

OKLAHOMA ROCKS!

Lesson 6: A Look into Northeastern Oklahoma

Northeastern Oklahoma, specifically the Ozark Plateau, is known for its many lakes and rivers. Because most of the area is underlain by limestone, the streams and lakes are amazingly clear, even after our spring “gully-washers.” The lakes and streams provide recreation, wildlife refuge areas and sources for civic, industrial and agricultural water use. The McClellan-Kerr Navigation System on the Arkansas River provides water transport from the port of Catoosa down to the Mississippi River, which provides access to ocean-going vessels.



Part of northeast Oklahoma is on the southwest flank of the Ozark Plateau, a broad asymmetrical dome produced by a series of minor uplifts during the early and middle Pennsylvanian Period. The region underwent successive submergences and emergences during the Paleozoic Era, and marine fossils, such as brachiopods, bryozoans, crinoids, corals, and an occasional shark’s tooth, are found in the limestone beds today.

This area contains dense growths of oak, hickory, and other hardwoods, with a scattering of pine and cedar. The region’s history includes oil and gas production, lead and zinc mines, and coal mines.

Questions:

1. Imagine that you work for a local chamber of commerce and are trying to attract tourism and businesses to northeast Oklahoma and want to focus on the resources in this area. Consider such factors as the water, transportation routes, raw materials and agricultural products that are available. What could potential employees who want to move to the area expect in terms of housing, recreation and income?
2. As mentioned, limestone keeps the streams and lakes amazingly clear. What is the science behind this? Are there other types of rocks that would yield the same result?

This lesson is part of the Newspapers In Education program, Oklahoma Rocks. To learn more visit nie.newsok.com.



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