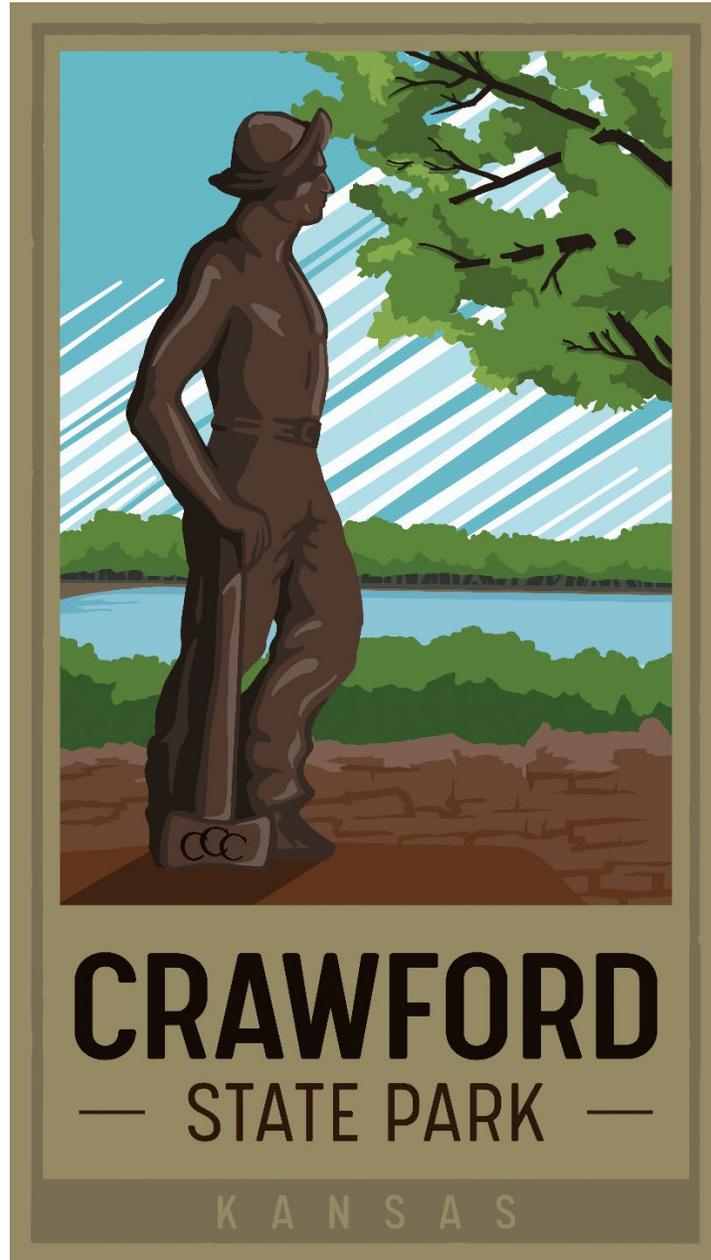


# CRAWFORD STATE PARK

## MASTER PLAN 2021



## **Purpose**

The purpose of this master plan is to guide current and future operations and development at Crawford State Park. Reference to this plan will ensure that operations at Crawford State Park meet the needs identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreations Plan (SCORP) 2020. This plan is required by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); accepting such funds dedicates the park in perpetuity to outdoor recreation. Many LWCF funds were utilized in the development of Crawford State Park after its initial completion in 1965. Grant funding from LWCF, the Recreational Trails Program Fund, and many others are critical to development of recreational opportunities in all Kansas State Parks.

Guidance from this plan also ensures that development will be in alignment with the Department mission statement:

- Conserve and enhance Kansas's natural heritage, its wildlife and its habitats—to ensure future generations the benefits of the state's diverse, living resources;
- Provide the public with the opportunity for the use and appreciation of the natural resources of Kansas, consistent with the conservation of those resources;
- Inform the public of the status of the natural resources of Kansas to promote understanding and gain assistance in achieving this mission.

## **Park History**

Crawford State Park is one of the oldest parks in the Kansas State Park system. Originally built in 1934 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the area consists of a 150-acre lake, and 515 acres of land. The park was obtained through private donations and operated as a state fishing lake until 1965 by the Kansas Forestry Fish and Game Commission when it was then officially designated as Lake Crawford State Park.

The park is located in Crawford County, approximately 12 miles north of Girard, Kansas on Highway 7. The park is 30 minutes north of the Kansas/Oklahoma border, and 20 minutes west of the Kansas/Missouri border in an area locally known as the four-states. Crawford State Park has been part of the social fabric in South East Kansas for over 75 years and enjoys exceptional community support. In addition to the park, the department also operates the Farlington Fish Hatchery at this location. Both of these developments have provided a rich tradition of service to the people of the State of Kansas. Coupled with the economic impact this project provides to the local economy, it is foreseen that this facility will continue to provide recreational opportunities for generations to come.

One of the unique characteristics of this facility is the incorporation of private homes or in holdings throughout the park. There are 127 privately-owned lots inside the park and another 43 adjacent, all utilizing the park's infrastructure. With these private developments essentially being part of the park, management practices also include many considerations often associated with small communities.

The age and high use of this park leads to two serious concerns. The first is the impact from human use of this facility. Compaction adjacent to developed facilities has always been a

management concern and management strategies such as limiting off road driving have been staples. Natural flora has always been of great concern with the protection of trees within our developed areas as a top priority. In addition, protecting the park grounds from private encroachment is an ongoing management concern and critical for the continued viability of this facility.

**Facilities**

Crawford State Park is a 690-acre facility most of which surrounds Crawford State Lake, a 150 surface acre impoundment. The park campgrounds are situated in old growth wooded areas with ample over story shade which makes for exceptional camping opportunities. Below the dam and at the upper end of the lake are riparian corridors which provide scenic wildlife viewing opportunities along the park’s many trails. The major areas that surround the park are farms, much of which is native prairie. The park and lake property are somewhat unique in that it is wholly owned by the department.

The facility has operated as a Kansas State Park for 55 years and during that time has seen much transformation. As a state lake, the facility offered a marina, two picnic shelters, and a boat access facility. Today the facilities include:

**Miles of:**

Water Lines	<b>30</b>	Paved Roads	<b>91</b>	Electrical Lines	<b>35</b>
Bike Trail	<b>25</b>	Pedestrian Trail	<b>35</b>	Boundary Fence	<b>10</b>

**Structures**

Office Building	<b>1</b>	Sewer Lift Stations	<b>1</b>		
Maintenance Building	<b>1</b>	Boat Ramps	<b>2</b>	Water Hydrants	<b>60</b>
Storage Building	<b>1</b>	Courtesy Docks	<b>5</b>	Drinking Fountains	<b>2</b>
Shower Houses	<b>3</b>	Fishing Docks	<b>4</b>	Electrical Pedestal	<b>95</b>
Bathroom	<b>1</b>	Grills/Fire Rings	<b>140</b>	Trash Dumpster	<b>15</b>
Shelter House	<b>2</b>	Picnic Tables	<b>140</b>	Amphitheater	<b>1</b>
Marinas	<b>1</b>	Campsites	<b>127</b>	Vehicle Bridges	<b>2</b>
Playgrounds	<b>3</b>	Cabins	<b>5</b>	Earth Piers	<b>2</b>
Dump Stations	<b>1</b>				

Boat Ramps	2	Three lanes total
Courtesy Docks	9	
Railroad Crossings	1	
Fishing	5	shoreline miles
Trails	4	trails, three hike and one hike and bike. Six total miles
Trail Heads & Kiosks	3	
Picnic Areas	1	
Picnic shelters	2	Beach Shelter and Rocky Cove Shelter
Swim beach	1	Sand with 5 shaded picnic tables
Playground	2	Beach Area 2006 sectional, Oak Point 2002 sectional

Campsites	83 total utility sites 28 primitive
	Rocky Cove 15 – 50amp electric with water
	15 – 30 amp electric
	Oak Point 9 - 30 amp electric
	30 - 50 amp electric with water
	25- primitive
	Lonesome Point 4- 30 amp electric
	1- primitive
	Group Use Area 10- 50amp electric
	Cherokee Landing 1- primitive
	Osage Bluff 1- primitive
Reservable sites	100
Restroom buildings	1
Shower buildings	3
Fish cleaning stations	0
Marina	0
Other concessions	Friends operated restaurant/convenience store
Rental cabins	5 modern

Like most state parks in Kansas, Crawford State Park must maintain many of the services of a city. The park contains 15 lane miles of roads, over 35 miles of electrical line, and 30 miles of water line. Trash disposal, too, is a city-like concern. Where available at a reasonable cost, we contract with trash disposal services. Such contracts must be bid out for the lowest bid. Because parks are often located far from cities, the bids are often quite high.

Crawford State Park offers some very unique trail opportunities which range from majestic walks through riparian corridors to historic military encampments. All are within a stone's throw from campgrounds and day use areas.

The first trail opportunity, near the park entrance, is the Civilian Conservation Corps Memorial Trail. This quarter mile walking trail is a self-guided interpretive trail which wanders through the old CCC campsite. It features several pieces of equipment that were used to construct the lake as well as a bronze CCC Alumni Foundation statue honoring those who built this facility.

Below the dam is the Spiderleg Bridge interpretive trail which follows Drywood Creek to a historic bridge site. This area was the location of a post-civil war military encampment which features foundations and other remnants of the camp. The overstory shade, provided by the trail's mature native trees, offer patrons unique opportunities for natural and cultural interpretation.

The Deer Run Trail explores the areas below the dam which takes hikers through the riparian corridor along Drywood Creek. The trail features a hardened surface along which self-guided interpretive signs that identify native flora and fauna have been installed.

The Drywood Creek Mountain Bike and Hiking Trail circles Crawford State Park. This single track mountain bike trail allows users to explore areas of the park that are not often seen

by patrons. Whether it is wooded areas transitioning to open prairies or rock bluffs leading to the lakeshore, this trail has something for anyone who wishes to get off the beaten path.

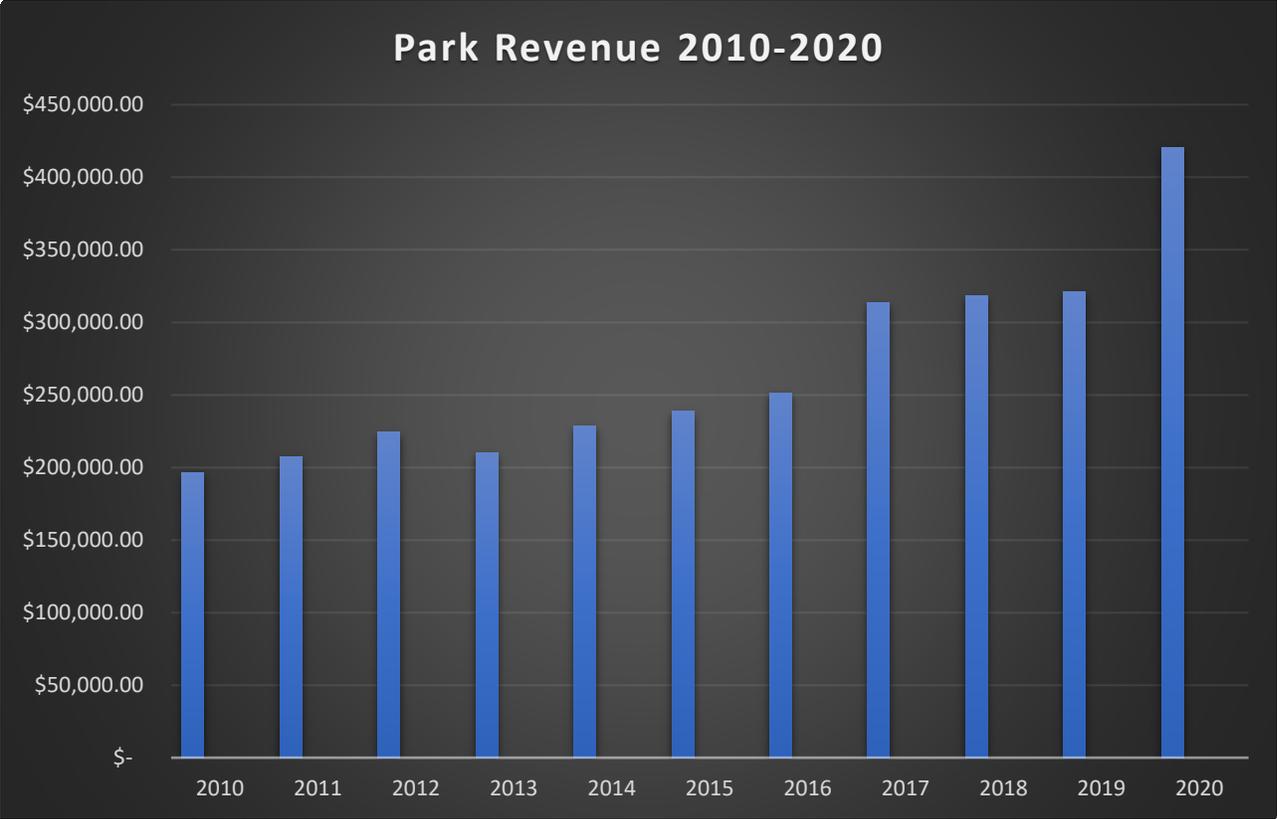
### **Visitation**

Crawford State Park was the first to move to 100% reservable campsites in 2018. This option has made it easier and more convenient for our park patrons to plan camping trips, has resulted in virtually zero issues with double bookings, and has almost eliminated any issues with cancellations and transfers. Overall, it has been a huge success and has resulted in Crawford State Park operating at capacity for 90% of the weekends during camping season.



### **Revenue**

In recent years the Kansas State Park System has moved from in person revenue collection to a more online-oriented market. At Crawford State Park roughly two thirds of all reservations are made online. This shift has led to a higher revenue overall, as park patrons can more readily and easily make reservations and view availability of all parks and campgrounds.



In addition, we have had fewer issues with reservations, and a much greater compliance with park vehicle permits as well as boating registration and fishing licenses. The trend has moved and will continue to move away from fee collection at gatehouses and park offices to online sales. The new CampItKansas app that was implemented recently allows campers to check availability and reserve sites from their smartphones, or from the actual site itself.

**Staffing**

Crawford State Park Staff consists of three full time employees (FTE), which include a Park Manager I, Park Ranger I, and an Administrative Specialist. These three positions are further augmented by a variety of seasonal workers, whose positions vary by year depending on both budget and need, but generally include the following:

- 1 Office Assistant I                      6 months per year
- 1 Custodial Worker                        6 months per year
- 5 Camp Hosts                                6 months per year
- 1 Camp Host                                 All Year (covers cabins during wintertime)
- 2 Seasonal Park Rangers                3 Months per year

These positions are used for a variety of operations, which include everything from office operation to restroom maintenance. While ten seasonal positions are utilized for area operation,

none are forty-hour per week employees and no worker exceeds 999 hours or approximately six months.

In addition to paid employees, to operate Crawford State Park it is necessary to rely on several non-paid employees from different volunteer programs and organizations.

The Friends of Crawford State Park is a 501c3 group, who are instrumental in the operation of the park's marina/restaurant facility, the rentable dock facility, our storm shelter/rentable shelter facility, as well as the presentation of many of the park's special events. This group is also responsible for several of the recent developments around that park that include our rentable dock facility as well as our storm shelter/rentable shelter facility, which is the first of its kind in the Kansas State Park System. Past projects include the Drywood Creek Amphitheatre and the Lonesome Point Campground playground facility.

AmeriCorps Program is a service learning program in which members serve from 300-1700 hour terms of service. While serving, they receive a living stipend. At the successful completion of their terms, members receive an education award to be used to pay off student loans or pay for expenses at college. By tackling special projects and conducting programs, this group has had a significant impact on facility renovations that would not have been possible to complete without their presence. The AmeriCorps program has been a tremendous benefit to CRSP operations. Renovations to existing facilities, park improvements and educational programming have all benefited from their participation. In these tight budgetary times, they have been the difference between a quality operation and program failures.

Volunteers play an important part in CRSP operations. In many cases they may be the only point of contact the public has during a park visit. From campground to cabin operations these folks provide for daily operations of many of the park's amenities. Without volunteers, the quality of daily park operations would be drastically reduced.

The number one staffing need for Crawford State Park is a maintenance position. The park had this position until 1990 when it was lost due to restructuring. Since then, our facilities have expanded and aged. The park's visitation steadily increased over the years, now at capacity ever weekend during the summer season, and seasonal budgets have declined. To accommodate user demands and safety concerns for this facility, a full-time maintenance position is a must. When filled, this position would act as the inmate crew supervisor and provide for a year-round five-man inmate crew. The cost/benefit ratio of this situation would be advantageous providing 240 hours of labor weekly at the cost of one entry level employee.

## **Operations**

Whenever possible, staff conducts prescribed burns on approximately 1/3 of the grassland per year, to control noxious weeds and woody invasive species such as sericia lespedeza, multiflora rose, and Johnson grass. Regular burning promotes a healthy native grassland and reduces the fuel load to make control of range fires easier. Firebreaks established for prescribed burning efforts also help protect the park and neighbor's property from wildfires.

The park hosts several special events during the year. Our biggest event is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July fireworks show which fills the park to the brim. Another very popular event is the Chili Cook-Off that we hold at the end of September every year. The park also hosts numerous biking events, weddings, and family reunions.

## **Equipment**

Crawford State Park has an adequate equipment inventory. From law enforcement equipped four-wheel drive crew cab pickups to our two-ton dump truck that was purchased from KDOT surplus, the park vehicles are very diverse. The vehicles and tractors of Crawford State Park are in fair condition; however, several need to be replaced in a prioritized, phased, budgeted plan. There are several additions that are needed that would save time and money by decreasing project times, and drastically lowering repair costs. Some vehicles, such as maintenance vehicles and dump trucks, may not be driven many miles and can be quite old. In many cases, a used vehicle can serve adequately for certain maintenance needs. Law enforcement vehicles need to be new or close to new and in optimum condition. Some can be passed down for other uses when they pass the mileage limit for law enforcement use. The park also utilizes large numbers of hand and small power tools. This many high use acres requires several large mowers.

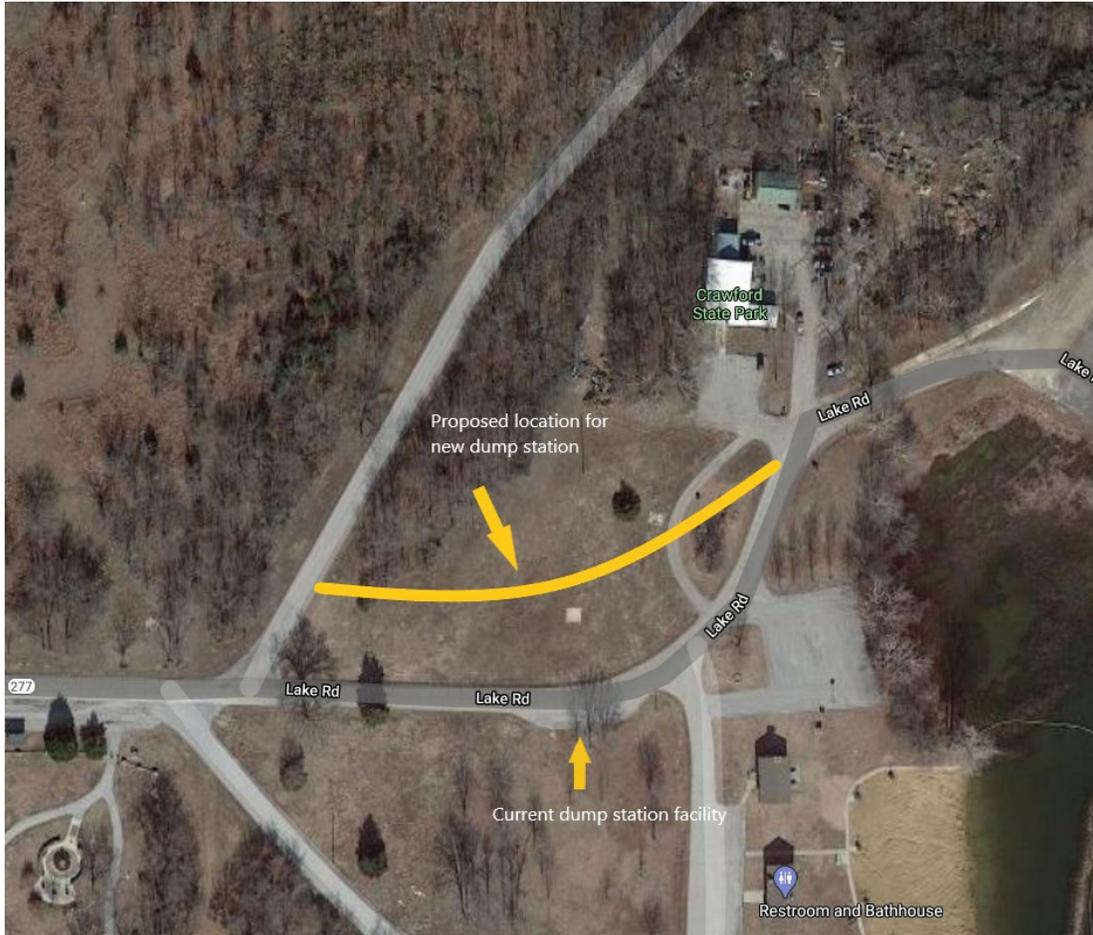
Tag No.	Year	Manufacturer	Model	Hours/Mileage	Condition	Primary Use
764	2002	John Deere	5205	1,733	Good	Beach Raking/Spraying
00x644	1976	John Deere	301A	1500	Fair	Mowing/Gen. Use
00x659	UKN	John Deere			Parts	Parts
00x681	1948	Gallion			Parts	Parts
25771	2002	Kawasaki	Mule		Poor	Seasonal/AmeriCorps
28573	UKN	Bad Boy			Good	Camphost
11025P	1975	John Deere	9250A		Fair	Backhoe
12152	2007	Ford	F150	158,773	Fair	Seasonal/AmeriCorps
12509	1993	International	2Ton-Dump	174,432	Good	Material Transport
15484	2004	Ford	F250	61,289	Good	Seasonal/Maintenance
16000	1990	Ford	F350	65,555	Fair	Tree Trimming
17530	2017	Ford	F150	54,655	Good	FTE Ranger Childress
7790	1998	Ford	Expedition	282,388	Poor	Inmate Transport
12180	2007	Ford	F150	140,857	Fair	Seasonal Ranger
24108	2019	Ford	F150	10,628	Good	FTE Manager Lytle
24376	1996	Chevrolet	3500	77,877	Good	Material Hauling

## **Future Development**

### **Relocation of the park's dump station**

Crawford State Park has continued to see a rise in visitation and revenue over the course of the last decade, without an update to current dump station services. The park currently utilizes a single lane dump station located on the main park entrance road. This poorly designed facility requires campers to pull across oncoming traffic to empty their campers and park in the oncoming traffic lane while doing so. This facility, built to accommodate state fishing lake traffic

of years ago, has been failing for the past several years causing major disruptions in service. We plan to relocate this facility off the main road and develop a multi-lane unit capable of handling current patron demands. Estimated cost: \$75,000.00

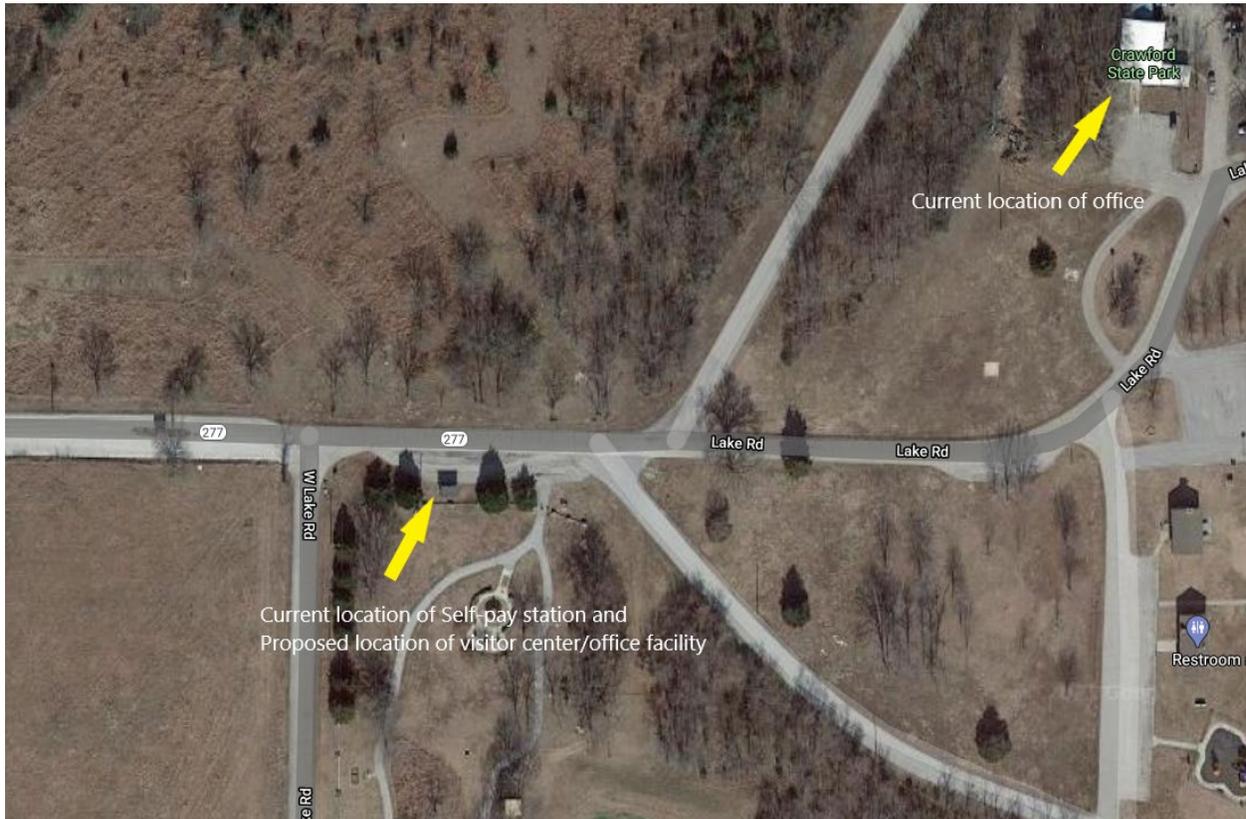


### **Visitor Center/Office**

This project will relocate the CRSP office to the entrance of the park. This project accomplishes two goals. The first is to replace a dilapidated facility which floods with something modern and easily accessible to the public. The second is to provide one central location for all public transactions to occur at the entrance of the park providing greater operational efficiencies. Estimated cost: \$350,000.00

Utilizing one of the new prebuilt cabins that are constructed for us by the building trades class at Chanute High School, we can replace our current self-pay station at the front of the park and create a new office facility that is in front of the public eye. The cabin floor print lends itself to being set up for two small offices, and a front desk area for an Administrative Specialist, while also having an ADA accessible bathroom.

Also, by building the self-pay station directly into the front of the facility, it would make the drop box more secure as well as placing all our informational signage and pay station at one centralized location at the front of the park.



### **Cabin Installation Project.**

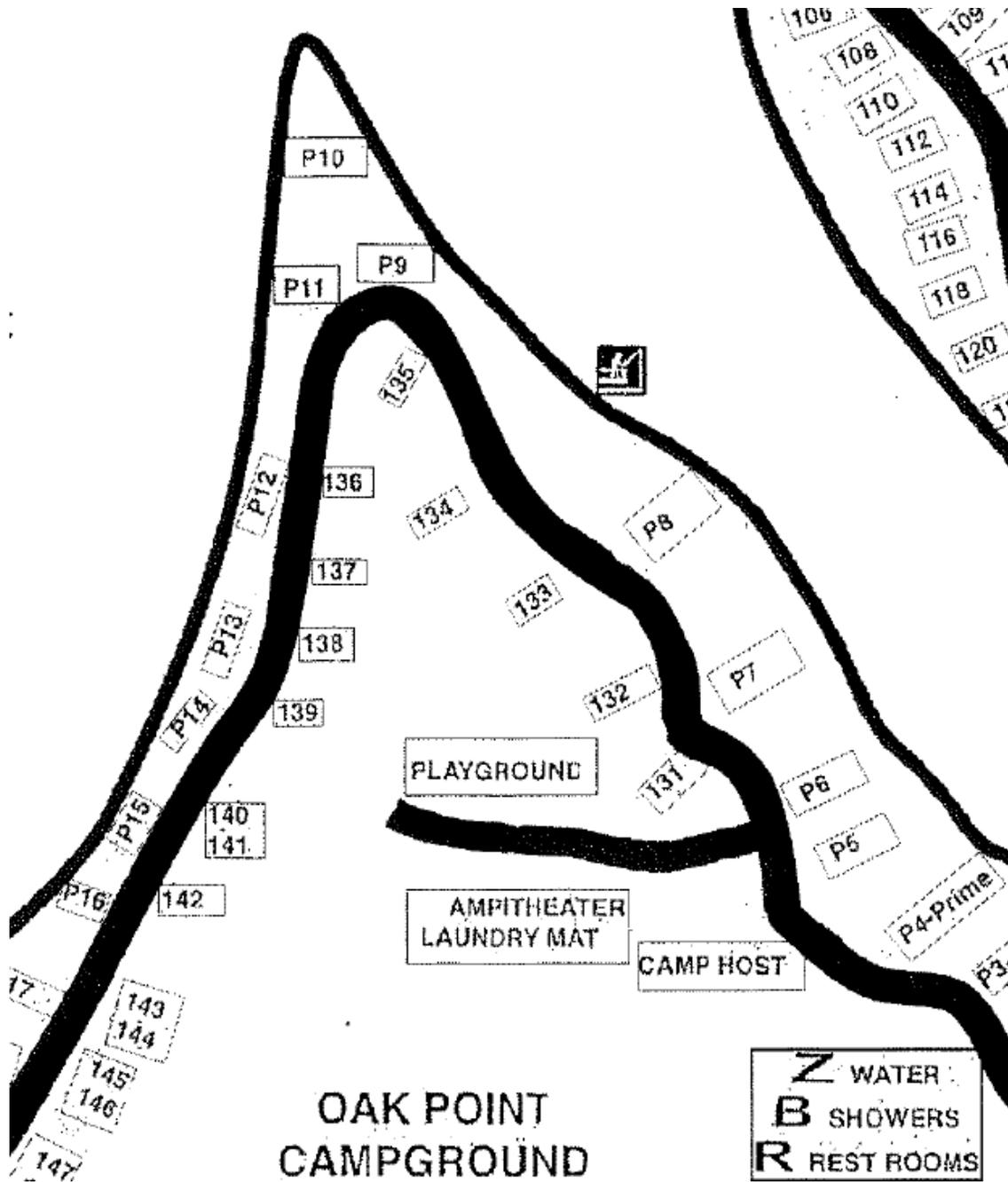
The cabin rental program has proven to be a good source of revenue across the state, as well as one of the most popular resources at Crawford State Park. Our Osage Bluff Campsite is a perfect candidate for being upgraded to a cabin facility. The Osage Bluff campground is the least used campground at Crawford state park. It is a large enough area to accommodate two cabins, and its close proximity to utilities is also ideal.

Estimated cost: \$ [REDACTED]



### **Campground Utilities Upgrade**

Converting additional primitive campsites to utility sites would meet public demand. The park utility sites currently rent 100% of every weekend during the season. In an effort to increase revenue, and keep up with demand for utility sites, converting some of the lesser used primitive sites into utility sites would increase both visitation and revenue. Sites 12-19 in Oak Point campground are ideal candidates for this project. Estimated cost: \$150,000.



**Road resurfacing**

It has been 10 years since any of the park's campground access roads have been overlaid. Many are showing signs of neglect and need direct attention before we lose the road surface. At a minimum the worst should be identified by KDOT and resurfaced. Estimated cost: \$600,000.00

### **Shoreline stabilization adjacent to the Spiderleg Bridge Trail**

The Spiderleg Bridge Trail is of historic significance and is the site of an 1860's military outpost. Featured along this trail are the foundations of officer cabins. These foundations are in jeopardy of being lost as a result of creek bank erosion of the adjacent Drywood Creek. Estimated cost: \$50,000.00

### **Renovate stone shelters**

This project will renovate two stone shelters originally constructed in the 1950's. While beautiful in construction, these cut stone shelters are starting to fail. Mortar joints need tuck pointed and fireplaces need rebuilt to ensure their continued serviceable life. Estimated cost: \$30,000.00

### **Repair the road surface on the emergency spillway**

The concrete portion of the emergency spillway, which is used as part of the campground access road, needs repaired. At present the wear surface is broken and rebar is showing through. To maintain the integrity of this structure repairs must be completed. This has been temporarily patched but the project may be included as a Phase 2 of the current dam repair project. Estimated cost: \$250,000.00

