



Riley Park is Delphi's largest park, adjacent to Deer Creek and Highway 39/421 east of Washington Street. It houses a lighted softball field with concession stand, tennis court, basketball court, a modern playground, and rest rooms. These facilities are used for various sports events. There is also a measured walking track with exercise stations. Fishermen enjoy Deer Creek from the bridge, the bank, and the remains of a dam.

The park has a gazebo, a picnic shelter with tables and grill, and Riley Cabin—a year-round facility with restrooms. All three of these structures can be reserved and rented at the city office.



Picnic tables and grills as well as park benches are located throughout the park near the boardwalk which runs along the creek bank. A suspension bridge over Deer Creek was rebuilt in 2004 after being lost in the 2003 flood. Bridges were built at that approximate site in 1908, 1911, 1989, and 1998. After the 1913 flood, there was no bridge there until 1989.

Riley Park was named for Hoosier poet, James Whitcomb Riley, who often visited friends in the Delphi area and gave readings of his work at the Delphi Opera House. His poem "On the Banks o' Deer Crick" reflects the images and language of Delphi at the turn of the century.

The Deer Creek swimming pool dam was completed in 1925, and, on Sunday the 16th, over 500 citizens attended the opening of the Riley Memorial Swimming Pool. The bathing beach and bath houses were constructed on the south bank of the stream where Riley Park is now located. From this time, it became a long term project to develop and beautify this area with the intention of creating "a new city park for greater Delphi."

The land for this park was donated to the city in 1930 by E.W. Bowen, and the Chamber of Commerce raised funds to develop the park. It became one of the most beautiful parks in Indiana. It also contained a park attendant's house, a landscaped section containing a flagpole erected by the D.A.R. in 1932, flower urns, a formal garden, a key-shaped flower garden which was once a fish pool fed by a flowing spring. At one time, the park also contained a skating rink.

In 1936, the Delphi parks accommodated 5,000 visitors and dates were already being reserved for the 1937 season. On one Sunday, during which there were four reunions, 1,000 people were present.

A quarter mile cinder track was also a basic feature of the original park, providing a much needed facility for high school track competition. After World War II, night lighting was installed and locker rooms were added to the bath house for use by the Delphi High School football program. In the 1960s, football and track activities moved near Hillcrest Elementary School, in south Delphi. In 1967 the Delphi Lions Club donated the picnic pavilion to the park.

Hoosier Celebration '88, a planned statewide community-by-community celebration of Indiana's past and its potential for the future, is responsible for the construction of the walking/exercise trail, new parking lot, and other improvements in this park.