



The original plan for the development of Tickfaw State Park called for the typical visitor's center: a swimming pool, ball fields spread throughout the site, and cluster of cabins nestled along the river. However, since much of the site lies in a wetland state year-round, that design did not seem realistic. Once Moore Planning Group, LLC (MPG) joined the design team, a radically different blueprint took shape. The new plan proposed leaving more of the natural habitat, developing less of the land, and letting nature be the center attraction.

The Tickfaw River cuts through the heart of the 1,300-acre park located 32 miles east of Baton Rouge near Hammond, Louisiana. Campers, hikers, bicyclists, canoeists, wildlife and horticulture admirers alike can pursue their favorite recreation among the park's four distinct eco-system villages: the cypress/tupelo swamp, the bottomland hardwood forest, the riparian/river system, and the wetland system. Archeological sites (where Native Americans may have camped) and wetlands, crisscrossed with five miles of trails and a boardwalk system, link the various ecosystem villages with camping activities, and allow visitors to experience nature up close while making minimal impact on the wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Most of the development lies near the road, on the area referred to as the "first-level day-use area." It includes cabins and a nature center, with three classroom-like amphitheatres, where tour groups and school children can learn about the environment from park naturalists. The farther from the road you travel, the more rustic and undeveloped the park becomes. Major retention areas and designated backwater flood areas not only help manage the seasonal flooding, but also separate the various activities, carefully distributing the users so the habitats' capacity is preserved. To further the site's preservation, overnight users, upon entering the park area, must review and sign a set of strict conservation guidelines.

Tickfaw State Park now serves as a practical example of how wetlands, wildlife habitat preservation, and a lucrative eco-tourism site can attract more than 100,000 visitors each year.

- Louisiana Chapter, ASLA Honor Award, 1999
- Featured in 'Architectural Record' Evaluating Hidden Sites' Featured in Louisiana Life Magazine