

U.S. Considers 25,000-Acre Area Park

Our Springfield Bureau

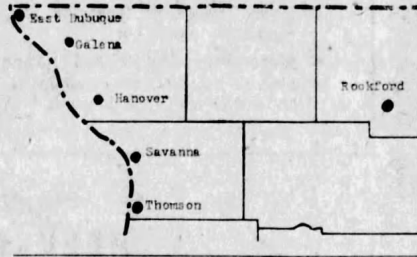
SPRINGFIELD — Northwestern Illinois stands a good chance of being selected as the site of a 25,000-acre national park, an official of the Illinois Department of Parks and Monuments said Wednesday.

Shelby Lee, the department's assistant superintendent, said two representatives of the federal government who toured the area between Thomson and East Dubuque last week indicated it suited them more than two other sites under consideration.

"This area has been under consideration for a couple of years, along with one in central Illinois near Charleston and one in Southern Illinois," Lee said. "We think it has a better chance because it is near a major population center — Chicago."

Although Lee wouldn't pin-point the area under consideration, he said it generally is along the Illinois side of the Mississippi River.

"They want to create a lake in the park,



but that will depend on several factors," Lee said. "They'll have to find out if there is a watershed available in the area and they'll have to take test borings to find out if the land will hold water."

After spending two days inspecting the area, the representatives of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation returned to Washington to summarize their findings and make a re-

commendation to officials of the Department of the Interior.

Lee said the tentative plans for a national park have no connection with the enlargement last week of Mississippi Palisades State Park near Savanna.

Lee said the state paid \$80,000 for a 122-acre tract of land owned by Ted R. Haller, former operator of the Savanna Valley Ski Resort.

"This is what we call an 'inholding,' the purchase of property that we have virtually surrounded to square off the park area," Lee said. "We still have some more property like this we want to acquire around the park when we get the right price and have the money."

Skiing equipment on the Haller property already has been removed and Lee said there are no plans at present to replace it.

"We have no definite plans for this property, but it is very picturesque, and I'm sure it will fit in with the rest of the park," he said.

The new acquisition brings the total acreage of the Savanna park to about 2,000, Lee said.