

TRAIL REGULATIONS AND ETHICS

-  Please register to hike the Butterfield Trail at the Visitor Center and return your permit there when you have finished the trail. The required permit is free.
-  Purify all water before drinking.
-  Camping or campfire building is prohibited along the trail inside Devil’s Den State Park boundaries.
-  Camping is permitted anywhere within the Ozark National Forest provided the site is 100 feet off the trail and away from a water source; however, there are two designated primitive camping areas on the trail. Fires are permitted except during a county burn ban. (Check at the Visitor Center for current information).
-  If you pack it in, you are required to pack it out. Littering or burying of trash is prohibited.
-  Bury human waste 6-8 inches deep and at least 100 feet from a water source.
-  Motorized vehicles are prohibited along the Butterfield Hiking Trail. Horses are permitted along sections where the Butterfield and horse trails coincide. Mountain bikes are permitted on the Butterfield Trail, but must yield to hikers and horses. Many sections of this trail are unsuitable for mountain bikes.
-  Leave natural and historical features undisturbed. This includes homesites, bluff faces, plants and wildlife.
-  Prevent trail damage and soil erosion. Stay on the trail and avoid cutting switchbacks.
-  Prevent stream and spring pollution. Avoid washing directly in these water sources and never dump food, grease or detergents in them.



For more information, contact:
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ArkansasStateParks.com

HISTORY OF THE BUTTERFIELD TRAIL

The Butterfield Hiking Trail (BHT) was named after one of the longest stagecoach routes in the history of the United States, the Butterfield Overland Stage. In the years before the Civil War, 1858-1861, this stage ran from Tipton, Missouri to San Francisco, California. In northwest Arkansas, it passed through Fayetteville, Hogeys, Strickler and continued to Van Buren and Fort Smith. Fourteen miles south of Fayetteville, a four-mule team was hitched to the stage in place of the customary horses. The change was made in order to cross the much dreaded Boston Mountains of the Ozarks. An author of the time, Waterman L. Ormsby, Jr., of the New York Herald, wrote an account of the entire trip in his book, The Butterfield Overland Mail. Ormsby stated that the term "boston" was a western expression used to describe anything tough or difficult.

In describing this area, Ormsby wrote: "It is impossible that any road could be worse. I might say the road was steep, rugged, jagged, rough and mountainous, and then wish for more impressive words."

Although the Butterfield Hiking Trail does not follow the original stage route, it does come within two miles of it. When hiking the trail, you will get a feeling for what Ormsby wrote, and it will give you new insight into our American heritage as well as inspire your respect for the settlers who lived in this part of Arkansas.

TRAILHEAD

The Butterfield Hiking Trail is 15 miles long. It begins and ends in Devil’s Den State Park, but more than ten miles of the trail is in the Ozark National Forest.

The trail officially begins and ends at the cedar shelter located past the pavilion/playground area below the dam. If you wish to hike only a portion of the trail, park personnel at the Visitor Center will be happy to suggest alternate routes suitable for day hikes. If they are available, park rangers will provide a shuttle service to some starting points. Inquire at the Visitor Center for more information.

OTHER INFORMATION

The Butterfield Hiking Trail is a component of the Arkansas Trail System.

Devil’s Den State Park offers backpacking workshops and guided hikes each year. The park also rents backpacking equipment.

During the winter of 1997 the Devil’s Den State Park trails crew made significant improvements to the Butterfield Hiking Trail. They re-routed several portions of the trail, remarked the entire trail and built a new trailhead shelter. Funding for this project was provided by a grant from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council. This brochure was revised in the fall of 1998 to interpret these and other improvements.

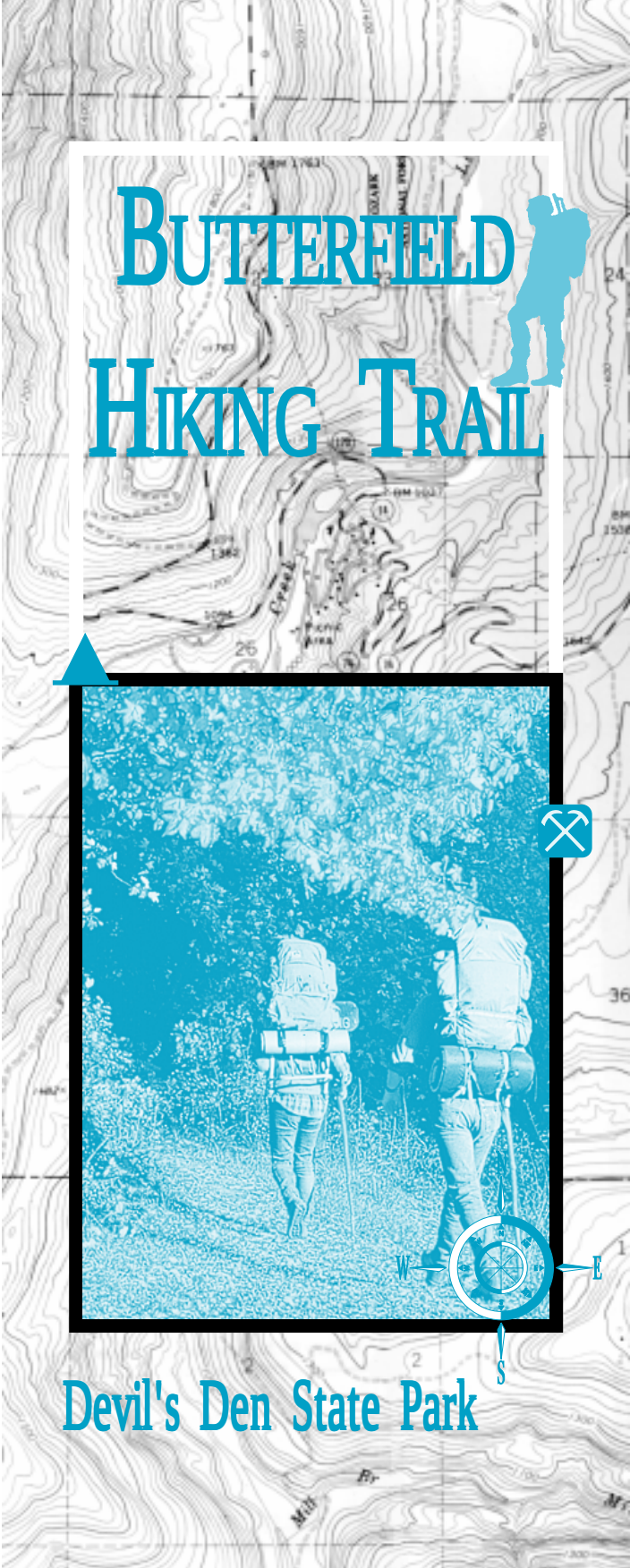
NOTICE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.

HIKING HINTS

-  You can usually find water at Quail Valley and both primitive campgrounds; however, it is always wise to carry a good supply.
-  Tick, chigger and snake season is April through September. Wear insect repellent and check for ticks frequently. If you encounter a snake, give it room and walk around it. **DO NOT HARASS SNAKES OR ANY WILDLIFE. ALL WILDLIFE AND PLANT LIFE IS PROTECTED BY LAW!**
-  Leave food tied up outside your tent at night away from raccoons and other critters. Black bears are reported every few years, but are rarely encountered.
-  Watch for poison ivy along the trail. It is common, and you may recognize it by its three leaflets, reddish leaf stem, and hairy vine. Always wash after a day of hiking to avoid contracting the painful rash caused by this plant.
-  Take care to dress properly for your hike. A good pair of well-fitted, broken-in boots, with a hat, and loose fitting clothing will help ensure your comfort and safety.
-  Keep in mind if you become lost that you never have to cross Blackburn or Lee Creeks. By following either of these downstream, you will eventually arrive at Junction Camp and thus the spur trail back up the hill to the Butterfield Trail.
-  Also remember that Holt Road runs along the top of the ridge. By finding it and heading north, you will reach Highway 74.
If you become lost after sunset, remember to stay where you are. You will be easier to find.

TRAIL MARKINGS

The trail is marked with blue paint on both sides of the trees; therefore you may hike the trail in either direction. However this trail brochure is written as if you were hiking the trail in a clockwise manner. A single blue painted blaze on a tree designates that the trail continues. A double blue blaze indicates that the trail turns or there is some irregularity. Blue mile markers are posted at each mile.



TRAILHEAD TO AREA A

The cedar shelter marks the trailhead of the Butterfield Hiking Trail (BHT). From the shelter, follow the walkway to the suspension bridge. This bridge, which replaced a YACC bridge that was washed out in a flood, was built in 1989 by Army Reserves, 1st Platoon, Company D, 489th Engineers. Past the bridge, the trail turns right and coincides with the Lake Trail for the first half mile.

Continuing on the trail you will reach the native stone dam built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937. It represents the quality craftsmanship of that period. The lake was originally used as a swimming area, but a swimming pool built in 1963, visible across the lake, now serves that purpose. The lake is now used for fishing, canoeing and paddle boating. Also visible across the lake is the Ridge Runner Cafe and Store. This building was also constructed in the 1930s by the CCC. Both the store and the cafe are open seasonally.

As you continue on the trail past the dam, you will enter a flood plain habitat. Here the vegetation includes a canebrake and other plants which prefer the moist, rich soil of this area. You will also notice evidence of beaver activity by the tell-tale teeth marks and stripped bark at the base of many of the trees, both standing and toppled.

The Lake Trail ends at the picnic area along the lake, but the Butterfield crosses Arkansas Highway 170 and continues along to the paved park road that runs to Area A campground.

Soon after crossing the highway, you will notice the remains of the CCC vehicular bridge that originally spanned Lee Creek. This structure was finished in 1935 and was washed away in a flash flood in May 1959. Take a few moments to examine the remaining bridge abutments and read the wayside marker.

From here, continue along the paved road. The vegetation along the creek is still typical of a flooded habitat, but for several yards the canebrake gives way to a tangle of honeysuckle, greenbrier and numerous trees and wildflowers. During the spring, this area is a favorite for birders as the abundant food and cover attract a wide variety of migratory songbirds. During the late summer and early fall, the area is awash with the blooms of frost weed, (*Verbesina virginica*) Yellow Ironweed, (*Verbesina alternifolia*) and several varieties of sunflowers. Veer to the right as you enter the Area A campground.