

Illinois offers Jubilee College State Park

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The summer trail riding season is well underway, and because of the illogically high price of motor fuel we have tried to stay close to home while still enjoying good camping and outstanding trail riding. There is an interesting park northwest of Peoria, Illinois, located off Interstate 74 at Brimfield, Peoria called Jubilee College State Park. It is a 3,200-acre facility situated in the Illinoian drift-plane, replete with rolling topography and the meandering Jubilee Creek. Visitors often see deer, rabbits, squirrel, fox, coyote and raccoon throughout the forests, while the creek may offer glimpses of mink, muskrat and beaver. There are over 160 species of birds. While swimming is prohibited in Jubilee Creek, anglers may be interested in the smallmouth bass, bluegill, catfish, and carp that thrive in the creek.



horseshoeing. He continued shoeing until he was 88 years old. There is a memorial erected just inside the entrance of the equestrian area. When you arrive at the equestrian camping area, you are greeted by a sign reading James S. Spurgeon State rather than Jubilee College State Park.

The equestrian campground includes drinking water, toilet facilities, a shelter house, picnic tables, grills, and a pay phone. Overnight campers must self-register at the self pay station located in the equestrian campground. The equestrian camping area has a single loop road. Within the loop the camping is flat with numerous trees. On the outside of the loop the camping is more open and rolling. In order to camp with your horses, be prepared to use a highline as there are no campsite hitching rails. You should also be prepared with a water storage tank. There is only one undersized well for the grounds. The camping spaces are undefined. There are numerous fire spaces that may or may not help define a parking space.

Jubilee is deeply eroded into many complex valley systems, from near-level ridge tops and floodplains to steep slope ravines. Bedrock exposures are numerous and include shale, sandstone, limestone, and coal. The park contains about 25 miles of trails for the equestrian. The topography and Jubilee Creek constitute an aesthetically pleasing environment for outdoor recreation activities and provide habitat for numerous wildlife and fish species. Jubilee Creek, which passes through the park from northwest to southeast, is a tributary to Kickapoo Creek. It is characterized by deep pools and fast riffles. The average width is 40 feet and average depth is only four inches. *For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois*



An equestrian camping area is located at the north end of the park. Twenty-five miles of horseback riding trails originate from the camping area. The park area has the right mix of uphill riding, downhill riding, and best of all, gully crossings, some of which retain water. There are over 40 miles of dirt and grass loop trails at Jubilee, about 80% of which are also open to mountain bikes. When we rode the trails, we encountered many bicyclists, which slowed the ride. They were a very friendly bunch, and we frequently would stop and visit with them. One morning we made a wrong turn and ended up in an area where there was a rally, and the bicyclists helped us to find our way out without incident.

In 1998 the Equestrian Area of Jubilee State Park was named in honor of James S. Spurgeon. Jim Spurgeon was responsible for establishing many of the horse trails at the park and for helping acquire some of the land that now is part of Jubilee College State Park. Jim also promoted fund-raisers for the water well and facilities for the equestrian campgrounds at the park. He worked as a professional farrier, specializing in natural and corrective



Department of Commerce and Community Affairs' Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2Connect.

The park has a good system of interconnected trails. We discovered three grades of trails. The trail map shows the groomed trails. These are wide and easy to ride. There is a second grade of trails that are marked with some maintenance. These trails have been a lot of fun to ride because they offer some additional challenges that we enjoy. Finally there is a third grade of trails that are unmarked and not maintained. As you might guess, these are the off trails created by disrespectful riders wanting to get somewhere the park staff have not seen a need to create. We can't tell you much about these trails because we do not ride off trail when there are designated trails.

We were exploring one trail when we came upon a clearing that was obviously a place where many riders stop for a break. While we enjoyed the scenery during our stop we decided to look around the clearing. We found what must be described as an abandoned cookie factory that must have been operated by elves. The elves have moved on but still make good cookies.



Jubilee College State Park - South Trails Map

When riders leave camp they can select a north or south ride. The ride north takes the riders under the highway past a few buildings used during hunting season. The trail follows Jubilee Creek before moving up hill to an open meadow. The views are memorable and we usually make the north ride first. In returning south the trail crosses the highway and then into the woods.

The trails in the south part of the park offer some of the better riding because of their length, complexity, and beauty. While

riding south, the trails cross park roads used by other campers for access to their campgrounds. The trails then are shared extensively with bicycles. The southern most trails are nearly flat and are wide with good maintenance. These are the trails where we can really let our horses gait for long distances. The equine trails are routed around the general campground but are close enough that you can stop at one of the restrooms they have.

Jubilee College State Park is an evolving park and you need to keep going back to discover the changes. We enjoy the park for its spacious camping, trail variety, and friendly people riding and working there. And please remember that if you can pack it in, you can pack it out. Help keep our riding areas open for our grandchildren.

