

TOLTEC MOUNDS STATE PARK

In the modern farmlands of the 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.

HISTORY

Mrs. Gilbert Knapp, who owned the site from 1857 to 1900, mistakenly believed the mounds were associated with the Toltec people of Mexico. Investigations by archeologists in 1883 supported the theory that these mounds, like others in North America, had been built by the ancestors of North American Indians.

Bordered on the west by the bank of Mound Pond, the mound complex was surrounded by a ten-foot high earthen embankment. Early visitors more than a century ago reported that sixteen mounds stood within the embankment varying in height from three to fifty feet. Today, eighteen mound locations have been identified with three remaining mounds including the tallest mound in Arkansas, Mound A at 49-feet high, and a portion of the embankment being visible.

TOLTEC MOUNDS IN THE NINTH CENTURY

The people who built the Toltec mounds had a culture that was distinctive from other contemporary groups in the Mississippi and Arkansas River valleys. The name that has been given to these people is the Plum Bayou Culture. The Plum Bayou people lived in permanent villages, farmed the rich alluvial soil, gathered wild plant foods, fished and hunted.

Mound groups, such as Toltec Mounds, served as religious and social centers for people living in the surrounding countryside. The Toltec site itself was inhabited by a small population of political and religious leaders from about 600 to 1150 A. D.

The surrounding embankment was an impressive earthwork eight to ten feet in height and 5,298 feet in length. Mounds were built along the edges of two open areas (plazas) which were used for political, religious and social activities. The locations of mounds seems to have been planned using principles based on alignment

with important solar positions and using standardized units of measurement. Through archeological investigations we know that most of the mounds were square or rectangular, flat-topped platforms. Mound B (38-feet high) was constructed and enlarged over time and was probably occupied by a religious structure. Mounds D, E, S and G were low platforms less than five feet in height and may have had habitation structures on top of them. Mound C (12-feet high) is a dome-shaped burial mound.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The current research program began at Toltec in 1977 and involves investigation of the site itself as well as its relationship to sites of the same period in the surrounding area. Although 150 years of agricultural activity has reduced the amount of archeological evidence that remains, excavations and laboratory analysis of artifacts provide valuable information about Toltec's inhabitants. Excavations have led to a better understanding of the layout and function of space at Toltec. Future studies are expected as archeologists discover more information about the site and its neighbors.

FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

A nominal access fee is charged. Visitor access onto the site is by self-guided tours. Tours leave the Visitor Center and follow the Knapp Trail, a three-quarter mile, barrier-free trail, or the 1.6-mile Plum Bayou Trail. Points of interest are the various earthworks and the boardwalk that extends onto Mound Pond. From the boardwalk visitors can observe the environment of an oxbow lake of the Arkansas River as they sit among towering cypress trees. Through the winter months, the lake abounds with migrating birds including herons, pelicans and waterfowl. In the warmer months, raccoons and squirrels scurry along the bank while reptiles sun themselves on fallen logs.

The Visitor Center contains interpretive exhibits, an audio/visual room, a vending and gift sales area and rest rooms. The exhibits feature artifacts recovered from the site and explain the process of archeological investigation. The Toltec Research Station of the Arkansas Archeological Survey, a unit of the University of Arkansas System, and its laboratory are also housed in the Visitor Center.

The multi purpose, enclosed pavilion is available year round for schools, civic organizations, family

reunions, office picnics, etc. The building offers bathrooms, picnic tables, chairs, and a covered porch. Rental fees apply, call the park for details.

School and other groups may 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.

Pets **must** be kept on a leash and are not permitted in the building. Service animals are welcome.

PARK HOURS

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 8-5
Sunday 12-5

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

Exhibit access and tour fee charged.

Inquire in advance about group rates.

For further information on park hours or programs, contact:

Toltec Mounds State Park
490 Toltec Mounds Road
Scott, AR 72142

Telephone: (501) 961-9442

Fax: (501) 961-9221

e-mail: 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
Telephone: (501) 682-1191
www.ArkansasStateParks.com



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Arkansas State Parks 2006

TOLTEC MOUNDS ARCHEOLOGICAL STATE PARK

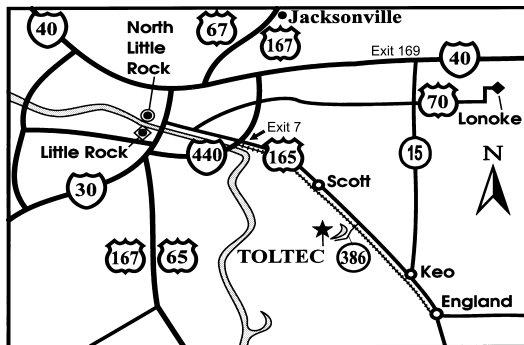


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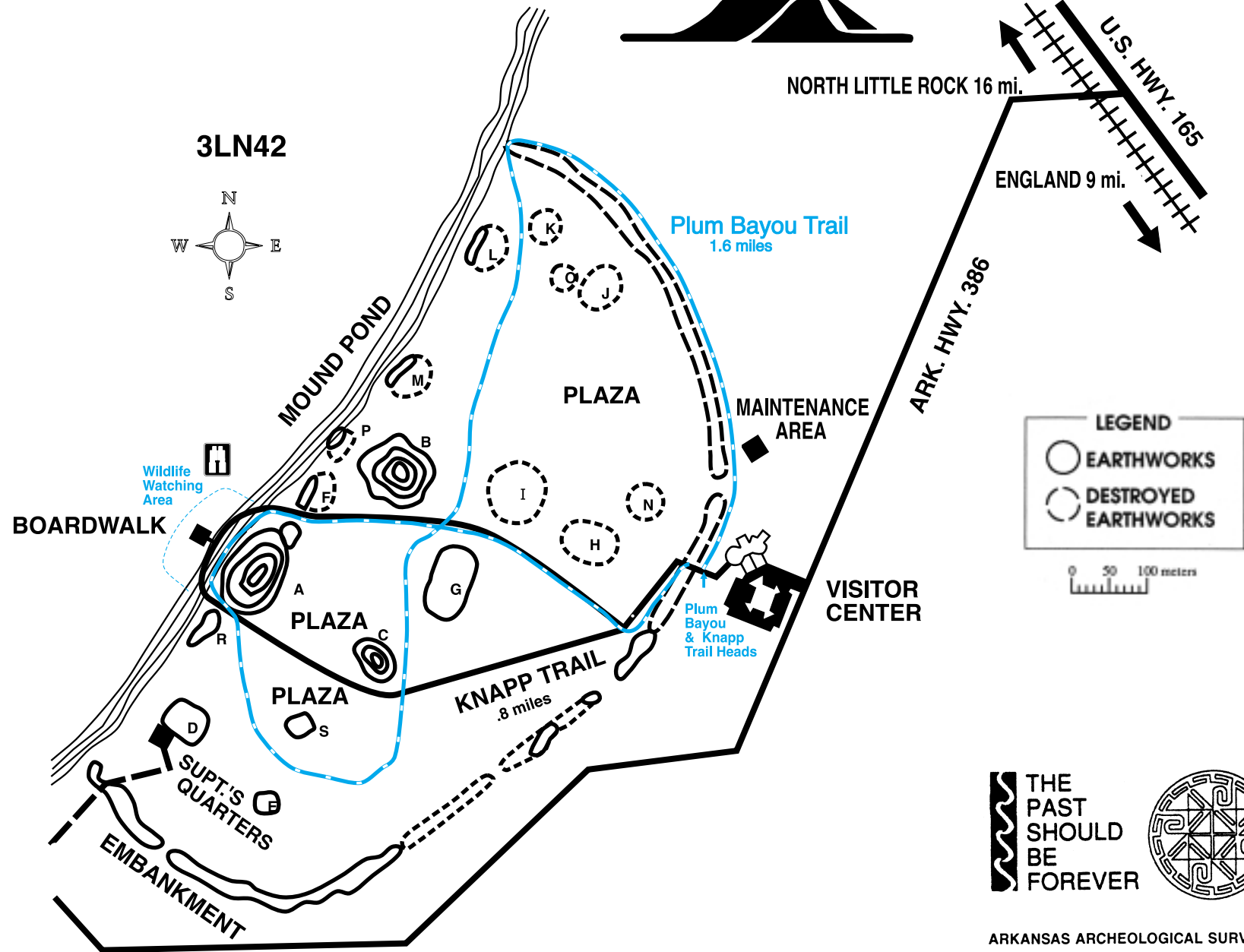
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LOCATION

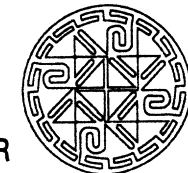
Toltec is located 16 miles southeast of North Little Rock and 9 miles northwest of England, off U.S. Hwy. 165 on Arkansas Highway 386; OR, take Exit 169 off I-40, going south on Arkansas Highway 15 for 14 miles to Keo, then northwest on U.S. Highway 165 for 4 miles; OR, from I-440, take Exit 7 (England), 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.



THE PAST SHOULD BE FOREVER



ARKANSAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY



EXPLORE THE BEAUTY & HISTORY OF ARKANSAS!