

TOLTEC MOUNDS STATE PARK

In the modern farmlands of the central Arkansas River Valley are the remains of a large group of ancient earthworks known as Toltec Mounds. This impressive archeological site has attracted national interest for over 100 years and was designated a **National Historic Landmark** in 1978.

Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park is managed by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and the Arkansas Archeological Survey to preserve and interpret this important and complex archeological site.

NAMED FOR THE WRONG TRIBE

Identification of the site with the Toltec Indians is a mistake, although the Toltec name has remained. Mrs. Gilbert Knapp, owner of the land from 1857 to 1900, thought the Toltec Indians of Mexico had built the mounds. However, investigation by archeologists in 1883 proved the ancestors of North American Indians had built these mounds.

A DISTINCT CULTURE

The work of archeologists suggest the people who built the mounds at the Toltec site had a culture that was similar to other contemporary Native American groups in the Mississippi Valley. The culture is named "Plum Bayou" after a local stream. People lived in permanent villages and hamlets throughout the countryside, where they built sturdy houses, farmed, gathered wild plants, fished, and hunted.

Mound sites such as this one were religious and social centers for people living in the surrounding countryside. The Toltec Mounds site had a small population, made up primarily of political and religious leaders of the community and their families.

This center was occupied from about 650 to 1050 A.D. Eighteen mounds were built next to the natural oxbow lake, now called Mound Lake. Surrounding those mounds was an earthen embankment wall that was about 10 feet tall. Mounds were placed along the edges of two open areas (plazas) which were used for political, religious, and social activities attended by people from the vicinity.

Mound locations seem to have been planned using principles based on the alignment with important solar positions and standardized units of measurement. Most of the mounds were flat-topped platforms with buildings on them. However, there is one known

rounded burial mound at the site. Other Native Americans lived on the site later, in the 1400s, but they did not build the mounds.

ONGOING ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The research program began at Toltec in 1977 by the Arkansas Archeological Survey and continues today. Archeologists gather and study evidence of the prehistoric Native Americans' occupation—evidence that still remains after 135 years of farming (1840-1975).

Recovery of artifacts and information by excavation is only one part of conducting research. Many hours are spent cleaning and studying artifacts and writing publications. Excavations are conducted when funds are available.

TRAILS

The park has two self-guided walking trails. The **Knapp Trail** is a ¾-mile paved, barrier-free path that takes you past the tallest mounds in Arkansas and onto a boardwalk that extends over an oxbow lake. The **Plum Bayou Trail**, a 1.6-mile turf trail, allows you to explore a larger area of the prehistoric site. Trail brochures are available at the visitor center. From the boardwalk, you can observe the environment of an oxbow lake of the Arkansas River as you sit among towering cypress trees. Through the winter months, Mound Lake abounds with migrating birds including herons, pelicans, and waterfowl.

FACILITIES

The park visitor center includes interpretive exhibits, an audio-visual room, an archeological laboratory, vending and gift sales areas, and wheelchair accessible restrooms. The education pavilion is available for rent by groups and offers a view of the archeological site, 12 picnic tables, wheelchair accessible restrooms, and is temperature controlled. It is available year round for schools, civic organizations, family reunions, office picnics, etc. Rental fees apply, contact the park for details. Pets must be kept on a leash and are not permitted in the buildings. Service animals are welcome.

GROUP PROGRAMMING

Schools and other groups can request guided tours and programs which may include talks on current or past research, prehistoric lifeways and culture, and the methods and practices of archeology. Due to high demand, groups should schedule reservations well in advance. Group rates are available.

TOURS AND EVENTS

The visitor center exhibits and self-guided tours are free. Any guided activities require a fee. Guided tram tours are offered on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays at 2 p.m. These tours are subject to change so call in advance to confirm availability. Tram tours are also available by advance request. Group rates are available.

PARK HOURS

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday 1-5 p.m.

Closed: Mondays (except Monday holidays)
New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day,
Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day

For further information on park hours or programs, contact:

Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park
490 Toltec Mounds Road
Scott, AR 72142
(501) 961-9442
toltecmounds@arkansas.com

For information on Arkansas's other fine state parks, contact:

Arkansas State Parks
One Capitol Mall, 4A-900
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-1191
www.ArkansasStateParks.com



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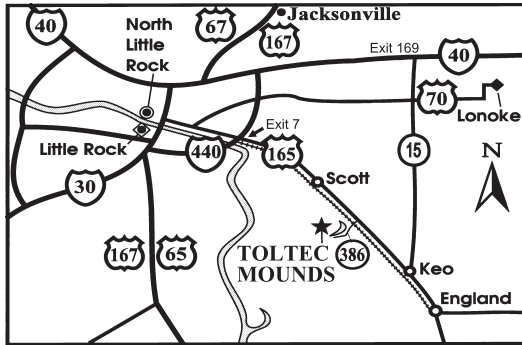
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ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & TOURISM

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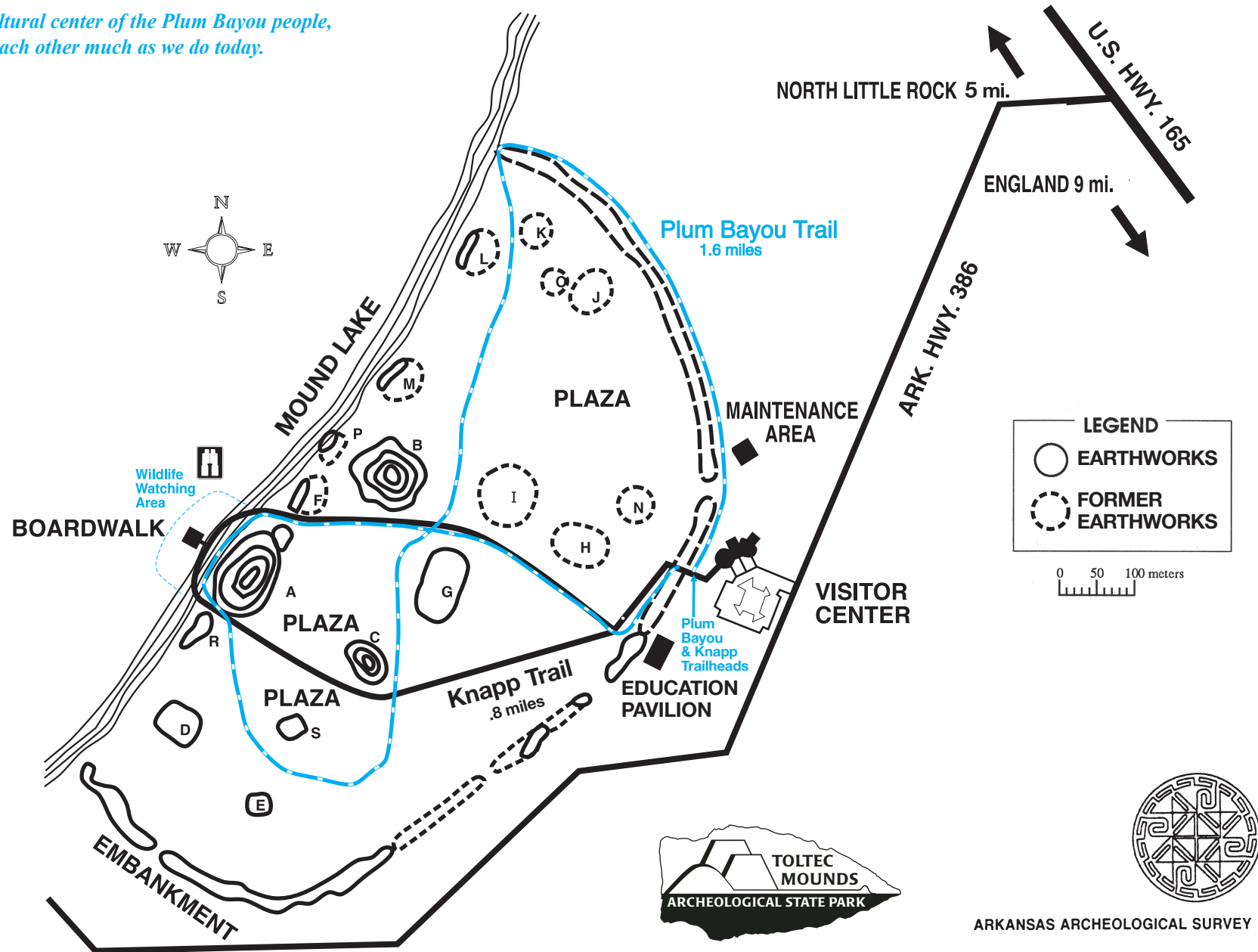
The unique mound complex here was the cultural center of the Plum Bayou people, who interacted with their environment and each other much as we do today.



LOCATION

The park is located 5 miles southeast of North Little Rock and 9 miles northwest of England, off U.S. Hwy. 165 on Arkansas Highway 386; OR, take Exit 169 off I-40, going south on Arkansas Highway 15 for 14 miles to Keo, then northwest on U.S. Highway 165 for 4 miles; OR, from I-440, take Exit 7 (England), going southeast on U.S. Hwy. 165 for 10 miles to the park.

NOTICE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas. Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park is a protected archeological site.



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