

Lake Wilson Park

It's no secret that one of the main attractions of Northwest Arkansas is how many outdoor activities it holds for nature lovers. There are more than 480 miles of trails across NWA, two of which are in Lake Wilson Park. The Park is 320 acres and located about six miles south of downtown Fayetteville. Including its hiking trails, the Park itself holds many features - a lake where you can boat and fish, a picnic area to enjoy with friends and family, and teeming wildlife. It's also considered an off-leash dog park, so your furry friends are free to explore as well.

Lake Wilson is a part of Fayetteville's rich history. Before the city became heavily populated, it was Fayetteville's first drinking water supply. In 1949, the Beaver Dam Association formed to develop a long-term plan to supply fresh, clean water for Northwest Arkansas. In 1972, the Beaver Water District officially took on that role. Today, Lake Wilson is a part of the West Fork-White River Watershed that flows in a northerly direction into the Beaver Lake Watershed. Beaver Lake supplies over 420,000 residents, or 1 in 8 Arkansans, with safe drinking water.

The lake can truly be enjoyed by taking one of the two looping Clark trails. The outside trail is 1.76 miles, has a slight elevation, and wraps through ancient rock formations. The inside trail is 1.33 miles, less rigorous, and has plenty of openings to enjoy the water. The trails were completed in 1995 by the members of the Highlands Chapter of the Ozark Society. They were built in dedication to Joe and Maxine Clark. The Clarks played a vital role in the beginning foundation of the society, which was formed in May of 1962 for the immediate purpose of saving the Buffalo River. As the society grew, Joe became the editor of their bulletin in the spring of 1967. With help from his wife, Joe contributed photographs and informational articles ranging from topics like conservation, botany, and local history.

For almost thirty years, Arkansans have enjoyed the Park and kept it thriving for future residents to enjoy. The Park is a part of Fayetteville's adopt-a-park and trail program, where individuals or organizations maintain local trails and parks to preserve Fayetteville's natural beauty. Pack Rat Outdoor Center adopted the Park through it and committed to three cleanups a year. Cleanups include gathering volunteers to walk through the area for litter removal and habitat restoration when needed. Whether you're looking for an easy hike, a place to fish, or just a quiet spot to sit in nature, Lake Wilson Park is a versatile destination for your outdoor needs.