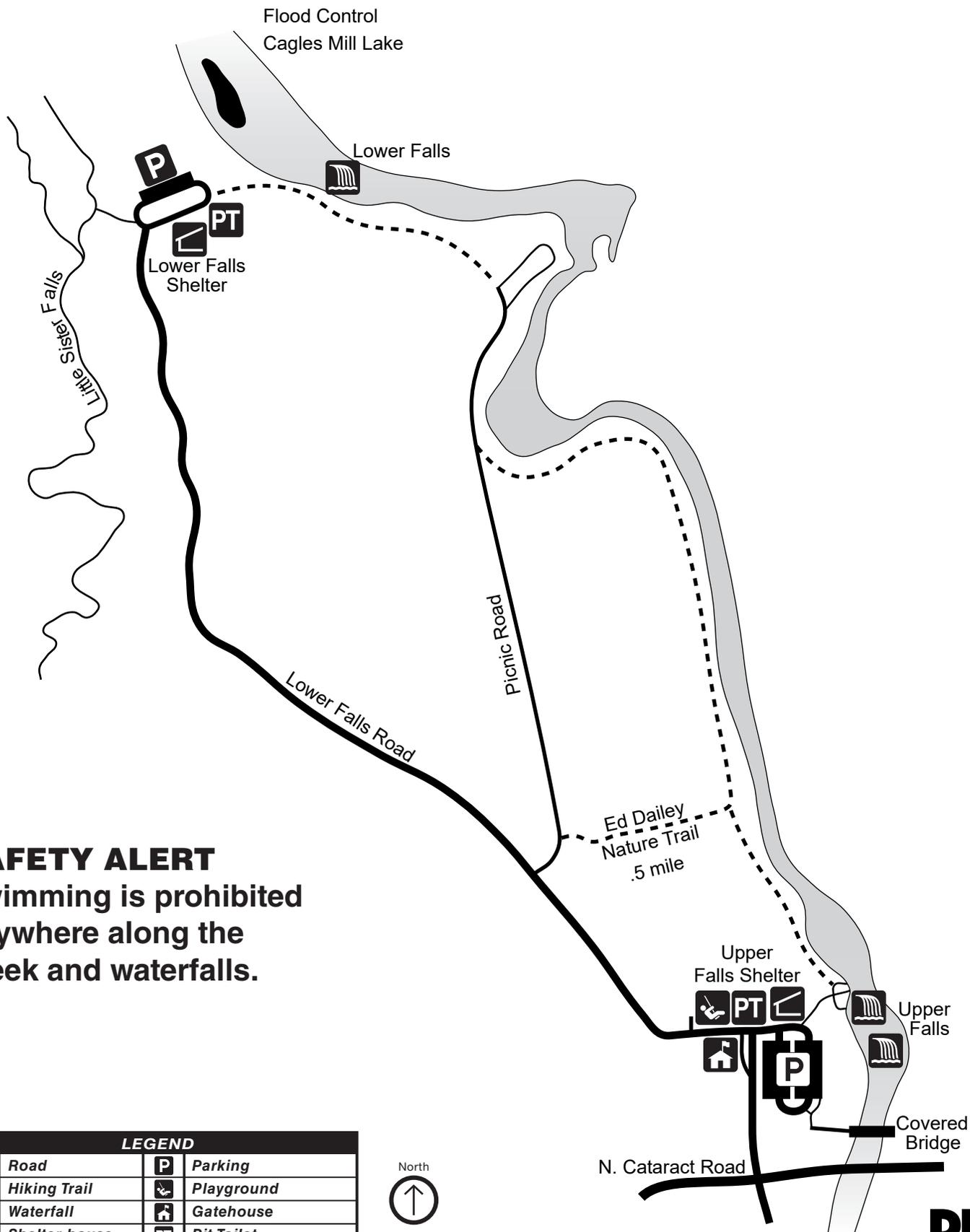


# CAGLES MILL LAKE Cataract Falls State Recreation Area



**SAFETY ALERT**  
Swimming is prohibited  
anywhere along the  
creek and waterfalls.

LEGEND	



## AREA HISTORY & POINTS OF INTEREST

Cagles Mill Lake is located within the Wabash River Valley in an area of scenic beauty. Picturesque Cataract Falls is at the headwaters of the lake, providing a pleasant experience for visitors. An early settler appropriately described the region as “a sensitive display of rolling hills surrounded by numerous streams and creeks. The hills often rise into steep rock bluffs or furnish valleys with soil as rich as the prized river bottoms.” It was this presence of fertile soil and abundance of fresh water that had for centuries attracted Native Americans to the area.

The Miami, Shawnee and Potawatomi were the dominant tribes that inhabited the region through the 18th century. However, in the late 1700s, the relentless western expansion of white settlers reached the area and threatened the tribes' claim to the land. Frequent conflicts followed, culminating with the battles of Tippecanoe and Fallen Timbers, which effectively destroyed the tribes as an organized fighting force, and forced the surrender of their land claims in the Indiana Territory.

The “Ten O'clock Line” Treaty, signed in 1809, gave pioneers claim to the land south and west of a line established by the shadow of a tree at ten o'clock. This line crossed what is now the Lieber State Recreation Area and Lower Cataract Falls. With the signing of that treaty and, subsequently, the Treaty of 1818, land in the Cagles Mill Lake area opened for settlement.

A great migration of pioneers eager to claim the valuable resources of the area ensued. They cleared the dense hardwood forests and farmed the river bottoms. The plentiful water supply spurred development of grist mills and sawmills, which gave rise to the local communities of Cataract and Cunot. Cagles Mill Lake bears the name of an old grist mill that was downstream from the lake. Cagles Mill was destroyed and rebuilt several times before finally being destroyed by fire in 1975. The old low-level dam is still in place.

Development of the region progressed rapidly with the discovery of limestone rock beds, gravel deposits, and other mineral deposits near Cloverdale, Putnamville and Reelsville. The National Trail (U.S. 40) and the onset of the railroad encouraged growth by providing employment and increasing business, while easing the transportation of goods and raw materials. The Vandalia, Monon and B&O railroads played an integral part in the diversified development of the Cagles Mill Lake area.

Today, more than a century later, many of the same industries provide a livelihood for area residents who take pride in their resourceful heritage. Livestock and grain farms, forest industries, and limestone quarries contribute to the local economy. The railroad lines (under different names) are still active and important for transport of area products.

Visitors to the site of the old Jennings Mill in Cataract can relive the old days.

**For a list of park events, visit  
interpretiveservices.IN.gov**

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

- Swimming is prohibited.
- No climbing on or fishing from waterfalls.
- Areas in water immediately above or below the waterfalls are off limits.
- No person shall conduct or participate in a fishing tournament on a reservoir property administered by the Division of State Parks and Reservoirs, except under a license.
- No person shall launch, dock, or moor a watercraft or other floating device, except during approved periods and at sites designated by the department for those purposes. No person shall leave watercraft unattended in a courtesy dock.
- Any firearm, BB gun, air gun, CO<sub>2</sub> gun, bow and arrow or paint gun must be unloaded or un-nocked and stored in a case or locked within a vehicle except in accordance with the terms of a one-day hunting permit and record card obtained from a hunter sign-in station and possessed by the person in the field for a specified date.
- A person who possesses a pet must attend it at all times and keep the animal caged or on a leash no more than 6 feet long.
- Vending or advertising without permission of the DNR is prohibited.
- Camping is permitted only in the campground. Youth groups must be under adult supervision.
- Fires shall be built only in designated places.
- Please comply with the Carry In/Carry Out trash policy in all day-use areas. Overnight guests must put waste in receptacles provided for that purpose.
- Motorists shall observe posted speed limits and park only in designated areas. (25 mph maximum).
- No person shall possess or consume an alcoholic beverage at a swimming beach and pool.
- Drinking water should be taken only from pumps, hydrants or fountains provided for that purpose. This water is tested regularly for purity.
- Report lost or found articles to the property office.
- Feeding of wildlife is prohibited.
- Use of metal detectors is prohibited.

*For a complete list of rules and regulations, inquire at property office.*

## DESCRIPTION OF HIKING TRAILS

TRAIL & DESCRIPTION	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
Ed Dailey	.5 miles	Moderate

Loop trail of pavement and stone that can be used to connect upper and lower falls.

**PLEASE STAY ON MARKED TRAILS.**

## CATARACT FALLS COVERED BRIDGE

Cataract Falls Bridge is the only surviving covered bridge in Owen County. It is also one of only six Smith trusses in Indiana. This construction was patented by Robert W. Smith and built by his company or under license to him.

While the majority of Indiana's covered bridges have Burr Arch trusses, Smith's design was a simple latticework of crossing timbers. The members pointing away from the center as they go up were in tension, and the members pointing in as they go up were in compression.

Instead of constructing his bridge on site, Smith built bridges in the controlled environment of his Toledo shops and delivered the pieces to be assembled on location. This allowed the Cataract Bridge's white pine timbers to have smooth, planed surfaces and uniform dimensions.

Smith trusses were produced in a manner at odds with the romantic conception of covered bridges as a product of pre-industrial times. Instead, bridges like the one at Cataract show many features characteristic of the late 19th century Industrial Age that are more likely associated with iron bridge construction. This bridge may be the best surviving example of a Smith truss.

The preservation work was partially funded with National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation (NHCBP) Program and Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) grants. NHCBP provides funding to assist efforts to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore National Register-eligible and listed covered bridges. TEA-21 funds activities “designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation's transportation system.” The program has been instrumental in preserving numerous bridges, depots, and one-of-a-kind transportation-related historic structures throughout Indiana. Both programs are funded by acts of Congress, and operated by the Federal Highway Administration through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Rehabilitation cost approximately \$520,000. The DNR's share was approximately \$110,000.

The bridge was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in April 2005, and documented by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) in 2004.

## DNR PROPERTIES NEARBY

- **McCormick's Creek State Park**-camping, hiking trails, saddle barn, play/sports fields, swimming, camping, Interpretive Services, Interpretive Center, picnicking, INN, cabins
- **Deer Creek Fish and Wildlife Area**-fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife watching
- **Chinook Fish and Wildlife Area**-Fishing, boating, boat ramp, trapping, wildlife watching

*Pick up an Indiana Recreation Guide for more information.*