

RIDE WISCONSIN-High Cliff State Park

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High Cliff State Park is on the northeast corner of Lake Winnebago in the town of Sherwood. High Cliff . It's the only state-owned recreational area on Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin's largest lake. High Cliff gets its name from the limestone cliff of the Niagara Escarpment, which parallels the eastern shore of Lake Winnebago. This ledge extends northeasterly to the Door County peninsula and on to Niagara Falls, New York.

A 125-acre area within the 1,147-acre park is designated as a state natural area, recognizing its excellent cliff environments, an undisturbed wet-mesic forest, and more than a mile of Lake Winnebago shoreline. Effigy mounds are important archaeological features.

The settling and hardening of limy ooze at the bottom of the Silurian Sea, which covered much of Wisconsin nearly 400 million years ago, formed the Niagara Escarpment, often called "the ledge." Later, the flat-lying dolomite was tilted downward to the southeast by earth forces, leaving its higher western edge exposed at the earth's surface.

Between 1,000 and 1,500 years ago, nomadic Siouan Indians built effigy mounds in what is now the park. There are four panther-shaped mounds, two buffalo-shaped mounds, conical mounds, and a linear mound. As long ago as the 1880s, this area was noted for its breathtaking views of Lake Winnebago.

The High Cliff Horse trail is located on a 223-foot ledge overlooking Lake Winnebago

Unfortunately you are not able to view the Lake from the horse trails, but the trails themselves are beautiful.

The horse trail starts in the marked gravel parking lot off the campground entrance road and loops the length of the park. The trail is 8 ½ miles and open May 1 through November 15. The trail surface is grass and dirt and very well marked. There are bathrooms available at the trailhead. High Cliff is for day rides only and there is no horse camping available in the park. It is unfortunate there is no horse camping available so trail riders outside of the area can enjoy these trails.

Horse trails at the park are maintained by the High Cliff Ridge Riders. They are a non-profit, horseback-riding club located in Sherwood, WI, on Lake Winnebago and High Cliff State Park. Their mission is to increase awareness and appreciation of horses and horsemanship in people of all ages. The main focus of the club is on the quality and proliferation of trails and other horse-related amenities at High Cliff State Park. The High Cliff Riders have devoted a great deal of work to provide trail users with well maintained trails.

Since High Cliff is a State Park, a vehicle admission sticker is required on all motor vehicles. Riders 16 and older will need a state trail pass.

The High Cliff horse trails combine both single and two track trails and are easy on the horse. There are long open stretches that are conducive to gaiting, trotting or loping. My favorite time of year is autumn when the colors are spectacular. This is a trail that everyone in the area should ride.

"The horse is God's gift to mankind."

Arabian Proverb

Until next time – Happy Trails!

