

TRAIL INFORMATION

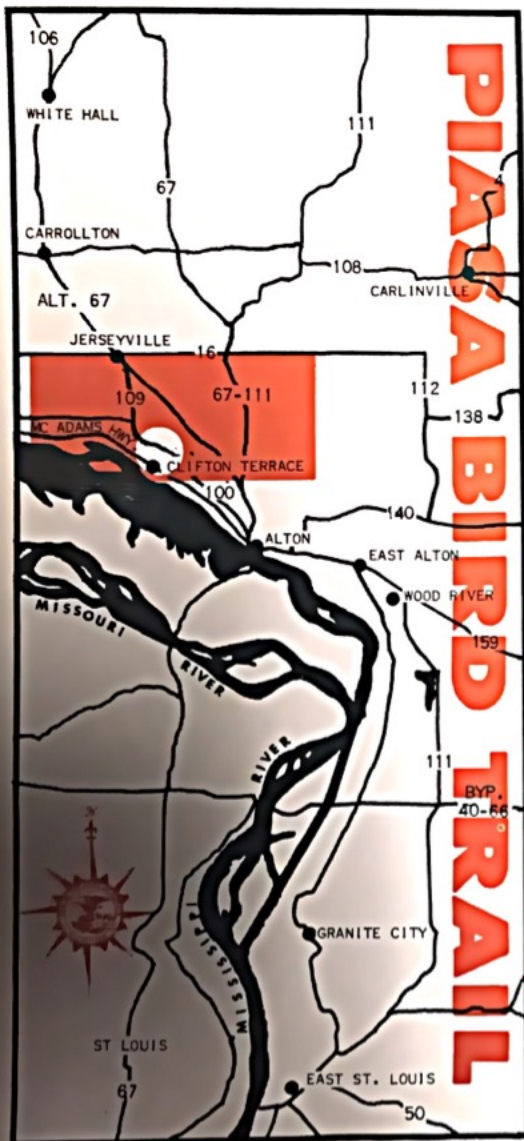
- WHO?** Any organized group under adult supervision may make application.
- WHAT?** Piassa Bird Trail is a 14 mile "circular" trail, starting and ending at the Piassa Bird Hostel.
- WHERE?** Trail headquarters is known as Piassa Bird Hostel located at the Alton Police Youth Camp, 8 miles north-west of Alton, Illinois.
- WHY?** The Piassa Bird Trail is operated for the express benefit of Explorer Post #80, and all those who enjoy the challenge and beauty of a rugged trail.
- WHEN?** The trail will officially open June 8, 1963. This is a four - seasons trail, varying in beauty and interest from the Spring-Summer green foliage the Fall scarlet and gold, and the ice-in-the-river Winter starkness.
- HOW?**
- * Complete and mail the attached application blank. Confirmation, information on church services, maps, and additional specific information will be forwarded upon receipt of application.
 - * Each group hiking the trail must have a ratio of one adult leader to about 10 hikers. The trail should be hiked in one day.
 - * Uniform should consist of comfortable but neat hiking clothes. Because of the ruggedness of the terrain, long pants are recommended. Because of the sanctity of a portion of the trail, girls must wear slacks and be dressed in good taste.
 - * Piassa Bird Hostel offers:
 - ▶ Overnight sleeping accommodations, dormitory style 50¢ per person.
 - ▶ Camping Area..... 25¢ per person. (Bring sleeping bags, air mattresses, and tents)
 - ▶ Available showers, toilet facilities, and refreshments.
 - * After hiking the trail; patches are available on site for \$1.00. Medals are available on site for \$2.00
 - * Snake bite kits and water canteens should be considered minimum equipment.
 - * Food may be purchased at about the mid-point of the trail.
 - * Groups must stay together at all times, and wandering off the trail is strictly prohibited.

*** UNIT LEADERS ARE TO MAKE SURE THAT KNIVES ARE NOT CARRIED ON THE TRAIL.**

We want you to enjoy the trail but sincerely request and expect you to help us maintain the use and beauty of the trail by keeping it clean; by maintaining a high sense of courtesy; by showing consideration for the property of those gracious individuals and organizations, from whom permission makes this trail possible.

TRAILS UNLIMITED, INC.

TRAILS UNLIMITED, INC.
P. O. BOX 33
ROXANA, ILLINOIS 62084



PIASSA BIRD TRAIL



FULLY EMBROIDERED MULTICOLOR PATCH



TRAILS UNLIMITED, INC.

P. O. BOX 33, ROXANA, ILLINOIS

OCT 15 1966

PIASA BIRD APPLICATION

ABOUT THE TRAIL



LEGEND OF THE PIASA BIRD

Many moons, before the arrival of the palefaces, when the great magolonyx and mastodon were still living on the green, grassy prairies there existed a bird of such dimensions that it could easily carry off in its talons a full grown deer. Having obtained the taste of human flesh, from that period on, nothing else would satisfy its ravenous hunger. He would dart suddenly and unexpectedly down upon an Indian of the Illini, bear him off to his cave and devour him. Hundreds of warriors attempted for years to destroy him but without success. Whole villages were nearly depopulated and great consternation grew within the villages of the Illini. At length, Ouatoga, famous chieftain of the Illini, separated himself from the rest of the tribe, fasted in solitude for the space of the whole moon, and prayed to the Great Spirit that his children be delivered from the great Piasa. On the last night of the fast, the Great Spirit appeared before him in a dream and directed him to take twenty of his best archers, each armed with a bow and a poisoned arrow, and conceal themselves in a designated spot. Near the place of concealment, there was to stand in open view upon the bluff, a victim of the beast. As soon as the Piasa pounced upon the victim, the warriors must pierce the monster in a vital mark. The next morning the chieftain awoke, and started out to tell the rest of the tribe of his happenings. The warriors were quickly selected and placed in the ambush as directed. Ouatoga offered himself as victim, for he was willing to die for his tribe. Placing himself upon the bluff, he soon saw the Piasa eyeing his prey. He began to sing the chant of the warrior's death song. A moment later, the Piasa picked itself up quick as a thunderbolt and rose into the air, pouncing itself upon the chieftain. Scarcely had he reached his prey, when every bow was sprung and every arrow met its mark. The Piasa uttered a scream of terror, and tumbled and fell over the side of the steep bluff and fell into the mighty Mississippi River, its carcass leaving the earth to quake. Ouatoga was safe, not even an arrow or talon touching him. The Master of Life, in admiration of the great deed performed, had surrounded the chieftain with an invisible shield, and the Illini were saved!

The Piasa Bird Trail offers a unique experience in trail hiking, combining the beauty of nature afforded by the scenic views from atop the bluffs and palisades along the shores of the Mississippi River just North-West of Alton, Illinois; the interesting and busy traffic on the river, both pleasure and commercial; the opportunities to study plant and animal life in the game preserves; and the historical significance of the land and legends of the Illini Indians, and the expeditions of Pere Marquette and Lewis-and-Clark.

Shortly after starting the trail, the hiker gets his first panorama of the Mighty Mississippi and the bluffs over which the trail leads, and then again from atop the bluffs, looking for miles upstream, downstream, and across into the State of Missouri. The trail winds along the top of the bluffs and finally drops down to river level, where for a number of miles interest is afforded by the pleasure boats, water skiers, sail boats, massive river barges and tow boats, and finally the site of the Piasa Bird, to be painted again on the rocky face of the bluffs, as it was during the time of the Illini.

Paintings of the Piasa Bird were first mentioned in Pere Marquette's account of his trip down the Mississippi in 1673. As Marquette described the pictures; "as we were descending the river, we saw high rocks with hideous monsters painted on them, and upon which the bravest Indians did not look. They are as large as a calf, with heads and horns like a goat; their eyes red; beard like a tiger; and a face like a man's. Their tails are so long that they pass over their head and between their forelegs, under their belly, and ending like a fish's tail. They are painted red, green, and black."

From this historic point, the trail again leads to the top of the bluffs, from where an entirely different view of the river valley reveals Alton Lake, Lock-Dam #26 far downstream, and Piasa Island and Eagles Nest Island upstream. As the trail follows the undulations of the bluffs, each new turn greets the hiker with a new scenic experience. Occasionally the trail of necessity must turn inland, and again another facet of nature is revealed. Finally river-level is again approached and the hiker is nearing the end of his experience, but still interest is maintained as the trail leads past the sheltered harbor of the Alton Motorboat Club, Lockhaven Country Club, and the cottages of residents along Mill Creek. Now we again see the Piasa Bird Hostel, and the thought of a shower, cold drinks, refreshments cause us to quicken our pace. TIRED? OH BOY !!

(NAME OF GROUP) _____ OF _____ (CITY AND STATE) _____ AND

(COUNCIL IF ANY) _____ COUNCIL WISHES TO HIKE THE PIASA BIRD TRAIL ON _____

(DATE) _____ OR _____ (ALTERNATE DATE) _____

★ WE PLAN TO HAVE _____ HIKERS AND I WILL NEED YOUR (1) OVERNIGHT DORMITORY FACILITIES, (2) CAMPING AREA,
(3) NO OVERNIGHT FACILITIES. (CIRCLE NUMBER)

★ WE PLAN TO ARRIVE IN ALTON ABOUT _____ (TIME) _____ ON THE _____ (DATE OF ARRIVAL) _____ AND WOULD LIKE TO
START THE TRAIL ABOUT _____ (TIME) _____ ★ WE DESIRE TO BUY OUR TRAIL MARKS (1) WHILE IN TOWN OR (2) SEND
FOR THEM. ★ IT IS AGREED THAT TRAILS UNLIMITED, INC. WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ACCIDENTS OR
LOSS OF PROPERTY.

(DATE OF APPLICATION) _____ (ADDRESS) _____ (PHONE) _____ SIGNED _____ (GROUP LEADER) _____