

## JACKSONPORT STATE PARK

*The rise and fall of the timeless Black and White Rivers shape life and history here.*

### STORIES OF A RIVER TOWN

Jacksonport was an important trade center in early Arkansas due to its location near the confluence of the Black and White Rivers. In 1834, Thomas Todd Tunstall purchased land where he later established the town of Jacksonport. As the area prospered and grew, the town developed into a busy steamboat port and became the county seat in 1854. Steamboats from the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers landed at the town year-round loaded with timber, bear grease, cotton bales, and wild game.

During the Civil War, Jacksonport was occupied by both Confederate and Union armies due to its strategic location. Five generals used the town as their headquarters. On June 5, 1865, Confederate General Jeff Thompson, "Swampfox of the Confederacy," surrendered more than 5,000 troops to Lt. Colonel C. W. Davis at the Jacksonport steamboat landing.

John A. Schnabel constructed the brick courthouse with a limestone foundation from 1869 to 1872. The massive beams supporting the mansard roof are hand-hewn from the heartwood of native cypress.

The courthouse opened for business in 1872 with the main entrance facing the White River and the town's business district on Jefferson Street. Golden-tongued oratory once rang through the halls, and political "speaking" were given from the balconies. The spacious courtroom hosted both dreadful murder trials and Mardi Gras balls.

The Iron Mountain & Southern Railroad began laying track through Jackson County—but not through this town—in the 1870s. As the railroad industry prospered and steamboat transportation declined, Jacksonport slowly began to die without railroad access. A spur was later added, but it was too late to save the town.

For 25 years Jacksonport continued to be an important steamboat landing, and though the town kept its faith in the river, trade and life eventually passed it by. The county seat moved to Newport in 1892, and Jefferson Street, with its mercantile houses, wharves, livery stables, and saloons, slowly vanished.

In 1962, the Jackson County Historical Society purchased the Jacksonport Courthouse with privately donated funds. Restoration began the next year. In 1964, a portion of the town including the courthouse square and the steamboat landing was bought by the society. Jacksonport opened as a state park in 1965. The Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage & Tourism has continued restoration and development of the park with the support of the historical society. In 1970, the courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2019, a new visitor center was constructed.

### FACILITIES

**Visitor Center** ♦ The park's visitor center offers a wide variety of facilities. Award-winning exhibits on the second floor lead guests through the history of this river town and the changes in transportation that affected it forever. The gift shop features unique Arkansas and history-inspired gifts to fit any taste and budget. Larger groups can be easily accommodated in the outdoor classroom or the rentable multi-purpose room complete with a catering kitchen. Please call for facility reservation information.

**Courthouse** ♦ Five museum exhibit rooms illustrate the story of the courthouse and Jacksonport, offering an opportunity to see and experience the town's cultural history. The gallery also features rotating exhibits about local history.

**Camping** ♦ Jacksonport offers twenty Class A campsites with 50/30 amp electric and water hookups. All sites are reservable and availability may be checked by calling the park or checking the website.

**Other Facilities** ♦ A picnic area with restroom facilities next to the swim beach on the White River offers a fun place for family and friends. A pavilion near the playground is available for rent. The 2/3-mile Tunstall Riverwalk trail offers leisurely hiking along the White River and a boat launch ramp provides access.

**Programs** ♦ Interpretive programs are offered regularly and give greater insight into the history and natural world of Jacksonport, Arkansas. Check the website for current available programs.

### LOCATION

Traveling north on U.S. Highway 67/I-57 into Newport take exit 83 and turn left (west) on Highway 384 and travel one mile to Highway 367. Turn left (south) onto Highway 367 and travel 2 miles to Highway 69 and turn right (north). Travel Highway 69 three miles to Jacksonport.

# JACKSONPORT STATE PARK



**For further information on park hours and fees, contact:**

**Jacksonport State Park**

**111 Avenue Street**

**Newport, AR 72112**

**(870) 523-2143**

**[www.ArkansasStateParks.com/Jacksonport](http://www.ArkansasStateParks.com/Jacksonport)**

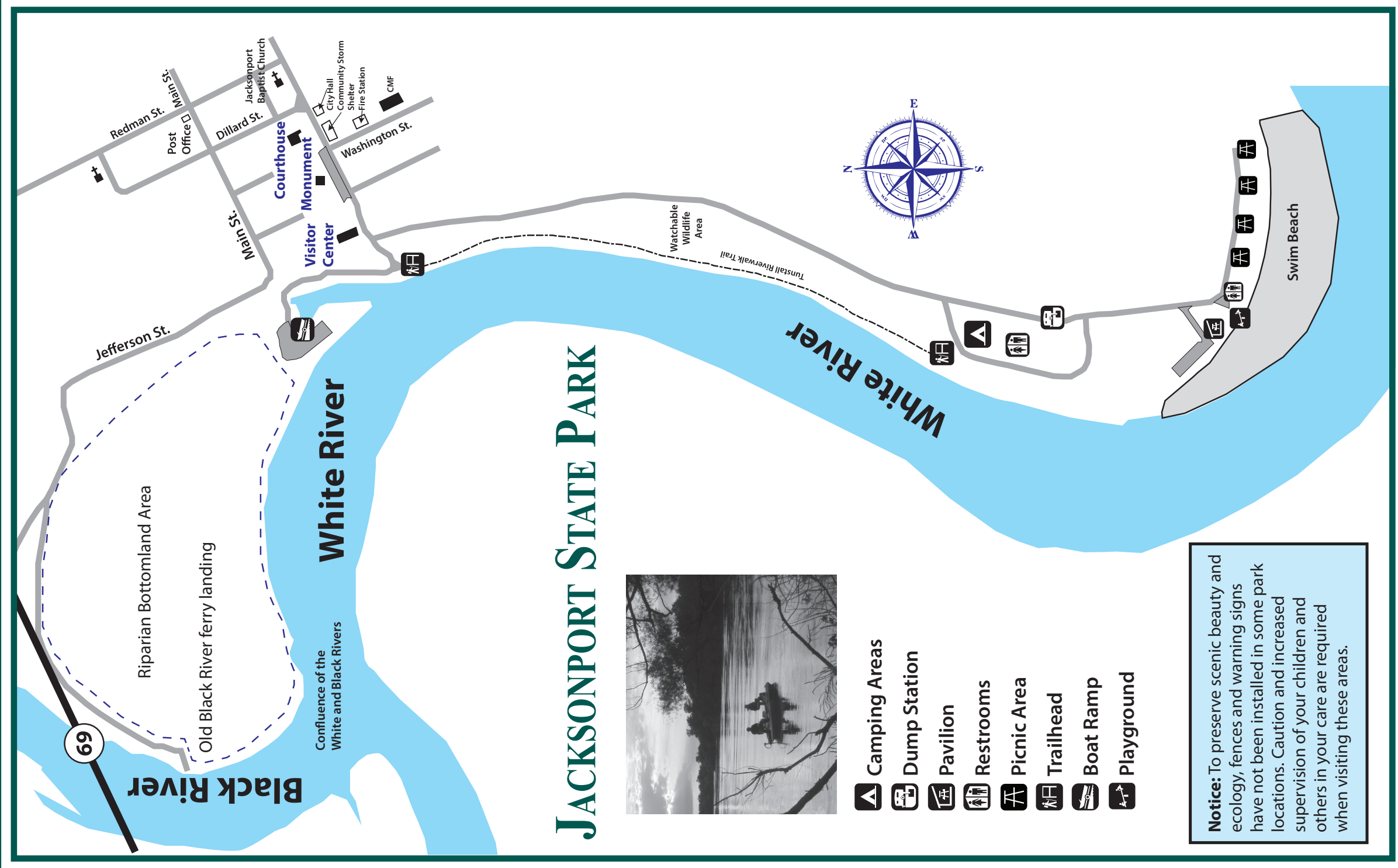
**[Jacksonport@Arkansas.com](mailto:Jacksonport@Arkansas.com)**

**Visitor Center GPS: 35.639401, -91.311468**

**For reservations, book online or call.**



All park services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis. Arkansas State Parks is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



# JACKSONPORT STATE PARK



- Camping Areas
- Dump Station
- Pavilion
- Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Trailhead
- Boat Ramp
- Playground

**Notice:** To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and increased supervision of your children and others in your care are required when visiting these areas.



EXPLORE THE BEAUTY & HISTORY OF ARKANSAS!