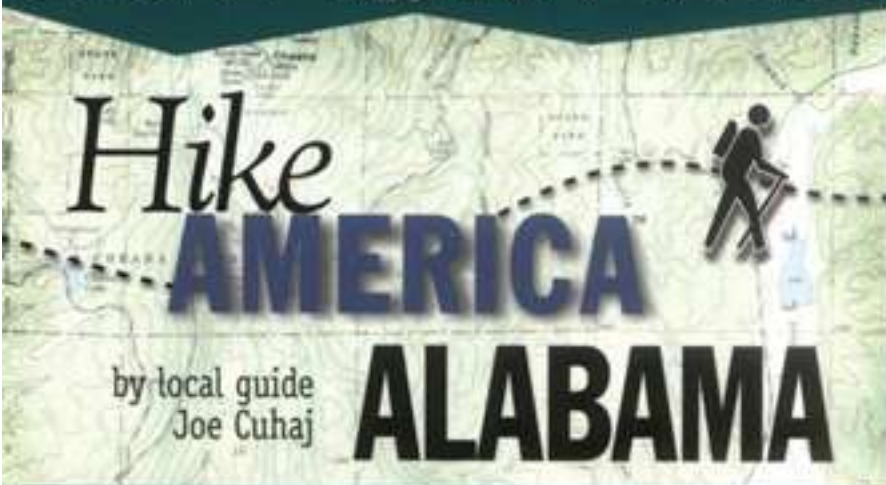
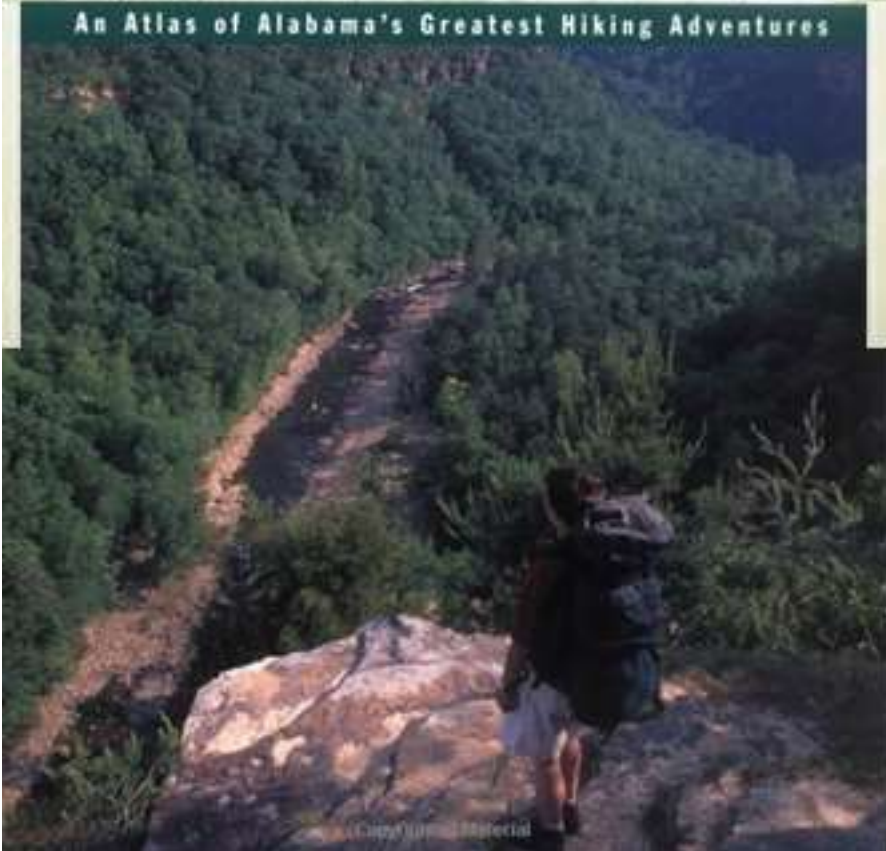
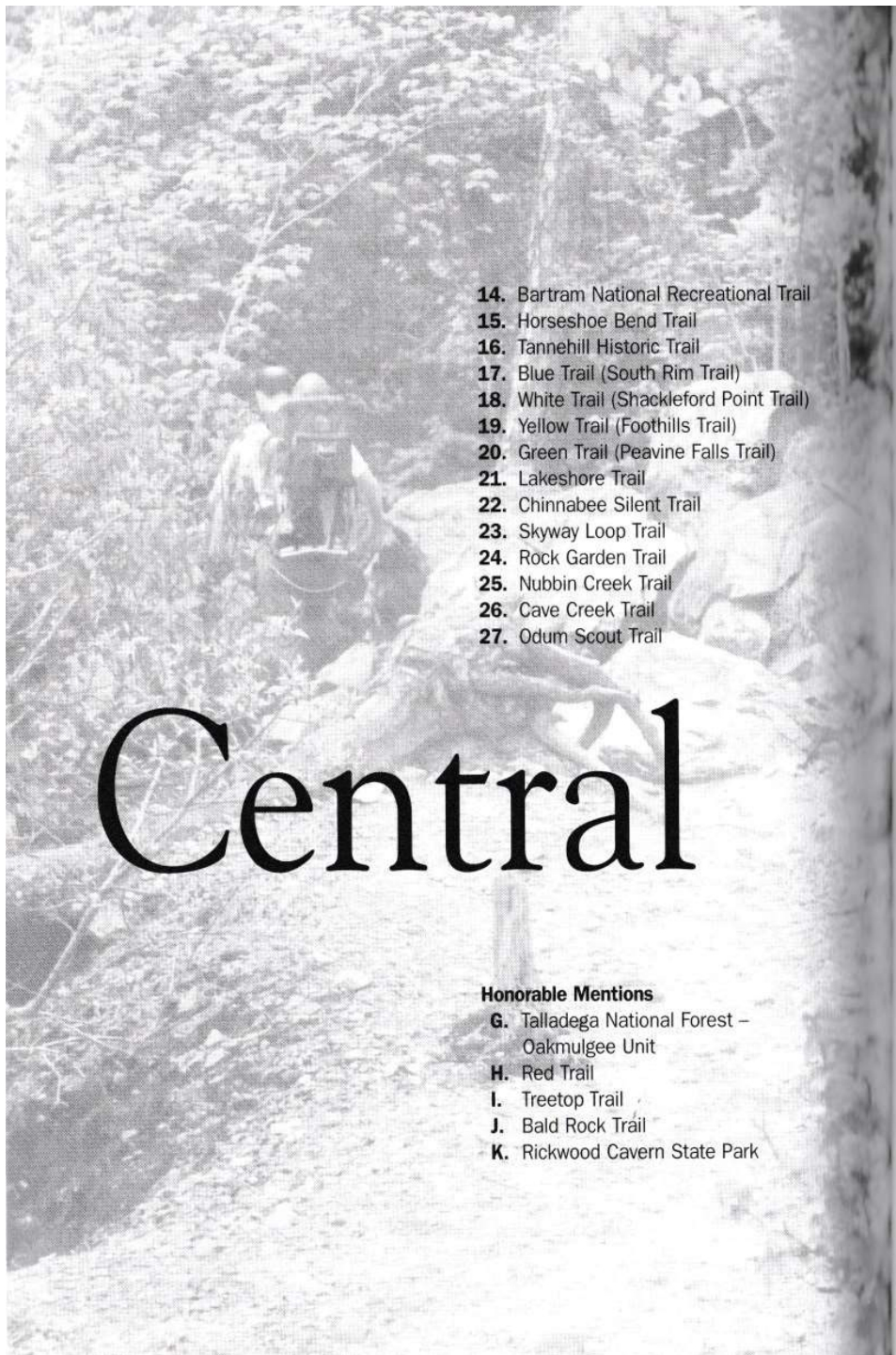


OUTSIDE AMERICA™ GUIDES



An Atlas of Alabama's Greatest Hiking Adventures



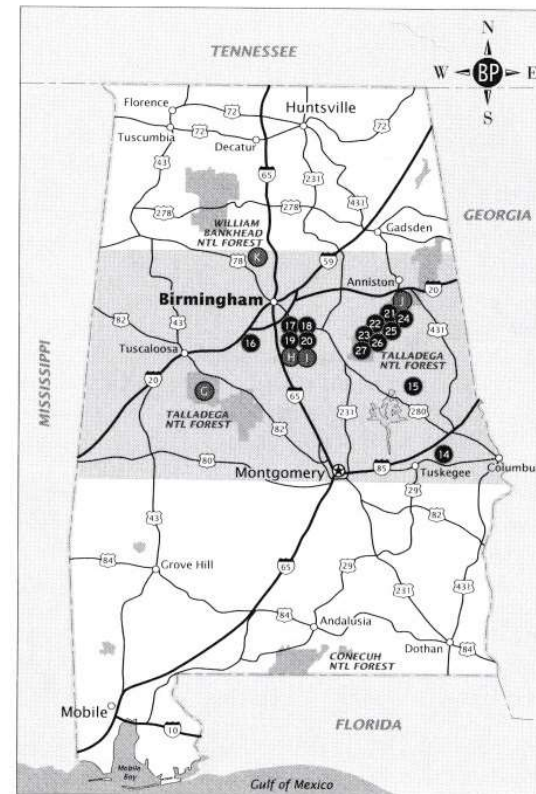


14. Bartram National Recreational Trail
15. Horseshoe Bend Trail
16. Tannehill Historic Trail
17. Blue Trail (South Rim Trail)
18. White Trail (Shackleford Point Trail)
19. Yellow Trail (Foothills Trail)
20. Green Trail (Peavine Falls Trail)
21. Lakeshore Trail
22. Chinnabee Silent Trail
23. Skyway Loop Trail
24. Rock Garden Trail
25. Nubbin Creek Trail
26. Cave Creek Trail
27. Odum Scout Trail

Central

Honorable Mentions

- G. Talladega National Forest – Oakmulgee Unit
- H. Red Trail
- I. Treetop Trail
- J. Bald Rock Trail
- K. Rickwood Cavern State Park



Alabama

Central Alabama

Central Alabama encompasses the area from just south of Birmingham to Montgomery, the state's capital. The southern boundary of this region, just below Montgomery, is known as the fertile Black Belt, the state's most lucrative cotton producing area. Geologically, Central Alabama forms the Piedmont Plateau, an area where the Appalachian Mountain Range terminates. The Central region provides the most challenging and most scenic treks you'll find in the state. It's in this region that you'll find the state's highest mountain, Cheaha Mountain, which stands 2,407 feet above sea level.

At Oak Mountain State Park just south of Birmingham, the hiker is treated to beautiful panoramas from atop Double Oak Mountain. In Cheaha State Park, the views are more spectacular from atop the tower at the summit of Cheaha. The park is surrounded by the enormous Talladega National Forest. Here you'll find the famous Chinnabee Silent Trail. This wonderful trail takes hikers past cascading Cheaha Falls and provides breathtaking views from atop narrow footbridges that traverse gorges leading to the falls. There are several other trails here with equal beauty and challenge such as the Odum Scout Trail, Skyway Loop, and Nubbin Creek Trail.

One of the more famous trails in the state, the Pinhoti Trail, travels the mountain ridges from the Talladega National Forest through Cheaha State Park for over 100 miles. The trail recently gained national attention when the White House placed it on the National Millennium Legacy Trail list, giving the trail full protection by the federal government and also funding for its maintenance. In addition, through the efforts of clubs such as the Alabama Appalachian Trail Club and the Alabama Trails Association, the Pinhoti is currently being touted as a new extension to the Appalachian Trail, linking it with the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain, Georgia.

For history buffs, to the east of Montgomery is Horseshoe Bend National Park. One of only two national park areas in the state, Horseshoe Bend provides an historic hike through this famous battlefield, the setting for the decisive 1814 battle between General Andrew Jackson and the local Native Americans. Jackson's victory resulted in the U.S.'s annexation of thousands of acres of land and the tragic displacement of the region's indigenous people along what would become known as the "Trail of Tears."



14

Bartram National Recreational Trail

Hike Summary

The Bartram National Recreational Trail in Tuskegee National Forest takes you on an easy jaunt through some nicely varied terrain. You'll stroll over gentle hills for the first half. Then, after crossing Alabama 186, the route makes its way through a dense magnolia forest over marshes as it travels toward Choctaw Creek.

Hike Specs

Start: From the western trailhead on AL 29

Length: 15-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 7–9 hours

Difficulty Rating: Moderate, due solely to length. Easy hike over gently rolling hills and marshes.

Trail Surface: Sand path to the west; dirt path and boardwalks to the east through the marshes

Lay of the Land: Longleaf pines, oaks, and dogwoods through the western section; magnolia forest to the east through the bottomlands

Land Status: National forest

Nearest Town: Tuskegee, AL

Other Trail Users: Cyclists

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—over easy trail, but bring water; leash recommended

Getting There

From Tuskegee: Head north on I-85 to Exit 42. Head south on AL 186 for three miles to its intersection with U.S. 29 and turn left. Travel one mile and turn left on a short gravel road. Head down the road only 100 feet to the parking area, information sign, and trailhead. **DeLorme:**

Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer: Page 46 C5

The Bartram National Recreational Trail was named for William Bartram, the son of famed naturalist John Bartram. Born in Philadelphia in 1739, William spent a great deal of his life under the wing of his famous father. Dubbed Botanist Royal by George III, William's father was far and away the most respected botanist in the colonies. In 1765 father and son embarked on an expedition for the King to locate the source of St. John's River, leading them through Georgia and Florida. Though this would be the elder Bartram's last expedition, it was only the start for William. In 1773, William set out to explore and document the upcountry South, before Europeans would later transform the landscape and disturb the indigenous cultures. The record of this trip, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (1791), is an American classic and became a tremendous inspiration to such naturalists as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir.

This trail runs along a portion of the route historians believe Bartram traveled. Using land features and historic sites from his journal, historians



reconstructed Bartram's path. The western trailhead is believed to be the site of a Native American colony described in his travel log. Benches along the way share quotes from his observations. The full trail is 8.5 miles long, but a portion of it was closed indefinitely because of a bridge washout at Choctaw Creek at the 7.5-mile marker.

The Bartram National Recreational Trail serves up interesting contrasts for a hiker. For its first half, from the western trailhead to the picnic area at the 3.5-mile mark, the trail travels up and down gently rolling hillsides over a sandy footpath. The forest is tall longleaf pine atop low ridges. Through the ravines, the path is lined with oaks, dogwoods, and muscadine.

After the picnic area, the trail crosses Alabama 186 and begins to travel through large marshes and near Choctaw Creek. Many varieties of wildflowers adorn the way, filling the air with fragrance during spring and summer. The area becomes thick with magnolia trees as the trail heads west and southwest over boardwalks and dirt paths.

Expect mosquitoes during some periods of spring, especially in and around the marshes. Also, spring rains can put this section of trail deep in mud. Be aware that the trail is popular with mountain bikers. Of all the trails visited in researching this book, the Bartram was the busiest by far.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the western trailhead/parking area off of U.S. 29. In 50 feet, come to the first bench. White blazes mark the trail. **[FYI. Throughout the hike you will see short strips of rubber mat across the trail. These are used to prevent erosion.]**

0.1 Come to fork and go right.

0.3 Cross a footbridge and come to a fork. Take the left fork. In 50 feet, turn to the southwest where the two trails rejoin.

0.6 Come to a fork and go right

1.3 Come to a dirt road and cross it diagonally—you will see the Bartram National Recreation Trail sign on the other side.

1.4 [FYI. Note the firebreaks alongside the trail.]

2.1 Come to a fork and go left. **[FYI. The right stem leads to a campsite.]**

2.3 Come to the road at its "elbow" and head straight across.

2.8 [FYI. Muscadine can be seen in the trees.]

3.7 Come to a T-intersection with Ranger Station Road. **[FYI. If you turn right, the ranger station is 0.5 miles down the**

road.] Turn left onto the road and travel 50 feet. On the right is a gravel road heading back into the woods. Next to the road is a Bicentennial historic marker telling about William Bartram. Turn right here and head into the woods on this gravel road.

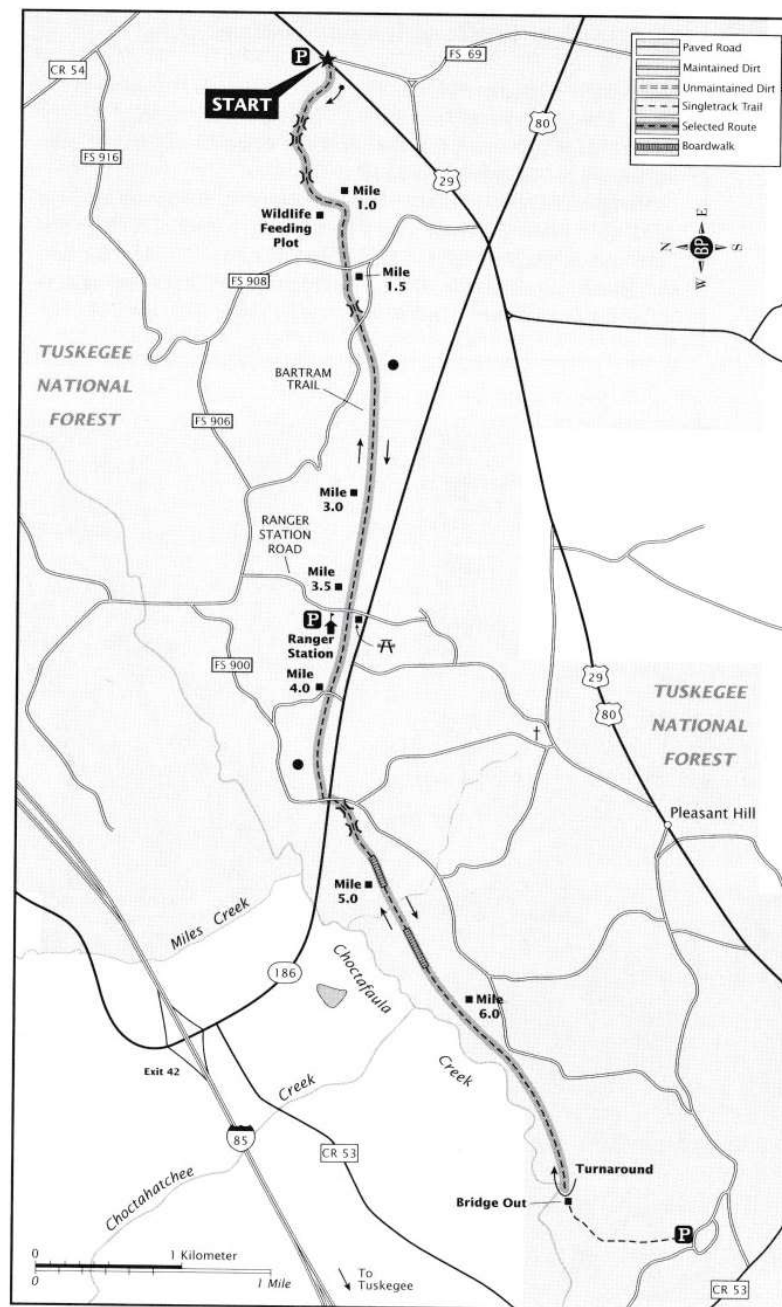
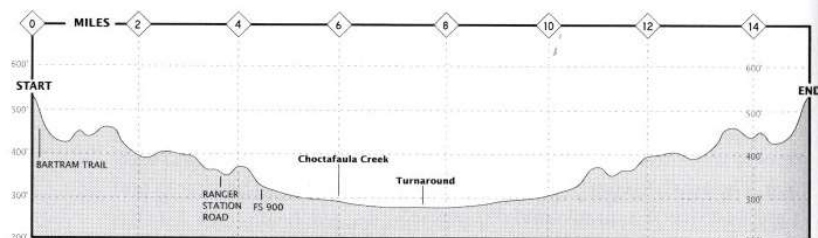
4.4 Come to FS 900. Turn left onto the road and walk about 50 feet to AL 186. Cross the highway, to the FS 900 sign. Walk up the dirt road another 50 feet and you'll see the white blazes heading into the woods on your right. Reenter the woods.

4.6 [FYI. Watch for snakes sunning themselves on the boardwalk.]

6.3 Come to a dirt road. Turn left and follow the road 100 feet—the white blaze can be seen on the right where you'll reenter the woods.

7.5 Come to the edge of Choctafaula Creek and the bridge that used to cross the creek—it's now in the creek. Orange ribbons are tied across the path indicating that this is the end of the road. Turn around and retrace your tracks back to the trailhead.

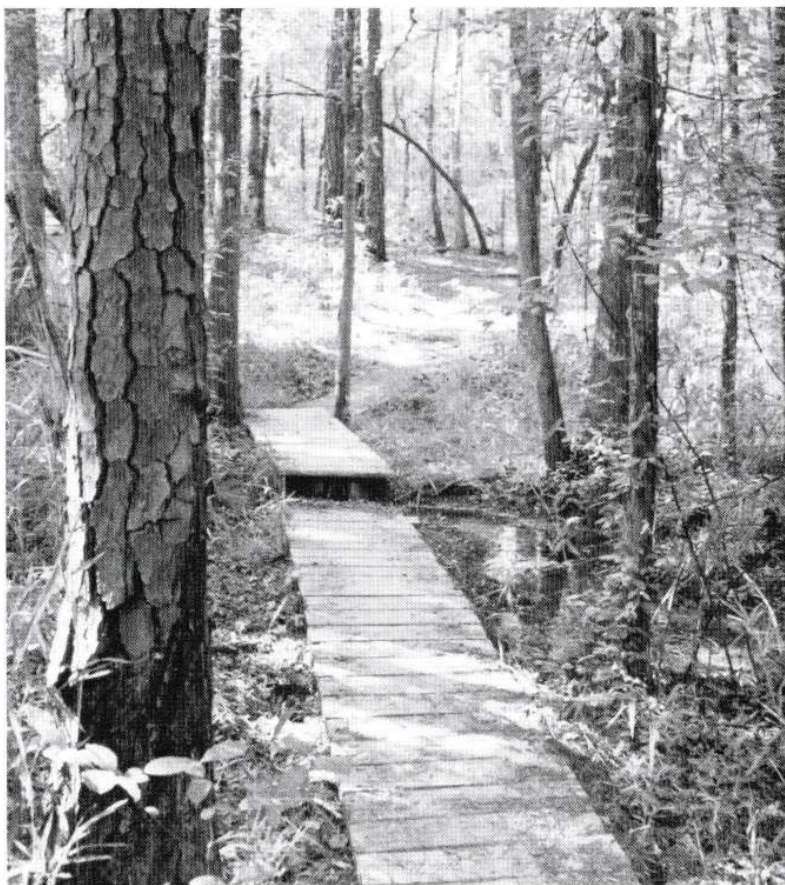
15.0 Arrive back at your vehicle.



Montgomery: Cradle of the Confederacy

The city of Montgomery holds a very special place in the history of the South. Montgomery was founded in 1817 and quickly became a major cotton market and river port. The capital of Alabama was moved from Tuscaloosa to Montgomery in 1847.

Montgomery earned its distinction as Cradle of the Confederacy in 1861 when seven Southern states seceded from the Union. Jefferson Davis was named President of the Confederate States of America, with Montgomery as its capital. The city held this honor for only six months before the decision was made to move the capital to Richmond, Virginia.



The trail is fairly open through the western half, so it's easy to see a cyclist approaching. But keep a careful eye out for them in the eastern half through the dense woods. And as nice as the trail is, there's no avoiding the sounds of nearby Alabama 186 and Wire Road on this half of the route.

The trail is well marked. White paint blazes are spaced between 50 and 100 feet apart. At the road crossings, markers on both sides of the road indicate the trail. Markers show the mileage along the trail every half mile.

Just about any member of the family can hike the Bartram Trail out-and-back in one day, but camping is allowed if you want to make it an overnight trip. Camping is permitted anywhere along the trail within the forest. During hunting season, however, camping is restricted to designated areas and requires a permit. If you plan to hike in fall or winter, contact the ranger office for hunting information and additional guidelines.

While in the Tuskegee National Forest, you may want to check out the Tsinia Wildlife Viewing Area, a 125-acre area set aside for the viewing of animals in their natural habitat. Patience and silence are often rewarded with sightings of white-tailed deer, turkeys, hawks, raccoons, or any of a variety of birds. The viewing area is at the intersection of Interstate 80 and Alabama 83.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Tuskegee National Forest,
Tuskegee, AL; (334) 727-2652—
*The ranger office is open
Monday–Friday, 7:30 A.M.–5 P.M.*

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

No fee to hike the trail. Camping is allowed along the trail using the "dispersal method" and by following standard National Forest Service regulations. Camping is allowed only by permit and in designated areas during hunting season (contact the ranger office for dates).

Local Information:

Tuskegee Area Chamber of Commerce, Tuskegee, AL; (334) 727-6619

Local Events/Attractions:

George Washington Carver Museum, Tuskegee, AL; (334) 727-3200 • **The Oaks,** Tuskegee, AL; (334) 727-3301—*Built in 1899 by the students and staff of Tuskegee University, this was the family home of Booker T. Washington.*

Maps:

USGS maps: Tuskegee, AL; Little Texas, AL • **Brochures** available free of charge at the ranger office. Maps are available at the ranger station for \$5.

15

Horseshoe Bend Trail

Hike Summary

This easy trek takes you along gravel paths across forested hillsides. The trail uses interpretive exhibits to trace the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, which ended the Creek Indian War in 1814 and started General Andrew Jackson on the road to fame, and ultimately the White House.

Hike Specs

Start: From the picnic area one-tenth of a mile from the headquarters of Horseshoe Bend National Military Park

Length: 2.8-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 2 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy, over gently rolling hills

Trail Surface: Gravel

Lay of the Land: Rolling, grassy hills; trees including white oak, hickory, chestnut, and dogwood

Land Status: National military park

Nearest Town: Alexander City, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—over easy trail; bring water; leash required

Getting There

From Alexander City: Take AL 22 north for 13 miles to AL 49. Turn right (south) onto AL 49 and travel one mile. The park entrance is on the left, marked with a National Park Service sign. **DeLorme:** *Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 39 D8

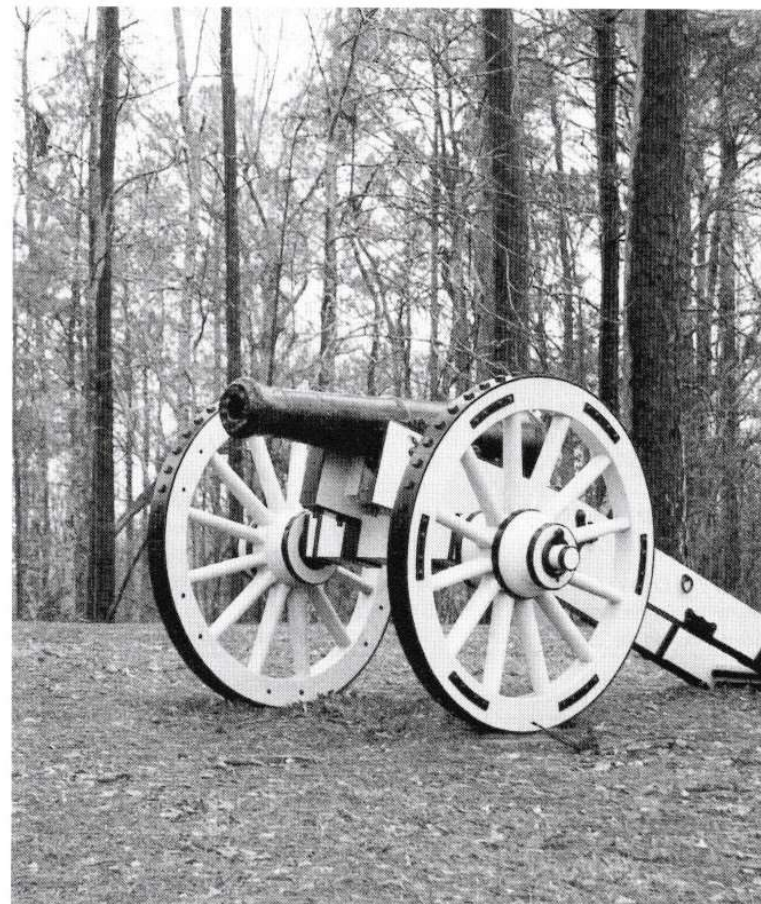
Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, just east of Alexander City, is a serene place, far enough out of the way that you'll rarely have to contend with crowds. Operated by the National Park Service, the park is located at a meander, or horseshoe, in the Tallapoosa River. The spit of land within this horseshoe provide the setting for the battle that ended the Creek Indian War (1813–1814).

No sooner than Europeans arrived in the area, they were bartering heavily with the Creek Indians, and this trade forged a bond between the two groups. By the end of the American Revolution, this friendship continued as the Creeks and the Americans signed an agreement guaranteeing the Creeks land.

Throughout the years leading up to the war, many of the tribes in the South trusted U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins and his programs for social improvement, especially in agriculture. By 1810, the Creek Nation



had fractured into two principal camps. The Red Sticks faction was fiercely nationalistic and feared the expansion of white settlements. In 1813 a group of Red Sticks were told erroneously that war had broken out between the United States and the Creek Nation. The Red Sticks attacked and killed several frontier families.



A monument commemorating the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, and a cannon used in the assault.

A Creek tribal council captured and executed those involved in the murders. Red Stick chief Menawa vowed revenge on those connected with the executions and pledged to remove whites from the region. And with that, the Creek War began.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the picnic area located 0.1 miles from the visitor center. Look for the "hiker" emblem and head into the woods here. The trail is basically a gravel path throughout the entire trip. There are no markers except where the trail crosses roads. The "hiker" emblem will show you where the path reenters the woods.

0.1 The trail tops out and comes to a T-intersection in the woods. (This is where the loop later rejoins itself.) Turn right. In 200 feet, reach another T-intersection. Turn right and engage a rather steep climb. **[Option.** By turning to the left, you can take a short out-and-back walk to an overlook where Andrew Jackson set his battle line.]

0.2 [FYI. From "The Overlook," look to your right at the series of white poles across the field. These indicate where the huge Upper Creek barricade once stood.] Head down the asphalt sidewalk to the parking area 200 feet then turn left and head another 100 feet to reenter the woods on the gravel trail.

0.4 [FYI. Cross Jackson's main line where the Tennessee Militia / 39th U.S. Infantry began the assault.]

0.5 Come to a fork and go right.

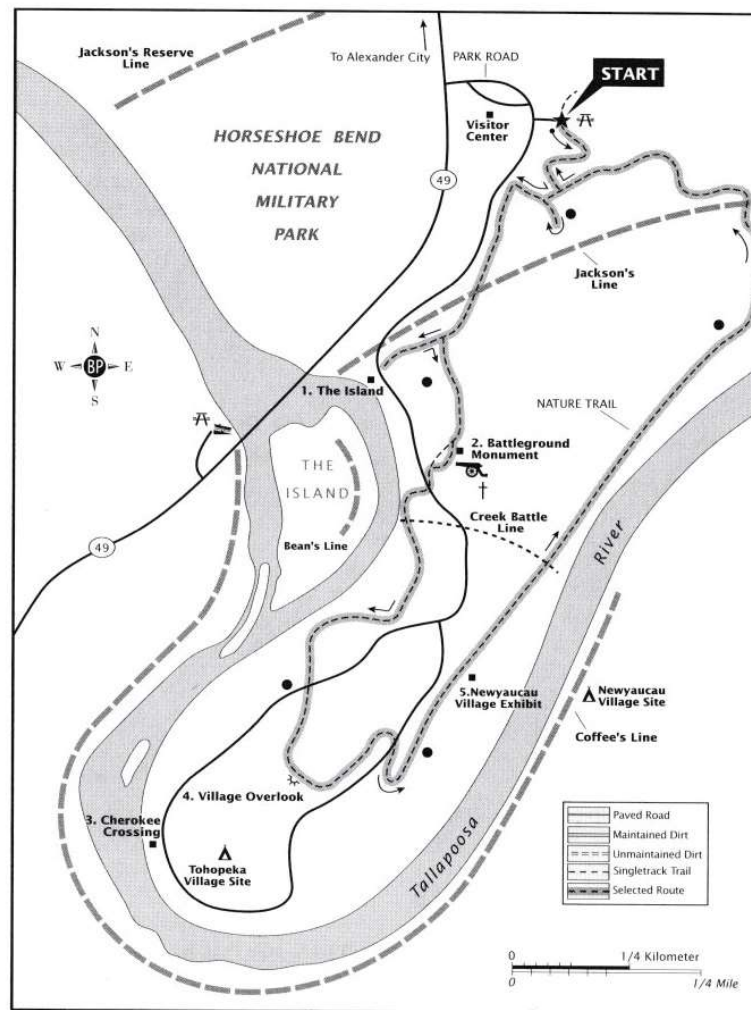
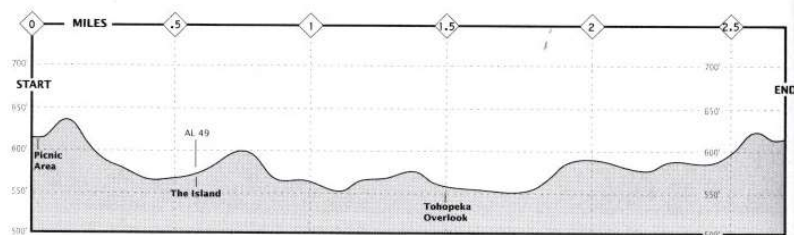
0.6 Reach Exhibit 1, known as the "Island." The view of the Tallapoosa is expansive here, up to 600 feet across. **[FYI.** Straight ahead is a small 15-acre island in which Lt. Jesse Bean's Tennessee Militia encamped, preventing the Red Sticks from retreating to this position. To the right is the AL 49 Bridge.] Turn around and retrace the trail back to the fork.

0.7 Return to the fork and turn right.

0.9 Reach Exhibit 2. Head down the sidewalk 100 feet to the parking area. Turn left and in 100 feet cross the park road and reenter the woods on a gravel path.

1.4 Cross the park road.

1.5 [FYI. Topping out on a hill, the trail arrives at the Tohopeka (a Creek word meaning "fort") Village Overlook. Below, the Red Stick's retreated to this grassy field directly in the curve of the "horseshoe" in hopes of the river protecting them from attack; however, Jackson's tribal allies swarmed across the river to attack this position by a surprise attack.]



1.6 Reach Exhibit 4. **[FYI.** This was the site of an Upper Creek refugee camp for tribal families to relocate after battles elsewhere in the region.]

1.7 Cross the park road.

1.9 Reach Exhibit 5. **[FYI.** Across the river stood the Newyaucau Village. The

Georgia militia burned the village and forced its inhabitants to join the other fleeing refugees at Tohopeka.]

2.7 This is where the loop reconnects with the first section of trail. Turn right.

2.8 Arrive at the picnic area.



A view of the Tallapoosa River.

Andrew Jackson was in charge of U.S. forces. Despite outnumbering the Creeks in every battle, his troops could not bring a decisive end to the war. The situation became worse in July of 1813 when a group of Creeks ambushed a Red Stick ammunition train. The Red Sticks then massacred 250 settlers in Fort Mims, just outside present-day Bay Minette, Alabama.

The war raged for two years, until at last it came to this location—which was called *cholocco litabixee* (“horses flat foot or hoof”) by the Creeks, Horseshoe Bend by the United States. On the winning side of the battle were 2,000 men from a Tennessee militia and 600 allied Cherokee and Creek Indians. By the end of the battle, 1,000 Red Sticks lay dead.

The end of the war brought a treaty that turned over 21 million acres of land to the United States and relocated most of the Creeks to Oklahoma along what became known as the Trail of Tears. Those Creeks who fought alongside Jackson were allowed to stay and establish a Poarch Creek Reservation. Formed in 1836, just north of Atmore, the reservation is home to over 2,000 Creeks Indians.

The path at Horseshoe Bend Park passes most of the exhibits that describe the battle. At each exhibit, signs describe what to look for. There are benches for rest, and a roof over the exhibit for shade.

Pick up a free brochure from the visitor center before starting out. The brochure describes the exhibits and the battle in more detail. You can see a 10-minute slide show at the visitor center that gives an overview of the battle and the park. Admission to the park is free, but a donation is requested to help maintain the facility.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, Davidson, AL; (256) 234-7111 or www.nps.gov/hobe—open seven days a week, 8am–5pm, closed December 25

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

No fee required. A donation to support maintenance is requested.

Local Information:

Alexander City/Lake Martin Chamber of Commerce, Alexander City, AL; (256) 234-3461 or www.alexandercity.org

Local Events/Attractions:

Reenactment of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, last weekend of March, Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, Davidson, AL; (256) 234-7111

Accommodations:

Mistletoe Bough Bed and Breakfast, Anniston, AL; (256) 329-3717 or 1-877-330-3707; www.bbonline.com/al/mistletoe

Maps:

USGS maps: Buttston, AL • **Map and brochures**—available for free at the visitor center

16

Tannehill
Historic Trail

Hike Summary

The ironworks at Tannehill produced many iron implements used by the Confederate army during the Civil War. The ironworks, which were restored to working condition in 1976, are today the centerpiece of Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park. The Tannehill Historic Trail travels around the buildings of the ironworks and its furnace. Heading into the woods, the trail encounters the rolling blue-green waters of Roupes Creek and the ruins of the homes of slaves who worked at the ironworks.

Hike Specs

Start: From the visitor center parking lot at Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park

Length: 4.2-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 2–3 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy, over wide paths and roads

Trail Surface: Packed clay and dirt

Lay of the Land: Live oak and hickory forest

Land Status: State historical park

Nearest Town: Bessemer, AL

Other Trail Users: Cyclists

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—with easy walking; ample water available; leash required

Getting There

From Birmingham: Take I-465 south for 13 miles to Exit 1 (Bessemer/McCalla). Turn left onto Eastern Valley Road and travel 7.3 miles. A sign on the left side of the road indicates the turn to Tannehill Park Road. Turn left onto this road and travel 0.5 miles to the park gate. After paying the fee, continue straight for about 100 feet to the visitor center parking lot. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 30 H3

At one time, Birmingham and its environs rivaled the steel production machine of Pittsburgh and helped keep the Confederate army supplied with weapons. In 1830, Daniel Hillman came to Alabama from Pennsylvania and built a forge along Roupes Creek. Two years after setting up the operation and well before he had a chance to see the fortune that would be produced by the forge, Hillman died. A local farmer, Ninian Tannehill, purchased the forge.

Three tall furnaces were constructed on the site with the use of slave laborers who cut the sandstone bricks by hand. By 1862 the ironworks was in full swing, producing pig iron for the Confederacy. On March 31, 1865, the 8th Iowa Cavalry of the U.S. Army shelled and set fire to the foundry. A few miles up the road, Union troops torched the slave quarters.



A businessman bought the ironworks after the Civil War and tried to rebuild it, but times were bad and the facility was eventually abandoned and soon overgrown.

This brings us to the 1970s, when the state of Alabama and several colleges resurrected the site. Archaeological digs uncovered the old blower house and the main furnace. The furnace was rebuilt and fired up once again. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The park encompasses more than 1,500 acres of forest just south of Bessemer. Forty historic structures of the period (from 1830 to 1870) have been brought in and restored for the public to view. Local craftspeople display the making of quilts, furniture, and pottery at the site between March and November of each year.

The Tannehill Historical Trail takes you through the major sites of the park. The trail itself is actually a combination of four separate routes: the Furnace Trail, Slave Quarters Trail, Old Bucksville Stage Road, and Iron Road. Along its route, the trail passes through thick oak and dogwood forests and along several creeks, including Roupes Creek, which helped power the furnace.

Beginning at the visitor center, the path first leads to the Alabama Museum of Iron and Steel, which exhibits many of the artifacts discovered through the years at the site. The trail also passes Plank Road, which features cabins from the mid to late 1800s.

Farther up the trail is the main attraction, the Tannehill furnace. A long wooden walkway leads to the top, and you are invited to stroll around the furnace as well as the blower house next to it.

As the trail moves into the woods away from the campgrounds, it joins the Slave Quarters Trail. You'll pass the foundations of several of the slave

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the visitor center parking lot. Head to the southwest over the paved park road. In 100 feet it becomes gravel. Continue to the southwest toward the Museum of Iron and Steel at the top of a small hill. Travel down the right side of the museum to the north along the gravel road. Behind the museum, turn left and head west down a series of cement stairs.

0.1 Cross a wide cement dam with a creek flowing over it to the north. It's shallow, but requires getting a little wet. Come to a fork and go left—this dirt road is the Furnace Trail.

0.2 Pass a set of cement stairs that leads to Plank Road and the craft cabins next to the trail to the left. Continue to the southeast and the wide white water of Roupes Creek will first be seen to the left.

0.3 Arrive at the furnace and blower house. Continue 300 feet to the southeast until the Snead House is reached (originally built in 1840).

0.4 Cross Folsom Bridge, named after former governor "Big Jim" Folsom. The trail turns into gravel Iron Hill Road. (This is where the loop rejoins itself for the return trip.) In just a few feet, the trail forks. Go straight—this is the Slave Quarters Trail. **[FYI. The short trail to the left leads to the creek.]**

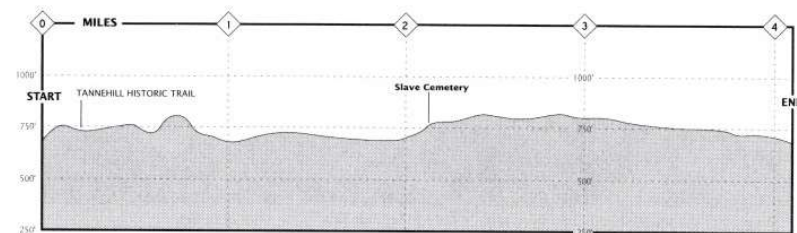
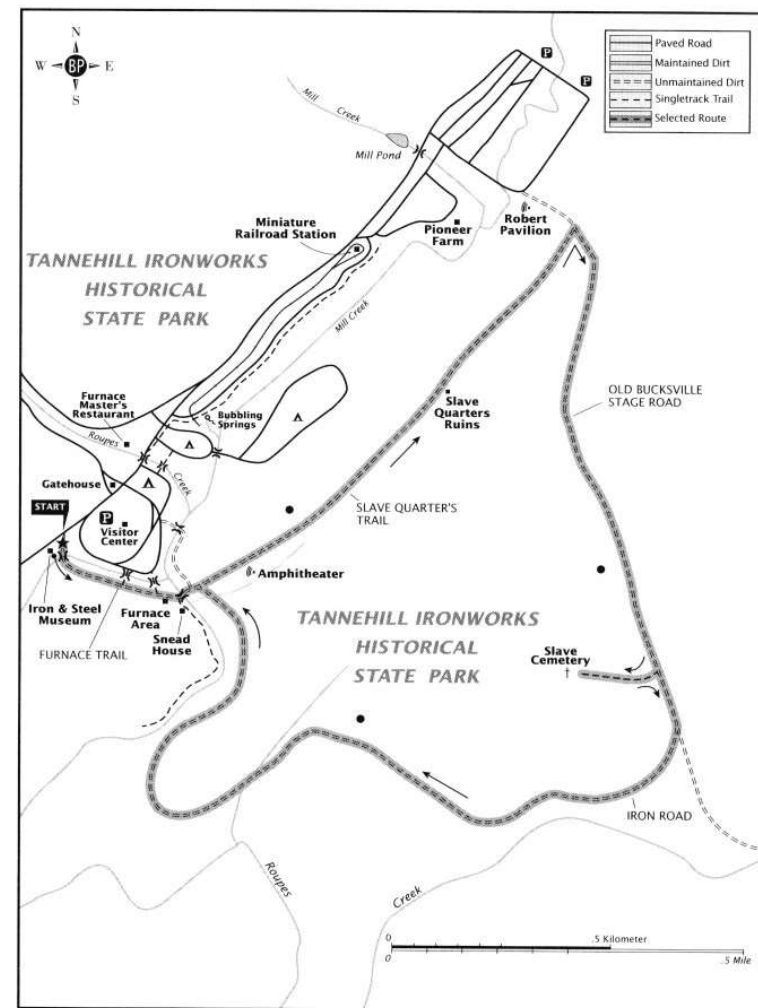
0.5 Pass a small amphitheater to the right used for nature and historical lectures.

0.6 The trail is moving between two ridges.

0.8 Come to the "Slave Cabin Sites Circa 1860" sign. Keep an eye out through the next 0.4 miles for the foundations of the cabins.

1.0 A sign on a tree here says, "C.S. Army Quarters Furnace Help." Continue for 100 feet and pass a bench on the left and an old road to the right that leads to a second amphitheater.

1.2 The dirt Old Bucksville Stage Road merges in from the east (the right). Turn right onto this road.



MilesDirections (Continued)

2.0 Come to a fork and go right. This dirt road is a side trail that leads to the slave cemetery. A sign points the way.

2.2 Reach the cemetery. When you're done, turn around and retrace your route back to the fork.

2.4 Turn right onto Old Bucksville Stage Road.

2.5 Come to a fork and go right, onto Iron Road.

2.6 Come to a fork and go right.

2.9 *[FYI. The red pebbles that line the trail are iron slag.]*

3.0 *[Side-trip. The short 250-foot trail to the left leads to Roupes Creek, a nice place to sit and take in the stream.]*

3.4 Roupes Creek lies straight ahead.

3.5 Come to a fork and go right. *[FYI. The left fork is a short grassy trail leading to*

the creek.] In 200 feet you'll need to rock-hop across a five-foot wide creek.

3.6 Roupes Creek and the furnace area are in view to the left.

3.8 Come to a T-intersection with the gravel road from the start of the trip. Turn left onto the road. In 100 feet, turn to the right and cross the Folsom Bridge once again. Continue straight to the Snead House. Follow the dirt road between the furnace and blower house.

4.0 Pass the cement steps that lead to Plank Road. In 100 feet, cross the cement dam again. After crossing, head up the stairs again behind the museum (a cotton gin is on the left). Travel 200 feet and on the other side of the museum, turn to the right and head down the gravel road.

4.2 The gravel road turns to asphalt and returns you to the visitor center.



Just prior to the intersection of Iron Road and the Bucksville Stage Road is the slave cemetery. This is the only engraved tombstone.

cabins burned by the Union army during their raid. The trail soon turns onto the Old Bucksville Stage Road, which was the main highway into the area during the mid 1800s.

At the end of the road, a short side trail leads to the slave cemetery. Of the simple, flat rock tombstones that mark the area, only one, that of Josh Stroup, is engraved.

The hike is easy, over well-maintained roads of dirt and clay. After a good rain, however, some of the route can be deep in mud. A \$2 entry fee covers admission to the craft houses, museum, and furnace. Artifacts are protected by the state of Alabama and cannot be removed. In other words, don't take home a brick from the furnace.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park, McCalla, AL; (205) 477-5711 or www.tannehill.org

Schedule:

Park and trails open year round 7 A.M.–sunset

Fees/Permits:

\$2 day-use fee for adults, \$1 seniors and children, six–11. Primitive camping is \$9 per night for up to four people (\$2.50 more for each additional person) or improved campsites with water and electricity are \$14 per night.

Local Information:

Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce, Bessemer, AL; 1-888-4-BESSEMER or www.bessemerchamber.com

Local Events/Attractions:

Bessemer Hall of History, Bessemer, AL; (205) 426-1633—A truly unique museum featuring photos and artifacts from the 1800s, artifacts from the 28th

Alabama Infantry from the Civil War, even Adolph Hitler's typewriter. Open Tuesday–Saturday 9 A.M.–4 P.M. • Annual Civil War Reenactment, last weekend of May, Tannehill Historic State Park, McCalla, AL; (205) 477-5711—*Each year Union and Confederate troops gather to reenact the battle for the iron works and to demonstrate life during the 1860s.*

Accommodations:

Masters Economy Inn, Bessemer, AL; 1-800-633-3434

Restaurants:

Audie's Diner, Bessemer, AL; (205) 436-3874

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Wilson Butch Sporting Goods, Bessemer, AL; (205) 428-4642

Maps:

USGS maps: McCalla, AL; Halfmile Shoals, AL • **Brochures and trail maps** available free of charge from the park office

17

Blue Trail (South Rim Trail)

Hike Summary

Although not the most difficult trail at Oak Mountain State Park, the Blue Trail does have some long, constant climbs for the first two miles of the trip up the side of Double Oak Mountain. Once on top, with the help of a little bushwhacking, you will be rewarded with superb views of surrounding mountains and the valley below.

Hike Specs

Start: From the North Trailhead at Oak Mountain State Park

Length: 6.7-mile point-to-point

Approximate Hiking Time: 3–4 hours

Difficulty Rating: Difficult to easy, with steep, rocky inclines at the start, but more level walking the rest of the way

Trail Surface: Dirt path

Lay of the Land: Stands of longleaf pines

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Birmingham, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—bring water (sources can be intermittent); leash not required

CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Pay the entrance and camping fees and get general information brochures. Trail maps are available at the park office. Travel 6.5 miles straight ahead and the well-marked parking area will be on the left. This lot offers access to the North Trailhead. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6

Shuttle Point

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Travel 2.5 miles and turn right onto Terrace Drive. Travel around the lake and up the winding road two miles to the Peavine Falls parking area (the South Trailhead). Be careful driving up the last mile of this dirt road. It winds and there are steep drop-offs. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6

Getting There

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to

Alabama is blessed with some beautiful country and the foresight to protect it. While each Alabama state park has something special, none offers more variety than Oak Mountain State Park. Located just 15 minutes south of Birmingham, Oak Mountain's offerings run the gamut from a championship 18-hole golf course to world-class mountain bike trails to vacation cottages. There is a horse stable where trail rides can be organized, and even a demonstration farm. The park is the home of the Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, which offers shelter and an area of recuperation for injured or orphaned animals.



Oak Mountain's 9,940 acres comprise pine forests and hardwood valleys and mountain ridges that top out at 1,200 feet. This park offers a combination of challenging treks, spectacular views from the top of Double Oak Mountain, and the beauty of Peavine Falls.

Because the park provides such variety and is so close to the state's largest city, it gets a bit crowded in summer—and even more so in the fall when the leaves turn. But the crowding hasn't reached the point where the park has lost any of its appeal to hikers.

The Blue Trail is one of the more popular trails in the park's network because of the views it affords. The trail is 6.7 miles long, from the North Trailhead to the South Trailhead (which is also the Peavine Falls trailhead), but by traveling on connector routes, you can fashion a number of loop trips. The South Trailhead provides access to other trails that would make excellent return routes to the North Trailhead.

Oak Mountain is one of the few state parks to allow overnight camping along trails, and the Blue Trail is the most popular for overnighing. Many backpackers head up to the rocky ridge of Double Oak Mountain—so named because of the dual mountains running parallel to one another—and spend the night overlooking the valley below. Campers must register at the park office before heading out.



A view of the Pelham Valley far below.

The trail is one of the best maintained in the park, due to efforts of the Vulcan Trail Association. The trail is wide and regularly cleared of fallen trees and overgrowth. Berms and washout-prevention steps are replaced frequently. The trail is marked with blue paint blazes about every 50 yards. At the trailhead, a canister invites hikers to make a contribution to help with trail maintenance.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the North Trailhead. *[FYI. Make plans to arrive early as the parking lot tends to fill up quite rapidly since many of the hiking and biking trails begin here.]* Cross John Findley Drive to the southeast and come to a red cattle gate. There is plenty of information here on the trail and other activities. Head through the gate down the gravel road. In a few feet, a wooden sign will be reached that reads "BLUE TRAIL" with an arrow pointing to the left, and "YELLOW TRAIL" with an arrow pointing to the right. Turn left and head to the east slightly uphill.

1.4 Pass the first of two connectors to the Red Trail. (The connector is marked by a red blaze above the Blue Trail blaze.)

1.6 *[FYI. To your right (northwest) is Shackleford Point (1260 ft.), the highest point in the park.]*

1.9 Pass through "The Turnstile," two large boulders on either side of the trail.

2.1 *[Side-trip. To the right approximately 50 feet away from the trail is a row of rock outcroppings. A short trip over to*

them provides some nice views of the second mountain forming Double Oak Mountain. This is a popular spot for backpackers to pitch camp for the night as is evidenced by numerous fire rings.]

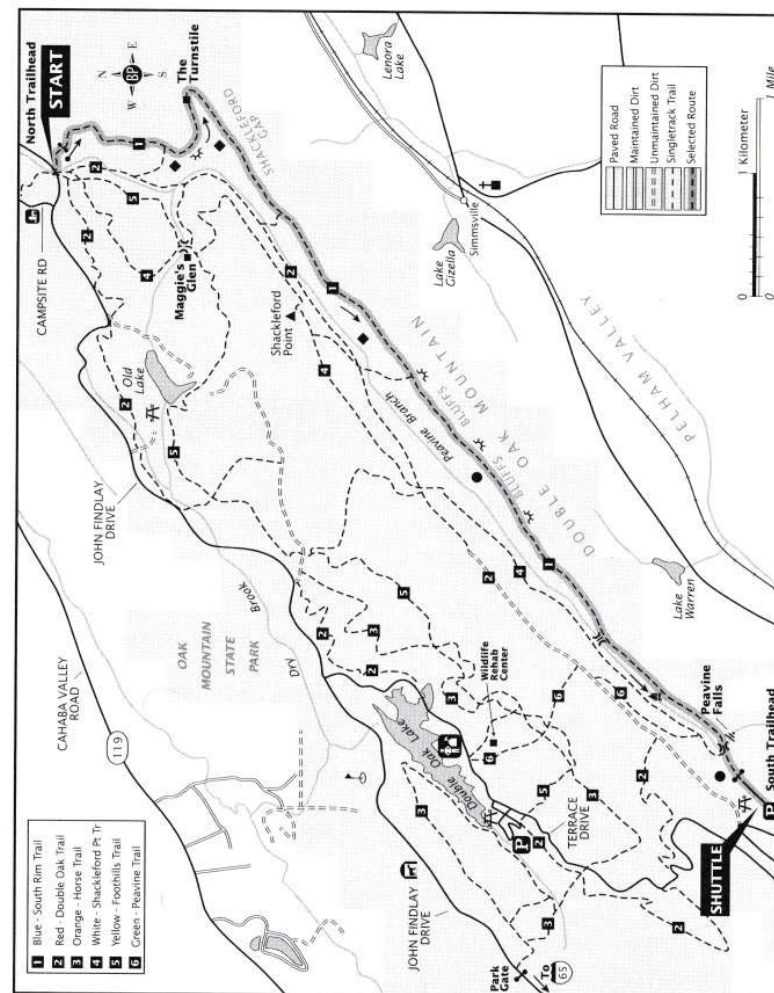
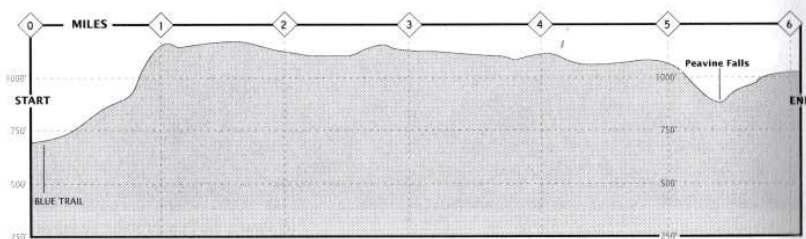
2.5 Pass the second Red-Blue connector trail.

3.2 *[Side-trip. You can catch some spectacular views of the Pelham Valley by bushwhacking to the rocks outcroppings. Many backpackers choose to hike the rocks, which run parallel to the trail for the next 0.9 miles, instead of the trail. Many hikers also use this area to pitch camp for the night.]*

3.5 The Blue Trail intersects the Orange Trail Connector.

4.7 Pass the White / Blue Connector just past the creek.

5.2 Pass a short side trail to the right. *[FYI. It leads down to Peavine Branch and a nice level area, good for camping.]* Shortly thereafter the trail forks. Go right. *[FYI. Through the trees to the left is the Peavine Falls Gorge.]*



5.3 Come to a "No Camping" sign. A few feet more and a short footpath will split left. Follow this approximately 50 feet to the edge of the gorge where you'll find spectacular views of the gorge and 65-foot Peavine Falls. *[Note: Be VERY cautious here as the rocks are slick and the drop precipitous.]* Along the edge of the gorge is a clay footpath. Turn right and in 40 feet you'll reconnect with the Blue

Trail. Continue west on the trail. After crossing Peavine Branch, the White Trail (Shackleford Point Trail) joins the Blue Trail for the remainder of the trip.

6.7 Arrive at the South Trailhead and your shuttle. *[FYI. At the gravel parking area you'll find maps, trail information, a pavilion with picnic tables, and a phone.]*

Since the trail is just slightly lower in elevation than the top of the ridge it follows, you may be wondering what is hiding on the other side of the rock formations to your left. By bushwhacking just a few dozen yards to the outcrops, you can see into the Pelham Valley below. Many hikers prefer to continue bushwhacking along the ridge, which for the most part runs parallel to the Blue Trail. Just remember to tread lightly and leave only footsteps.

The hike culminates in a visit to Peavine Falls. The falls can be heard from a mile away, long before the trail swings around the top of the 65-foot falls and gorge. A short bushwhack to the edge of the gorge provides a spectacular view of the falls, but be very careful as the rocks are slick and the drop is precipitous. Although camping is allowed along the trail, it's prohibited above and below the falls.

Local Events/Attractions:

Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame, Birmingham, AL; (205) 254-2731—*Jazz legends with ties to Alabama, such as Lionel Hampton and Erskine Hawkins, are enshrined here. The Hall of Fame is opened Tuesday–Saturday 10 A.M.–5 P.M., and Sunday 1 P.M.–5 P.M.. Admission is free.* • **Alabama Sports Hall of Fame**, Birmingham, AL; (205) 323-6665 or www.tech-comm.com/ashof—*Through the years, Alabama has provided the sports world with outstanding athletes and they are all enshrined here at the Sports Hall of Fame. Artifacts from such notables as Paul "Bear" Bryant, Hank Aaron, Joe Louis, Joe Namath, Satchel Paige, and many more will be found here. The Hall is open Monday–Saturday 9 A.M.–5 P.M., Sundays 1 P.M.–5 P.M.*

Birmingham Bulls, Birmingham, AL at www.birminghambulls.com—*The Bulls are a minor league N.H.L./East Coast Hockey League franchise who play at the Birmingham Civic Center.* • **Birmingham Zoo**, Birmingham, AL; (205) 879-0408—*This is the premier zoo in the state with over 900 species of rare and exotic animals all set in natural outdoor settings. Call ahead for their schedule and admission prices.* • **Smith-Harrison Museum**, Columbiana, AL; (205) 669-4545—*This museum has the 2nd largest collection of George and Martha Washington artifacts as well as Robert E. Lee artifacts. The museum is open Monday–Friday 9 A.M.–5 P.M. with free admission.*

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Oak Mountain State Park, Pelham, AL; (205) 620-2527 or 1-800-ALA-PARK or www.bham.net/oakmntn

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

A day-use permit costs \$2 per person. Camping is \$8 per night for a primitive site, \$13 per night for tent sites with water, \$14 with water and electricity.

Local Information:

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham, AL; (205) 323-5461 or www.birmingham-chamber.com • **Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitor Bureau**, Birmingham, AL; 1-800-458-8085 or www.bcvb.org • **North Shelby Chamber of Commerce**, Pelham, AL; (205) 663-4542 or www.nsoc.com

Accommodations:

Mountain Brook Inn, Mountain Brook, AL; 1-800-523-7771 • **Oak Mountain State Park**, Pelham, AL; 1-800-ALA-PARK • **Ranchouse Inn**, Birmingham, AL; (205) 322-0691

Restaurants:

The Original Whistle Stop Café (Irondale Café), Birmingham, AL; (205) 956-5258—*Setting for the novel and movie Fried Green Tomatoes.* • **Johnny Ray's**

Barbecue, Pelham, AL; (205) 985-7675 • **Cafe Trentuno**, Pelham, AL; (205) 664-7887

Hike Tours:

Vulcan Trail Association, Birmingham, AL; (205) 328-6198 or www.bham.net/vulcan—*The Vulcan Trail Association features a "Second Sunday Walk," when else but the second Sunday of each month at Oak Mountain. The trails they feature are different theme each month and rated easy. Hikes begin at 1 P.M. from the park office.*

Organizations:

Sierra Club Cahaba, Birmingham, AL; (334) 540-7496 or www.sierraclub.org/chapters/al/cahaba.html • **Vulcan Trail Association**, Birmingham, AL; (205) 328-6198

Other Resources:

Alabama Trails, Birmingham, AL or www.alabamatrails.com • **Bama Environmental News**, Birmingham, AL; (205) 226-7739 or www.bamanews.com • **Wild Alabama**, Moulton, AL; (256) 974-7678; www.wildalabama.com

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Alabama Outdoors, Birmingham, AL; 1-800-870-0011

Maps:

USGS maps: Cahaba Heights, AL; Chelsea, AL; Helena, AL • **Brochures and trail maps** available at the park office. Maps are 50 cents.

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White Trail (Shackleford Pt. Trail)

Hike Summary

A bit more overgrown than other trails at Oak Mountain, the White Trail begins at the park's South Trailhead and passes by Peavine Falls. The trail continues along gently flowing Peavine Branch before gradually heading up to the highest perch in the park, Shackleford Point. Here the trail turns rocky as it follows the ridgeline, with views of mountains to either side. The trek includes a visit to Maggie's Glen, a favorite spot for sitting along the banks of the creek and relaxing.

Hike Specs

Start: From the South Trailhead (Peavine Falls trailhead) at Oak Mountain State Park

Length: 6.3-miles point-to-point

Approximate Hiking Time: 3–4 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy travel along Peavine Branch and a ridge; moderate climbs up a rocky slope

Trail Surface: Dirt; some rocky areas

Lay of the Land: Forests of longleaf pine, hickory, white oak, and silver maple; boulder-strewn vistas

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Birmingham, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—though could be tough on older or out-of-shape dogs on steeper portions; bring water; leash not required

Getting There

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Travel 2.5 miles and turn right onto Terrace Drive. Travel around the lake and up the winding road two miles to the Peavine Falls parking area (the South Trailhead). Be careful driving up the last mile of this dirt road. It winds and there are steep drop-offs. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6

Shuttle Point

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Pay the entrance and camping fees and get general information brochures. Trail maps are available at the park office. Travel 6.5 miles straight ahead and the well-marked parking area will be on the left. This lot offers access to the North Trailhead. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6



In Oak Mountain State Park, most trails lead to Peavine Falls. The White Trail, also known as the Shackleford Point Trail, is no exception. The trail begins at the South Trailhead and travels north to the park's aptly named North Trailhead. Several trails interconnect through this area, making a variety of loop hikes possible. One of the more popular hikes is to begin at the North Trailhead, hike south on

the Blue Trail [see Hike 17] to the South Trailhead, and then take the White Trail back to the North Trailhead. This combination makes for a nice overnight backpacking trip. Camping is permitted along the trails, but be sure to register at the park office before heading out. Camping is not allowed just below or above Peavine Falls.

The White Trail follows the northern summit of Oak Mountain, which is not really a single mountain. It is, in fact, two mountains that run parallel to one another, and together are known as Double Oak Mountain. The Blue Trail follows the ridges of the southern summit.

From its beginning at the South Trailhead, the White Trail is narrow as it winds through heavy brush. As it sets out along the banks of Peavine Branch, it runs rocky through white oaks, hickory trees, maples, and dogwoods. After passing by Peavine Falls, the route opens up and enters some fine stands of longleaf pine.

In spring, you're likely to hear the sounds of yellow-billed cuckoos and pine warblers. In summer, thrushes and wrens dart through the brush, and throughout the year, broad wing and red shoulder hawks soar overhead. You also may see wild turkeys.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the north end of the South Trailhead at Peavine Falls. At first the trail is a combination of the Blue (South Rim) and White trails.

0.2 Come to a fork and go straight (the left fork). *[Side-trip. The Blue Trail splits right. It's just a short out-and-back down this trail to the headwaters of Peavine Falls and Peavine Gorge.]* The next tenth of a mile is a combination of the White and Green (Peavine Trail) trails.

0.3 The Green Trail splits and heads back to the park office. Continue straight.

0.4 Pass a popular campsite for backpackers along the Blue Trail, right next to the stream.

1.0 Pass the White-Blue Connector Trail.

1.2 [FYI.] A short bushwhack to the rocks on the left and a hike along them will afford excellent views of the mountains to the northeast.]

1.9 Pass the wide dirt Red Trail, used by mountain bikes. At the top of the hill, pass the Yellow-White Connector Trail, which splits left.

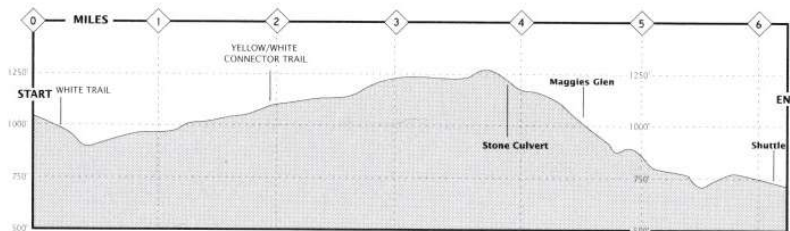
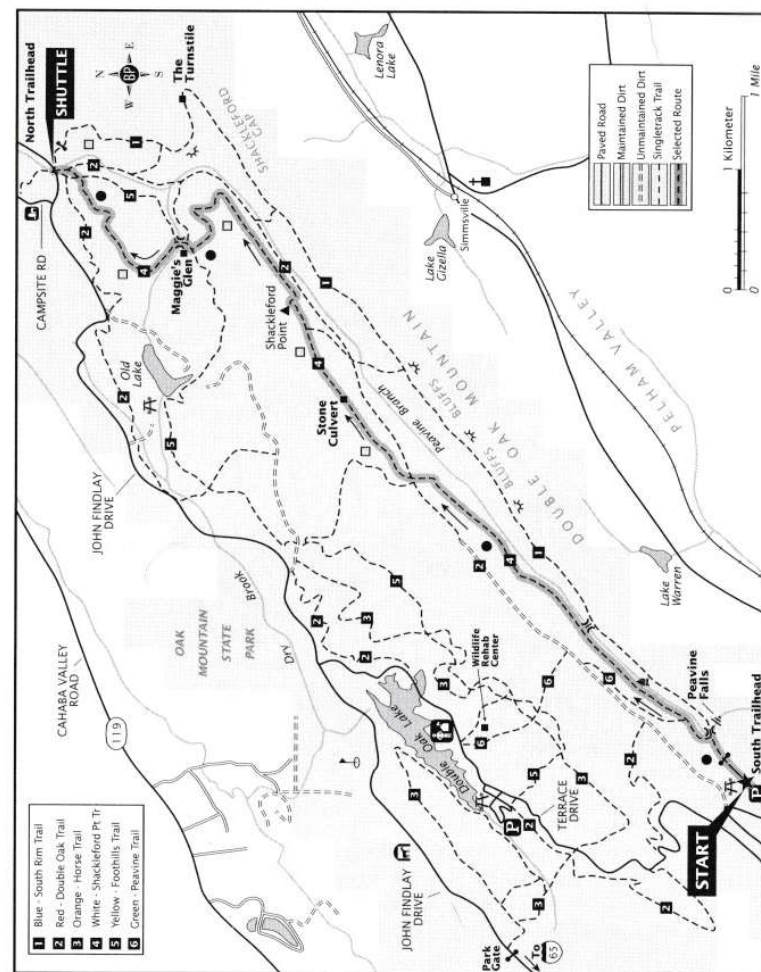
2.6 Come to a T-intersection (with several directional signs) and turn left.

3.3 [FYI.] To the right is the parallel mountain that makes up the pair of Double Oak Mountain and where the Blue South Rim Trail can be found.]

3.9 The White and Yellow trails converge and head northeast.

4.4 Reach Maggie's Glen. *[FYI. This is a very nice, flat glen with a wide stream running through it. It is a scenic and popular site among hikers.]* Cross a small footbridge and the Yellow and White trails split. Continue on the White Trail.

6.3 Arrive at the gate of the North Trailhead.





As the trail moves up the ridgeline, the trail becomes more and more rocky. On top of the mountain, the trail follows just below the rocky outcroppings of the ridge, which block many views. A short bushwhack to the ridge reveals outstanding views of Pelham Valley.

The trail eventually makes its way to the top of some bluffs and outcroppings just before heading back down the mountain. Along this section are some excellent spots to just sit down, kick back, watch the hawks overhead, and take in the views from a rock ledge. Along its route, the White Trail reaches the highest spot in the park, Shackleford Point, at an elevation of 1,260 feet.

A couple of miles before the White Trail nears its end at the North Trailhead, it passes through Maggie's Glen, a flat area situated in a hollow. The glen is grassy, with a wide stream running through it. Spring is a favorite time to visit, when white beeches and dogwoods bloom.

A word of praise has to go out to the men and women of the Vulcan Trail Association. Not only do they provide outdoor training programs to the public, but they also help with trail maintenance. At each trailhead is a metal container for contributions to help with their efforts.

Ride Information

Trail Contacts:

Oak Mountain State Park,
Pelham, AL; (205) 620-2527 or 1-800-ALA-PARK or
www.bham.net/oakmtn

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

A Day-Use permit costs \$2 per person. Camping is \$8 per night for a primitive site, \$13 per night for tent sites with water, \$14 with water and electricity.

Local Information:

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham, AL; (205) 323-5461 or www.birminghamchamber.com • **Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitor Bureau,** Birmingham, AL; 1-800-458-8085 or www.bcvb.org • **North Shelby Chamber of Commerce,** Pelham, AL; (205) 663-4542 or www.nsoc.com

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Organizations:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Other Resources

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Mountain Brook Sporting Goods, Mountain Brook, AL; (205) 870-3257

Maps:

USGS maps: Cahaba Heights, AL; Chelsea, AL; Helena, AL • **Brochures and trail maps**—available at the park office. Maps are 50 cents.

19

Yellow Trail (Foothills Trail)

Hike Summary

The Yellow Trail travels the lower foothills of Oak Mountain State Park through concentrated tree growth that provides a welcoming canopy of shade during hot weather. On the ridges above, longleaf pines tower over the trail. During the hike, watch for large turtles in some of the creeks you'll cross. One of the most popular stopping points along the route is Maggie's Glen.

Hike Specs

Start: From the North Trailhead at Oak Mountain State Park

Length: 8.2-mile point-to-point

Approximate Hiking Time: 5–6 hours

Difficulty Rating: Moderate to difficult due to travel up steep ridges; easy to moderate for the last half of the trip

Trail Surface: Dirt path

Lay of the Land: Thick forest of magnolia, hickory, black walnut, and oak; stands of longleaf pines; many stream crossings



Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Birmingham, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—but can be tough on the initial steep parts; water available through most of the hike; leash not required

Getting There

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Pay the entrance and camping fees and get general information brochures. Trail maps are available at the park office. Travel 6.5 miles straight ahead and the well-marked parking area will be on the left. This lot offers access to the North Trailhead. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6

Shuttle Point

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Continue on two miles and make a right turn onto Terrace Drive. Head southwest one mile on Terrace Drive, passing the park office. The parking area will be on the right. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6



Quiet solitude. That's what's in store for you along the Yellow Trail at Oak Mountain State Park. This trail, in the middle of one of the most popular state parks in Alabama, sees little traffic except near its two ends.

The Yellow Trail, also known as the Foothills Trail, travels up and down the northern ridges of Double Oak Mountain. Unlike the higher White and Blue trails, the Yellow Trail reaches a maximum elevation at only 820 feet. The trail commences from the North Trailhead, where several other routes are accessed, including the Red Bike Trail. The parking area isn't that large here, so arrive early to get a parking spot.

To judge by park maps, the trail looks like it should be fairly easy, but the first half of this trip has some difficulty. The trail weaves its way steeply up the foothills of Double Oak Mountain, reaching the 820-foot high point in less than a mile. From there it's a steep descent into Maggie's Glen. Then things level out and the walking becomes easier.

The trail passes through a dense forest of magnolia, oak, hickory, and black walnut. The forest blocks views of the surrounding mountains, but the shade is welcome on hot, humid days. At the points where the Yellow Trail crosses one of the fast-flowing creeks over a wooden footbridge, look in pools at the creek to see if you can spot large turtles.

Of the two areas along the trail that get a fair amount of foot traffic, the first you come to is Maggie's Glen, about a mile from the North Trailhead. Many people come in spring to this grassy area with its lovely stream in order to view the white beeches and dogwoods in bloom. The second popular area is about a mile from the southern end of the trail, where it crosses the Wildlife and Treetop trails. These short interpretive trails make their way down the hillside from the Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the North Trailhead. **[FYI.** Make plans to arrive early as the parking lot tends to fill up quite rapidly since many of the hiking and biking trails begin here.] Cross John Findley Drive to the southeast and come to a red cattle gate. There is plenty of information here on the trail and other activities. Head through the gate down the gravel road. In a few feet, a wooden sign will be reached that reads "BLUE TRAIL" with an arrow pointing to the left, and "YELLOW TRAIL" with an arrow pointing to the right. Turn right and head west on the gravel road leading into the woods.

1.1 Arrive at Maggie's Glen. **[FYI.** This is a very nice, flat glen with a wide stream running through it. It is a scenic and popular site among hikers.] Cross a small footbridge and the Yellow and White trails merge for the next 0.1 miles.

1.2 Come to a fork. Take the right fork. (The White Trail forks left fork.)

2.0 **[FYI.** This is a finger of Old Lake, a small lake created by a narrow dam located at mile 2.5.]

2.5 Pass Picnic Area Number Two. **[FYI.** This is a quiet, secluded area with picnic tables that makes for a nice place to take a break.]

3.0 Cross a footbridge.

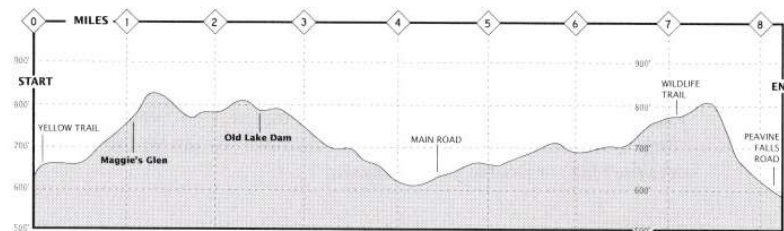
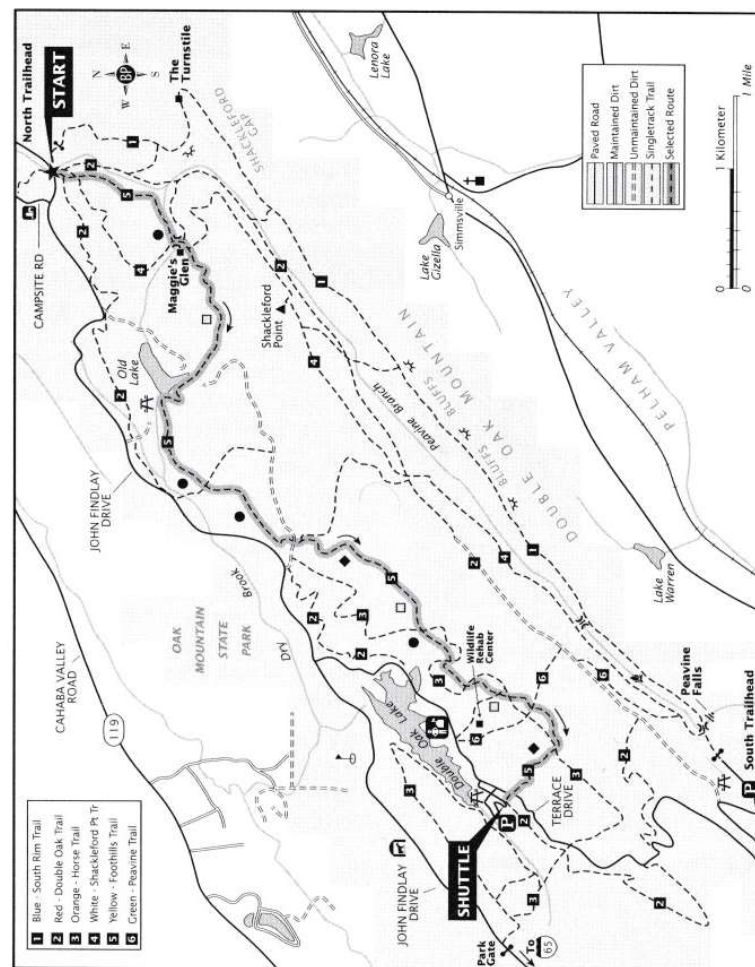
3.1 Cross a footbridge and then the Red Trail.

4.2 Cross the Red Trail a second time. **[FYI.** To the left, the ridge of Double Oak Mountain can be seen.]

4.4 Cross a footbridge. In 100 feet, come to a dirt road. A sign here reads "Main Road." Turn left (to the east) on the road and travel 50 feet. Cross a short bridge and in another 50 feet, a sign will point to the "Yellow Trail." Turn right here and return to the woods. **[FYI.** Just past this sign on the road about 30 feet farther is another sign pointing the way to the Yellow-White Connector Trail.]

4.5 Cross a footbridge.

6.0 The Orange (Horseshoe) Trail merges briefly with the Yellow Trail as they head to the southwest.



MilesDirections (Continued)

6.1 Come to a fork and go right. (The Orange Trail branches left.)

6.7 Cross the Orange Trail again.



The trail here is thick and enclosed.

6.8 Cross the Orange Trail again. In 100 feet, cross a park road—two yellow lines are painted on the road to show the direction. Reenter the woods after crossing a 3-foot wide cement culvert.

6.9 Cross the Orange Trail again.

7.0 Come to a fork where the Wildlife Center Trail merges with the Yellow Trail. Go right.

7.1 Come to a sign that reads, “Yellow Trail” (points back the way you came), “Wildlife Center” (points left), and “Treetop Trail” (points right). Continue straight. In 100 feet, come to a signed intersection. The sign reads, “Wildlife Trail” (points to the south) and “Yellow Trail” (points to the west). Turn south. In just a few feet, cross the Orange Trail again.

7.3 Cross the Green Trail. In 100 feet, the Orange Trail merges with the Yellow Trail for the next 0.4 miles.

7.7 [Note. A line of rocks across the trail indicates that both the Yellow and Horseshoe Trails are turning. There is a path that does continue straight, but make sure to make this turn.]

7.8 Come to a tree with an Orange (Horseshoe) Trail marker on it. Follow the Yellow Trail as it leaves the Orange Trail and heads into a ravine.

8.2 Come to an intersection with a dirt road. A “Yellow Trail” sign is here. This is Peavine Falls Road. Turn right onto the road. In 100 feet, come to a cattle gate used to shut down the road at night. The road becomes asphalt and is now Terrace Drive. Continue another 100 feet and arrive at the South Trailhead parking lot.

You'll cross several other routes on your hike down the Yellow Trail—including the Orange (Horseshoe), Red, and Green Trails—plus encounter a connector path to the White Trail. These trails can be combined into several loop hikes and some excellent overnight trips. Be forewarned that if you plan to use the White-Yellow connector trail at the 4.5-mile mark, the climb to the White Tail consists of difficult travel straight up the side and over the bluffs of Double Oak Mountain.

Once again we need to mention the work of the Vulcan Trail Association, which helps maintain the trails at Oak Mountain. The Yellow Trail is kept in good shape. Downed trees are cleared away quickly, and trail markers are clear and frequent. The association sponsors excursions in the park on the second Sunday of each month. The public is invited to join these guided hikes, which usually start just after lunch.

Ride Information

Trail Contacts:

Oak Mountain State Park,
Pelham, AL; (205) 620-2527 or
1-800-ALA-PARK or
www.bham.net/oakmtn

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

A day-use permit costs \$2 per person. Camping is \$8 per night for a primitive site, \$13 per night for tent sites with water, \$14 with water and electricity.

Local Information:

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham, AL; (205) 323-5461 or www.birminghamchamber.com • **Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitor Bureau,** Birmingham, AL; 1-800-458-8085 or www.bcvb.org • **North Shelby Chamber of Commerce,** Pelham, AL; (205) 663-4542 or www.nsoc.com

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Organizations:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Other Resources

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Homewood Sporting Goods,
Homewood, AL; (205) 879-2828

Maps:

USGS maps: Cahaba Heights, AL; Chelsea, AL; Helena, AL • **Brochures**—General park information available free at the main gate. Trail maps are available for 50 cents at the park office.

Green Trail (Peavine Falls Trail)

Hike Summary

The Green Trail is the most direct route to the most popular attraction at Oak Mountain State Park, Peavine Falls. The trail travels steeply up and down ridges through a forest lush with vegetation in spring and summer, giving a comfortable enclosed feeling. Although the climbs are steep, the trail may be crowded on weekends because of the popularity of the falls.

Hike Specs

Start: From the South Trailhead (Peavine Falls trailhead) at Oak Mountain State Park

Length: 4.6-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 3–4 hours

Difficulty Rating: Moderate to difficult due to steep grades

Trail Surface: Dirt path

Lay of the Land: Stands of longleaf pine, white oak, and silver maple

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Birmingham, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—but bring water (there are no sources until Peavine Branch at the end); leash recommended due to large number of people

Getting There

From Birmingham: Take I-65 south for 14 miles to Cahaba Valley Road (Exit 246). Take a right onto Cahaba Valley Road (AL 119) and travel two miles to CR 33 and turn left. Go 2.5 miles to the park gate. Pay the entrance and camping fees and get general information brochures. Trail maps are available at the park office. Continue on two miles and make a right turn onto Terrace Drive. Head southwest one mile on Terrace Drive. The park office and parking area will be on the right. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 31 G6

Hundreds of people flock to Peavine Falls each weekend—and anytime during the summer months when school is out—to view this 65-foot beauty that cascades down a sheer rock wall into a clear pool. Many visitors take the Green Trail down to the falls because it starts right at the park office and is the most direct route.

The Peavine Falls trailhead is close to some of Oak Mountain's main attractions, including the Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and the Oak Mountain Demonstration Farm. Far more than just a petting zoo, the Demonstration Farm exhibits life on a farm and the care of livestock. Next door to the farm are the Oak Mountain Stables, with horseback rides available up the mountain or along the Orange (Horseshoe) Trail.



A view looking down into Peavine Falls.

Eighty-five-acre Oak Lake is right next to the park office. Canoes and paddleboats are available for rent, and a swimming beach lies at one end. There is even a bicycle motocross facility just down from the park office. If you like to hit the links while vacationing and while not on the trail, you can take advantage of the 18-hole golf course here. Being in the heart of all this activity, it's no wonder the Green Trail sees so much traffic.

Although the path is a well-maintained dirt route, the climbs up and down the ridges are steep. The trail starts into the woods and then turns sharply uphill, next to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. After topping out on the first ridge, it's a steep walk down to the bottom—then back up steeply again to the ridgeline of Double Oak Mountain. The trail finally descends to meet the White Trail and then levels out, making its way to the falls.

As with many of the trails at Oak Mountain State Park, the Green Trail crosses several other trails, including the White, Red, and Orange (Horseshoe) Trails. This makes it easy to create several different loop hikes and some interesting overnight pack trips.

Views along the trail are not as open as those from high atop the twin ridges of Double Oak Mountain on the White and Blue trails. The thick cover of trees on the Green Trail is the scenic highlight on the way to the falls. When you're not concentrating on getting up a hillside, take a look around at the live oaks, silver maples, and dogwoods. At the top of the ridges, the aroma of liveleaf pines stands out.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the park office. Turn right onto Terrace Drive and head to the west 50 feet. The trailhead with a Green Trail sign will be on your left, directly across from the tennis courts. Turn left and head into the woods to the south.

0.6 Cross the Orange (Horseshoe) Trail.

0.7 Cross the Yellow Trail.

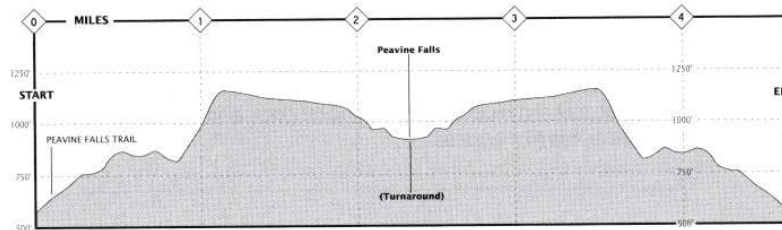
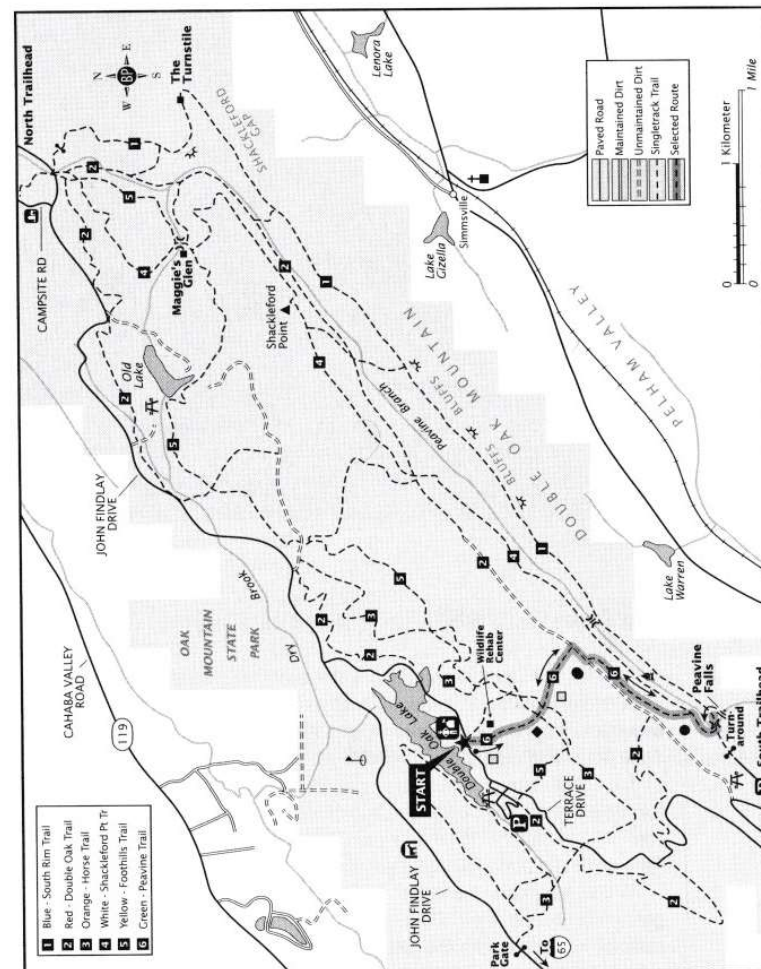
1.2 The Green Trail merges with the Red Trail for the next 0.1 miles.

1.3 The Red Trail leaves the Green. Stay on the Green Trail.

2.2 The Green Trail merges with the White Trail for the next 0.1 miles along the banks of Peavine Branch.

2.3 The White Trail leaves the Green. In reality, the Green Trail has officially ended. This short, remaining length of trail is actually the Blue Trail. Continue to the east following blue blazes about 50 feet to the head of Peavine Falls. From here, the trail overlooks the gorge for the next 0.1 miles. **[Note. Be VERY cautious here. The rocks are slick and the drop precarious. The edge of the gorge is a clay footpath.]** Turn around here for the return trip over the same path described above.

4.6 Arrive back at your vehicle.





The Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

The largest environmental organization in the state, the Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (AWRC) is located in the heart of Oak Mountain State Park. Established in 1977, the center was founded by Anne Miller and a staff of six volunteers.

The AWRC provides both long and short-term care for orphaned and injured animals. A wide variety of animals are brought to the center for care and treatment. Whenever possible, the animals are put into the Release Preparation Facility to get them ready to return to the wild.

At Oak Mountain, the AWRC facility is located 0.5 miles south of the park office on the AWRC Drive. Inside, there are a variety of educational exhibits to demonstrate the role of the center. Don't be surprised to see a few squirrels running in and out of the rafters as you walk through.

The highlight of the facility is the viewing area. Behind a screen, visitors can view the animals as their handlers help them recuperate.

Next to the facility is the Treetop Nature Trail. This is a wide, handicap accessible, elevated boardwalk that takes hikers through the valley. Here you can see red-shoulder and red-tail hawks, horned owls, and turkey vultures. These and many more such animals live in very spacious cages along the trail and receive the best of care. Admission to the facility and the trail is free to the public.

Ride Information

Trail Contacts:

Oak Mountain State Park,
Pelham, AL; (205) 620-2527 or
1-800-ALA-PARK or
www.bham.net/oakmtn

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

A Day-Use permit costs \$2 per person. Camping is \$8 per night for a primitive site, \$13 per night for tent sites with water, \$14 with water and electricity.

Local Information:

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham, AL; (205) 323-5461 or www.birmingham-chamber.com • **Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitor Bureau,** Birmingham, AL; 1-800-458-8085 or www.bcvb.org • **North Shelby Chamber of Commerce,** Pelham, AL; (205) 663-4542 or www.nsoc.com

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Organizations:

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Other Resources

[See Hike 17: Blue Trail.]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

Mountain Brook Sporting Goods,
Mountain Brook, AL; (205)
870-3257

Maps:

USGS maps: Cahaba Heights, AL; Chelsea, AL; Helena, AL • **Brochures**—General park information available free at the main gate. Trail maps are available for 50 cents at the park office.

The hike culminates in Peavine Falls. The fall is formed by Peavine Branch, a slow meandering flow of water that runs between the two ridges of Double Oak Mountain. Both the Green Trail and the White Trail follow the creek for a portion of their length.

Overnight camping is permitted along the trails in the park, but not in the areas just above and below the falls. Rappelling and climbing are not allowed on the rock walls of the gorge formed by the stream.



21

Lakeshore Trail

Hike Summary

This easy walk meanders along the banks of Lake Chinnabee, passing through beautiful stands of oak and hickory. Flowering plants are abloom in spring and early summer. At the halfway mark, the trail passes a marsh with lush, green grasses growing on a small island. The Chinnabee Silent Trail and the Skyway Loop Trail both join at the start of this trail.

Hike Specs

Start: From the southeast end of the Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area parking lot

Length: 1.9-mile loop

Approximate Hiking Time: 1–2 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy travel over gentle hills

Trail Surface: Clay and dirt

Lay of the Land: White oak, hickory, and yellow pine trees, plus mountain laurels, camellias, and rhododendrons

Land Status: National forest

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None, except for motorists on recreation area road

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—leash required

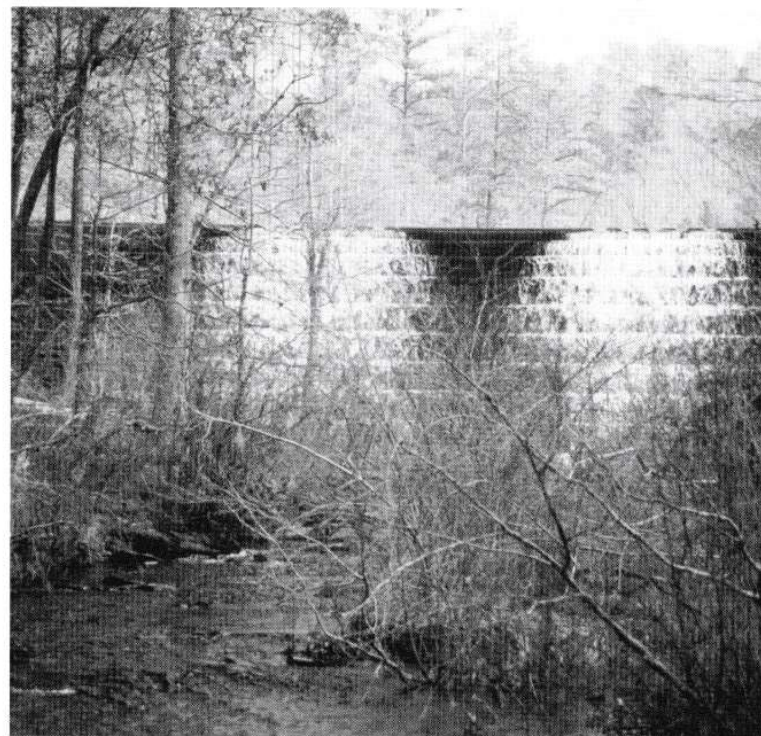
Getting There

From Anniston: Take I-20 east for five miles to Exit 191. Merge into U.S. 431 South. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right onto AL 281. Head south on AL 281 for 16 miles and pass the Cheaha State Park headquarters and lodge on the right. Continue south three miles. Make a sharp right turn onto the Lake/Campground Road and travel 3.5 miles. Turn left onto Lake Chinnabee Road (a national forest sign marks the turn). Head down this road one mile to the parking area. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 32 F5

President Roosevelt created the 377,000-acre Talladega National Forest in 1936. The Lakeshore Loop Trail takes you through only a portion of this large forest reserve, along the banks of Lake Chinnabee. Fishing in the lake is excellent, but don't forget a state freshwater fishing license.

The route is narrow, for the most part, except where it follows the recreation area road to its conclusion. The trek is easy, with only minor climbs up rolling hills that funnel water runoff from the mountain-side. If you take small children along for the trip, keep an eye on them because the path along the west-southwest side of the lake has a steep drop-off to the lake bank.

Along the trail in spring, you'll encounter camellias and mountain laurels in bloom. Along with the oak and hickory, you'll see pines, including



The trail crosses just below the dam's spillway.

Southern yellow and longleaf. The region is home to a multitude of reptiles and amphibians. At least 16 varieties of salamanders live here, including the spotted salamander and the red salamander. The salamanders may be hard to find because they change color to blend into their surroundings. But you may hear the sound of rustling leaves as the salamanders dart through the brush. Also be on the lookout for one of the 14 species of frogs. Bullfrogs, Southern leopard frogs,

Just What Is Dixie?

Just before the Civil War, the state of Louisiana issued a note of currency worth \$10 called a dix—French for “ten.” Eventually the South became known as “dixie.” Montgomery, Alabama, was the first capital of the Confederacy, and Alabama is officially known as the Heart of Dixie.

mountain chorus frogs, and barking tree frogs are among those in the neighborhood. Snakes are prevalent in the forest, including ringneck, rat, king, and green snakes. Poisonous snakes include timber and pygmy rattlesnakes and the Eastern cottonmouth, but sightings of these are rare.

The Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area is closed between November 15 and April 15. During this period, the trail is still accessible by parking at the end of the recreation area road and hiking two miles down the road to the trailhead. Deer hunting season generally runs from October 15 to January 31, so wear hunter orange if you're out hiking then.

While at Lake Chinnabee, you might also want to stop by Cheaha State Park [see Hike 24], just three miles north on Alabama 281. Cheaha

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the southeast end of the Lake Chinnabee Recreational Area. A metal post blocks the road with a sign that reads "Closed to traffic." Walk down the paved road past the post to the southeast.

0.1 Come to an information board with posted information about various hikes and hiking within the forest. A creek flows next to the trail on the right. The trail is a manmade stone footpath with blue blazes. The blazes are for the Chinnabee Silent Trail, which also begins (or ends) here. In 100 yards, you'll reach a sign that reads "Lakeshore Loop 2 miles" and points to the right. The Chinnabee Silent Trail continues straight ahead to the southeast. Turn right here to the southwest and cross the creek over the rocks.

Shortly the white blazes of the loop begin.

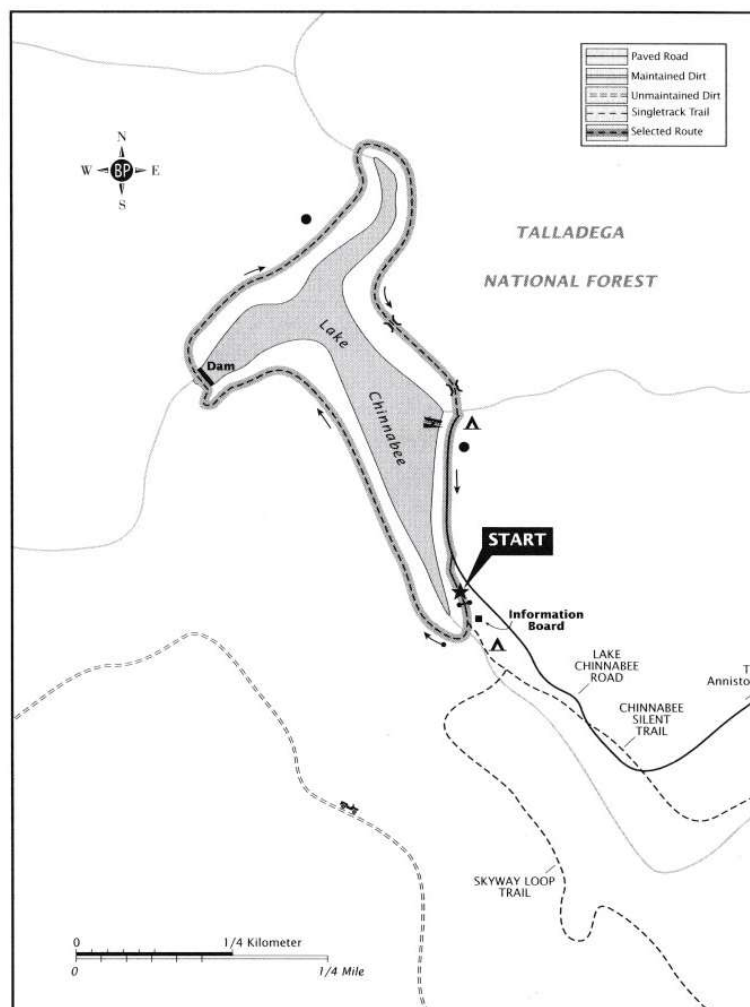
0.6 The trail tops out next to the dam.

0.7 Come to a sign that reads, "Lakeshore Trail" and points to the right. Turn right. *[FYI. You're going to cross some water soon so make sure those boots are waterproofed.]*

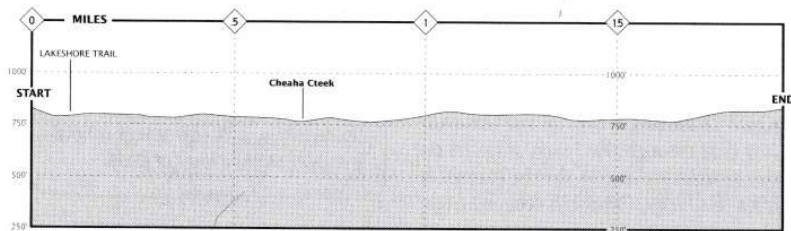
1.6 Come to a sign that reads "Lakeshore Trail—2-mile Loop." Turn right onto the paved road.

1.8 Come to a fork in the road. A sign in the center of the fork reads "Talladega National Forest/Lake Chinnabee Recreational Area." Take the right fork. This is the parking area. Pass a day-use fee box to the right.

1.9 Return to the start of the trail.



Mountain is the highest point in the state, at an elevation of 2,407 feet. The park offers short trails to some beautiful overlooks, including Pulpit Rock and Bald Rock. In addition, the Civilian Conservation Corps Museum is open daily at the park, without charge. You can see fine examples of the craftsmanship of CCC workers at the Cheaha Observation Tower and Bald Rock Lodge.



Local Events/Attractions:

Church of Saint Michael & All Angels, Anniston, AL; (256) 237-4011 or www.brasenhill.com/stmikesaa/index.html—This church was built in 1888 by the founding families of the town of Anniston. The church features impressive examples of Norman architecture with Tiffany glass, a 95-foot bell tower and a 12-foot white Carrara marble altar. • **Anniston Museum of Natural History**, Anniston, AL; (256) 237-6766 or www.annistonmuseum.org—A museum for the ages, literally, with displays of dinosaurs and

fossils, 400 species of birds, authentic Egyptian mummies, and more. Open Tuesday–Friday 9 A.M.–5 P.M., Saturday 10 A.M.–5 P.M., Sunday 1 P.M.–5 P.M. • **Berman Museum**, Anniston, AL; (256) 237-6261—The Berman Museum has a very rare collection of art and historic artifacts that run the gambit from bronze sculptures by Remington and Fraser's "The End of the Trail" to rare weapons from around the world, including a sword with 1,295 diamonds embedded in it.



A view of the lake from the opposite side of the trailhead.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Talladega National Forest, Talladega, AL; (256) 463-2273 or www.r8web.com/alabama—The office is open Monday–Friday, 7:30 A.M.–5 P.M.

Schedule:

Trail open year round. Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area is closed from November 15th–April 15th each year due to freeze potential. The trail can still be reached by hiking the two-mile road to the area.

Fees/Permits:

There is a \$3 day-use fee at Lake Chinnabee Recreational Area (half price for Golden Age Passport holders).

Local Information:

Anniston / Calhoun County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Anniston, AL; 1-800-489-1087 or www.calhounchamber.org • **Greater Talladega Chamber of Commerce**, Talladega, AL; (256) 362-9075 or www.talladega.com/business/chamber.htm

Accommodations:

Cheaha State Park Lodge, Delta, AL; 1-800-846-2654—This hotel is situated atop the state's highest mountain. Half of the rooms have panoramic views of the surrounding countryside as does the swimming pool. • **McClellan Inn**, Anniston, AL; (256) 820-3144

Restaurants:

Cheaha State Park Restaurant, Delta, AL; (256) 488-5115—From catfish to steaks, the Cheaha Restaurant, located next to the state park's hotel, has wonderful food and a rustic feel. A huge fireplace, and a gigantic window overlooking the valley from the highest point in the state make this a unique dining experience. • **Backyard Burgers**, Anniston, AL; (256) 236-4544

Organizations:

Alabama Trails Association, Birmingham, AL; www.alabama-trails.com • **Sierra Club East Alabama Chapter**, Auburn, AL; (334) 821-9817 • **Appalachian Trail Club of Alabama**, Birmingham, AL <http://sport.al.com/sport/atca>

Other Resources:

Bama Environmental News—Birmingham, AL; (205) 226-7739 or www.bamanews.com

Local Outdoor Retailers:

B&S Sporting Goods, Anniston, AL; (256) 237-6986 • **Smith's Sporting Goods**, Anniston, AL (256) 237-2895

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL; Ironaton, AL • **Brochures** available free of charge at the Cheaha State Park camp store. • **Park maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7 is available for \$5.20 at the Cheaha State Park camp store or by mail through the Talladega National Forest ranger office.

Chinnabee Silent Trail

Hike Summary

The Chinnabee Silent Trail, meandering up a hillside toward Lake Chinnabee, showcases the beauty of Talladega National Forest. Along the way, the wonders of the forest are revealed again and again. Just when you think it can't get any better, it does. In the gorge leading to the lake, the trail clings to rock walls on an elevated wooden platform and provides views of several waterfalls.

Hike Specs

Start: From the trailhead three miles south of the Cheaha State Park office

Length: 7.4-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 4–6 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy over dirt foot-paths and some rock; normally moderate sections made easier by steps

Trail Surface: Dirt path; some travel over rock

Lay of the Land: Mixture of white oak and longleaf pine; plants including rhododendron, flame azalea, and dogwood; waterfalls

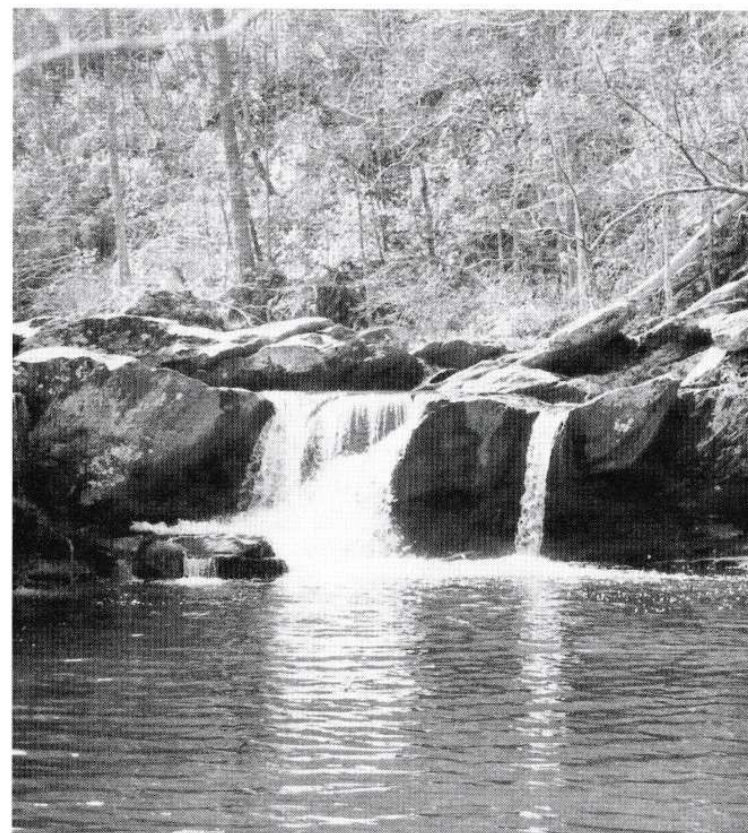
Land Status: National forest

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—except for dogs that don't like to climb stairs; ample water available; leash not required

Everyone who visits Cheaha State Park, Cheaha Mountain, and Talladega National Forest seems to return with endless stories about how gorgeous it all is: the overlooks, the waterfalls, the mountain landscapes. Sometimes it seems they exaggerate a bit, but seeing is believing. The area of Cheaha Mountain—at 2,407 feet elevation, the highest in the state—is truly a sight to behold, with massive rock outcroppings, raging streams, and impressive waterfalls. The Chinnabee Silent Trail is rightfully one of the most popular hiking routes in Alabama.



One of the many waterfalls along the trail.

The trail is named for the Creek Indian chief Chinnabee, an ally of Andrew Jackson during the Creek Indian Wars. The designation of "Silent Trail" comes from the trail's builders. Between 1973 and 1976, Boy Scout Troop 29 from the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, with the help of the U.S. Forest Service, created the trail.

The Chinnabee Silent Trail is actually six miles long, if you start at the Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area and hike all the way to the Pinhoti Trail at Caney Head on the summit of Talladega Mountain. But the most enjoy-

able way to hike the trail is to start from the trailhead three miles south of the Cheaha State Park office, on Alabama 281, and then travel north to the Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area. The trip is less difficult in this direction and it's two miles shorter. The real plus, however, is that the scenery unfolds at every turn.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the east end the parking area on AL 281 south. Cross the highway to the north. A sign indicating a hiking trail will be across the highway where the trail enters the woods. The trail is marked with blue blazes.

0.1 At the bottom of the ravine, the trail comes to a small creek. The path looks like it continues straight, but it doesn't. Turn to the left here and cross the creek to the northeast. The trail now starts going up the other side of the ravine.

0.5 Cross a dirt road (a hiker sign will be seen on the other side where it reenters the woods).

1.0 Come to a fork and go right. *[Side-trip. It's worth the effort to take the left fork a short one tenth of a mile to the base of Cheaha Falls.]*

1.2 Reach the Cheaha Falls Shelter.

2.5 *[FYI. This area was cut in 1998 to prevent the spread of the Southern Pine Beetle through the forest.]*

3.0 *[FYI. Below to the left is a popular area for camping, along the banks of the*

stream. In 200 feet, the trail basically levels out high above the stream and the view of the falls and the canyon are spectacular in this area known as Devil's Den.]

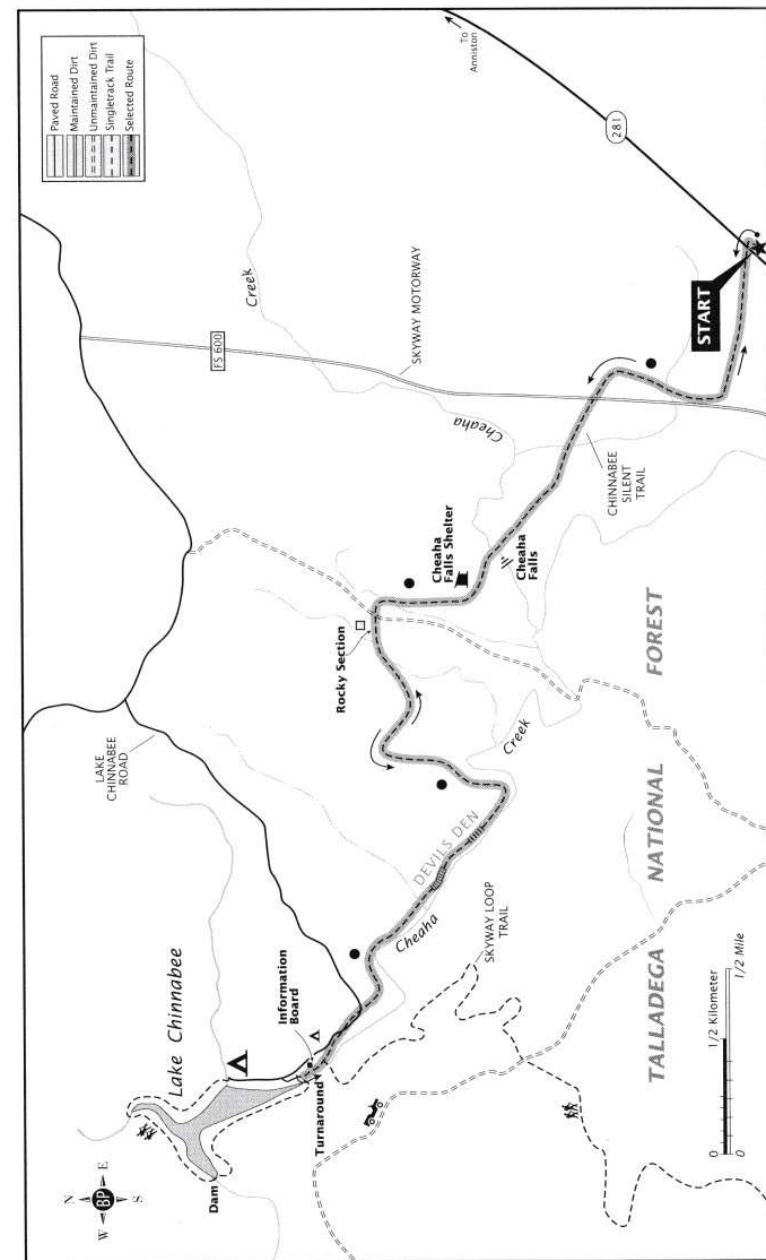
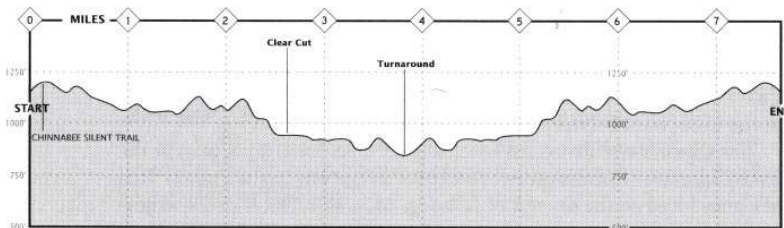
3.2 At the top of the climb, a 75-foot elevated wooden bridge clings to the rock cliff as it takes the trail to the west.

3.4 Come to a sign that reads "Chinnabee Silent Trail...Devil's Den—0.5 miles, Cheaha Falls Shelter—3 miles, Turnipseed 4 miles, Pinhoti 6 miles." Continue straight. In 50 feet, come to another sign that marks the turn off for the Skyway Loop Trail. Continue straight.

3.5 A stone marker identifies the trail as being built by Boy Scout Troop 29. In 10 feet, another sign marks the turn for the Lakeshore Loop Trail. Continue straight.

3.7 Come to the southeast end of the Lake Chinnabee Recreational Area parking lot and turn around. Retrace your tracks back to the trailhead.

7.4 Arrive back at your vehicle.



Starting low and slow from the trailhead, the route winds its way around hillsides until the rushing of water can be heard. You'll soon reach Cheaha Falls—a series of falls with a nice pool at the bottom. A side trail leads for a tenth of a mile to the pool. The Chinnabee Silent Trail crosses Cheaha Creek at the head of the upper fall. A wooden footbridge once crossed here, but Hurricane Opal took care of that in 1995.

Topping the hill from the falls, a fine view unfolds to the left of the surrounding mountains. Here you'll find the spacious Cheaha Falls Shelter, a first-come first-serve facility for overnight backpackers. Farther along the trail—if you're hiking in spring, that is—wildflowers such as spring beauty and downy rattlesnake line the way.

Before Drinking That Water . . .

Alabama is blessed with beautiful mountain streams and lakes. While that clear water may look inviting to drink, even here it's wise to be cautious in order to avoid illness from pollution or disease organisms. Before drinking water along the trail, use one of these three purification methods:

- Boil the water for three to five minutes before using.
- Filter the water with a purifying water bottle or pump.
- Put iodine or chlorine tablets into the water.

If you aren't able to use one of these methods, try to locate a source of water where it first comes out of the ground, because the ground can act as a natural purifier.



View from the Cheaha Falls Shelter.

The trail soon ascends to meet Cheaha Creek again, in the canyon section known as the Devil's Den. Through the canyon, the creek churns white over the rocks. The trail moves progressively higher up the cliffs, eventually crossing the face of the cliffs at one point on an elevated wooden walkway clinging to the rock wall.

The trail ends at the Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area. The Lakeshore Trail begins here and loops for two miles around the lake [see Hike 21]. This also serves as a trailhead for the Skyway Loop Trail. A combination of the Chinnabee Silent Trail, Skyway Loop Trail, and Pinhoti Trail creates a 17-mile loop that provides an excellent weekend backpack trip.

All in all, the Chinnabee Silent Trail, with its wildness and its beauty, makes for one of the most enjoyable hikes in the state.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Talladega National Forest,
Talladega, AL; (256) 463-2273 or
www.r8web.com/alabama—The
office is open Monday–Friday,
7 A.M.–5 P.M.

Schedule:

Trail open year round. Lake
Chinnabee Recreation Area is
closed from November 15–April 15
each year due to freeze potential.

Fees/Permits:

No fee to hike the trail. Camping is
allowed anywhere in the forest by
using the “dispersal” method and
following national forest guide-
lines. Camping at both the Lake
Chinnabee Recreation Area and
Cheaha State Park is \$8 per night
(half price for Golden Age
Passport holders).

Local Information:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Organizations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Other Resources:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL
• **Brochures**—Cheaha and the
national forest brochures are avail-
able free of charge at the Cheaha
State Park camp store. • **Park
maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7
is available for \$5.20 at the
Cheaha State Park camp store or
by mail through the Talladega
National Forest ranger office. This
map also includes the Chinnabee
Silent, Odum Scout, Cave Creek,
Nubbin, and Skyway Loop trails.

Skyway Loop Trail

Hike Summary

This hike can be a pretty good overnight trip culminating in a visit to Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area, where you can swim in the pools formed by the falls of Chinnabee Creek. The hike includes views of the surrounding mountains as you travel the ridgelines.

Hike Specs

Start: From Adams Gap trailhead

Length: 14.4-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 8–9 hours

Difficulty Rating: Moderate over rocky ridges; difficult on steep slopes

Trail Surface: Dirt and rock footpath

Lay of the Land: Oaks and longleaf pines; rhododendrons, azaleas, and dogwoods

Land Status: National forest

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—ample water available; no leash required

Getting There

From Anniston: Take I-20 east for five miles to Exit 191. Merge into U.S. 431 South. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right onto AL 281. Head south on AL 281 for 16 miles and pass the Cheaha State Park headquarters and lodge on the right. Continue south 4.5 miles. The road dead-ends at Adams Gap and the trailhead. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 32 F5

The Skyway Trail is a long, winding path around the ridges of Talladega National Forest just to the west of the state's highest peak, Cheaha Mountain. Aptly named, the Skyway Trail travels up and down moderate climbs along the ridges as it makes its way to Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area.

The trail beginning at Adams Gap follows the Pinhoti Trail for the first 0.2 miles. After the trail branches off, watch for families of armadillos rooting through the brush and leaves. Armadillos are determined to stand up to anything they feel endangers them. After walking around a group of armadillos, you may find they are chasing you down the trail. Make a loud noise and they should scatter.

Also along the trail, you may see large numbers of white-tailed deer and wild turkeys (after all, *Pinhoti* means *turkey home*). The trail makes its way through stands of white oaks and Southern longleaf pines. The path is also lined with rhododendrons, flame azaleas, and dogwoods that bloom and brighten the way from spring to fall.

Winding along, the trail crosses several creeks. Two of the largest are Barbaree Creek, near the midpoint of the hike, and Hubbard Creek, near



Chinnabee Creek.

the end. About two miles into the hike, the trail passes through a previously burned area that is very open and affords good views of the neighboring mountains.

The trail eventually begins a steep descent to Chinnabee Creek. The return trip also takes this path, making for a steep uphill climb. Just after the Chinnabee Creek crossing, you have the option of taking a side excursion

on the Chinnabee Silent Trail for a half-mile walk to a swimming hole. Here, the creek cascades down a rock wall and forms a deep blue-green pool, just the place for a swim in the cold mountain water. Also there are several nice primitive campsites next to the creek. No fee or permit is required. Camping is also allowed anywhere along the trail except in the Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area.

From Chinnabee Creek, the Skyway Trail leads to Lake Chinnabee and then uses the Lakeshore Loop Trail [see Hike 21] for the next two miles to swing around the lake and head back on your original trail for the return to Adams Gap. Lake Chinnabee offers excellent bass fishing—a state freshwater fishing license is required.

If you are looking for a good overnight hiking experience on a loop route, try connecting the Skyway Trail, Chinnabee Silent Trail, and Pinhoti Trail together (leaving out the Lakeshore Loop). This forms a 17-mile circuit beginning at Adams Gap.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the Adams Gap trail-head. A Pinhoti National Recreational Trail sign marks the entrance. The trail has diamond shaped Pinhoti (turkey) markers on the trees. **[FYI. Beware of the armadillos (especially if you have a dog with you).]**

0.2 Come to a fork and go right. (The left fork is the Pinhoti Trail.) Blue triangle blazes soon mark the Skyway Loop Trail.

0.6 Cross an off-road trail to the west. (The marker is hard to see on the other side of the road.)

1.0 Pass a campsite on the left.

2.0 Cross a dirt road.

2.9 Cross an off-road path.

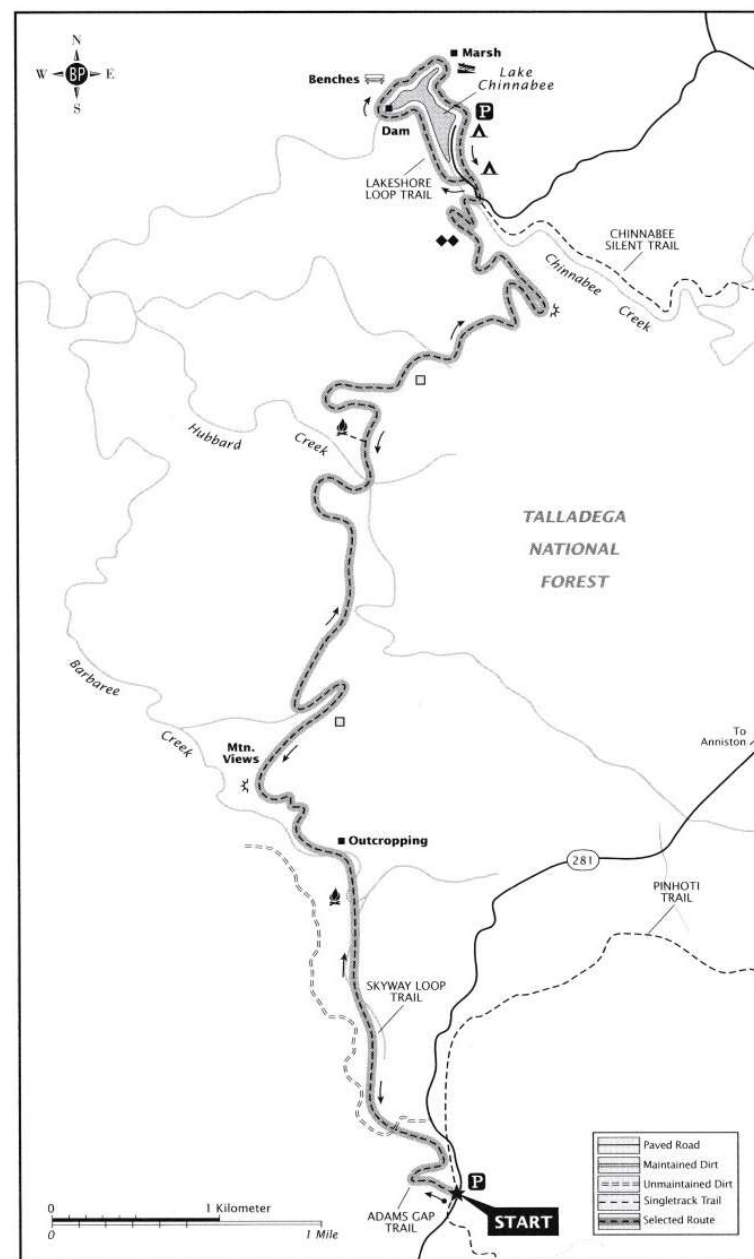
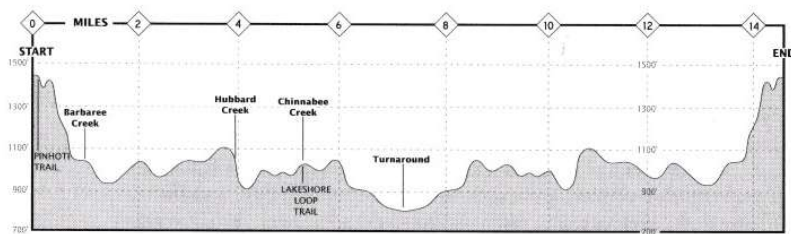
3.0 Cross a dirt road (a hiker sign on the other side shows the path reentering the woods).

3.9 Come to the banks of a Hubbard Creek—a very nice, wide creek. In about 20 feet, cross the creek using stepping stones.

4.0 Come to a fork and go right. (The left fork takes you to a campsite.)

4.5 Cross a dirt road.

4.7 Cross a dirt road.



MilesDirections (Continued)

5.3 Cross the Chinnabee Creek and come to a T-intersection with the Chinnabee Silent Trail. Turn left here on this wide dirt footpath. Shortly, come to a sign that reads "Lakeshore Loop 2 miles" and points to the left. Turn left here and recross the creek over the rocks. On the other side, the trail white blazes of the Lakeshore Loop portion of this hike begin.

6.0 Come to a sign that reads, "Lakeshore Trail" and points to the right. Turn right. *[FYI. You're going to cross some water soon so make sure those boots are waterproofed.]*

6.9 Come to a sign that reads "Lakeshore Trail—2-mile Loop." Turn right onto the paved road.

7.1 Come to a fork in the road. A sign in the center of the fork reads "Talladega National Forest/Lake Chinnabee Recreational Area." Take the right fork. This is the parking area. Pass a day-use fee box to the right.

7.2 Come to an information board detailing various hikes within the forest. In 100 yards, come to a sign that reads "Lakeshore Loop 2 miles" and points to the right. Continue straight and a sign that reads "Skyway Loop" and points to the right shows the direction back to the trail. Retrace your steps back to the Adams Gap trailhead.

14.4 Arrive back at the trailhead.



Watch out for the armadillos along the way.

If you plan to hike the Skyway Trail by starting at the Lake Chinnabee Recreation Area and walking to Adams Gap, remember that the recreation area is closed to vehicles between November 15 and April 15. However, the trail is still accessible by parking at the end of the recreation area road and hiking two miles down the road to the trailhead at Lake Chinnabee. Deer hunting season generally runs from October 15 to January 31, so wear hunter orange if you're out hiking then. The Talladega National Forest office has exact dates.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Talladega National Forest,
Talladega, AL; (256) 463-2273 or
www.r8web.com/alabama—The
office is open Monday–Friday,
7 A.M.–5 P.M..

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

No fee to hike the trail. Camping is allowed anywhere in the forest by using the "dispersal" method and following national forest guidelines.

Local Information:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Organizations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Other Resources:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL
• **Brochures**—available free of charge at the Cheaha State Park camp store • **Park maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7 is available for \$5.20 at the Cheaha State Park camp store or by mail through the Talladega National Forest ranger office. This map also includes the Chinnabee Silent, Odum Scout, Cave Creek, Nubbin, and Skyway Loop trails.

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Rock Garden Trail

Hike Summary

The Rock Garden Trail, which happens to be the most challenging hike in this book, begins easy enough from Cheaha Lake but then becomes more strenuous as it climbs sharply up and over boulders and bluffs to a point near the summit of Cheaha Mountain.

Hike Specs

Start: From the Cheaha Lake picnic area

Length: 1.6-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 2–3 hours

Difficulty Rating: Difficult over the towering overlook called the Rock Garden

Trail Surface: Dirt path, turning into a rocky path, then some scrambling up rocks

Lay of the Land: Thick hardwood forest; boulders and bluffs

Land Status: State park

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Not dog friendly—due to steep, difficult climb; if you do take a dog, leash not required

Getting There

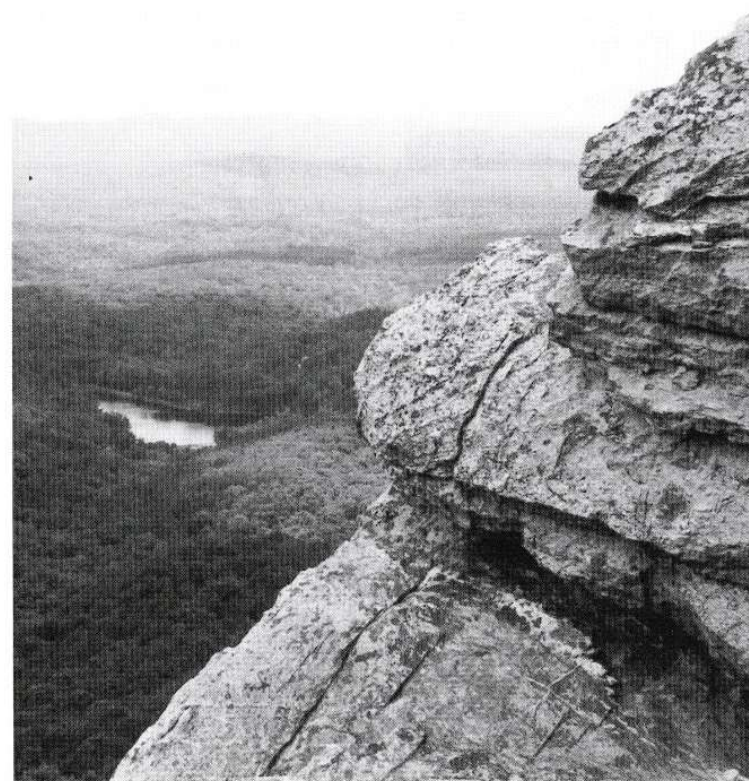
From Anniston: Take I-20 east for five miles to Exit 191. Merge onto U.S. 431 South. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right onto AL 281 south. Head south on AL 281 for 19 miles, passing the Cheaha State Park headquarters and lodge. Turn right onto the Lake Road and travel three miles to Cheaha Lake. Turn right and head 0.1 miles to a fork. Take the right fork and travel an additional 0.1 miles. Park at the bathhouse. **DeLorme:**

Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer: Page 32 E5

This book covers the spectrum of hiking difficulty. The easy, casual walk along the Weeks Bay Nature Trail in the Gulf Coast Region is included to give every member of the family an enjoyable and educational hike. At the opposite end of that spectrum, the Rock Garden Trail described here is included for hikers who like difficulty and steep climbing.

Although this trail in Cheaha State Park is only 1.6 miles, round trip, there's a huge elevation gain on the way up. Beginning at the Cheaha Lake picnic area at an elevation of 1,264 feet, the trail heads straight up Cheaha Mountain to an elevation of about 2,100 feet. That's not far below the 2,407-foot summit of Cheaha, the highest mountain in Alabama.

Not many trails give you a view of the end of the trail from the very start, but this one does. Standing at the trailhead, look up to the north and you'll see the end of the trail at the top of the outcropping known as the Rock Garden, just to the left of the Cheaha Lodge Restaurant.



The starting point, Cheaha Lake—far below.

The Rock Garden Trail begins up a gradual grade, following the banks of a creek up a ravine. But after 0.3 miles, that's where the joyride ends. From there, the trail gets progressively steeper and rockier as it maneuvers around large boulders and outcroppings and courses through a dense forest of white oaks, dappled with rhododendrons, flame azaleas, and dogwoods. At a little

over half a mile from the trailhead, the path begins peeking out of the trees at the surrounding views—and they are spectacular.

From this point on, the trail rounds the outcroppings with ever-expanding views of the mountains and valley. Don't be surprised to see rock climbers beginning their ascent of the cliffs or rappelling down. Take a glance skyward and you may even spot a climber high in the air, sliding slowly across on a rope strung from one tall outcropping to another several hundred feet away. Climbers call it "the best view in the house."

The trail finally pops out at the top of two large, flat outcroppings atop the Rock Garden. Here you can relax, take in the view, and watch the activity around the cliffs—and look at your original trailhead far below. Way down at the bottom is Cheaha Lake, waiting for your return.

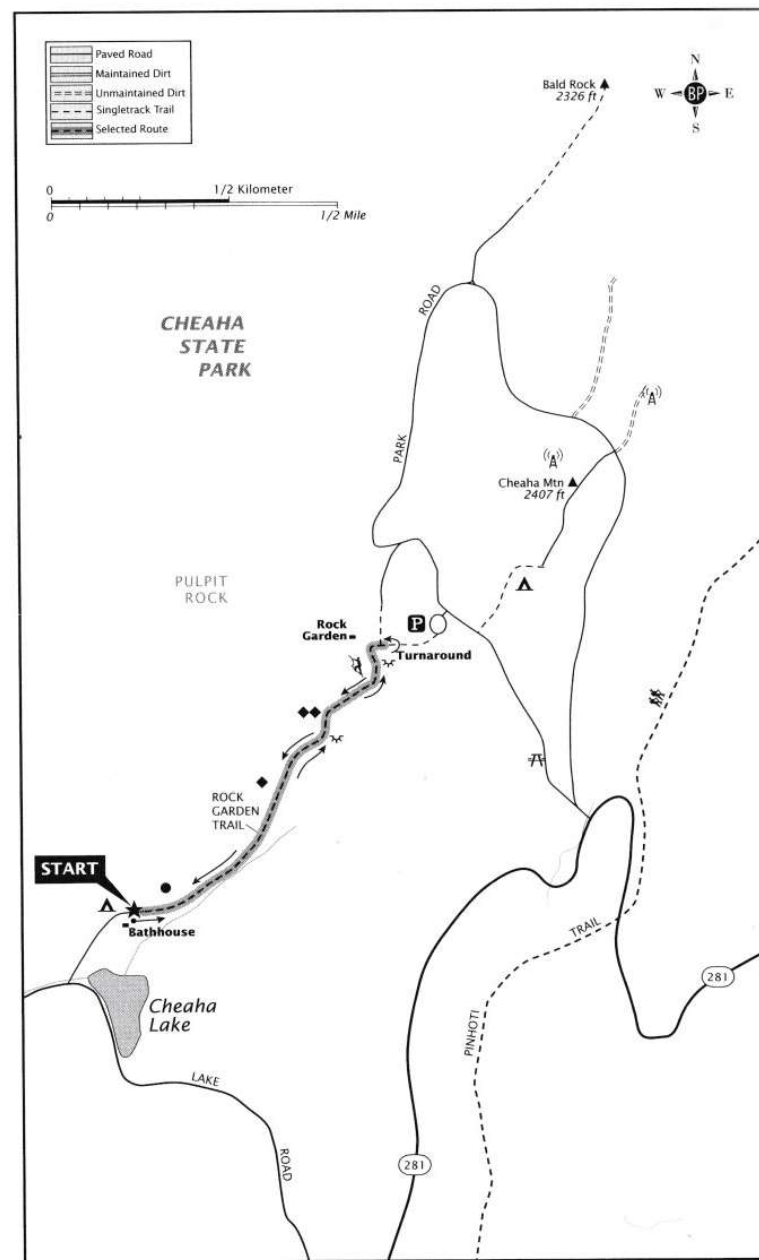
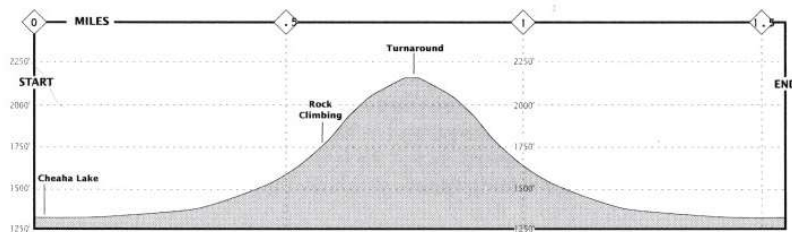
MilesDirections

0.0 START from the bathhouse at Cheaha Lake. Travel around the paved road until you see a reflective blue trail marker. Head off into the woods on the dirt footpath.

0.5 The hardest part of the trip is upon you.

0.8 The trail levels off considerably and comes to a huge rock outcropping overlooking the valley below. Off to the right is Cheaha Lake, where you started. **[FYI. Another 100 feet up the path is a dirt road and the northern trailhead—where you'd park if you drove up.]** Turn around here and head back down.

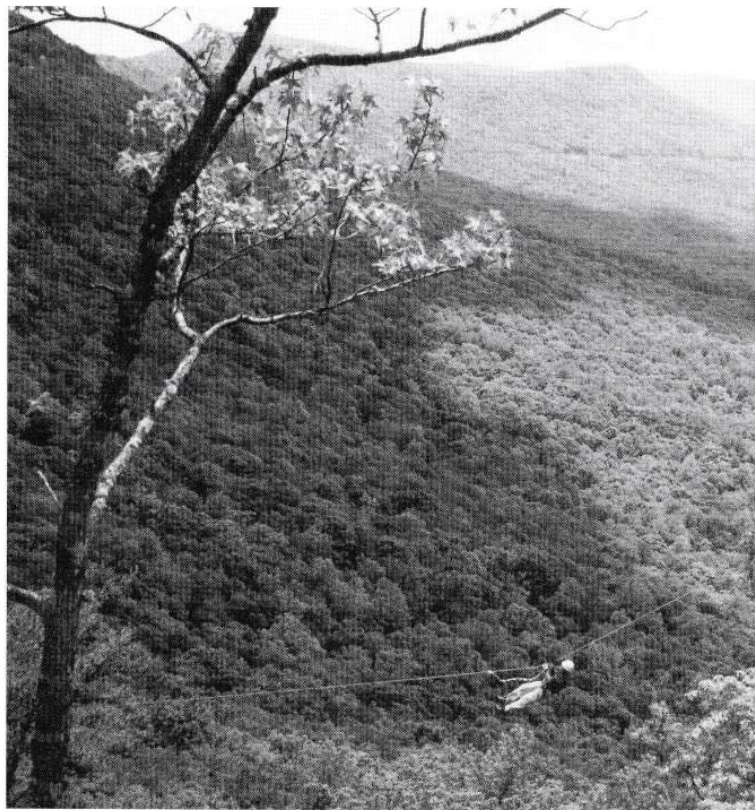
1.6 Arrive back at the trailhead.



Local Events/Attractions:

Talladega SuperSpeedway, Talladega, AL; (256) 761-4702 or www.talladegasuperspeedway.com—NASCAR's most competitive and fastest track. You can make arrangements for a drive around this famous track with an embankment of almost four stories, bus tours available. • **International Motor Sports Hall of Fame**,

Talladega, AL; (256) 362-5002—Five buildings with cars and memorabilia from 1902 to present. Tributes to sports writers, ARCA Champions and more. Open every day 9 A.M.–5 P.M., closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and Easter Morning. • [See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]



The best view in the house.

From the Rock Garden, it's only about a tenth of a mile to the parking area for visitors who choose to drive to the summit of Cheaha Mountain instead of hiking. Many visitors take the easy approach to hiking the Rock Garden Trail, making a one-way trip out of it by starting from the parking area at the summit and then hiking down to Cheaha Lake (where they can be met by a shuttle car).

When you're done with the hike, you can cool down and relax at Cheaha Lake. Swimming is good in the cold mountain lake, and there are diving boards and lifeguards, plus picnic tables, a picnic pavilion, and a bathhouse. There is a \$1 day-use fee for parking at the lake or the summit.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Cheaha State Park, Delta, AL; (256) 488-5111 • **Talladega National Forest**, Talladega, AL; (256) 463-2273 or www.r8web.com/alabama—The office is open Monday–Friday, 7:30 A.M.–5 P.M.

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

A \$1 day-use fee is charged for parking.

Local Information:

Anniston / Calhoun County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Anniston, AL; 1-800-489-1087 or www.calhounchamber.org • **Greater Talladega Chamber of Commerce**, Talladega, AL; (256) 362-9075 or www.talladega.com/business/chamber.htm

Accommodations:

Anniston Efficiency Motel, Anniston, AL; (256) 238-0060 • **Victoria Inn**, Anniston, AL; (256) 236-0503 • [See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Restaurants:

Old Hickory, Talladega, AL; (256) 362-0677 • **Buena Vista Mexican Restaurant**, Talladega, AL; (256) 362-5754 • **Daily Café**, Anniston, AL; (256) 238-8100 • [See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Organizations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Other Resources:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL • **Brochures**—available free of charge at the Cheaha State Park camp store • **Park maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7 is available for \$5.20 at the Cheaha State Park camp store or by mail through the Talladega National Forest ranger office. This map also includes the Chinnabee Silent, Odum Scout, Cave Creek, Nubbin, and Skyway Loop trails.

Nubbin Creek Trail

Hike Summary

Although the full Nubbin Creek Trail is four miles long, the first two miles are the most enjoyable and are described here. The trail meanders gradually up the side of Talladega Mountain, passing three waterfalls and ending with panoramic views. The trail is lined with a variety of wildflowers in spring.

Hike Specs

Start: From the Nubbin Creek trailhead

Length: 3.8-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 2–3 hours

Difficulty Rating: Moderate, due to narrow trail and brush

Trail Surface: Dirt and clay; rock-covered near falls

Lay of the Land: White oak and chestnut forest; longleaf pine forest; rhododendron and mountain laurel; waterfalls

Land Status: National forest

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None

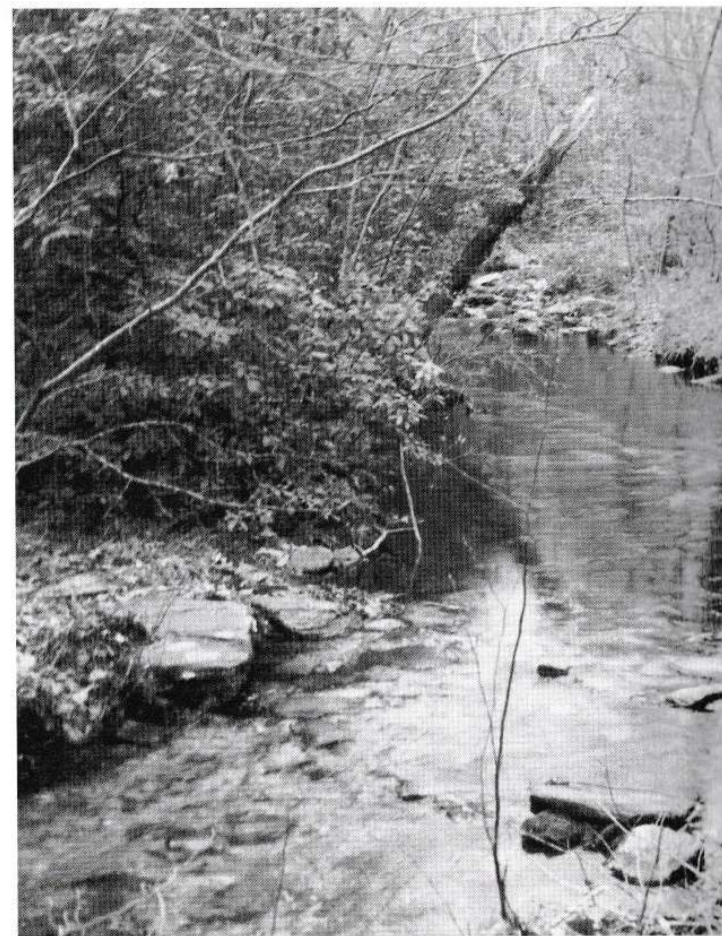
Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—though could be tough on older or out-of-shape dogs; ample water available; no leash required

Getting There

From Anniston: Take I-20 east for five miles to Exit 191. Merge onto U.S. 431 South. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right onto AL 281 South. Head south for seven miles and turn left onto AL 49 South. Head south 6.3 miles until the road forks. Take the right fork (this is Nubbin Creek Road). A sign will be seen that says “Nubbin Creek Trailhead 3 miles.” In 0.8 miles, the paved road turns into a clay road. Continue an additional 2.2 miles and the Nubbin Creek Trailhead will be to the right. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 32 F5

Waterfalls abound in the Talladega National Forest, and the Nubbin Creek Trail highlights several of them. The main attractions of the trail fall within its first two miles. The final two miles, which aren't covered in this description, are overgrown with vegetation and lack sufficient trail markers. The full 4.0-mile trail ends at its intersection with the Cave Creek Trail [see Hike 26]. A round-trip hike to this point could make a good overnight trip, with some nice campsites along the ridge tops.

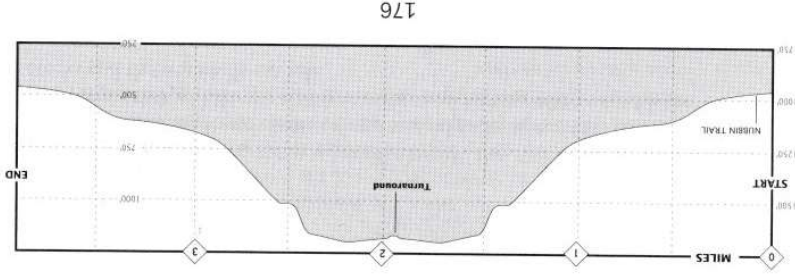
Even on the first two miles, the Nubbin Creek Trail is dense with rhododendron bushes, covering sections of the route. It's entirely passable, but on a rainy day, a poncho won't be enough to keep your pants dry. A couple sections of the trail are especially narrow, where feeder creeks have washed away parts of the trail, leaving sharp drop-offs. On a day of heavy rain, these spots can be dangerous.



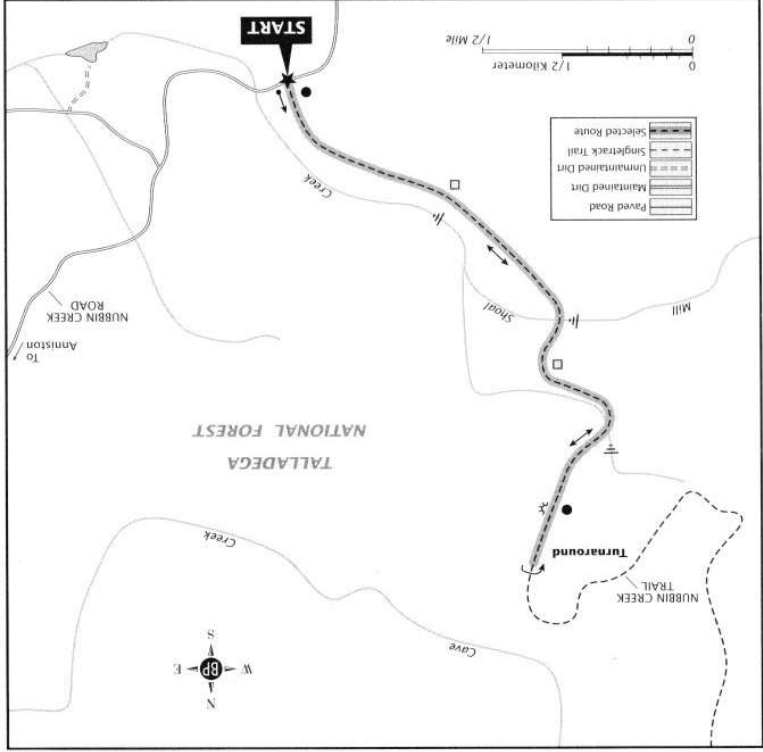
One of many stream crossings along the Nubbin Creek

With that said, on to the good stuff. Overall, the trail is not difficult. There are some moderate climbs up and around rocky waterfalls. The most picturesque time to hike the trail is in early to mid spring when rains fill the creeks and the waterfalls run full.

From its beginning at the Nubbins Creek Trailhead, the route is narrow, with longleaf pines, white oak, and brush giving the path an enclosed feeling. Details on trail conditions and national forest rules are posted on an information board near the start of the trail. There is also a register here. It's a good idea to fill out the registration card before starting any trip into the wilderness, because you never know when you might want searchers to be able to find you in an emergency.



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Nubbins Creek Trail (25)

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the Nubbins Creek Trailhead. A hiker sign marks the entrance into the pines. White blazes line the trail.

0.3 Pass a short, unmarked trail to the right. In 100 feet, pass a second side trail. [Side-trip. This second trail is approximately 100 feet long and rather steep, but leads to a beautiful bluff high above the rushing stream and waterfall.]

1.4 The trail narrows to a 6-inch rock ledge with a steep drop to the right as it crosses a creek. In 50 feet the trail comes to the base of the falls. Carefully cross the moss covered rocks of the stream.

1.5 The path runs just below the highest elevation of the trip, 1,600 feet.

1.8 The trail markers are all but non-existent through this section.

1.9 The brush thins out as the trail comes to a boulder field. To the right the views of the surrounding mountains open up. Turn around here and retrace your route back to the Nubbins Creek Trailhead. [Option. You can continue on to the intersection of Cave Creek Trail. The hike from this point on is extremely difficult, not marked, and very overgrown.]

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'Bama Trivia

- Alabama is the namesake of a Native American tribe, the Alibamu.
- Isabella de Soto, wife of explorer Hernando de Soto, planted the first fig tree in the United States, on Dauphin Island, Alabama.
- The number of acres of forestland in Alabama ranks third in the nation.
- 350,000 endangered American gray bats call a waterside cave at Joe Wheeler State Park near Florence, AL, home. Visitors can see them swarm en mass after sunset between April and October.

The trail winds gradually uphill and you begin to hear Mill Shoals Creek. The first of two short side trails toward the creek comes in from the right. This first side trail goes about 100 yards to the banks of the fast-flowing creek. But the real scenery is on the second side trail, which takes off about 50 feet farther along the trail. This short path takes you to the edge of a bluff that rises more than 100 feet above the creek, which tumbles here over a series of falls. This is definitely the highlight view of the trip.

Back on the Nubbin Creek Trail, you'll hike through an area where white bloodroot and toothwort dot the trail sides in spring. In places where the trees thin out and the surrounding mountains and ridges come into view, look for white dogwoods on the hillsides.

At the 1.4-mile mark—about the time you can spot the next waterfall ahead on the right—the trail makes its way along the side of a ravine and becomes little more than a ledge, less than a foot wide. You'll need to pay close attention to your footing. At one point a feeder creek to the stream far below cuts across the trail. The trail is washed out, and it'll take some careful maneuvering to get safely around this spot.

Shortly after the washout, you'll reach a 70-foot waterfall. The trail crosses the creek at the base of the falls. From here, the trail makes its way into a boulder field for good open views. This is the end point of the hike described here.

Hike Information**Trail Contacts:**

Talladega National Forest,
Talladega, AL; (256) 463-2273 or
www8web.com/alabama—The
office is open Monday–Friday,
7:30 A.M.–5 P.M..

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

No fee to hike the trail. Camping is allowed anywhere in the forest by using the “dispersal” method and following national forest guidelines.

Local Information:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Organizations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Other Resources:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL

• **Brochures**—available free of charge at the Cheaha State Park camp store • **Park maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7 is available for \$5.20 at the Cheaha State Park camp store or by mail through the Talladega National Forest ranger office. This map also includes the Chinnabee Silent, Odum Scout, Cave Creek, Nubbin, and Skyway Loop trails.

Cave Creek Trail

Hike Summary

The Cave Creek Trail travels the side of Hernandez Peak for a trip that takes you through tunnels of rhododendron bushes. You'll also enjoy excellent views of the surrounding mountains. The hiking becomes difficult from the Nubbin Creek Trail junction on Little Caney Head to the end of the trail at the Pinhoti connector on Parker High Point because the trail has become overgrown with thorn bushes and shrubs.

Hike Specs

Start: From the north parking area on AL 281 (Cheaha Trailhead)

Length: 13.8-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 6–7 hours

Difficulty Rating: Easy along the side of Hernandez Peak; moderate climbs over Little Caney Head and Parker High Point; difficult beyond the Nubbin Creek Trail junction due to brush

Trail Surface: Dirt path and rock

Lay of the Land: Rhododendrons and wildflowers, along with longleaf pines, white oaks, and dogwoods

Land Status: State park and national forest

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—bring water, which is scarce after the creeks at the trail beginning; no leash required

Getting There

From Anniston: Take I-20 east for five miles to Exit 191. Merge onto U.S. 431 South. Travel 3.5 miles and turn right onto AL 281 South. Go 13 miles on AL 281 and the Cheaha Trailhead will be plainly marked on the left. **DeLorme:** *Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 32 F5

Cave Creek Trail gets its name from a creek at the start of the hike that flows through large rocks to make small “caves.” The trail is lined with rhododendron, dogwoods, and white oaks. From spring through fall wildflowers color the mountaintops like a rainbow. Among the wildlife you’re likely to see are white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, wild pigs, and foxes. Hawks are often seen soaring around the bluffs.

Once you leave the trailhead, the path is nice and level, though rocky in many places, as it heads south along the side of Hernandez Peak. The trail narrows in several spots, with a steep drop to one side into a hollow. Be careful here, especially over rocky areas.

All along this part of the route, through Cheaha State Park, the trail is lined with rhododendron bushes. The best time to walk this path is in late spring or early summer when the bushes are in full bloom. They are so thick that they form flowering tunnels. Soon the trail leaves the state park and



enters Talladega National Forest. The trail jogs to the west and at this elbow provides a spectacular view of surrounding mountains.

From here the trail follows the side of a ridge and then starts making its way up to just below the top of 2,000-foot-high Little Caney Head. At this point, 4.7 miles into the hike, the Nubbin Creek Trail splits off to the east—and this is where the difficult stuff begins. The park service information will

tell you that the Cave Creek Trail is marked with tree blazes, but don't expect to see them. From this point on, to the end of the trail, the brush is so thick that it obscures the trail. It's almost easier to just bushwhack than to try and follow the official route.

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the Cheaha Trailhead off AL 281. The trail leaves the parking area to the west behind a "Pinhoti National Recreational Trail" sign. The trail forks in 200 feet at an information board and registration box. Take the left fork. (The right fork leads to the Pinhoti Trail.)

1.7 Pass the Cheaha Wilderness / Talladega National Forest sign.

2.1 The trail forks. Go right, around the outcropping. (The left fork heads steeply up an outcropping to the south.) Shortly, the two trails rejoin. Continue through a campsite.

2.3 Pass a campsite on the right.

2.5 Pass another campsite on the right.

2.8 [Note.] The trail turns rocky and is high above a creek with a steep drop off into a hollow to the left. It's very narrow here, so be careful of your footing as you go around.]

3.8 Come to a fork where a sign reads "Pinhoti" and points to the north; and "State Park" and points to the northeast. Another sign here reads "Nubbin Creek

Road" and points to the southwest. Take the left fork.

4.7 Come to the intersection of the Nubbin Creek Trail and another connector to the Pinhoti (two signs mark the crossing). Continue straight. **[FYI. Box turtles can be found here.]**

5.0 Pass a campsite on the right.

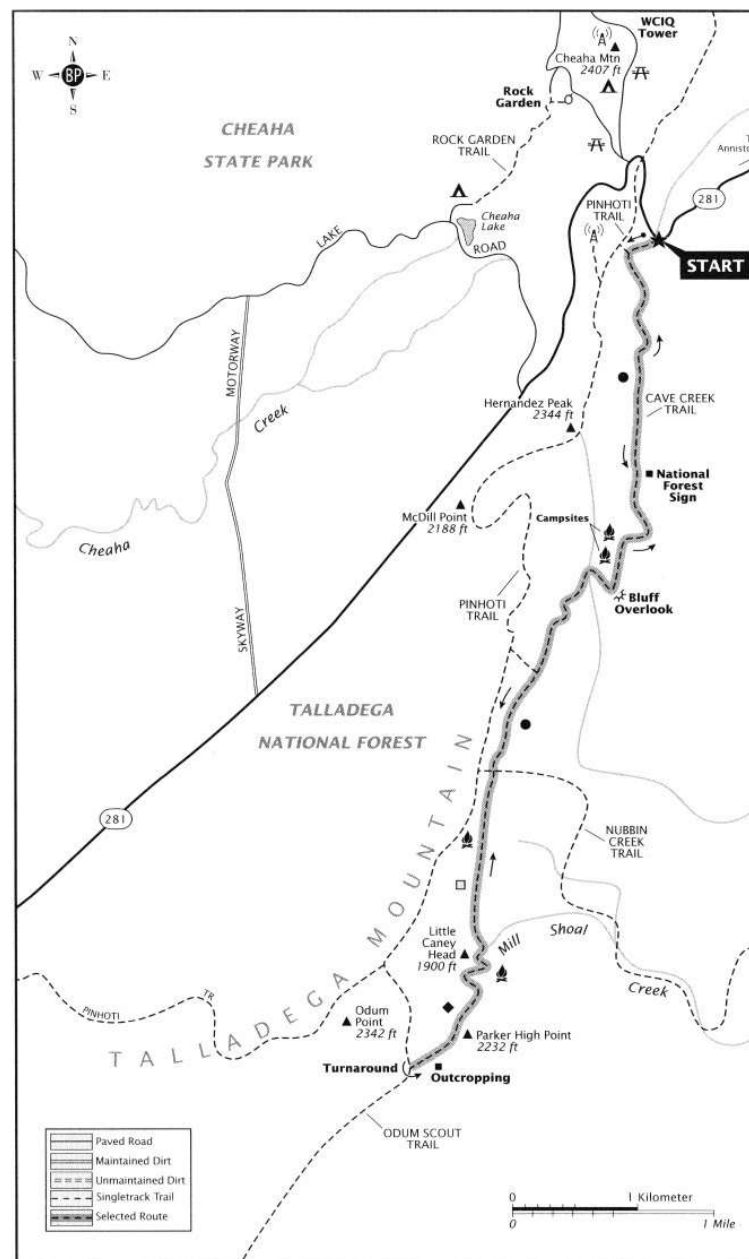
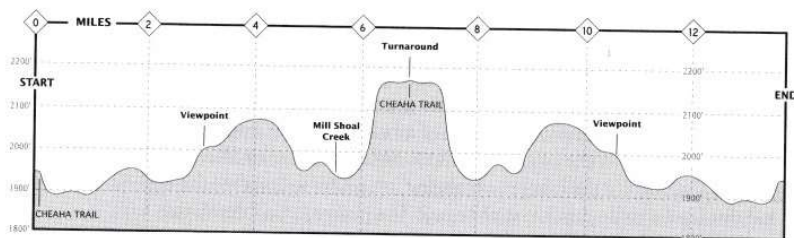
5.7 Pass a campsite on the left.

6.3 Come to a fork and go left, continuing up hill.

6.8 The trail is hard to see through the brush as it heads to the west.

6.9 Pass a campsite on the right. The trail is rocky again as it comes to a fork, where a sign marks the intersection with the Odum Scout Trail. Turn around point and retrace your route back to the Cheaha Trailhead. **[Option. To make a loop, turn right on to the Odum Trail and take it to its intersection with the Pinhoti Trail, where you'll turn right and follow the Pinhoti back to the Cheaha Trailhead.]**

13.8 Arrive back at the trailhead.



The trail reaches its end atop Parker High Point (2,232 feet), where it intersects with the Odum Scout Trail. At this Y-intersection, you have the choice of retracing your outbound route back to the Cheaha Trailhead or following a loop route back to the trailhead. To make the loop, take the right fork at the Y-intersection and head up the Odum Scout Trail until it intersects with the Pinhoti Trail. Turn right and walk the Pinhoti Trail along the ridge of Talladega Mountain. You'll climb over the top of McDill Point (2,188 feet) and Hernandez Peak (2,344 feet) before dropping back to the Cheaha Trailhead.



A box turtle along the trail.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Cheaha State Park, Delta, AL;
(256) 488-5111 • **Talladega
National Forest**, Talladega, AL;
(256) 463-2273 or www.r8web.com/alabama—The office is open
Monday–Friday, 7:30 A.M.–5 P.M.

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

No fee to hike the trail. Camping is allowed anywhere in the forest by using the “dispersal” method and following national forest guidelines. Primitive camping at Cheaha State Park is \$8 per night.

Local Information:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Organizations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Other Resources:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL
• **Brochures**—available free of charge at the Cheaha State Park camp store • **Park maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7 is available for \$5.20 at the Cheaha State Park camp store or by mail through the Talladega National Forest ranger office. This map also includes the Chinnabee Silent, Odum Scout, Cave Creek, Nubbin, and Skyway Loop trails.

In Addition

Pinhoti Trail

The Pinhoti Trail System, located within Talladega National Forest and Cheaha State Park, offers the ultimate backpacking excursion in Alabama. The system connects more than 100 miles of Alabama wilderness and leads through the tallest mountains in the state.

The Pinhoti area received its name from the Native Americans who inhabited the region. Loosely translated, it means turkey home—appropriate because the Eastern wild turkey calls these mountains home.

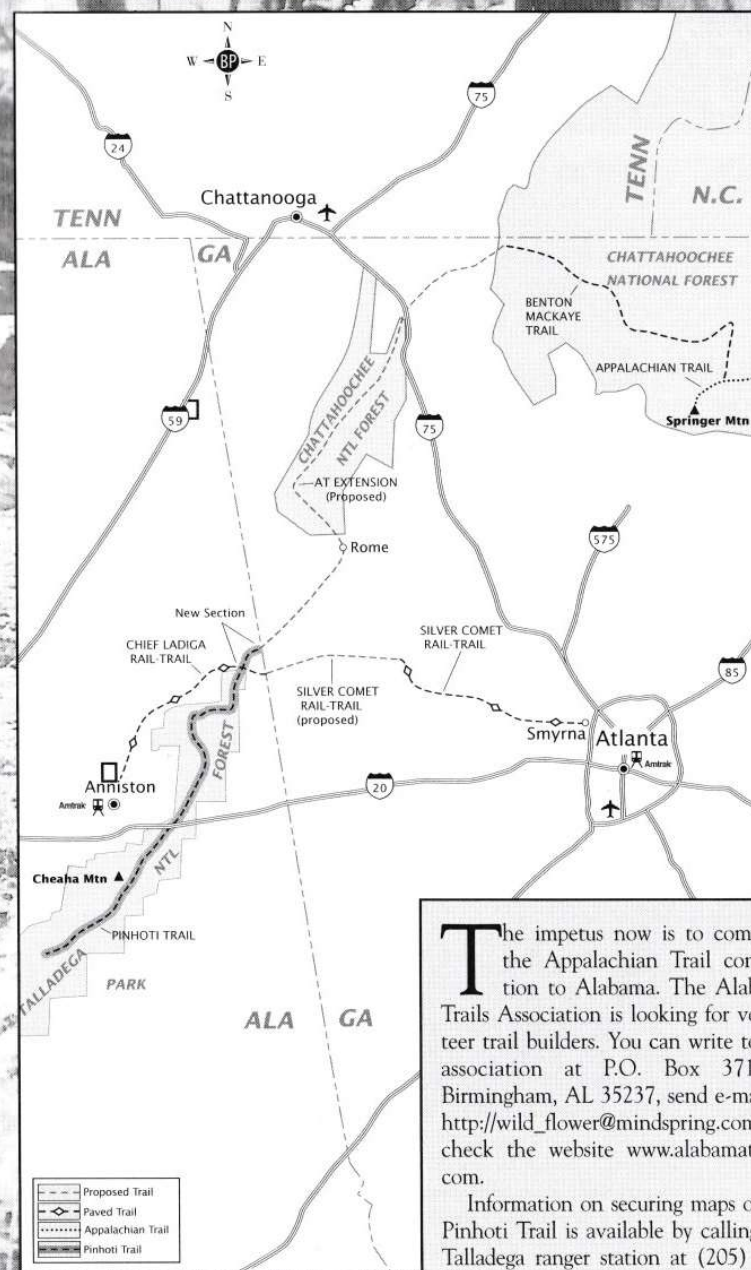
The Pinhoti Trail System takes off from a trailhead on Alabama 77, north of Ashland, and ends at a spot on U.S. Route 278 just north of Piedmont. Along the hundred-mile hiking route, you'll find comfortable trail shelters and spectacular landscapes. A wide variety of wildflowers bloom from spring through summer, followed later in the year by the beautiful reds and golds of autumn leaves. With 100 miles to cover, a through hike of the Pinhoti System can be quite a challenge. The weather can change without warning, and some creeks run only intermittently in summer.

The Pinhoti System combines several trails in the national forest, such as the Odum Scout Trail, as it makes its way through the southern portion of the Appalachian Mountains. Using a variety of trails, you can devise weekend loop hikes for yourself. In October 1999, the Pinhoti Trail was named a federal Millennium Legacy Trail, making it eligible for federal funding to help maintain and protect it.

The future plans for the Pinhoti Trail are to link it with the 2,167-mile Appalachian Trail that now runs from Mount Katahdin, Maine, to Springer Mountain, Georgia. A hard-working group of volunteers, outdoors organizations, and Forest Service agents are working on bringing the two trails together. This would effectively increase the length of the Appalachian Trail by about another 200 miles.

Construction has already begun on a path to connect the Appalachian Trail with the Benton Mackaye Trail in Northern Georgia. From there, a connector route is to be completed between the Mackaye Trail and Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia, then from there to the Alabama state line. The Alabama Trails Association recently completed a connector trail between the Georgia state line and the Pinhoti Trail.

Hoping to take the project a step farther, some members of the Florida Trails Association would like to continue the Pinhoti Trail down through the Tuskegee and Conecuh national forests in Alabama and on into Florida, and eventually down to the Everglades using the Florida Trail.



The impetus now is to complete the Appalachian Trail connection to Alabama. The Alabama Trails Association is looking for volunteer trail builders. You can write to the association at P.O. Box 371162, Birmingham, AL 35237, send e-mail to [http://wild_flower@mindspring.com](mailto:wild_flower@mindspring.com), or check the website www.alabamatrails.com.

Information on securing maps of the Pinhoti Trail is available by calling the Talladega ranger station at (205) 362-2909.

Odum Scout Trail

Hike Summary

The scenery and serenity of the Odum Scout Trail makes this one great hike. Right from the start, High Falls adds to the splendor of the scene—and to the difficulty of the hike, as the route ascends stairs to reach the top of the falls. The path then follows the ridge-line of Cheaha Mountain, with wildflowers displaying all imaginable colors and two bluffs providing spectacular views.

Hike Specs

Start: From the High Falls trailhead off CR 31

Length: 9.8-mile out-and-back

Approximate Hiking Time: 4–5 hours

Difficulty Rating: Difficult start, following stairs up rock walls; then easy over the ridge of Cheaha Mountain

Trail Surface: Rock and dirt footpaths

Lay of the Land: High bluffs; wildflowers

Land Status: National forest

Nearest Town: Anniston, AL

Other Trail Users: None

Canine Compatibility: Dog friendly—except for the first half-mile, which is steep and includes stairs; bring water; no leash required

Getting There

From Anniston: Take I-20 east for five miles to Exit 191. Merge onto U.S. 431 south. Turn right in 3.5 miles onto AL 281 South. Go seven miles and turn left onto AL 49 South. Go 10 miles (passing the turn for the Nubbin Creek Trailhead on the right at mile 6.3) and turn right onto CR 31. Travel 1.2 miles and a sign on the right marks the turn for the High Falls Trailhead. Turn right here onto the gravel road and travel 0.3 miles to the trailhead. **DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer:** Page 32 F5

Many people believe the Odum Scout Trail is Alabama's most scenic mountain trail. If, after hiking it, you don't agree, you'll have to at least acknowledge that it comes pretty darn close. Situated in the Talladega National Forest, the trail was built by the Cheaha District of the Choccolocco Council of the Boy Scouts, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. Its objective: "to encourage interest in camping and hiking in the great out-of-doors."

The trail, which begins at the High Falls Trailhead, travels the backbone of Cheaha Mountain until it reaches the Pinhoti Trail at Odum Point. Right from the start, nature takes hold of you with breathtaking beauty. Just a tenth of a mile into the hike, the trail reaches High Falls—a three-tiered cascade that leaps from ledge to ledge right next to the trail.



Lower Cascade of High Falls.

The trail heads straight up rock walls to the top of the falls, using steel and wood stairs to make the climb possible. (If you bring the dog, you may end up carrying the animal.)

Farther on, the trail comes to the edge of a bluff on Cedar Mountain, with a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains. Atop the bluff is a flat area that has been used as a campsite, but it's a windy place. It's better to drop down a bit from the outcropping if you plan to spend the night. As

MilesDirections

0.0 START from the High Falls Trailhead. Faded yellow blazes mark the trail. Immediately, come to a fork and go right. (The left fork leads to a series of campsites next to High Falls Branch.)

0.1 Pass the trail registration and information board. In 50 feet the trail crosses High Falls Creek.

0.2 The second cascade of High Falls is straight ahead. Turn left at the falls and in 50 feet come to a set of wooden and steel stairs. At the top of the stairs, the upper cascade is straight ahead.

0.3 Climb two sets of stairs and come to a T-intersection here. Take the left fork. (The right fork leads to the head of the falls.)

0.4 Pass a camp on the left.

0.5 Pass a campsite on the right.

0.7 Pass a campsite on the left. *[FYI. Through the trees to the right is Robinson Mountain.]*

2.1 Pass a campsite on the right. Thick brush obscures the trail but you can see it again about 30 feet ahead.

2.4 Pass a decomposer on the right.

2.8 A 50-foot trail breaks left. Continue straight.

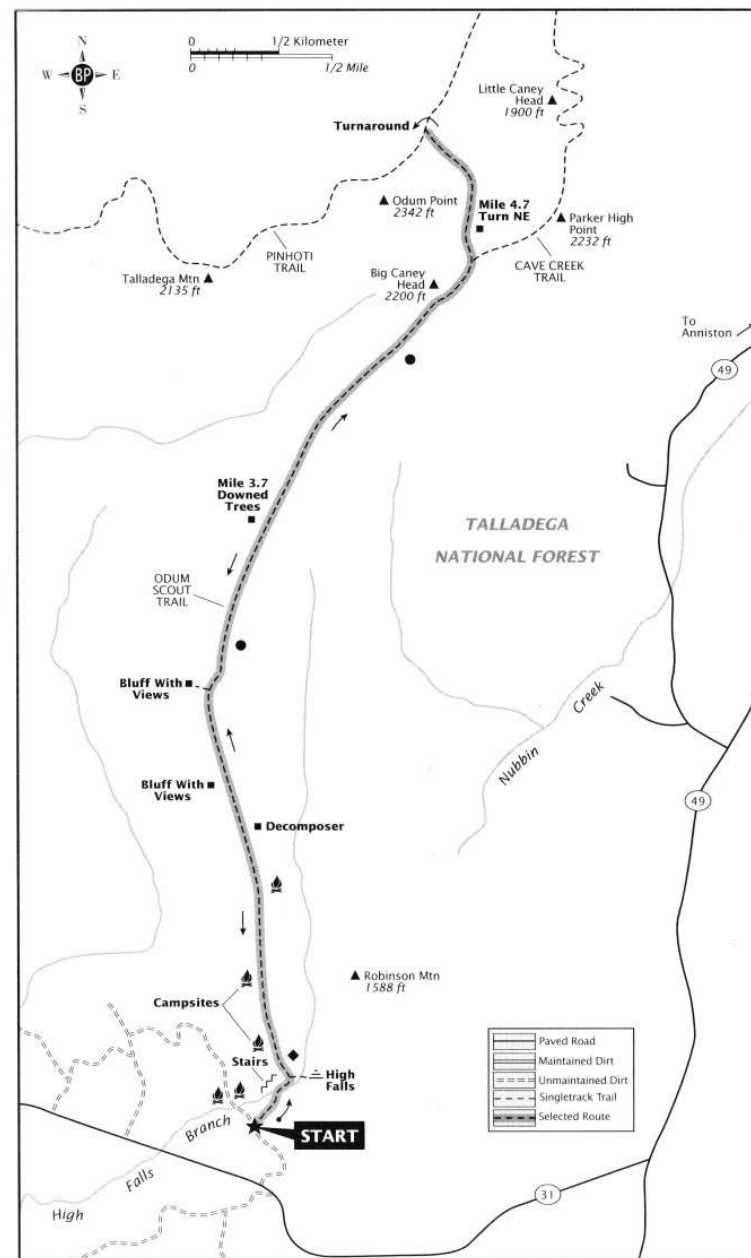
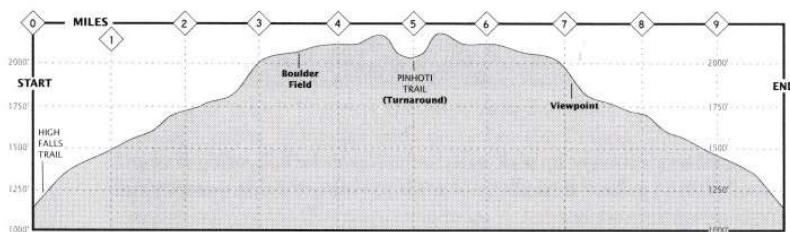
3.5 (A short side trail to the left leads to another beautiful view.) Continue straight. The trail is difficult to follow over the rocks here and there are no trail markers; just keep heading northeast.

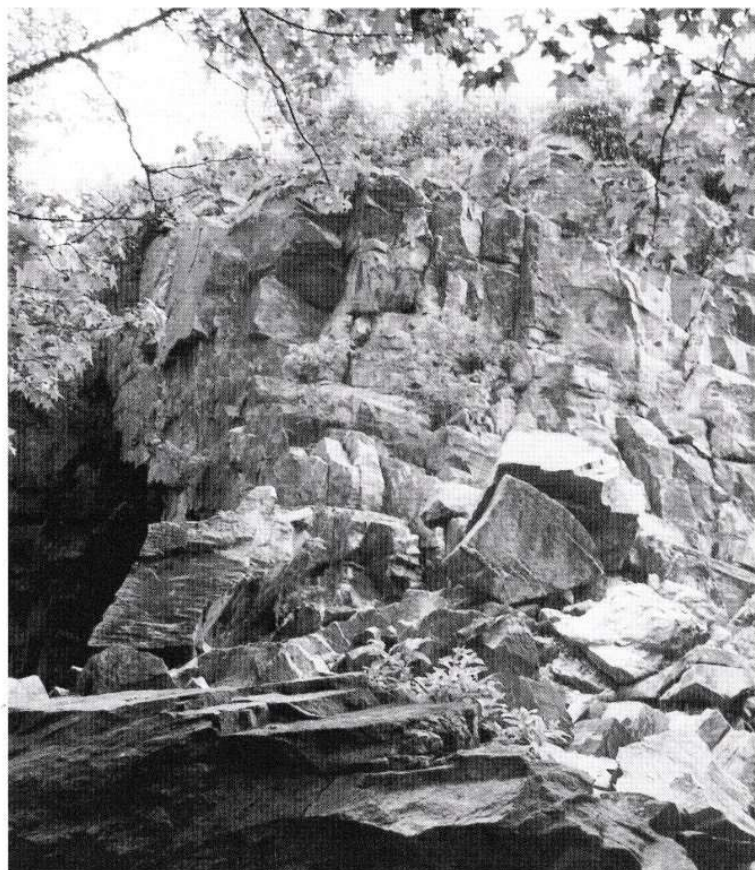
3.7 Come to a field of rocks. The trail looks like it could go either to the north or northeast. Go to the northeast over the flat rocks (not up the boulders to the left). A faded yellow blaze can be seen on one of the rocks as you walk over it. The path will reappear on the other side.

4.5 Come to a fork with two wooden signs. The right sign reads "Nubbin Creek Trail / Cave Creek Trail 2.0 miles, Nubbin Creek Road 4.0 miles." The left sign reads "Odum Trail/High Falls 3.0 miles." Take the left fork.

4.9 Come to a T-intersection with the Pinhoti Trail (a wooden sign indicates the intersection). Turn around and retrace your tracks back to the High Falls Trailhead.

9.8 Arrive at the trailhead.





Rock pile at the trailhead.

the trail heads up Big Caney Head, it reaches the edge of a second bluff, again with a broad view of the mountains.

Among the animals you might cross on your trip are white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, wild pigs, and foxes. Azaleas, dogwoods, and wildflowers line the path—so many wildflowers, in fact, that from spring through fall much of the area is a rainbow of colors. Along the ridge, travel is fairly easy as you walk up and down small grades. With the exception of at the beginning part of the trail, water is pretty scarce, so pack plenty.

The trail is only roughly marked, with faded yellow blazes visible on some trees and rocks. The path is well worn, but brush overgrowing the trail can make it difficult to follow. At places like this, look ahead and you should be able to spot the trail as it continues beyond the brush. In other areas, the trail travels over rocks and disappears completely. Generally if you continue in the same direction of travel, you'll find the path on the other side of the rocks.

Hike Information

Trail Contacts:

Talladega National Forest,
Talladega, AL; (256) 463-2273 or
www.r8web.com/alabama—The
office is open Monday–Friday,
7:30 A.M.–5 P.M.

Schedule:

Open year round

Fees/Permits:

No fee to hike the trail. Camping is allowed anywhere in the forest by using the “dispersal” method and following national forest guidelines.

Local Information:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Events/Attractions:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Accommodations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Restaurants:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Organizations:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Other Resources:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Local Outdoor Retailers:

[See Hike 21: Lakeshore Trail]

Maps:

USGS maps: Cheaha Mountain, AL; Lineville West, AL • **Brochures**—available free of charge at the Cheaha State Park camp store • **Park maps**—Pinhoti Trail Map Section 7 is available for \$5.20 at the Cheaha State Park camp store or by mail through the Talladega National Forest ranger office. This map also includes the Chinnabee Silent, Odum Scout, Cave Creek, Nubbin, and Skyway Loop trails.

Honorable Mentions



Central Alabama

As we've seen, Central Alabama offers the hiker much in the way of scenery and challenging treks. The following trails didn't make our A-list, but are well worth mention. Most of these trails are within striking distance of other trails listed in the Central Region section of this book, so stop in, pay a visit, and let us know what you think. Maybe one should be upgraded, or maybe you know of some hidden trip that would make a good honorable mention.

G Talladega National Forest – Oakmulgee Unit

The Talladega National Forest is broken into two distinct areas. The first is home to the state's highest mountain, Cheaha. The second is the Oakmulgee Unit, located between Montgomery and Birmingham.

The highlight of the Oakmulgee Unit is the Payne Lake Recreation Area. Here, a variety of activities from swimming to boating to fishing will be found, along with a hiking trail that skirts the banks of the lake. The terrain is not exceptionally difficult and there are ample opportunities to view the wildlife of the region.

As with all national forests in the state, camping is permitted along the trail. Camping at the recreational area with water costs \$12 per day. Otherwise, a day use fee of \$3 is charged. Remember that hunting is allowed in national forests so camping and hiking become restricted during hunting season. Contact the ranger office Monday–Friday from 7:30 A.M.–5 P.M. at (205) 926–9765 for dates.

To get to the forest, go west from Montgomery on U.S. 82 to AL 5. Turn left on AL 5 and head south for six miles. Turn right onto AL 25. The recreational area will be reached in 15 miles. *DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 36 E1

H Red Trail – Oak Mountain State Park

Oak Mountain State Park is well known for its mountain bike trails and the Red Trail is among its best routes. Totalling 17 miles, this trail follows old dirt roadbeds for the first half of the trip and then a nice footpath around the hillsides for the remainder. Mountain bikers use the trail as a training course and many contests are held here each year.

As with many of the trails in the park, the Red Trail takes the hiker to Peavine Falls and can be accessed either from the Peavine Falls parking lot or the northern parking area near the country store.

The hike is easy to moderate in difficulty. The main drawback is the frequency of bicycles careening down the hillsides. The views are not as spectacular as other trails in the park, but it does travel alongside some streams that make it a pleasant trip. [See Hike 17 for park directions and additional

information.] Call (205) 620–2527 or 1–800–ALA–PARK for more information or visit www.bham.net/oakmntn. *DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 31 G6

I Treetop Trail – Oak Mountain State Park

Just over half a mile in length, the Treetop Trail at Oak Mountain is an elevated walkway through the Oak Mountain forest. What makes the trail interesting is that it's maintained by the Alabama Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. The center provides homes for over 300 species of wildlife that are found injured throughout the state. Here, the animals are protected and cared for until they are well enough to make it on their own in the wild.

The trail travels through the section of the park where the animals recuperate. Here, all manner of wildlife, from cougar to alligators to eagles, can be seen. A.W.R.C. personnel are more than happy to talk with hikers about the wildlife and the rehabilitation program. The trail itself begins at the park ranger office and runs parallel to the Green Trail. [See Hike 20 for park directions and additional information.] Call (205) 620–2527 or 1–800–ALA–PARK for more information or visit www.bham.net/oakmntn. *DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 31 G6



J Bald Rock Trail – Cheaha State Park

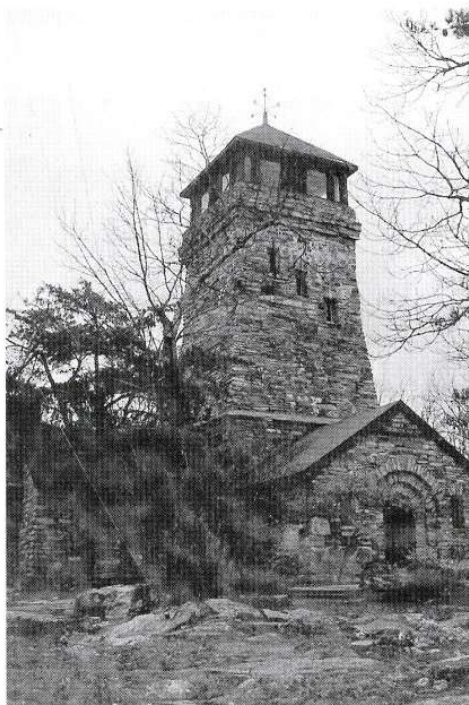
Located on the very top of the highest mountain in the state, the Bald Rock Trail gives you what you would expect from the highest point, spectacular views! This trail is an 1.0-mile loop that is perfect for families with small children and people with disabilities.

The trail begins at the north end of the parking lot, next to the closed Mt. Cheaha Lodge, which is a fine example of CCC craftsmanship. The trail takes two paths here, one to the left and one to the right of a boardwalk that runs down the center of the loop. Either path leads to the same location.

The trail is easy traveling, mostly a dirt footpath with some exposed rock. Half a mile into the trip the trail turns west and comes out right on top of Bald Rock. The view is spectacular and expansive to say the least.

The boardwalk running down the center of the loop is elevated approximately four feet off the ground. It's quite wide, at least six feet, with four-foot high handrails, and it leads directly to the rock. This makes the trip easily accessible for those who are handicapped.

The trail opens at 7 A.M. and closes at sunset. There is a \$1 day-use fee to gain entry into the park. [See Hike 24 for park directions and additional information.] Call (256) 488-5111 or 1-800-ALA-PARK for more information. *DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 32 E5



K Rickwood Cavern State Park

One of the truly magnificent state park experiences in Alabama is Rickwood Cavern State Park, member of the National Caves Association. The cave is maintained by the state and is the only operational caving park in the state.

Park rangers guide you along the trail through the "Miracle Mile," a solid mile (two-mile round trip) of passages, huge carved rooms, and limestone formations. The cave was formed over 260 million years ago during the geologic Mississippian period. Early fossils of marine life can be seen as well as colorful flowstones and an exhibit of 2,000-year-old artifacts found in the cave.

The park is located about 20 miles north of Birmingham. Take Exit 284 off of I-65. The park is open 10 A.M.–5 P.M. daily on a seasonal schedule, so it's best to call in advance at (205) 647-9692 before heading out. Admission to the cave is \$7.50 for adults 12 and older and \$3.50 for children six to 11. Admission to the park is \$1 for ages six and older. The fee for camping is \$12 per night for four people. *DeLorme: Alabama Atlas & Gazetteer*: Page 24 H5

