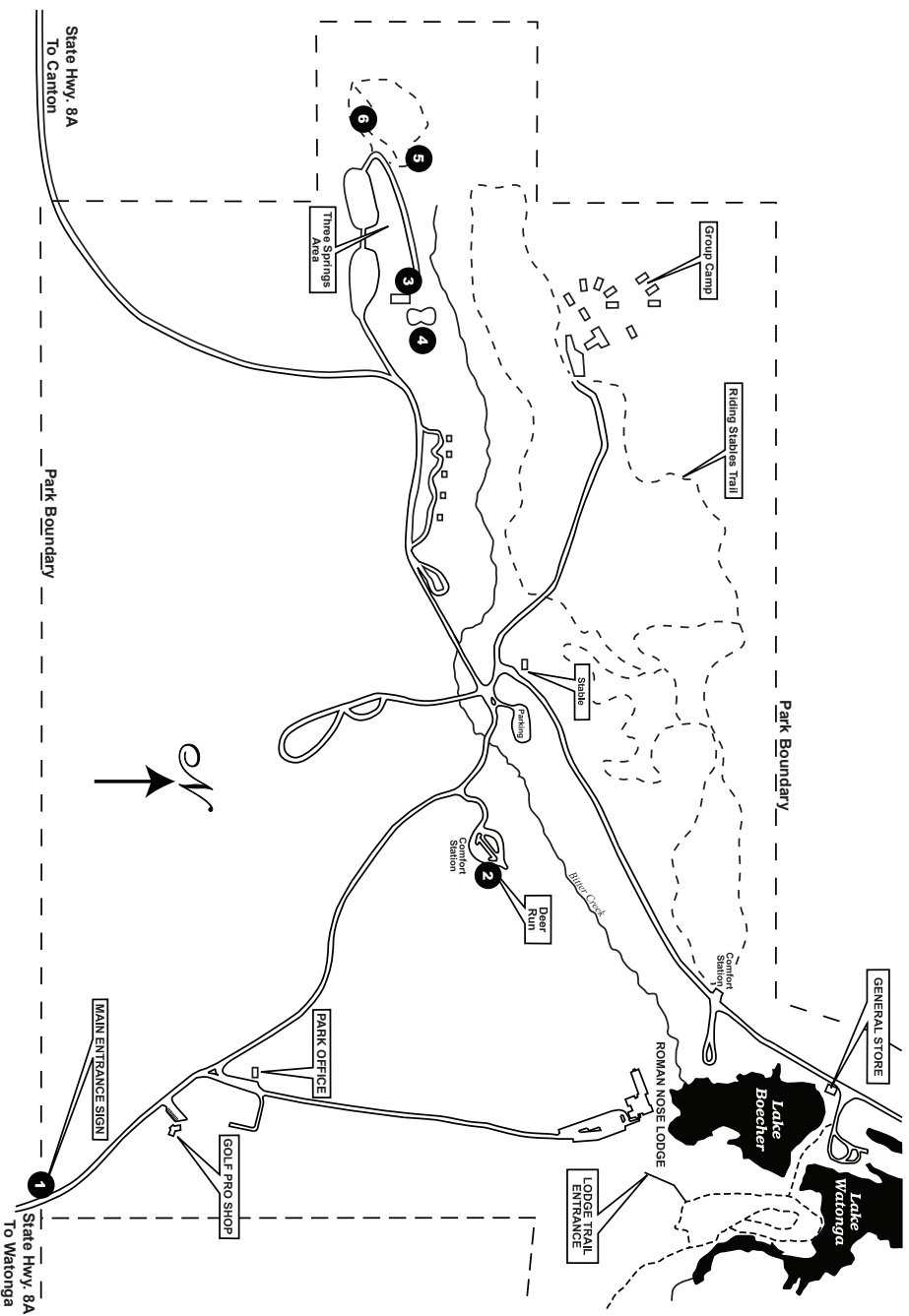
Work began on Roman Nose State Park in September, 1935. Although the park was officially opened in 1937, major facilities like the swimming pool and picnic pavilion were not completed until 1938. In addition to the pool and pavilion, the CCC also built over 5 miles of park roads, 14 check dams on Bitter Creek, picnic tables, a water supply and sewage disposal system for the park. They planted thousands of tree and shrub seedlings, 4 miles of fence and a firebreak around the park boundary. This camp closed in 1942 as the young men of the CCC joined the U.S. Military during World War II.

Roman Nose, 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 Roman Nose State Park'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 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 Entrance Sign

This distinctive entrance sign was designed by Gordon Janecek, the National Park Service's landscape architect for this park. The sign, which honors the Southern Cheyenne tribal leader, Henry Roman Nose, is made of dolomite rock, concrete and steel. The CCC's built the sign in 1942. Under the direction of park manager Leon Hightower, this sign was restored by park staff in 2000. (Easy View)



Station No. 2 Deer Run Picnic Area

Portions of this picnic area were built by the CCC. Notice the native stone that lines the parking areas. Several of the concrete picnic tables and fire rings were also constructed by the CCC. (Easy View)

Station No. 3 Bathhouse - Stone Patio

This was the location of the CCC-built pool bathhouse. Unlike many of the CCC structures in eastern Oklahoma that had a rustic woodsy design, the National Park Service architects wanted their park buildings in western Oklahoma to have a Southwestern appearance. The bathhouse's horizontal line and careful use of native stone reflected the style of architectural design called Spanish-Pueblo Revival. Unfortunately, over the years the bathhouse structure fell into disrepair and had to be removed for safety reasons. However, the building's stonework and outdoor fireplace remain and have been re-purposed into this beautiful stone patio. (Easy View)



Station No. 4 Swimming Pool

Although updated to meet current standards, this swimming pool maintains its character as a CCC structure.



Throughout the pool and stone patio area are other examples of CCC craftsmanship. The parking lot for the pool, walkways, water hydrants, metal signs, culverts and boulders that are skillfully placed throughout this landscape are all of CCC construction. (Easy View)

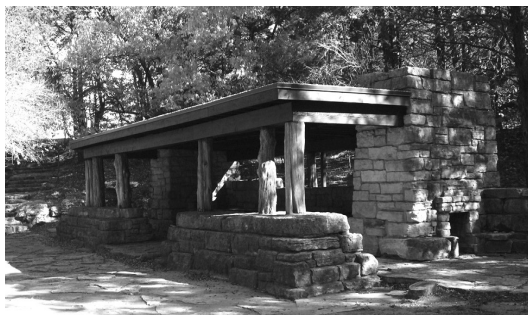


Station No. 5 Big Spring

As you walk along the stream that flows from Big Spring, notice the boulders that line the streambank. Although they appear to be occurring naturally, each stone was put in place by the CCC. By the careful use of dolomite boulders, numerous small waterfalls occur all along the stream. The CCC also built small check-dams that reduced soil erosion into the stream and lake.

Station No. 6 Picnic Pavilion

Near one of the smaller springs is a beautiful, CCC picnic pavilion. As with all of the National Park Service designed facilities in this park, this pavilion blends into the natural surroundings.





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

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