



Raging Rivers Shares Haunted History at Park's Halloween Attraction

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
October 14 2023 7:35 AM

GRAFTON - Raging Rivers Water Park is a favorite summer spot, but the history of the property is more spooky than sunny. This month, the park is hosting a Haunted Trail for those who are brave enough to face the ghosts.

The Raging Rivers' Haunted Trail is a 30–45 minute walk through “Illinois’s darkest and most haunted forest,” according to the [park’s website](#). Located at 100 Palisades Parkway in Grafton, the trail is open every Saturday until Oct. 28, 2023, with plenty of scarers and props to keep you on your toes.

“We took advantage of some of the haunted woods that we have on our property,” explained Jeremy Hayes, general manager at the park. “Back in the 40s there was a nitroglycerine plant that was on the property, and they had multiple accidents. After the final accident, they finally shut it down...It’s a little creepy back there, it really is, if you know the history of the woods a little bit.”

Nitroglycerine is an explosive known for its instability; Hayes said that the final explosion was violent enough to shatter windows all the way in St. Louis. This ghost story is front of mind for every visitor who treks the Haunted Trail.

But while it’s creepy, the new attraction has been a lot of fun for the guests and employees. The trail loops around the Raging Rivers park and is easy to traverse. The scarers, who double as lifeguards during the summer, are “having a lot of fun with it,” and every guest so far has enjoyed classic haunted house props like strobe lights, jump scares, loud noises and fog.

“It’s probably one of the funnest things that I’ve been a part of in the park,” Hayes said. “It’s a way to keep our guests interacting with the park a little bit longer than just our

normal waterpark season, and it also keeps our staff entertained, keeping them on board. It's been a really, really good event."

Raging Rivers started planning the Haunted Trail in July. Hayes worked with the other manager and the Raging Rivers owners, who ultimately decided the Haunted Trail would be a fun way to celebrate the spooky season and expand the water park's offerings. To Hayes, this is an example of how the park's new owners have stepped up since they purchased Raging Rivers in 2020.

"They're great, because they care about putting money back into Grafton and money back into the economy. They're putting it back into the park. They're investing in people like me and their staff," Hayes said.

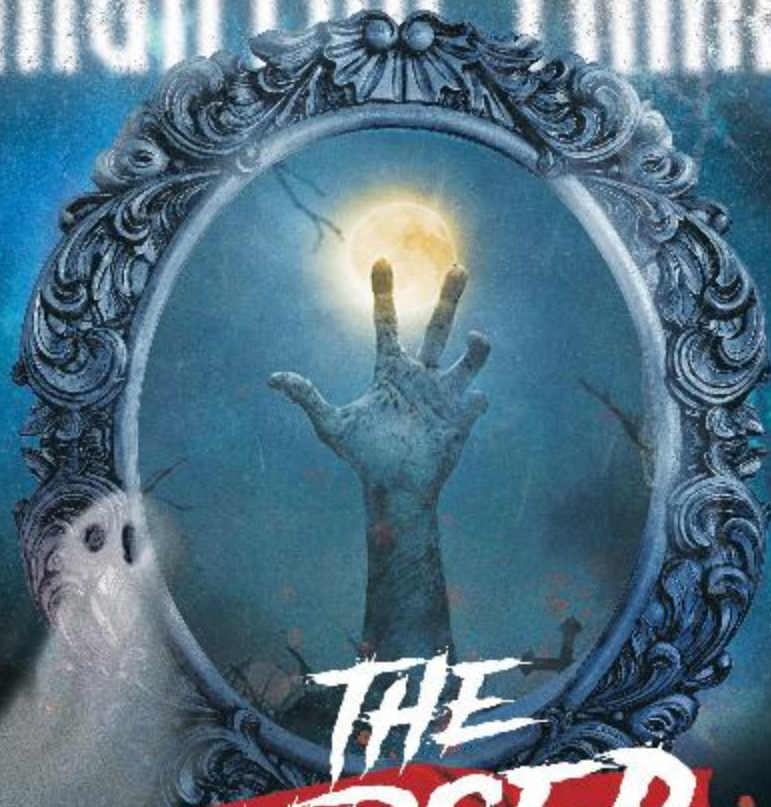
He added that the Haunted Trail has been a boost to employee morale, as both the scarers and the guests have gotten into the spirit. They welcomed approximately 300 guests on the trail's opening night and received nothing but positive feedback.

Tours depart every 15 minutes starting at 7 p.m., with the last "terror trek" at 10:45 p.m. The scaring is a little less intense from 7–8 p.m., but the spookiness intensifies after dark. The park offers glow bands in different colors, which will indicate what "level of scaring" you want to experience. But still, Raging Rivers warns that the trail might not be suitable for all kids. Tours are geared toward ages 16 and up after 8 p.m.

If you're looking for a "ghoulishly good time," as the park's website promises, you can [purchase tickets online](#) for \$13 or at the park for \$20. For safety reasons, closed toe shoes are required and visitors are asked not to bring flashlights. There is no contact allowed with creatures, scarers and staff, and you should avoid looking directly into the strobe lights. For more information and to reserve your spot, visit the [official website at RagingRivers.com](#).

"It is scary. It is a lot of fun, and it's a way of creating memories at the park," Hayes said. "That's what Raging Rivers is all about — creating memories for the families to last — and hopefully this will be something that goes on for the future of Raging Rivers."

RAGING RIVERS
HAUNTED TRAIL



THE
CURSED
GRAVEYARD

TRAIL IS OPEN SATURDAYS IN OCTOBER STARTING AT 7:00 PM.

100 PALISADES PKWY | GRAFTON, ILLINOIS | RAGINGRIVERS.COM