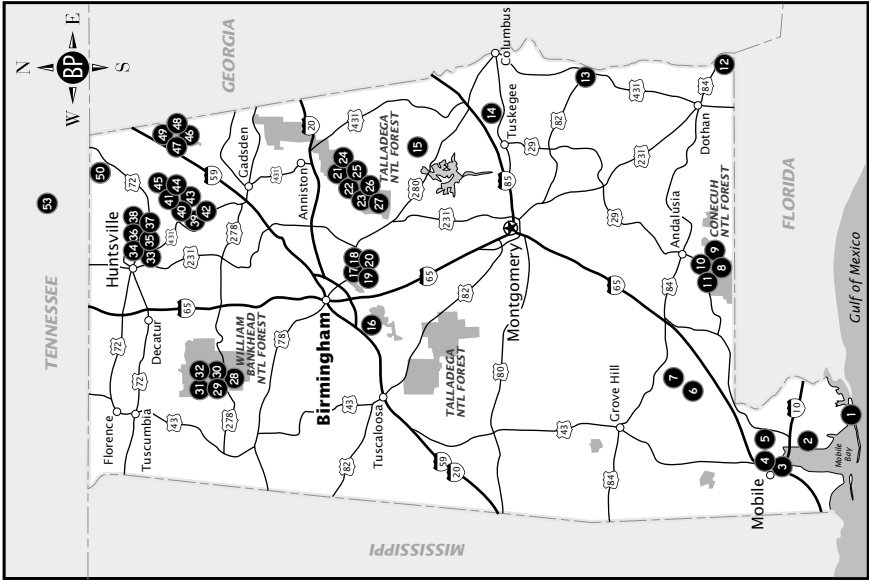


Hike AMERICA™

Alabama

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THIS PAGE**



Coast

The Gulf Coast region of Alabama supports not only a wide variety of endangered wildlife but also countless perches from which to view them.

The traveling by foot in this region is rarely strenuous. Elevations range from sea level to around 100 feet. It's in this region that the Mobile and Tensaw rivers converge to form the Tensaw River Delta, and ultimately empty into the Gulf of Mexico. The Tensaw River Delta has the distinction of being the second

1. Pine Beach Trail
2. Weeks Bay Nature Trail
3. USS Alabama Historical Trail
4. Cemetery Trail
5. CCC Trail
6. Gazebo Trail
7. Redoubt Trail Loop

Gulf

Honorable Mentions

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

largest river delta in the country—second only to the Mississippi Delta. The American alligator calls this area home, as do the largest population of black bear in the state and the endangered brown pelican.

This region is also the home to the white sand beaches of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach. The scenic in the Pine Beach Trail Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge takes hikers directly to the beach. The refuge protects such endangered species of animals as the beach mouse and the loggerhead sea turtle.

History abounds in the region, as well, with the centerpiece being the city of Mobile, the state's second largest city. Mobile is known as the "Mother of Mystics" and is recognized as the birthplace of Mardi Gras in the United States. Hiking along the USS Alabama Historic Trail is a good way to soak in the 300-year history of the city.

It is also in this area that the famous "Battle of Mobile Bay" occurred during the Civil War. It was in this battle that Admiral David Farragut uttered the immortal words, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Speaking of the Civil War, just across the Mobile River in Spanish Fort is Blakeley Historic State Park, site of the Battle of Blakeley, the last major battle of the Civil War.

The weather in the region is sub-tropical. Late summer heat is accentuated with high humidity that often hits 100%, making outdoor activity a bit uncomfortable and sometimes not recommended. The warm air and its location on the Gulf of Mexico mean that sudden and very heavy rainfall can be expected without warning. The storms are short, but the rain plentiful. In fact, Mobile has held the National Weather Service title of "wettest city in America" a number of times.

Perhaps the worst weather system you'll see in the summer is a hurricane. Mobile and Baldwin counties have been hit by several large and devastating hurricanes in the past, but an eye on the weather forecast will keep you safe. Hurricane season "generally" runs between May and November.

Fall and winter along the Gulf Coast is wonderful, to say the least. Most of the time, moderate temperatures averaging in the low-to-mid 70s last well into the fall. During this time, the humidity is quite low, making hiking a real pleasure. Temperatures in January average around 52 degrees. Now don't get me wrong; it does get cold in Dixie. Temperatures have dropped to below zero on occasion, but those days are few and are usually short lived.

1

Pine Beach Trail

Hike Summary

This is one of those surprising trails—a simple walk down a forested nature trail that unfolds to reveal the sand dunes and pristine white beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. As the trail meanders to the sea, you're treated to a close look at the marshes of southern Alabama, where American alligators may be found.

Hike Specs

Start: From the southeast end of the Pine Beach parking area at Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge

Length: 4-mile out and back

Approximate Hiking Time: 1½ hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy, along flat roadways

Trail Surface: Dirt and sand service road; fine beach sand

Lay of the Land: Forest of slash pine, dotted with sawgrass and live oak; sea oats and scrub pines along the dunes; marshes and beaches

Elevation Gain: [Need information]

Land Status: National wildlife refuge

Nearest Town: Gulf Shores, AL

Other Trail Users: Service vehicles on service-road portion of trail

Canine Compatibility: Not dog friendly—due to wildlife and the fragile nature of the preserve; if you do take a dog, leash required

Getting There

From Mobile: Take I-10 west to AL 59 (Exit 44). Head south on AL 59 toward Gulf Shores. Travel 0.5 miles past the Intracoastal Waterway to the intersection with AL 180. Follow AL 180 west 9.0 miles to the refuge headquarters on the right. To get to the trailhead, continue past the refuge headquarters another mile. The parking area is on the left side of the highway and marked with a large wooden sign that reads "PINE BEACH TRAIL." The trailhead is at the southeast end of the parking lot. **Delorme:**

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Along a stretch of highway at the extreme southern tip of Alabama, a peninsula stretches westward along the Gulf of Mexico to form the mouth of the Mobile Bay delta. On this spit of land, between outcroppings of beachside condominiums, lies Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge encompasses more than 6,500 acres of fragile landscape and is home to more than 500 species of animals and birds—which provide hikers with endless photo ops. The key to viewing this wide variety of animal life is to take the time to sit quietly on one of the many benches situated just off the trail. Patience will be rewarded each and every time.



End of the trail at the Gulf of Mexico.

The Pine Beach Trail is the longest in the refuge. Early in the hike, the trail crosses a marshy area as it works its way between Little Lagoon and Gator Lake. This is the best vantage point for viewing alligators. Many visitors leave disappointed because they didn't see an alligator—but they are there. Most of the time, they lie just below the surface of the water, looking like submerged logs. Stay quiet and be patient and you'll see them. Alligators are naturally wary of humans; do not feed them or approach them in any way.

Saltwater fishing is allowed along the banks of Little Lagoon—of course, a saltwater fishing license is required. Across the trail from Little Lagoon is Gator Lake—a 40-acre freshwater lake known for its largemouth bass and catfish. It's open for fishing year-round, with a freshwater fishing license required.

Among the rare animals in the refuge is the Alabama beach mouse. Although you'll probably never see one, you can tell they're here from the numerous burrows and mouse trails near the beaches. Avoid disturbing the burrows.

Another unusual animal that visits the refuge is the loggerhead sea turtle. The loggerhead species made its first appearance on Earth more than 200 million years ago and has remained virtually the same ever since. The loggerhead population has declined due to habitat loss along the coastlines.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from southeast end of Pine Beach Trail, parking area at the cable gateway.

0.2 As the trail heads southeast, the first of 15 numbered markers indicate the flora of the area—be sure to pick up a brochure at refuge headquarters to follow along.

0.3 Here you encounter the toughest gradient—a gradual downhill jaunt of about 10 feet as the trail heads toward sea level. At the bottom of this hill is a small sign marking an abandoned route.

0.4 The trail begins to curve to a more southerly direction and comes to a gazebo. Notices and additional information are posted here and there are benches to sit and view the marsh and its inhabitants. A few feet further, the trail crosses a 10-foot wooden footbridge over a small canal that feeds the marsh. Evidence of hurricane Frederic from 1979 and the debris from its 150-mph winds can still be seen here.

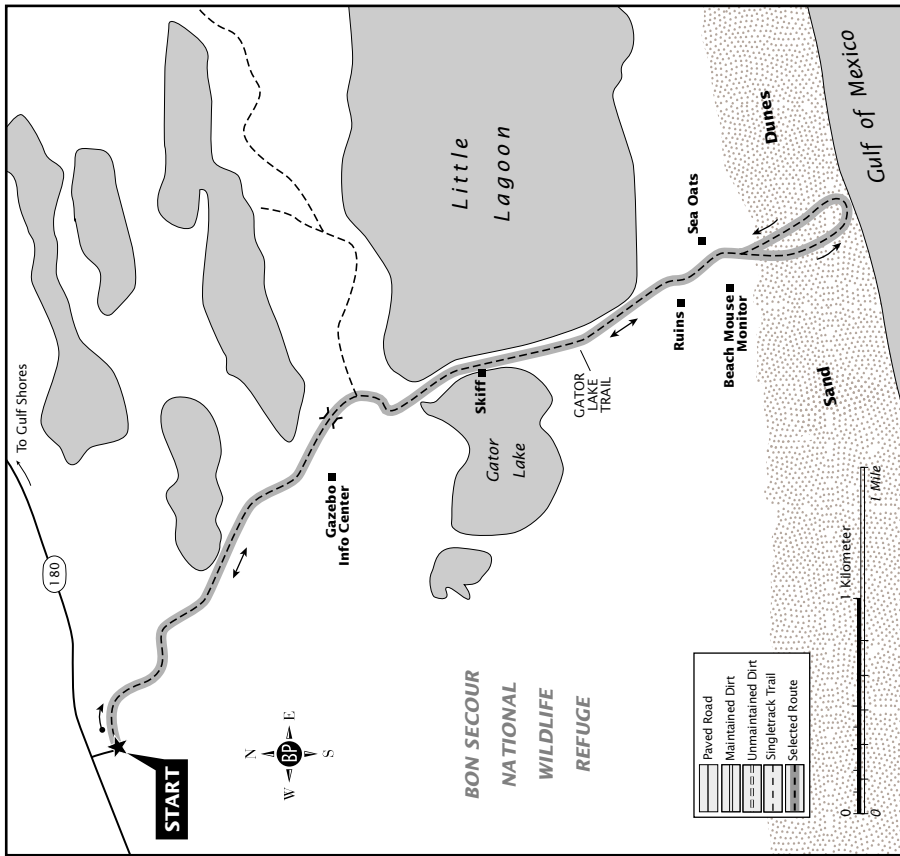
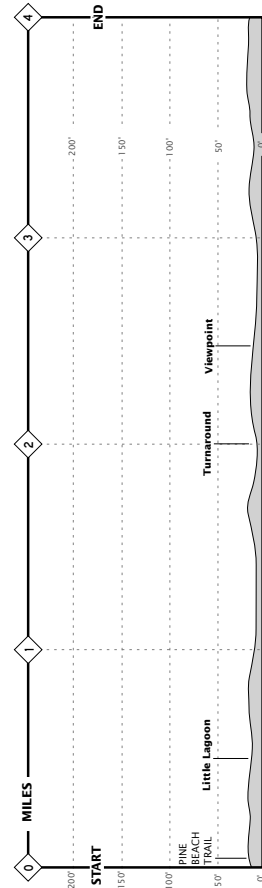
0.5 The trail heads due south. A brown directional sign points to Little Lagoon on the left, Gator Lake to the right, and the

beach one mile straight ahead. Just a few feet farther and there are excellent views of Little Lagoon. The condominiums of Gulf Shores are in the distance. The trail travels the banks of Little Lagoon. You'll likely see muscle and clams and small schools of fish.

0.6 A sign marks the beginning of the Gator Lake Trail to the right. This 0.8-mile trail is used to portage boats to the lake



View from the footbridge toward Gator Lake. The Debris is from Hurricane Frederic.



for fishing. There is also a small skiff here that the refuge allows visitors to use to float around the 40-acre lake. At this point, the trail becomes progressively more sandy, all the way to the Gulf.

1.0 Reach a Y-intersection and continue on to the right. "BEACH" sign point you in the right direction.

1.3 The trail now passes by the ruins of a beach house that was destroyed by hurricane Frederic. Notice the Alabama beach mouse holes along the sides of the trail in the sand. Also, the Gulf's sea oats begin to line the trail. The waters of

the Gulf of Mexico can be seen straight ahead.

1.5 The trail crests a sand dune and you can see a beautiful panoramic of the Gulf as well as the skyline of Gulf Shores. Continue another 0.5 miles along the dunes and take in the sea breeze and views. In the summer months, you can see the tracks of nesting loggerhead sea turtles.

2.0 Turn around and retrace your route back to the trailhead.

4.0 Arrive back at the trailhead.

Mullet Over

The *Flora-Bama Lounge* in Perdido Key, Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico, directly on the Florida-Alabama border, is renowned not only for its annual *National Songwriter Festival*, but also for its mullet. And not just for eating. Each winter, this bar and restaurant hosts the *National Mullet Tossing Championships*. Participants toss mullet (dead, of course) as far as they can across the border for cash and prizes.

Each year, people flock to the *Flora-Bama* to compete in the contest. For the past several years, *South Alabama native* and former NFL quarterback *Kenny Stabler* has tossed out the first mullet to get the event under way. The event became so popular that at *Mobile Mysticks* hockey games, instead of throwing octopus like they do in Detroit when a goal is scored, fans began throwing mullet—a practice that has since been banned by the *East Coast Hockey League*.

At Bon Secour, loggerheads have a safe nesting area. From May through September, they make their way unobtrusively to the dunes at night, lay their eggs, and then crawl back into the sea.

Wildlife is not the only striking feature of the trail. The flora in the refuge is just as fascinating. Blueberries and huckleberries grow along the trail, though berry picking isn't allowed—in order to preserve the feeding plots for the wildlife. Among other plant life is the hairy wicky (no kidding)—a plant similar to mountain laurel, with white blooms in the summer.

Marshy areas support floating bladders—aquatic plants with yellow flow-ers. Trees include live oaks, myrtles, dwarf sand oaks, and several varieties of pine. Along the beach, the tall, golden grasses known as sea oats wave in the sea breeze—but again, no picking!

The trail culminates in a breathtaking view and walk along white beaches on the Gulf of Mexico. You can fish in the surf here (as long as you have a saltwater license). Swift currents and an undertow mean that swimming is not allowed, but only a few highway miles away, Gulf State Park offers swimming.

If you decide to bushwhack off the designated trails, it's best to wear boots for thicker brush areas and waders through the marshes. Otherwise a good pair of sneakers will work fine along the service road, with either sandals or bare feet on the sandy parts of the trail.

Among the wildlife you'd just as well avoid are mosquitoes and sand gnats. Rather than rely on luck, bring bug spray. The swampy marsh, combined with high humidity, make this a fertile environment for these formidable pests.

Ride Information

Trail Contacts:

Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Gulf Shores, AL; (334) 540-7720 or southeast.fws.gov/bonsecour

Schedule:

Trails are opened year round 7 A.M.–sunset. Refuge headquarters hours are M–F, 7 A.M.–4 P.M.

Fees/Permits:

No fees charged. No camping is allowed.

Local Information:

Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Gulf Shores, AL; 1-800-745-7263 or www.gulfshores.com

Local Events/Attractions:

National Shrimp Festival, first weekend of October, Gulf Shores, AL; (334) 968-6904 or www.alagulfcoastchamber.com—This is the biggest shrimp festival in the country featuring live bands, arts and crafts, and plenty of delicious Gulf Shrimp. • **Gulf State Park**, Gulf Shores, AL; (334) 948-7275 or www.dcnr.state.al.us—[Refer to the "Gulf Coast Honorable Mention" section for a description.]

Accommodations:

Acadian Inn, Orange Beach, AL; (334) 981-6710 • **Romar House Bed and Breakfast**, Orange Beach, AL; (334) 978-1625 or www.bbonlin.com/al/romarhouse

Restaurants:

Original Oyster House, Gulf Shores, AL; (334) 948-2445 • **Sea-N-Suds**, Gulf Shores, AL; (334) 948-7894

Organizations:

Mobile Sierra Club, Mobile, AL; www.sierraclub.org/chapters/al/mobile.html

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Smith Outdoors, Gulf Shores, AL; (334) 981-1855

Maps:

USGS maps: Bon Secour Bay, AL • **Pine Beach Trail Map, Bird List, & Refuge Pamphlet**—available at the *Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge* headquarters.

2

Weeks Bay Nature Trail

Hike Summary

This trail provides a short and very easy walk at the Weeks Bay Estuary. The estuary, home to a wide variety of birds and other plant and animal life, offers an interesting, enjoyable experience for all members of the family.

Hike Specs

Start: From the Weeks Bay Estuary office

Length: 1.3-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 1 hour

Difficulty Rating: Easy, over level paths

Trail Surface: Dirt path and boardwalks

Lay of the Land: Magnolias and cypress trees

Elevation Gain: [Need information]

Land Status: National estuarine research reserve

Nearest Town: Fairhope, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—leash required

Getting There

From Fairhope: Take U.S. 98 south 10 miles. Come to a stop sign and turn left (AL 42 and U.S. 98 now head to the east). Travel five miles. The estuary is clearly marked on the right. If you cross over the Weeks Bay Bridge, you've over shot the turn. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 63 G6



This is not a high-tech, high-altitude, three-day backpacking trip. In fact, it's just the opposite. This short and simple nature path is included here for the purposes of spotlighting an endangered habitat and providing the perfect hike for couples looking to take the kids—and who knows, the children just might learn something in the process.

Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is one of 26 estuaries administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. An estuary, by definition, is a semi-enclosed body of water where freshwater from rivers mixes with saltwater from the ocean. It is because of this merger of diversity that estuaries are generally teeming with a wide variety of plant and animal life.

The Weeks Bay reserve, established in 1986, protects land that was once at high risk of development—Baldwin County, in which the reserve is situated, is the fastest growing county in the state of Alabama. The reserve maintains for posterity 3,000 acres along Weeks Bay and Mobile Bay and is fed by the Magnolia and Fish rivers.

The reserve's nature trail utilizes a combination of vegetation-friendly boardwalks and dirt paths to lead you through the forested swamps, along the banks of salt and freshwater marshes, and through the tidal flats. Signs along the boardwalks identify animals and plants—the same information is also provided in a brochure available at the reserve office. Among the animals that live here are blue crabs, red-bellied turtles, and American alliga-

tors. More than 350 species of birds are found at Weeks Bay, either permanently or during migration periods. Among them are the black needlerush, the great blue heron, and the once-endangered brown pelican.

The first place to visit is the estuary office, where you'll find displays that describe the estuary and its plants and animals. At the back of the office building, where the trail begins, is a mini-zoo with fish, blue crabs, and an alligator.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the rear of the estuary office and head south onto the boardwalk. The path turns to the southeast in about 200 feet.

0.1 The boardwalk comes to a Y-intersection. Take the left fork and continue to the south.

0.2 Come to the banks of the bay. There are binoculars here for you to use. Turn left and head to the east. The path winds to the northwest and in 300 feet, returns to the previous Y-intersection. Turn left and head north back toward the office.

0.3 When you arrive back to the office, follow a sidewalk around to the right side of the building—between the office and the conference building—and arrive at the front parking lot. Turn left and head west. In 200 feet, come to a large wooden sign that reads "Nature Trail." Take the dirt path into the woods.

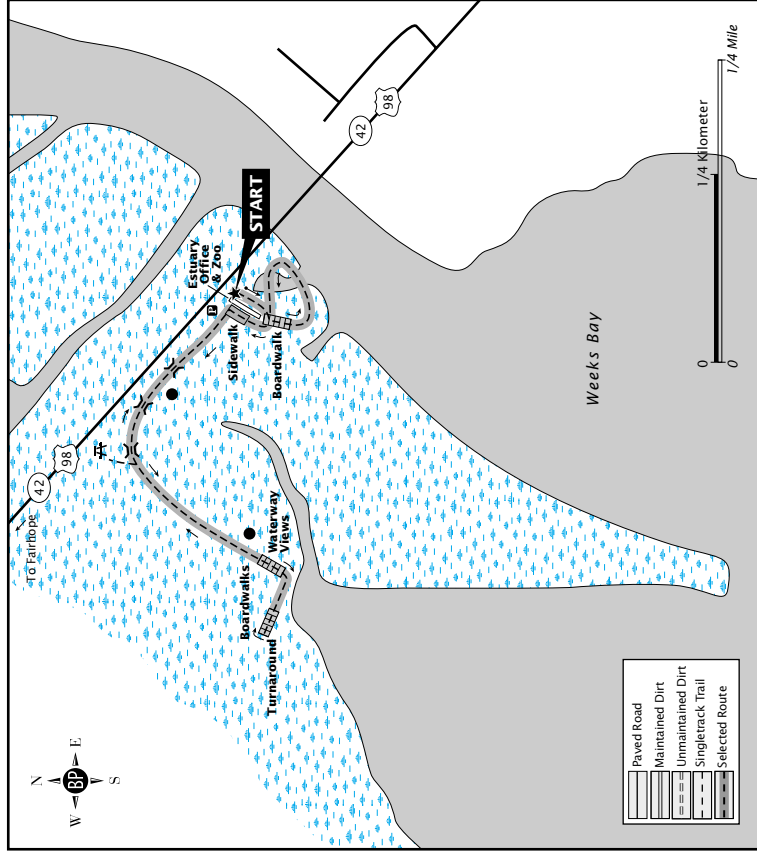
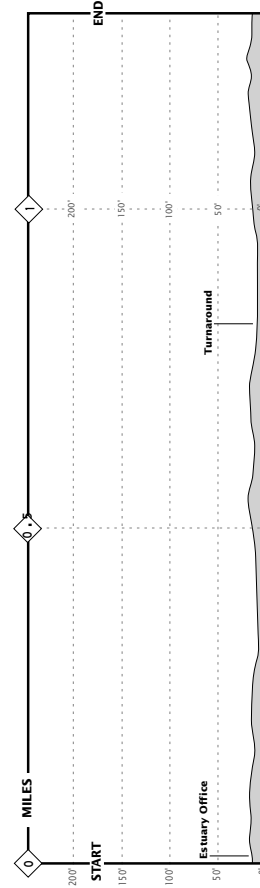
0.4 Head to the southwest over this flat, wide path. Downed trees surround the

area, but the path is well cleared. In 200 feet, come to a wooden footbridge over a small creek. Cross the bridge to the west. In 100 feet, cross another footbridge to the southwest. Along this section, diamond "WB" markers lead the way.

0.5 Cross another bridge to the west. *[Option. To the right, a short side trail leads to a picnic area near U.S. 98.]* Make a left turn and head southwest. The trail narrows somewhat but is still level and dirt.

0.8 The trail comes to a boardwalk that leads to the banks of the bay with great views of the waterway. Turn right and in 50 feet, come off the footbridge and travel on a dirt path to the northwest until you reach another boardwalk that gives you another perspective of the bay. Turn around here and follow the trail and boardwalk back to the parking lot.

1.3 Arrive back at the trailhead.



The Jubilee City

It's a phenomenon that occurs only once or twice a year between June and September, if at all, and only occurs in a few rare places on earth. It's a time after the sun sets when the breeze is still, the water of Mobile Bay is calm, and the residents of the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay in the city of Daphne wait for the call.

What happens is hundreds of thousands of fish, crabs, and other marine life swim right up to the shores of the bay and end up on the sandy beaches. The cry goes out around town, "JUBILEE!"—that's what this phenomenon is known as. Residents pick up buckets full of fresh seafood for their tables. But just as quick as it starts, the Jubilee is over.

No one is exactly sure what causes the Jubilee, but it's believed that a seasonal drop in the water's oxygen level draws both prey and predator to the surface looking for food and air.

While you're in the neighborhood, be sure to head down to the Weeks Bay Pitcher Plant Bog. (Take U.S. Route 98 over the nearby Weeks Bay Bridge and turn left onto County Road 17.) The curious pitcher plant is worth the visit. This wily carnivore feasts on insects and other tiny creatures—so watch the ankles (just kidding). The Wintermeyer Nature Trail guides visitors easily through the bog—which, contrary to what you might think, is a relatively dry environment.



Another boardwalk takes hikers to the banks of Weeks Bay.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Weeks Bay National Estuary,
Fairhope, AL; (334) 928-9792 or
inlet.geol.sc.edu/WKB/home.html

Schedule:

Open 9 A.M.–5 P.M. Monday–
Saturday, 1 P.M.–5 P.M. Sunday,
closed for state and federal holi-
days.

Local Information:

**Eastern Shore Chamber of
Commerce,** Daphne, AL; (334)
621-8222 or [www.siteone.com/
towns/chamber](http://www.siteone.com/towns/chamber) • **City of Fairhope,**
Fairhope, AL; (334) 928-2136 or
www.cofairhope.com

Local Events/Attractions:

Fairhope Arts and Crafts Festival,
2nd weekend of March, Fairhope,
AL; (334) 621-8222—One of the
largest such events on the Gulf
Coast with lots of music, food, and
of course, arts and crafts. •
Fairhope Municipal Pier, Fairhope,
AL; (334) 928-2136—A one-quar-
ter-mile long pier jutting into beau-
tiful Mobile Bay. The pier is open
for fishing and walks 24-hours. The
beach next to the pier for swim-
ming is open from 9 A.M.–5 P.M.
The city holds an impressive
Fourth of July fireworks over the
bay with music provided by the
Eastern Shore Symphony.

Accommodations:

The Parker House, Fairhope, AL;
(334) 928-8472

Restaurants:

The Yardarm, Fairhope, AL; (334)
928-0711—Fresh gulf seafood is
the fare at this restaurant located
right smack dab in the middle of
the Fairhope Municipal Pier.

Hike Tours:

Weeks Bay National Estuary,
Fairhope, AL; (334) 928-9792—
Contact the estuary office to set
up times for a guided tour of the
research facility and the estuary.

Organizations:

Weeks Bay Watershed Project,
Fairhope, AL; (334) 928-9792 •
Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation,
Fairhope, AL; (334) 990-5004

Other Resources:

**Alabama Department of
Environmental Management,**
Montgomery, AL; (334) 271-7710
or www.dcnr.state.al.us/

Maps:

USGS maps: Magnolia Springs, AL
• Brochures are available at the
estuary office

3

USS Alabama Historical Trail

Hike Summary

The city of Mobile is justly proud of its history and heritage, from the early Native Americans to the Europeans' first exploration of the region in 1528, through the Civil War, and into the city's present-day rejuvenation. This trail allows you to experience this history firsthand as you stroll by antebellum homes, historical museums, and old cemeteries. The route passes under towering live oaks draped in Spanish moss, making an archway above the road. Azaleas, blooming fiery red each spring, line the streets.

Hike Specs

Start: From the Fort Conde Museum
Length: 6.5-mile loop
Approximate Hiking Time: 3–4 hours
Difficulty Rating: Easy, on sidewalks
Trail Surface: Concrete sidewalks and paved road
Lay of the Land: Historical sites and museums; ancient oak trees
Elevation Gain: Need information
Land Status: City streets
Nearest Town: Mobile, AL
Other Trail Users: Cyclists and pedestrians
Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—leash required; bring water; dogs not permitted in homes or museums

Getting There

From Mobile: From I-65 in Mobile, take U.S. 90 east 15 miles to downtown Mobile. Turn right onto South Royal Street at the Bankhead Tunnel. Travel down the brick roadway 0.3 miles. Fort Conde, the starting location, is on the right with parking on the left. **DeLorme:** *Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 62 D4

ahead!" It was also here that William A. Alexander built the world's first successful submarine, the *Hunley*. It was eventually used to sink a federal ship off the coast of South Carolina.

This trail through time—named for the USS *Alabama* battleship, which is on display here—begins at the Fort Conde Welcome Center and Museum. This re-creation of the 1711 fort built by the French is only a third the size of the original but is located on the exact site of the old fort. A tour of the museum's pictures and artifacts offers a taste of what's in store on the walk. While at the fort, be sure to catch the musket firings by people dressed in early French marine uniforms, and the cannon firings from the ramparts.

From the fort, the trail swings past the original 1865 city hall, which is seeing renewed life as the new city museum. Next door are the J.L. Bedsole Imax Theater and the Gulf Coast Exploreum. The Exploreum features hands-on science activities, especially attractive to children. Just past the Imax Theater is a statue honoring Admiral Raphael Semmes, commander of the warship *Alabama* during the Civil War.



Fort Conde—the starting point for this trail.

It's time to get off the beaten path and hit the pavement with this city excursion created by the Boy Scouts as a badge and medal hike. The path travels the streets of Mobile, passing through centuries of history.

This history begins with the Maubilian, Choctaw, and Alibamu Indians who occupied this region for centuries. The first Europeans to visit and eventually settle the area were the Spanish in 1528, followed by the French in 1699, then the British in 1763. Finally the United States seized control in 1812.

Many of the events in Mobile history may amaze the average person. For example, forget what New Orleans says about Mardi Gras. That city's Mardi Gras may be bigger, but Mobile is the birthplace of this carnival celebration in the United States—beginning in 1830.

Mobile Bay was the site of the naval battle in which Union Admiral David Farragut uttered the famous words, "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed

Local Events/Attractions:

Mardi Gras, two weeks prior to Ash Wednesday, Mobile, AL; 1-800-252-3862 or www.mobile.org • **First Night Mobile**, December 31st, Mobile, AL; 1-800-252-3862 or www.mobile.org—This celebration is a non-alcoholic family festival celebrating the New Year with fireworks, live bands, and family activities. • **Mobile Mysticks I East Coast League Hockey**, Mobile, AL; (334) 208-7825 or www.mysticks.com—Ice Hockey is now a "Southern thing" as the Mysticks skate in to town. Catch the up and coming players of the NHL each year between the months of October and April. • **J.L. Bedsole Imax Theater**, Mobile, AL; (334) 208-6873 or www.exploreum.net—The theater is open in the summer Monday–Wednesday 9 A.M.–5 P.M., 9 A.M.–8 P.M. Thursdays, 9 A.M.–9 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 12 P.M.–5 P.M. Sunday. Fall and winter hours are 9 A.M.–5 P.M. Monday–Thursday, 9 A.M.–9 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 12 P.M.–5 P.M. Sunday. Admission is \$7 adults, \$6 for youths and seniors, and \$5.50 for children. • **Gulf Coast Exploreum**, Mobile, AL; (334) 208-6873 or www.exploreum.net—The museum is open in the summer Monday–Wednesday 9 A.M.–5 P.M., 9 A.M.–8 P.M. Thursdays, 9 A.M.–9 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 12 P.M.–5 P.M. Sunday. Fall and winter hours are 9 A.M.–5 P.M. Monday–Thursday, 9 A.M.–9 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 12 P.M.–5 P.M. Sunday. Admission is \$7 adults, \$6 for youths and seniors, and \$5.50 for children.

The trail travels down to the Mobile River, which made Mobile a thriving seaport second only to New Orleans. At the riverfront you'll see the modern spire of the Mobile Convention Center, and coming soon is the Gulf Coast Maritime Museum.

Looping back around to the southwest, the trail passes a series of historic buildings, including the Catholic Basilica of the Immaculate Conception (built in 1835) and the Berstein House (built in 1872), which up until 2000 housed the city museum. The trail passes Magnolia National Cemetery, named a national cemetery in 1866, which holds the remains of soldiers from the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Among those buried here are members of the first crew of the Civil War submarine Hunley, who died during sea trials of the warship.

You can also visit Church Street Cemetery, first set up in 1819 for victims of a yellow fever epidemic. Since then, many area notables have been laid to rest here, including Joe Cain, the man who brought Mardi Gras back to the South after the Civil War.

A word of caution about the weather: Bring a raincoat or umbrella if you visit in the summer. Heavy afternoon downpours are not uncommon.

Hike Information

- Trail Contacts:**
Fort Conde Visitor Center, Mobile, AL; (334) 434-7304—Open seven days a week 8 A.M.–5 P.M., closed Christmas and Mardi Gras Day
- Schedule:**
Open year round. One of the best times to take in the trail is the two weeks prior to Ash Wednesday (Mardi Gras).
- Fees/Permits:**
No fee is charged for hiking the trail or visiting the city museums.
- Local Information:**
City of Mobile Department of Tourism, Mobile, AL; 1-800-252-3862 or www.mobile.org • **Mobile Transit Authority**, (334) 344-5656—All bus routes serve Bienville Square. The Highway 90 bus travels the main route of this trail, Government Street. Buses run down Government Street every 30 minutes. Service runs Monday through Saturday until 6:30 P.M.
- Accommodations:**
Adam's Mark Hotel, Mobile, AL; (334) 438-4000 or www.adams-mark.com/mobile • **Radisson Admiral Semmes Hotel**, Mobile, AL; (334) 432-8000 or www.rdadmsemmes.com
- Restaurants:**
Port City Brewery, Mobile, AL; (334) 438-2739 • **Roussos's**, Mobile, AL; (334) 433-3322
- Local Outdoor Retailers:**
Academy Sports, Mobile, AL; (334) 344-0047 • **Ward's Army / Navy Stores**, Mobile, AL; (334) 479-9058
- Maps:**
USGS maps: Mobile, AL • **USS Alabama Historical Trail Map and assorted city brochures**—available at Fort Conde Welcome Center and Museum, Mobile, AL

Raising Cain in Mobile

The term "raising Cain" takes on a new meaning in Alabama's southernmost city, Mobile. The city was the scene of the first Mardi Gras celebration in the United States, back in 1830. The annual event was prohibited by Union troops during their occupation of the city following the Civil War.

One Mobilian, Joe Cain, brought the celebration back to life one evening when he and fellow revelers dressed as Indians and paraded through the streets of the city. Following Cain's death, a tradition began in which townspeople honored Cain by gathering around his grave during Mardi Gras and partying in an attempt to "raise Cain." The tradition continues to this day.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the Fort Conde Welcome Center and Museum. Be sure to pick up the trail pamphlet and while there, spend a few minutes browsing the exhibits. Head north on South Royal Street.

0.1 Pass the former city hall. This building was built in 1856 as a city fish market, and later became the city hall/market-place. In 1999, the city government moved to their new building and renovation is now underway to make this building the new home of the city museum, set to open in 2001. Next to the city hall is the Gulf Coast Exploreum and the J.L. Bedsole Imax Theater. Both are fantastic stops if you are traveling with children. Just past the theater is a statue honoring Admiral Raphael Semmes, the commander of the Civil War warship *Alabama*. Turn right onto Government Street (U.S. 90 east).

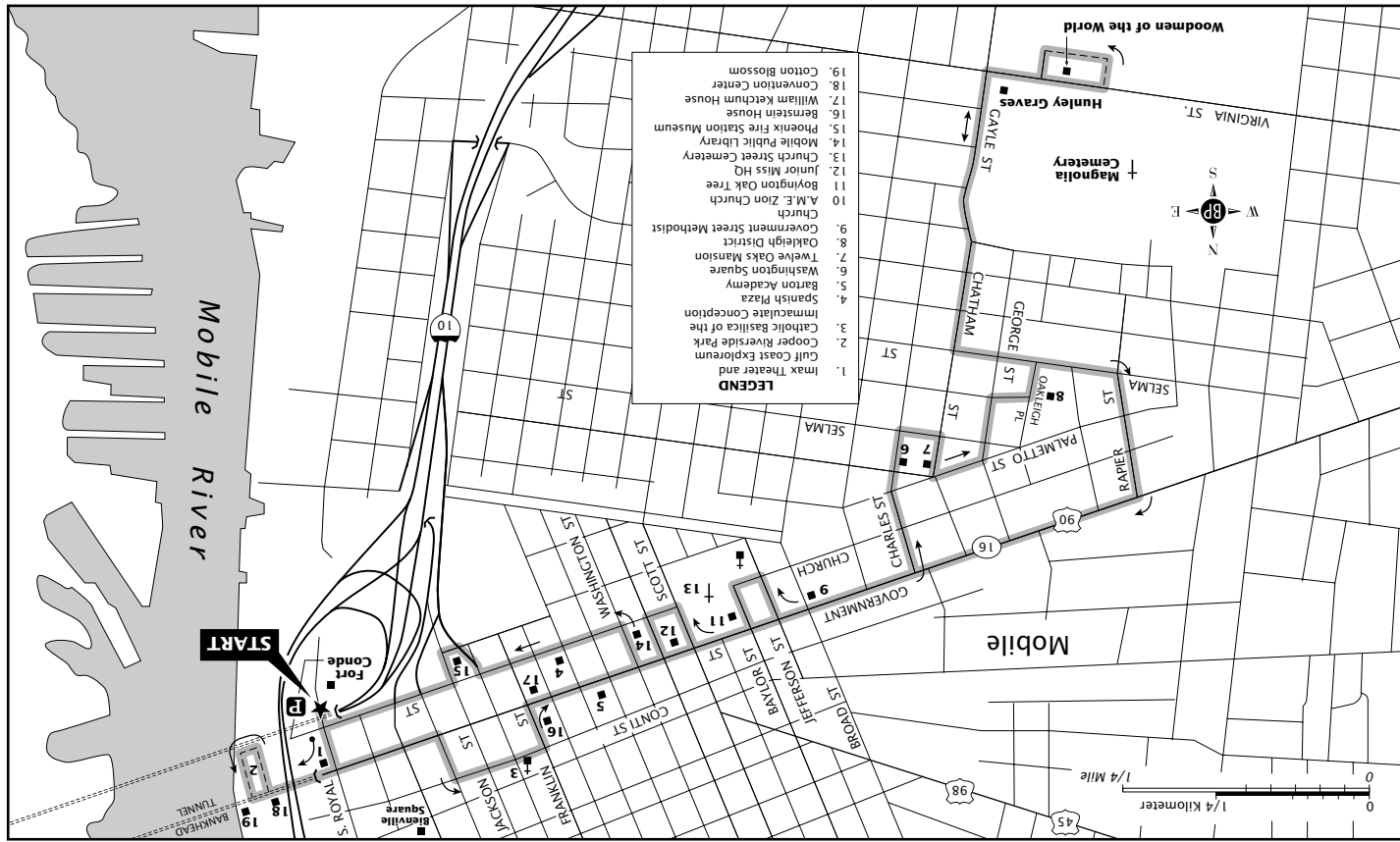
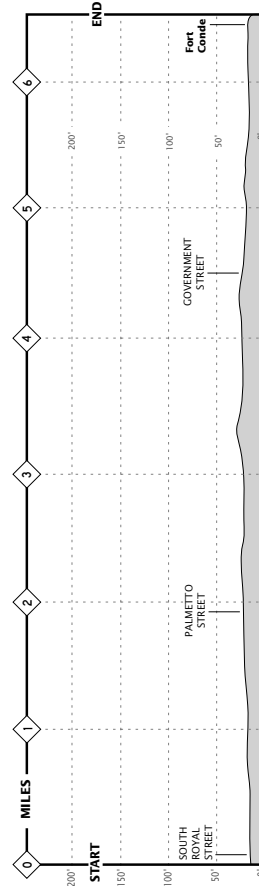
0.5 The trail heads to the waterfront. It was here that Mobile became a booming port city. Paddle boats and steamers would move cotton to ports all over North America. Today, the waterfront is being revitalized. The Cooper Riverside Park allows visitors to sit and take in the ships moving in and out of the harbor. The modern spire of the Mobile Convention Center is here, as well as a new attraction, the Cotton Blossom, an authentic Southern riverboat. In late 2000, a new maritime museum will be

opened here. The trail loops here and then heads southwest back down Government Street.

0.7 The trail passes a marker indicating the boundary of the city limits back in 1711—the year Fort Conde was constructed—and then turns right onto South Joaquin Street. Travel one city block and then turn left onto Conti Street.

0.9 To the right at the intersection with Claiborne Street sits the Catholic Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. This cathedral was built in 1835 and features beautiful ornate statues and stained glass. Every statue has a story and the staff is more than happy to tell them. The trail now turns left down Franklin Street.

1.0 At the corner of Franklin and Government streets is the home of Confederate Major William Ketchum—now the home of the Archbishop of the Mobile Catholic Church. The home has 23 rooms and a 60-foot drawing room. Directly across the street is the Bernstein House, the former home of the Mobile City Museum. From here, turn right heading southwest once again back onto Government Street. Just next door to the museum is Spanish Plaza, built in honor of the relationship between Spain and Mobile. The statue of Queen Isabella in the plaza was a given to Mobile from the Spanish exhibit at the 1965 World's Fair in New York.



MilesDirections (Continued)

1.2 Barton Academy is on the right. Built in 1836 and now the home of the Mobile County Board of Education, this building served as a hospital during the Civil War.

1.5 Continuing southwest, the trail passes the home of Admiral Raphael Semmes. This home was given to Semmes by the city in honor of his service to the Confederacy during the Civil War.

1.7 Turn left onto Charles Street.

1.9 The trail comes to Washington Square. This small park area was deeded to the city in 1859 for use as a promenade. Decorated with statues and fountains, the park was occupied by the Union Army during the Civil War and relieved of everything but the iron statue of a deer that still remains. The trail turns right on Augusta Street for one block. Turn right on Chatham Street and head north for one city block to Palmetto Street.

2.0 At the intersection of Palmetto Street and Chatham Street is Twelve Oaks Mansion, built in 1867. Travel to the southwest on Palmetto Street.

2.1 Take a left turn and head south on George Street. In about one block, George Street intersects Savannah Street. Make a right turn onto Savannah and continue until it intersects Oakleigh Place.

2.3 Turn south onto Oakleigh Place. Be sure to pay a visit to Oakleigh Mansion. Built in the 1830s, this house is now the home of the Historic Mobile Preservation Society and is a museum of the beautiful historic homes of the city. Admission is \$1 adults, 50 cents for students. Travel past Oakleigh one block and turn east onto Selma Street.

2.4 Follow Selma Street two blocks and turn right onto Chatham Street. In three

blocks, Chatham turns into Gayle Street. Magnolia Cemetery, established in 1866, is on the right. There is a Confederate cemetery here.

2.8 Turn west onto a short, unnamed street that runs from the southeast to southwest corner of Magnolia Cemetery. At this turn, the graves of the first crew of the Confederate submarine *Hunley* can be seen.

3.0 Turn left and head south a short distance on another unnamed street. The Woodmen of the World building is here.

3.1 Turn east onto a third unnamed street.

3.3 Turn north onto one final unnamed road, completing a circle of the Woodmen of the World building. The trail intersects the first street (at the 2.8-mile mark) near the *Hunley* graves. Make a right heading north on Gayle Street. Travel three blocks and Gayle Street again becomes Chatham Street. Continue another two blocks and make a left onto Selma Street.

3.7 Take a left turn (westward), on Selma Street.

4.0 Turn right on Rapier Street.

4.5 Turn right and head northeast onto Government. *[Option. For a longer trip, turn left (southwest) here onto Government Street (U.S. 90 west). The longer trip is detailed in the literature provided at the fort and passes by an original eleven inch cannon used at Fort Morgan during the Battle of Mobile Bay. Also along this route is Murphy High School, the oldest high school in Alabama and the only high school listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This longer trip is 11 miles in total length.]*



Statue of Admiral Raphael Semmes.

5.0 At the corner of Government Street and Broad Street, the trail passes the Government Street Methodist Church, built in the 1890s and patterned after Spanish Baroque architecture of the 17th Century. The building was known as the "Beehive" because of the bustle of activity that occurred there day and night. Visitors are welcome. Special services are held each day at noon. From the church, continue northeast across Broad Street one block. Turn southeast onto Jefferson Street. Follow Jefferson one block to Church Street. Turn left onto Baylor Street, passing the AME. Zion Church, built in 1860.

5.2 As you head northwest on Baylor, pass the Boyington Oak Tree. On November 16, 1834, John Boyington was hanged on this site for murder. Before the execution, Boyington said, "I am innocent, but what can I do? From my grave shall grow a tree of many branches that will prove my innocence." Years later, an oak tree, the Boyington Oak, began to grow on this site as the real murderer turned himself in. A few short

feet past the tree, the trail turns right onto Government Street, heading northeast, and passes the home of America's Junior Miss. This national competition is held every June in Mobile and awards scholarships to the brightest and most outstanding high school students in the country.

5.5 Turn right and head southeast on Scott Street. After a block, make a left onto Church Street. This is the site of the Church Street Cemetery, established in 1819 for victims of a yellow fever epidemic. The cemetery is divided into several sections including veterans, strangers, Catholics, and Protestants. Many Mobile notables are buried here including Joe Cain. Just past the cemetery is the Mobile Public Library, housed in a building constructed especially for the facility in 1928. Make a left turn onto the unnamed side street and continue 50 feet to Government Street where the trail turns right and continues northeast.

5.6 Take a right on Washington Street and proceed 0.1 miles. Take a left onto Church Street and continue heading northeast. The Church Street East District—where you are—is the second oldest neighborhood in the city with many of the houses dating back to 1850.

6.2 Turn right on Claiborne Street and head southeast for about 100 feet when you come to the Phoenix Fire Station. This 1838 building was the original home of fire station number 6 of the Phoenix Steam Fire Company. Today, it is a museum dedicated to the city's history of fire fighting. The station is open Tuesday–Saturday 10 A.M.–5 P.M., Sunday 1 P.M.–5 P.M. Admission is free. From the fire station, turn left on Jackson Street and return to Church Street. Make a right here and continue 0.3 miles to return to Fort Conde.

4

Cemetery Trail

Hike Summary

An interesting trail within Chickasabogue Park, the Cemetery Trail is used by both hikers and cyclists, with hikers heading in one direction, cyclists the other. The directions are reversed each month. The trail is ideally located for family hiking, with plenty to do at the park, and it provides easy trekking for young hikers.

Hike Specs

Start: From the parking lot at the northwest side of the sports field at Chickasabogue Park

Length: 2.7-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 1½ hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy, on level and well-maintained trail

Trail Surface: Dirt and sand path; gravel in washout-prone areas

Lay of the Land: Slash pine forest; many fern-lined creeks

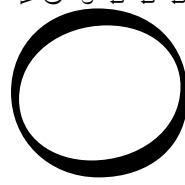
Elevation Gain: [Need information]

Land Status: County park

Nearest Town: Saraland, AL

Other Trail Users: Cyclists

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—leash required; bring water as sources are seasonal; dogs are not allowed at the pavilion at the beach along the creek



owned and maintained by the Mobile County Commission, Chickasabogue Park encompasses more than 1,100 acres of forest, wetlands, and creeks. In addition to preserving the natural environment, the commissioners have made it their mission to provide a quality family getaway—and they have succeeded.

Chickasabogue features easy trails over lightly rolling hillsides, just right for children. The trails are mostly sandy and cross several creeks. The wildlife, including white-tailed deer, gives parents plenty to talk about with their children as they spend an afternoon together.

In addition to superb hiking and cycling trails, the park offers ball fields, a swimming beach along Chickasaw Creek, playgrounds, and picnic areas.



The information center at Chickasabogue Park.

The park is also home to an 18-hole disc golf course that is sanctioned by the Professional Disc Golf Association. Located in one of the state's bigger counties, the park can get crowded on weekends, so try to arrange your visit during the week if at all possible.

A little history education is also part of the Chickasabogue experience. At the entrance to the park, next to the information center, is the former Eight Mile AME Church. This small structure, built in 1879 in the neighboring town of Eight Mile, was moved to the park to serve as a museum. The museum features artifacts of Native American culture from as far back as 1500 BC. The museum, open to the public without charge, also displays photos of old Mobile.

The explorer Hernando de Soto first visited the area around 1540. Pirates also ventured through the region, using Chickasaw Creek as a their primary point of entry. The outlaw Cooper Gang, who roamed the Southeast robbing stagecoaches and businesses, lived here in the late 1800s. This rugged band helped runaway slaves flee the area, only to then sell them to plantations in other states.

Chickasabogue Park provides three walking routes: Cemetery Trail, Indian Loop Trail, and Beach Loop Trail. The Cemetery Trail, used by both hikers and cyclists, incorporates portions of the Indian Loop Trail. The trail

is marked with small wooden planks, and they can be a bit confusing to a first-timer. In one direction they are painted red, in the other direction yellow—a way to help hikers and cyclists stay in opposite directions and thus see each other coming. Check with the information center to confirm which direction you're meant to travel.

The Cemetery Trail begins at the parking area next to the playing field. As the trail meanders away from the parking area, it runs parallel

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the grass parking area at the northwest side of the sports field. Head across the field to the southeast. The woods of Chickasabogue can be seen at the opposite side of the field. Just before entering the woods is a nature study pond. Beautiful water lilies float at the top of the pond with small fish schooling under the surface. A small gazebo sits at the end of a pier that protrudes into the pond. No fishing is allowed here! Continue south along the right or east bank of the pond toward the woods.

0.2 A sign marking the Cemetery Trail appears as the trail ducks into the woods heading west. There are very few trail markers along this portion of the route, but early in the hike, several trees are marked with white blazes. As the trail sinks a few hundred feet into the woods, a campground appears through the trees on the left.

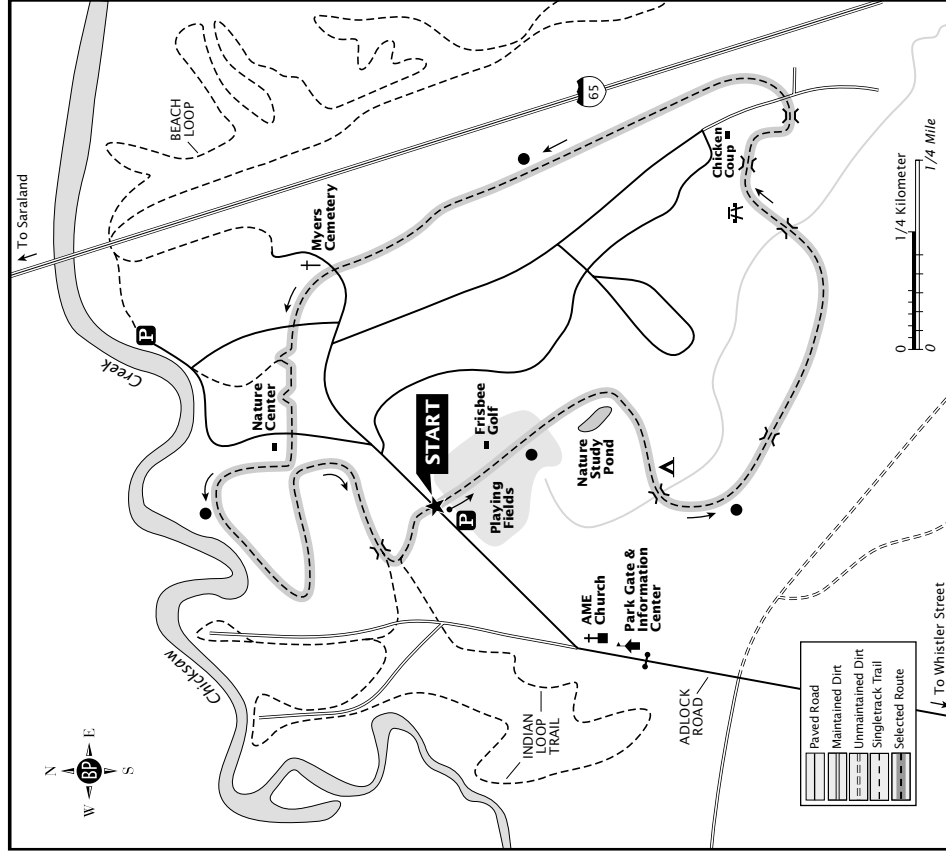
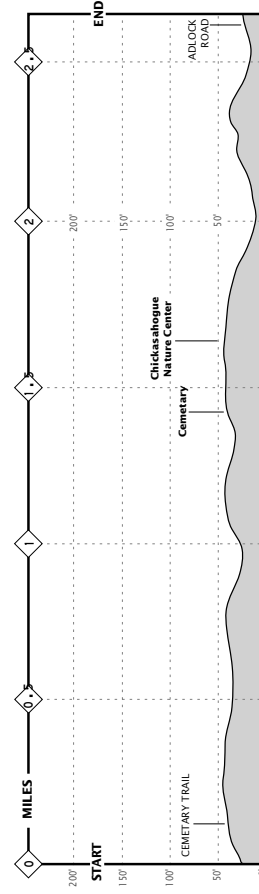
0.4 The trail takes a turn to the south and heads down into a ravine. At the bottom, the trail crosses one of several

small streams and creeks over wooden footbridges.

0.6 Cross a larger 50-foot long footbridge.

0.8 After leveling off at the top of a ridge and traveling about 30-yards, the path takes a turn to the east and then makes a steep descent once again about 100 feet to the bottom of another ravine. At the bottom, a 20-foot footbridge crosses another stream. If the crowds are small, White Tail Deer may be seen foraging and drinking nearby. Off through the trees, a picnic area can be seen to the left. Follow the trail a few more feet and it makes a hook to the south and then to the east where there is another footbridge. In the distance you can hear the sound of I-65.

1.0 Trail signs become more frequent. Don't be confused about the Red and Yellow trail signs. Remember, they are both part of the Cemetery Trail. A chicken coup can be seen off to the northeast just off the trail. In about 50 feet, the trail comes to the paved park road. Cut



diagonal across the road to the north and continue on the trail.

1.1 Continuing to the north, the trail runs parallel to I-65. A large 130-foot bridge spans a marshy area. Here you'll find Marsh Marigold growing, as well as Cardinal Flowers, Morning Glory, and Wild Geranium.

1.4 Come to a Y-intersection. The Cemetery Trail continues on to the northwest on the left fork. Take this. (On the right is the Beach Loop Trail.) Separating the two trails is the cemetery

for which the Cemetery Trail is named. The small cemetery of 10 to 15 graves dates back to 1870.

1.5 Cross the paved park road and head back into the woods. The trees thin out here.

1.7 Encounter a sign that reads "SHORT" and points to the northwest. (This is a section of the Beach Loop Trail and leads to the northern most parking lot in the park.) Continue to the west. The trail scampers up a short hill. After weaving around thick brush, the trail once again

MilesDirections (Continued)

intersects the paved park road. To the left, is the playing field. Cross straight across the road to the gravel road on the other side. Continue down the gravel road to the north, passing a Cemetery Trail sign on the left. Continue about 50 feet and the Chickasabogue Nature Center will come into view. A series of informative posters display the wildlife and plantlife in the area. From here, continue north.

1.8 The trail now makes a left turn around some marshy areas until it reaches the banks of Chickasaw Creek. The slow moving muddy waters of the creek provide an excellent and relaxing canoe trip after the hike. Canoes are available at the information center.

2.2 The trail returns to the nature center.

Turn to the south.

2.5 One final 60-foot long footbridge crosses a marsh and a small feeder creek of the Chickasaw. Shortly after the crossing, the trail turns to the south. Following the turn, encounter a Y-intersection. To the right, the Indian Loop Trail continues to another meeting with the Chickasaw. Take the left fork.

2.6 The Cemetery Trail intersects with the Indian Loop Trail once again at a T-intersection. Go left.

2.7 Reach a Y-intersection. Either fork will lead back to the parking area.

2.8 The trail ends at Adlock Road directly across from the playing field and the parking area.

Eyes on the Hurricane

The most dreaded words along the Gulf Coast are: "The National Hurricane Center in Miami has issued a hurricane warning."

Hurricanes are among the deadliest forces of nature. According to Frank Lepore of the National Hurricane Center, more people die from flash flooding as a storm moves inland than from the storm where it makes landfall. Storm rainfall in the mountains of Alabama can result in flash floods that sweep people away, including hikers.

Although the technology for tracking storms is considerably better than in the past, hurricanes are still difficult to predict. A storm that seems to be heading up the East Coast can, without warning, make a beeline for the Gulf Coast. Hurricane Elena was a puzzler, traveling back and forth just off the Gulf Coast several times over several days, keeping residents guessing until it finally moved inland over the Florida panhandle.

To avoid being surprised by a major storm, hikers can carry a lightweight battery-powered weather radio. Most of these radios monitor the U.S. Emergency Alert System and activate when an emergency weather situation is imminent.

The good news is that most hurricanes do not make landfall. But the best advice is to stay alert. Check the weather often, and in the meantime, enjoy the normally balmy weather of the South.

to Interstate 65 for a short distance before coming to a small cemetery established in the 1800s. Continuing on, the trail circles around and travels to a small nature center. Here you'll find posters and information about the park and its wildlife and plant life.

At this point, the sports field will again be nearby, offering a good opportunity to cut the trip short and head back to the parking area if you're hiking with small children.

From the nature center, the trail moves into the woods and follows a sandy path that crosses several creeks and marshes on wooden footbridges. Ferns are abundant. The trail travels to the banks of Chickasaw Creek before heading back to the parking area.

Hike Information

-  **Trail Contacts:**
Chickasabogue Park, Mobile, AL; (334) 452-8496 *lyon.maf.mobile.al.us/government/local/county/county_org/chikpark.html*
-  **Accommodations:**
Best Western, Saraland, AL; (334) 679-7953 • **Comfort Inn**, Saraland, AL; 1-800-228-5150
-  **Restaurants:**
Benzi's Pizza, Saraland, AL; (334) 675-9600 • **Kings Seafood**, Saraland, AL; (334) 679-4703 • **Leroy's Real Pit Barbecue**, Saraland, AL; (334) 675-5750 • **Something Special Deli**, Saraland, AL; (334) 675-3023
-  **Schedule:**
Open year round 7 A.M.–dusk.
Rangers are on duty 24 hours for campers.
-  **Fees/Permits:**
\$1 day-use fee for ages 12–59, 50 cents for children 6–11, free for children five and younger and adults 60 and older. Primitive camping is \$5 a night, \$10 for improved sites. Canoe rentals are \$4 an hour or \$15 a day.
-  **Local Outdoor Retailers:**
Academy Sports, Mobile, AL; (334) 344-0047 • **Ward's Army/Navy Stores**, Mobile, AL; (334) 479-9058

Local Information:

Saraland Area Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center, Saraland, AL; (334) 675-4444 or www.saralandcoc.com

Local Events/Attractions:

Wildland Expeditions, Chickasaw, AL; (334) 460-8206—Take a scenic boat tour of south Alabama's wetlands and salt marshes.

Maps:

USGS maps: Chickasaw, AL • **Cycling and hiking map as well as park information**—available free at the Chickasabogue Park Information Center, Saraland, AL

5

CCC Trail

Hike Summary

A wake-up call for those who have hiked the flatter trails of the Gulf Coast region, the CCC Trail leaves the sea level hiking behind and starts to take on some hills. Granted these are not massive mountains, but some of the inclines can get you breathing hard. The trail crosses the beautiful stream that flows from the spillway of the dam at Blacksher Lake, and then rounds the lake and ducks into a thick forest.

Hike Specs

Start: From the southwest end of the main parking area of Claude D. Kelley State Park

Length: 1.5-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 1 hour

Difficulty Rating: Easy to moderate, with a few steep grades; some rocky stretches because of washouts

Trail Surface: Dirt path; some travel on a dirt logging road

Lay of the Land: Dense forest, including slash pine, dogwood, sweet gum, hickory, and live oak

Elevation Gain: [Need information]

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Atmore, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly along the trails; leash required; bring water (sources are seasonal); dogs not permitted at the beach area

Getting There

From Atmore: Take AL 21 north. Go 11.0 miles past where it crosses with I-65. Turn right onto H. Kyle Road—a sign marking Claude Kelley State Park will be seen on the right. Travel 0.4 miles to the park gatehouse. If the gatehouse is closed, pay at the honor box located on the side of the shack. Continue down H. Kyle Road 0.1 miles to the main parking area on the bank of Little River Lake. Hiking brochures can be picked up at the gatehouse or from the bathhouse at the parking lot. **DeLorme:** *Alabama Atlas &*

Gazetteer: Page 57 D6

The folks who drive past Claude D. Kelley State Park and never stop to visit just don't know what they're missing. The park, hidden in the woods about 18 miles north of Atmore, features 960 forested acres and the 25-acre Blacksher Lake. This man-made lake provides swimming and fishing year-round. The CCC Trail affords wonderful views of the lake, plus a bit more of a hiking challenge than many other Gulf Coast hikes.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the trail, and the park itself, in 1938. You can also thank the CCC for the log pavilion and bath-



house, as well as the log gazebo perched at the ridge, accessed by the Gazebo Trail (see the following chapter).

The area in which the park lies, Monroe County, was immortalized in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the best-selling novel about racial tensions in a small town. The story was set in Maycomb, a fictionalized alias for the nearby town of Monroeville.

This region is home to the Poarch band of the Creek Indians. Following the 1814 battle of Horseshoe Bend, which pitted the Creek's Red Stick band against U.S. soldiers and the Lower Creek tribe, the federal government relocated most of the local tribes to Oklahoma. In appreciation for fighting alongside General Andrew Jackson troops, the Poarch Creek Indians were allowed to establish a reservation here. Each Thanksgiving the tribe invites the public to its annual Thanksgiving PowWow, featuring native foods, rituals, costumes, and dances. The PowWow is held on the Poarch Creek Reservation on Jack Springs Road in Atmore.

The CCC Trail begins by tracing the banks of Blacksher Lake. Early on, you cross the lake's overflow stream. The crossing makes for a scenic spot to rest up or have a bite to eat. At the opposite side of the lake, the trail enters a forest so thick that you can feel the drop in temperature—a blessing during hot and humid summer months. A sign along here says Bell Trail, but don't worry: This is still the CCC Trail.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the southwest end of the main parking area in Claude D. Kelley State Park. Head to the southwest around the banks of Blacksher Lake, passing the dam that forms the lake.



head back to the lake. Once you reach the lake, turn right and follow the dirt road along the banks of the lake.

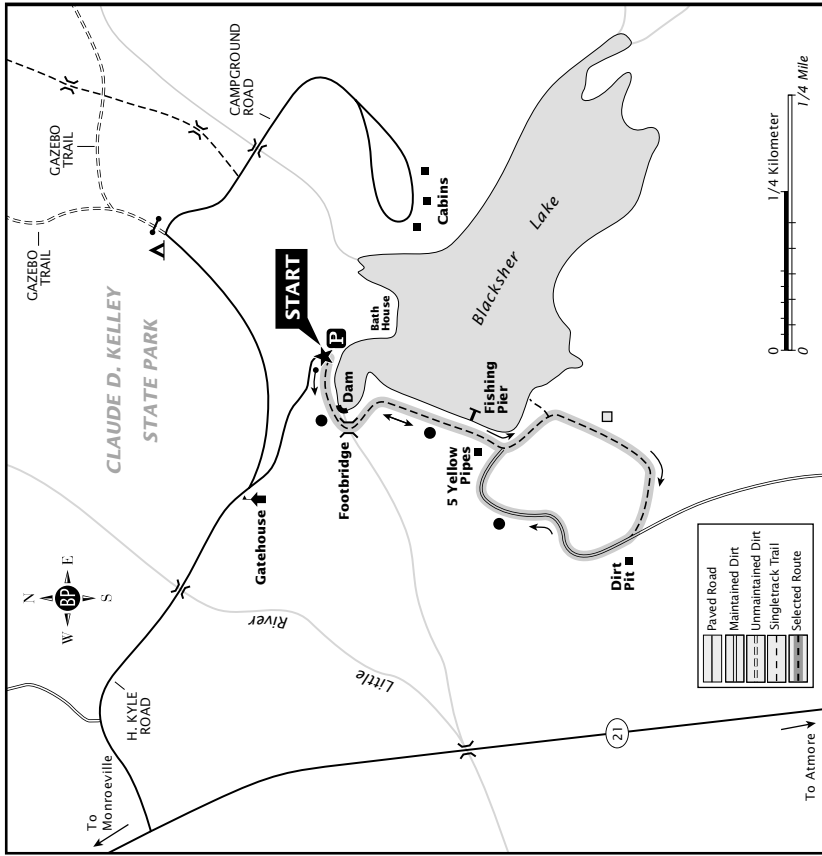
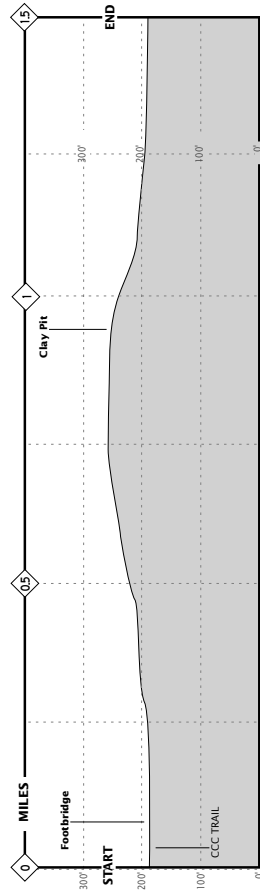
0.2 A "T" fishing pier is passed that extends out into Blacksher Lake. Continue straight until the dirt road ends in a cul-de-sac. To the right is a series of 5 yellow pipes. This is where the loop of the trail rejoins the road on the trip back. A "BELL TRAIL" sign is off to the southeast corner of the cul-de-sac. This is the alternate name for the C.C.C. trail. Stay left, following the dirt path into the woods to the southeast.

0.3 A short footpath off the main trail leads to the banks of Blacksher Lake for more spectacular views.

0.4 The trail turns to the south and heads away from the lake.

0.5 The trail now starts its climb to the top of the hill and the slash pines become thicker. A few feet up the hill, the dirt path becomes an abandoned dirt road. Due to washouts, the travel becomes rocky in areas.

0.1 The trail comes to a 50-foot long footbridge that spans the spillway stream. A "C.C.C. Trail" sign is here. Cross the bridge heading to the south and once across, turn to the east and



0.9 The road reaches the top of the hill at a clay dirt pit that is about 75–100 feet deep. Be careful of loose footing. A dirt road crosses here from north to south while the road from the lake continues on to the northwest. Turn right and follow the intersecting road. This road is more gravel than sand and begins the descent back down to the lake.

1.2 Continuing downhill, the trail starts heading more to the east. At this point, the downhill walk is on about the same incline as the trip up.

1.3 A jog in the trail is encountered as it starts heading to the north. The trail

turns abruptly to the northwest then to the northeast to avoid a 20-foot drop off that looks like it was created by a washout. Continue in this direction. The road runs into the five yellow pipes first encountered at the 0.2-mile point of the trip. Turn left here and follow the dirt road along the west bank of Blacksher Lake.

1.4 Turn left at the dam and head west back to the footbridge over the stream. Cross the bridge and head northeast along the banks of the lake toward the main parking area.

1.5 Return to the parking area.

Slash pines, sweet gum, and hickory fill the forest. In the fall, live oaks provide a sparkling display of color that reflects from the surface of the lake. In early spring the dogwood blooms are particularly beautiful. While hiking, be sure to watch for the many varieties of woodpeckers that live here, including downy, hairy, red-headed, and pileated.

As the trail heads off into the woods, it follows an old dirt and gravel logging road. The grades are a bit steeper here than on other Gulf Coast hikes covered in this guidebook, but the average hiker shouldn't find too much difficulty. The route has many washouts, so watch your footing.

At the top of a ridge, the trail comes to the very edge of the soft clay banks of a large pit. Be careful here: There's a drop-off of 75 to 100 feet. The path eventually loops back down toward the lake to the east, rejoining the main path back to the parking area.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Claude D. Kelley State Park,
Atmore, AL; (334) 862-2511

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

Admission to the park is \$1 for visitors 12 and older, 50 cents for children 6-11. Tent camping in primitive areas is \$6 per day or \$10 per day in improved areas with water and electricity at the site. Boats are available for use on the lake at \$7.50 per day or pedal-boats \$4 per hour. A freshwater fishing license is required for fishing in the lake.

Local Information:

Atmore Chamber of Commerce,
Atmore, AL; (334) 368-3305

Accommodations:

Best Western, Atmore, AL;
1-800-528-1234 or www.frontier-net.net/~bestwest • **Days Inn of Atmore,** Atmore, AL; (334) 368-9999

Restaurants:

Buster's Restaurant, Atmore, AL; (334) 368-4931 • **Catfish Junction,** Atmore, AL (334) 368-4422 • **Genie's Bar-B-Que,** Atmore, AL; (334) 446-7534 • **Great Family Restaurant,** Atmore, AL; (334) 368-4422

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Barnett and Associates, Atmore, AL; (334) 368-3571

Maps:

USGS maps: Uriah East • **Hiking map and park brochure**—available at **Claude D. Kelley State Park** gatehouse or at the park's beach and bathhouse next to the main parking area.

The Story of the CCC

The Civilian Conservation Corps was formed in 1933 as the United States was suffering through the Great Depression. The goal of this New Deal program was to provide employment and training for young men and to help conserve the nation's natural resources.

In exchange for a salary of \$30 a month plus food and lodging, unmarried and unemployed men spread out across the country to work on reforestation and other conservation programs. They built fire-lookout towers, worked on flood control projects, and helped with soil conservation. They contributed to wildlife protection programs, and they helped develop state parks—including Claude D. Kelley State Park, site of this CCC Trail.

The Corps ceased operation by order of Congress in 1942, but in less than 10 years, this agency provided more than three million jobs and brought countless benefits to all citizens, including hikers and others who love the outdoors.

Local Events/Attractions:

William Station Day, third weekend of October, Atmore, AL; (334) 368-3305 or www.frontiernet.net/~atmoreal/events.htm—"A simpler way of life," that's how the residents of Atmore describe the William Station Day celebration. This is a day to celebrate the town's founding back in 1866. Back then the town was a supply stop called William Station. There are plenty of arts and crafts, music, and stories of the trains that once ruled the area and the legends of the Poarch Creek Indians. • **Poarch Creek Indian Bingo Palace,** Atmore, AL; 1-800-826-9121 or www.frontiernet.net/~cbingo/ •

Annual Poarch Creek Indian Thanksgiving PowWow, Atmore, AL; (334) 368-3305 or www.frontiernet.net/~atmoreal/events.htm—Each year, the public is invited to celebrate Thanksgiving with the Poarch Creek Indians. The event brings tribal members together and features brilliant displays of authentic dress and exhibition dancing by a variety of tribes. In addition, there are arts and crafts, barbecue, fried chicken, and more.

6

Gazebo Trail

Hike Summary

The first sign of any elevation gain in the hikes of the Gulf Coast region of Alabama occurs in Claude D. Kelley State Park. Here the Gazebo Trail travels up the shallow inclines of 300-foot ridges past slash pines towering over pine needle floors. The trail crosses several creeks and streams that feed Blacksher Lake. Along the way, look for small fern forests, as well as Eastern wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, and red-tailed hawks.

Hike Specs

Start: From the north end of the main parking area at Claude D. Kelley State Park

Length: 3.2-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 1½ hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy, on relatively flat trails; moderate during some steep changes in elevation along ridges

Trail Surface: Dirt and sand trails; dirt and gravel road

Lay of the Land: Slash pine, sweet gum, and oak trees; ferns and wildflowers

Elevation Gain: [Need information]

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Atmore, AL

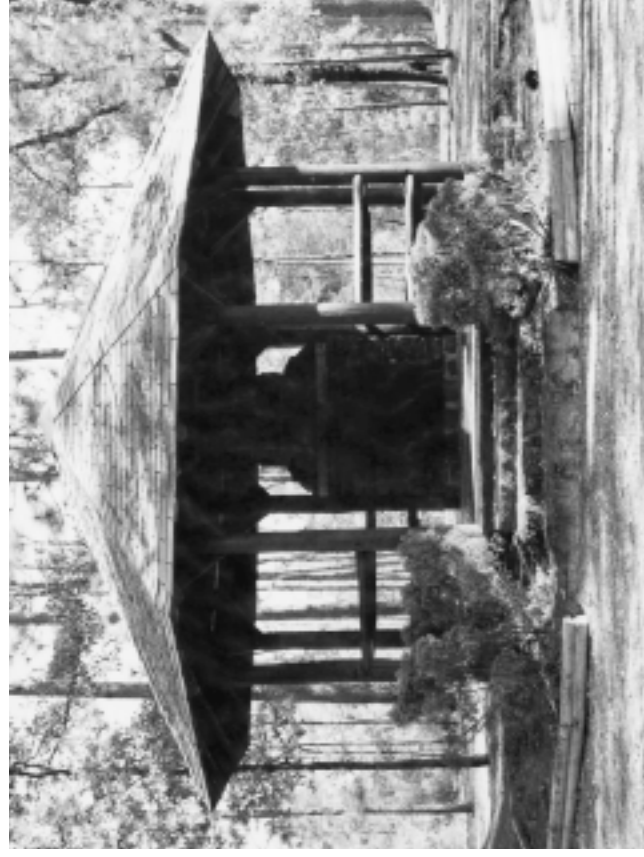
Other Trail Users: Equestrians and motorists on park road

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly along the trails; leash required; bring water (sources are seasonal); dogs not permitted at the beach area

Getting There

From Atmore: Take AL 21 north. Go 11.0 miles past where it crosses with I-65. Turn right onto H. Kyle Road—a sign marking Claude Kelley State Park will be seen on the right. Travel 0.4 miles to the park gatehouse. If the gatehouse is closed, pay at the honor box located on the side of the shack. Continue down H. Kyle Road 0.1 miles to the main parking area on the bank of Little River Lake. Hiking brochures can be picked up at the gatehouse or from the bathhouse at the parking lot. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 57 D6

Tucked away like a little secret off of Alabama 21 is Claude D. Kelley State Park, yet another gift of the Depression-era's Civilian Conservation Corps program. The centerpiece of the 960-acre park is Blacksher Lake. A swimming beach and canoe and paddleboat rentals make the lake easily accessible and a great spot for the family. The 25-acre lake is also a good for anglers anxious to reel in a few bass or bream or catfish—but don't forget your freshwater fishing license.



The Gazebo Trail's namesake.

The park is the home of two superb hiking trails: the CCC Trail and the Gazebo Trail (the longer of the two). The CCC Trail, featured in the previous chapter, heads south from the parking area, skirting the lake and forming a lollipop loop. The Gazebo Trail, instead, heads north-to-east of the lot into the rolling ridges above the lake, staying largely on the well-maintained Gazebo Road.

The trail begins at the main parking lot behind the bathhouse next to the lake. You can get park information and a free trail map at the main gate or at the bathhouse. Drinks, snacks, and ice are available for sale.

As you meander down the Gazebo Trail, you'll encounter a variety of plant life. Sweet gums and live oaks provide shade in the hot, humid summers; in the fall, they blaze in colors of red, yellow, and gold. Like most of the Gulf Coast region, the trail courses through an abundance of slash pines.

While gazing up at the pines that tower above the trail, be on the lookout for red-tailed hawks flying high overhead. Back down on the trail, in the right season, you'll see a wide variety of wildflowers lining the way: black-eyed Susan, the yellow-flowered winter honeysuckle, and lavender flowers of the morning glory.

The trail crosses several creeks on wooden footbridges. From the bridges, you can view the masses of ferns that spring up like miniature forests in the damp surroundings. This is also a place to see white-tailed deer and eastern wild turkeys.

On the way down the trail, you'll notice the boundaries and service roads of Little River State Forest. This forest, maintained by the Alabama Department of Forestry, is used mostly for timber operations.

The Gazebo Trail reaches its farthest point at the top of a ridge, where you'll find a log gazebo with stone fireplace built by the CCC. You can reserve the gazebo for picnics, but reserve it early as it can get a bit crowded here during the summer. Picnickers use the Gazebo Road to ferry their supplies and guests to the gazebo, so watch for vehicles. The trail loops around the gazebo and begins to descend the hill at this point.

As the trail heads back to the parking area, the woods thin out a bit. Watch for woodpeckers in the trees, including red-headed and downy species. Also look for the tracks and burrows of armadillos and gopher tortoises along the sandy shoulders of the road.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the north end of the main parking area and head north until you reach the dirt and gravel park road. Follow the road to the northeast.

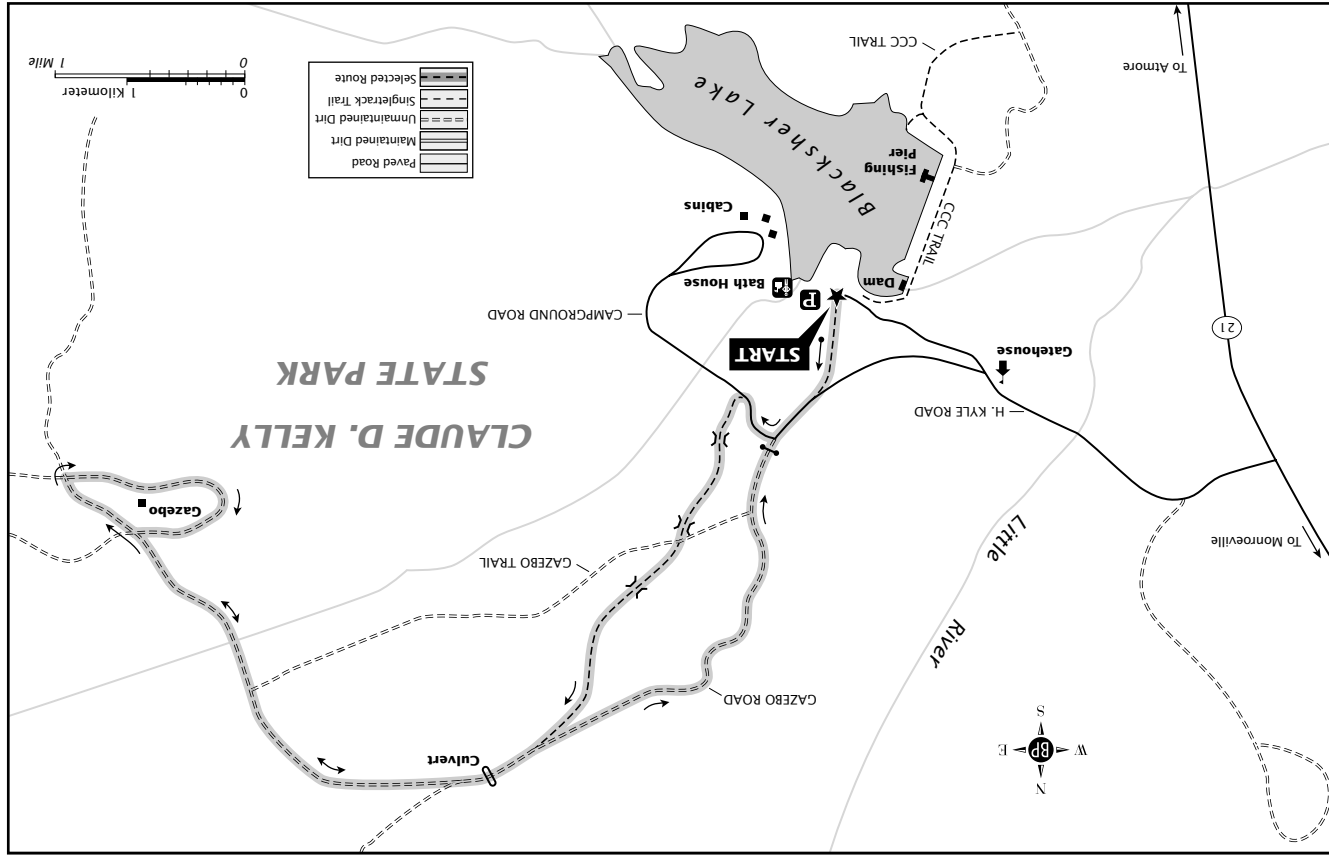
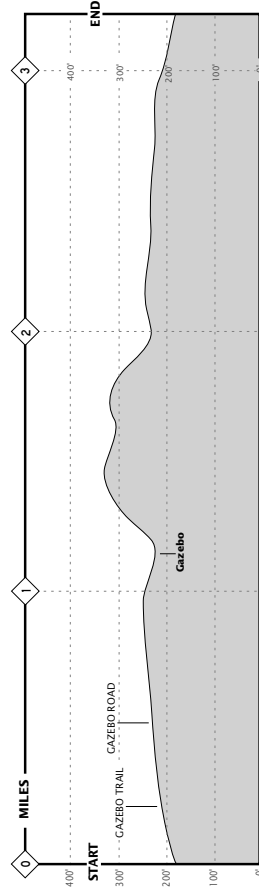
0.1.1 The dirt road intersects Campground Road. Looking ahead to the north, there will be a closed pipe gate with a sign that reads "Gazebo Road." Turn right and head east on Campground Road.

0.2 Come to a wooden "Gazebo Trail" sign. Take the trail to the left, which leaves the road and heads into the woods. From here out, the trail is only occasionally marked, but the path itself

should be easily discernable. Look out for Armadillo tracks in the sand.

0.3 The trail crosses several streams and creeks that feed Blacksher Lake. Cross the first creek using a small footbridge. Ferns are plentiful around these crossings.

0.4 Come to the second creek crossing, this one a 40-foot bridge. After the bridge, expect the most difficult climb of the trip. It begins with a 70-foot scramble uphill to the top of a ridge. At the top, the trail levels off for a bit and then sprints up another 75-foot hillside. Once



MilesDirections (Continued)

reaching the top of this hill, a third foot-bridge crosses a marshy area.

0.5 Pass a "Gazebo Trail" sign as the trail becomes a dirt and gravel park service road. This road merges with Gazebo Road. Continue east. After about 100-feet, pass a "Horse Trail" sign on the left and a "Gazebo Trail" sign on the right. Along this section, you'll see morning glories and black-eye Susans, along with stone water culverts built by the CCC.

0.7 A dirt road cuts back off to the right—this is where the loop will return at mile 1.5. To the left is a sign indicating another horse trail. Stay straight.

0.9 Reach the top of the ridge. A "Gazebo Trail" sign points to the west as the trail begins to round the loop.

1.1 Reach the gazebo. This is a nice stopping point for a bite to eat or to

watch wildlife. Whitetail deer are common in the area. The gazebo's stone fireplace is good for cooking. Continue on Gazebo Road as it now swings around to the east and back down the hill.

1.5 The loop is completed and you're back to Gazebo Road (mile 0.7). Turn to the left and head downhill.

2.5 Come to a Y-intersection. To the left is the trail you took earlier. Continue straight on Gazebo Road.

2.7 The trail begins a turn to the southwest.

3.1 Gazebo Road runs into the closed pipe gate encountered at the beginning of the trip. Continue down the dirt road to the southwest. You'll see the main parking area to the south.

3.2 Arrive back at the main parking area.

A Favorite of the South: Bread Pudding

- 1-1/2 cups milk
- 10 slices white bread
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup sherry
- 1/4 cup white raisins or chopped dates

Heat milk but do not boil. Trim crust off the bread. Slice bread into half-inch cubes. Melt butter in the milk, then add the bread. Soak bread 10 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour into oiled skillet and cook over a fire for 30 minutes. Turn and cook 30 more minutes. Best served with jam or honey on top.



Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Claude D. Kelley State Park,
Atmore, AL; (334) 862-2511

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

Admission to the park is \$1 for visitors 12 and older, 50 cents for children 6–11. Tent camping in primitive areas is \$6 per day or \$10 per day in improved areas with water and electricity at the site. Boats are available for use on the lake at \$7.50 per day or pedal-boats \$4 per hour. A freshwater fishing license is required for fishing in the lake.

Local Information:

Atmore Chamber of Commerce,
Atmore, AL; (334) 368-3305

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 5: CCC Trail]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 5: CCC Trail]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 5: CCC Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 5: CCC Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Uriah East • **Hiking map and park brochure**—available at Claude D. Kelley State Park gatehouse or at the park's beach and bathhouse next to the main parking area.

7

Redoubt Trail Loop



Hike Summary

Historic Blakeley State Park looks like a postcard of the archetypal South: long flowing Spanish moss hanging from the trees, shady walkways along the riverbank, and let us not forget Civil War history. Only hours after Lee's surrender to Grant in Virginia, the last major battle of the war occurred here in Blakeley State Park. Today the park is a National Civil War Historic Register Site—in fact, it's the largest site of its kind east of the Mississippi River.

Hike Specs

Start: From the picnic area off of service road at the east end of the park

Length: 6.1-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 3 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy travel on slightly rolling hills

Trail Surface: Dirt path, some paved and gravel roads, and a boardwalk section

Lay of the Land: Magnolia and slash pine forest with riverside and marsh walks

Elevation Gain: [We'll supply this]

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Spanish Fort, AL

Other Trail Users: Cyclists, motorists, and equestrians

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly

Getting There

From Montgomery: Take I-65 South to the Stockton exit (AL 225 South). The exit is marked with a brown "Historic Blakeley" sign. Follow the winding highway approximately five miles. The Blakeley State Park entrance sign is on the right.

From Mobile: Take I-10 east to the Spanish Fort exit (AL 225 North). Follow the winding highway approximately five miles. The Blakeley State Park entrance sign is on the left. **Delorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 62 C5

But the biggest thing to hit Blakeley came as the town lay in ruin. On April 8, 1865, 55,000 Union and Confederate soldiers converged in the fields surrounding the old town. The Union army intended to seize Fort Blakeley and then attack and capture the city of Mobile from its eastern shore. The fighting was fierce—216 killed, 955 wounded, and 3,054 captured (3,050 of them Confederates). It was a decisive Union victory. But what made the battle significant had little to do with the casualties. On the second day of this two-day campaign, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Central Virginia—thus making the battle at Blakeley the "Last Major Battle of the Civil War."

Over 100 years later, in 1974, the Alabama Historical Commission placed the site on the National Register of Historic Places, and the effort to preserve the battle site began. Trails were built, breastworks were located, and by 1993, Congress designated the site a "Class A Civil War Site." Three years later, it was added to the National Civil War Trail list.

Within Blakeley State Park's 3,800 acres are a total of 15 miles of nature and historic trails. The trails cross one another so that you can form shorter or longer loops to suit your schedule. All of the trails are well marked with brown signs.



Civil War gravestone at Blakeley State Historic Park.

The Paleo-Indians first moved into the area around 4,000 years ago—evidence of this is the ancient burial mounds that still dot the park. Over the years the land changed hands numerous times—it would fall under the rule of six different flags—until in 1813 the United States captured the region from Spain. Soon thereafter, a Josiah Blakeley stepped into the picture to buy the land and establish a town in his name.

The town of Blakeley, long since vanished, was chartered in 1814 and became a bustling port city that rose to rival neighboring Mobile. By 1828 a series of yellow fever epidemics, coupled with the greed of land speculators, forced the city of 4,000 into a spiral of decay. By the close of the Civil War, the town was abandoned. Today, all that remains of the old port town are the 400-year-old live oaks that once lined the city streets.

To access the Redoubt Trail, take the Benjamin Trail from the parking lot for a short hike to a small bridge that crosses a narrow tributary of the Tensaw River. Here, the trail connects with the Randall Trail. Hike the Randall Trail for another quarter of a mile through low lying, swampy areas and over another bridge before circling around to the Redoubt Trail, about half of a mile into the trip.

MilesDirections

0.0 START at the Washington Avenue parking area on the east side of the park along the Tensaw River. The Benjamin Trail begins at the extreme east side of the lot.

0.1 Cross a small wooden walkway over an inlet of the Tensaw River—now on the Randall Trail.

0.3 Cross another small walkway, back over the same inlet from the river.

0.6 The Randall Trail circles around from the inlet to the east approximately 0.2 miles and then heads back to the west for another 0.2 miles. This is the beginning of the Redoubt Trail.

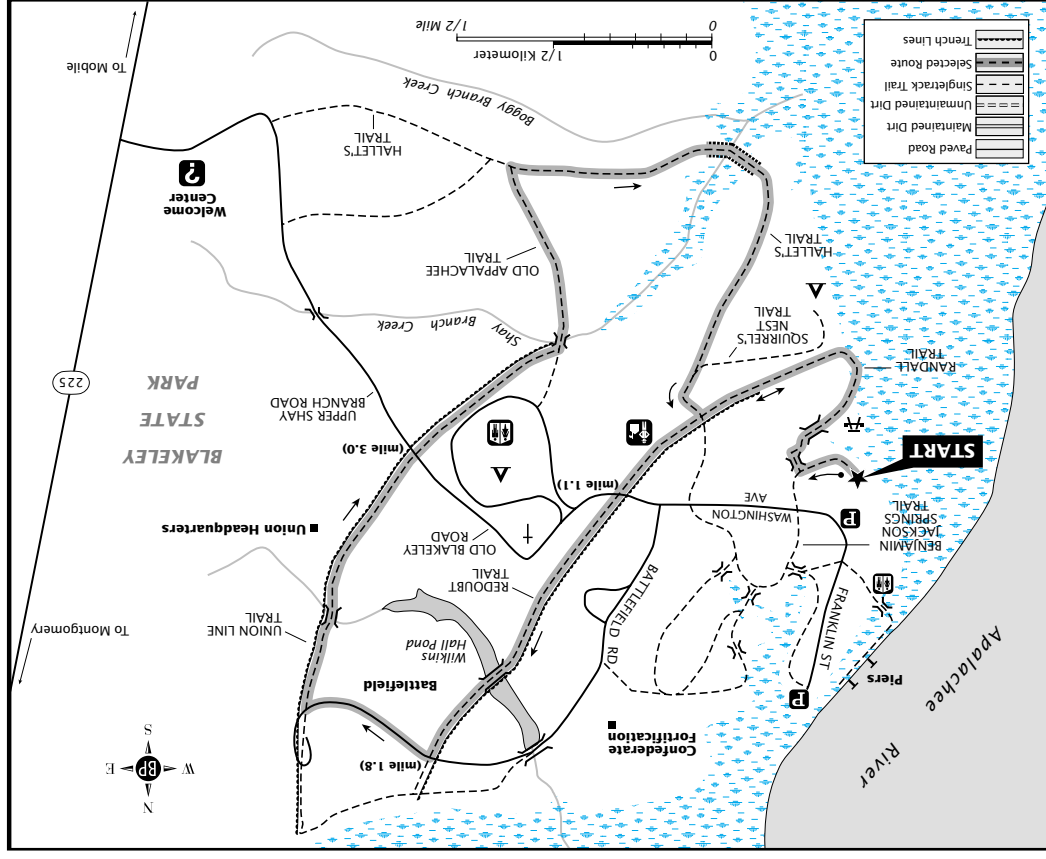
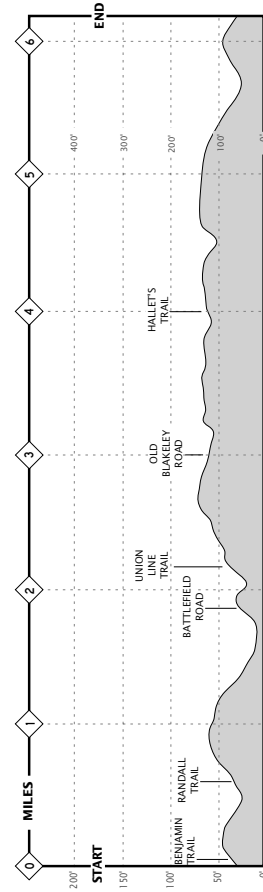
1.1 The Redoubt Trail runs along a small ridgeline dropping down only slightly in places where it crosses streams and creeks, which are usually dry during the summer months. The trail crosses Washington Avenue near the Blakeley Cemetery. While walking, be sure to notice the dugout foxholes used by the Confederate troops.

1.5 The trail takes its largest dip down to Wilkins Hall Pond. This pond, usually dry in the summer, provides excellent wildlife viewing opportunities during the spring and winter. The trail across the pond is a boardwalk. A 100-foot climb up the west bank of the ravine is the most difficult part of the hike.

1.8 The trail meanders to the top of the main Rebel Headquarters. Directly in front is the main fortification, reconstructed to the way it actually looked during the Battle of Blakeley. On the right, is the large grassy field where the Union army charged the Confederate stronghold. Following the fortifications, the trail intersects Battlefield Road, where you'll turn right.

2.2 Follow Battlefield Road for a quarter mile. Come to the Union Line Trail and turn right.

2.5 Follow the Union Line Trail along the opposite side of the battlefield and cross a small wooden walkway over a creek that feeds Wilkins Hall Pond.



3.0 Cross Old Blakeley Road.

3.5 The Union Line Trail ends at a small wooden bridge that crosses Shay Branch Creek and turns into the Old Appalachian Trail.

4.0 Follow the Old Appalachian Trail through heavily forested areas until it intersects with Hallet's Trail. Turn right on Hallet's Trail.

6.1 Follow Hallet's Trail over a wooden bridge that spans Shay Branch Creek and another inlet of the Tensaw River. The city of Mobile can be seen to the southwest. The trail intersects the Redoubt Trail once again. Take a left onto the Redoubt Trail and retrace the Randall and Benjamin trails back to the parking area.

The Redoubt Trail runs along the top of a small ridge. Like all of the trails in the park, the area is heavily forested with magnolia and slash pine trees. Several dugout areas appear along this ridge. These entrenchments were used by Confederate troops “digging in” for the battle to come.

After about a half mile, the trail intersects with the Hallett’s Trail. This is a long trail that, if taken, leads you over a number of creeks and swamplands that feed the Tensaw River. Continuing straight on the Redoubt Trail for another 0.6 miles and the trail crosses the Washington Avenue service road.

After a total of 1.5 miles of hiking, the trail dips into a ravine and makes its way over Wilkins Hall Pond. Here, brown pelicans and great egrets can be seen, as well as turtles and an occasional alligator. Slash pines and live oaks surround the pond with various marsh grasses waving in the breeze. This part of the trail is along a boardwalk. In the center of the pond area, you’ll find a platform with benches.

After passing over the pond on the boardwalk, the most difficult part of the trail is upon you, a 100-foot scramble up the other side of the ravine. Along this incline, there are some wooden stairs, but it’s mostly dirt path. Although it is not difficult, those out of shape could feel winded afterward.

After clearing the ravine, the large fortifications of the battlefield come into view. To the right is the actual battlefield where Union troops raced across to take on the Confederates. This is where the Rebel troops were headquartered. The redoubts, now reinforced with wood, have been restored to their original condition.

From here, the trail loops around to the opposite side of the battlefield where the Union troops were headquartered. Still visible are the entrenchments and cannon pits used by the Union army before their charge on the

Confederates. Across the flat, grassy battlefield lie the opposing Confederate fortifications.

At this point, the Redoubt Trail converges with the Old Appalachian Trail and follows it for half a mile before merging once again with the Hallett’s Trail. Take a right on Hallett’s and walk the remaining 2.1 miles back to the parking area, enjoying the spectacular and calming views of the Tensaw River and the wildlife that live along its banks.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Historic Blakeley State Park,
Spanish Fort, AL; (334)
580-0005 or [www.siteone.com/
tourist/blakeley](http://www.siteone.com/tourist/blakeley)

Schedule:

Open year round 9 A.M.–5 P.M.

Fees/Permits:

\$2 per person for hiking (\$1.50 children 6–12), \$4 for biking or horseback riding. Camping is allowed in designated primitive areas but not on the trails.

Local Information:

Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, Daphne, AL; (334) 621-8222 or [www.siteone.com/
towns/chamber](http://www.siteone.com/towns/chamber)

Local Events/Attractions:

Annual Blakeley Reenactment, Blakeley State Park, AL; (334) 580-0005—Hundreds of descendants of the Battle of Blakeley gather and reenact the battle. The event occurs around the weekend of the actual battle date of April 9th. • **Mardi Gras,** two weeks before Ash Wednesday, Spanish Fort, AL; (334) 621-8222—The city of Mobile is the birthplace of Mardi Gras in the United States

and since it was first introduced, the surrounding area has taken up the Carnival spirit. This is one of the smaller parades, but grows in size every year. Unlike other such celebrations, this one is family oriented.

Accommodations:

Comfort Suites, Daphne, AL; (334) 626-1113 • **Ramada Inn on the Bay,** Spanish Fort, AL; (334) 626-7200

Restaurants:

Blue Gill Restaurant, Spanish Fort, AL; (334) 625-1998 • **Cheryl’s Café and Market,** Spanish Fort, AL; (334) 626-2602 • **David’s Catfish House,** Spanish Fort, AL; (334) 626-7903

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Eastern Shore Sporting Goods, Fairhope, AL; (334) 928-8988

Maps:

USGS maps: Bridgehead, AL • **Park brochure and trail map—**Available for no charge at the park headquarters, Spanish Fort, AL. You can call the park at (334) 580-0005 to have them mailed to you.



Looking south toward Mobile along the Tensaw River.