

The Lowden-Miller State Forest

Nested in the Rock River Valley, just 3 miles south of the town of Oregon, lies a 2,356-acre wooded area that is one of Ogle County's most beautiful and historic sites. Its scenic qualities come from 120-foot bluffs along 3.5 miles of riverfront forested with hardwood and pine trees. The history stems from the individual who, in the early part of the 20th century, augmented the natural hardwood forest by planting pines – Frank O. Lowden (1861-1943), Illinois' governor from 1917-1921. He ardently embraced proper



State of Illinois  
Department of Natural Resources

Hiking, Horseback Riding, Hunting, Archery

# Lowden-Miller

STATE FOREST

Lowden-Miller

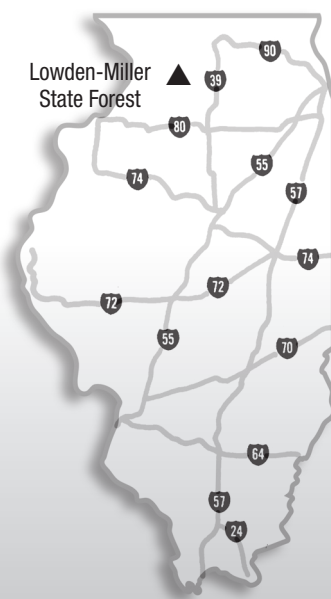
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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The governor remained an avid student of forestry throughout his life. In 1938, he invited the new forestry department at the University of Illinois to conduct research of the developing forest. Today, with nearly 80 percent of all data on Illinois hardwood forest growth having been developed at Sinissippi,

The governor's love of the land transcended his oldest in the state. were here before 1910 and are believed to be the productively. The earliest plantings of white pines and other tree species to see what would grow for crops, Lowden experimentally planted sandy farmland. Because the soil was of limited use, not only native hardwoods, but pasture and large and diverse farming operation that incorporated a "rocky river" or "troubled waters." It was part of a sippi Forest from American Indian terms meaning his wife, Florence Pullman Lowden, called it Sinissippi State Forest. But prior to that Gov. Lowden and Since 1992, the tract has been known as Lowden- or under his supervision.

land use and strongly believed in reforestation as a way to retard soil erosion. Over several decades, an estimated 500,000 trees were seeded directly by him Miller State Forest. But prior to that Gov. Lowden and his wife, Florence Pullman Lowden, called it Sinissippi Forest from American Indian terms meaning "rocky river" or "troubled waters." It was part of a large and diverse farming operation that incorporated, not only native hardwoods, but pasture and sandy farmland. Because the soil was of limited use for crops, Lowden experimentally planted white pines and other tree species to see what would grow productively. The earliest plantings of white pines were here before 1910 and are believed to be the oldest in the state.



**Lowden-Miller State Forest**  
c/o Castle Rock State Park • 1365 W. Castle Road  
Oregon, IL 61061, (815) 732-7329

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271 or visit our website at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us).
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

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## Forestry Practices

Named for the family, Lowden-Miller State Forest now totals 2,356 acres. It is managed by the Department of Natural Resources and is located across the Rock River from another DNR property, Castle Rock State Park, which oversees its daily operations.

The forest still serves as a field laboratory for the family's Sinissippi Forest Christmas Tree and operated until it closed in 2009. In 1955, high-quality firs and pines for the holidays in 1948, and his wife, Bonnie, sold an additional 1,039 acres to the state in 1993. In offering their land for sale to the state rather than seeing it subdivided or re-zoned for development, the family said they were achieving their goal of keeping the area an actively managed forest and preserving its beauty for future generations.

In June 1992, the state of Illinois purchased a 1,186-acre parcel of the forest from a grandson of Gov. and Mrs. Lowden, Warren P. Miller, and his wife, Nancy. Warren's brother, Phillip Lowden Miller, and his wife, Bonnie, sold an additional 1,039 acres to the state in 1993. In offering their land for sale to the state rather than seeing it subdivided or re-zoned for development, the family said they were achieving their goal of keeping the area an actively managed forest and preserving its beauty for future generations.

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## Parking

There are six parking areas available to the public. Information on the site is available at each lot.

## Hunting

The site offers deer, squirrel and turkey hunting. For regulations and permit information, contact the Castle Rock State Park office.

## Hiking

Lowden-Miller State Forest has approximately 22 miles of maintained trails available for hiking and cross-country skiing. These trails are open for use year-round except for a few days during the firearm hunting seasons. Check for closing dates at Castle Rock State Park.

## Equestrian Trail

An equestrian parking area and designated horse trails are available. For information on the equestrian program and trail usage, contact the Castle Rock State Park office.

## Camping

While camping facilities are not available at Lowden-Miller State Forest, other nearby state sites offer them, including Castle Rock State Park or Lowden Memorial State Park, both near Oregon, or White Pines Forest State Park, near Mount Morris.

For more information about Lowden-Miller State Forest, contact Castle Rock State Park, 1365 W. Castle Road, Oregon, IL 61061, phone (815) 732-7329, fax (815) 732-6742.

