



# Multi-Use Trail System Hiker's Guide

**OLD MILITARY ROAD TRAIL (Trail of Tears):** Originally the Memphis to Little Rock Road, this trail is 2.16 miles in length. It begins and ends on the Lake Austell dam. From this trail, you can access the Lake Dunn trail, swinging bridge and the multi-use trails. It features one of the most dramatic remaining portions of the Trail of Tears (1/2 mile from the trailhead). The Memphis to Little Rock Road, completed in 1829, provided the first improved route between the two cities and became a major route of Indian Removal for Creek, Chickasaw and 600 Cherokee. This trail provides scenic vistas of Lake Austell. Allow two to three hourshiking time; some terrain is moderately rugged.

**LAKE DUNN TRAIL:** This trail is 2.77 miles in length. A portion of this trail is open to bicycles (that portion is blazed in white). You can access this trail from the Lake Dunn dam or behind campsite # 23. This trail features the popular swinging bridge and follows a portion of the Trail of Tears. This trail also connects to the multi-use trails at intersections #12 and # 14.

## MULTI-USE TRAILS (BLAZED IN WHITE)

**CENTER RIDGE TRAIL (A, B, C):** This trail is 6.05 miles in length. Traversing some high ridge tops, it treats the hiker to views of some of the most scenic areas of the park. Most of this trail is relatively easy with several steep inclines and small stream crossings with no bridges. B loop is closed to bicycles.

**BEECH VALLEY TRAIL (D,E,F,G):** This trail is 4 miles in length. The trail passes near Lake Dunn and deep into the forests of Crowley's Ridge. This trail features small seasonal streams with no bridges.

**SOUTH RIDGE TRAIL (H,I,J,K):** This trail is 6.5 miles in length and offers some of the park's most spectacular views of steep wooded valleys. I loop is closed to bicycles. During

the winter season, you can see Delta farmland on the ridge south of intersection #16. This trail crosses a large creek and several streams that require wading.

**OLD CATTLE TRAIL (L):** Closed to bicycles, this trail is 1.4 miles in length. It was used by local inhabitants to move cattle to lower pastures that were once part of the park. This trail crosses a large creek that requires wading and features some steep terrain.

**DEER RUN TRAIL (M,N,P):** This trail is 4.6 miles in length. A portion of the trail (1.2 miles) runs along the gas pipeline and features very rugged terrain. Nice views of Lake Austell are accessible from this trail.

## The Story of Crowley's Ridge

Village Creek State Park is situated entirely upon the unique land formation known as Crowley's Ridge. The natural beauty and unique landscape you will experience on the park's trail system is a direct result of the geologic history of Crowley's Ridge

The unique environment of Crowley's Ridge owes its origins to the ancient ocean which covered most of what is now eastern Arkansas some 50 million years ago. The global climate patterns were much different then and the ocean levels were much deeper. An extended arm of the Gulf of Mexico, known as the Mississippi Embayment, covered the entire area. Layers of marine sediments deposited by the ocean formed the foundation of Crowley's Ridge. Eventually, this ancient ocean retreated from Arkansas, leaving behind a wealth of marine sediments and fossils contained within them.

Evidence indicates that a gently rolling plain made of layers of clay, sand and gravel, extended from Little Rock, Arkansas, to Memphis, Tennessee. During the decline of the Ice Age, massive trenches were scoured out by the two major river

systems, the Ohio River to the east of the ridge and the Mississippi River to the west. Carrying large torrents of glacial melt-water, these rivers removed most of the ancient marine sediments that had been deposited in what is now the Delta. Left standing between the two parallel running rivers, stood a thin strip of land, which became known as Crowley's Ridge

The unique topsoil that caps the ridge is called "loess" and is a wind blown deposit. This soil was created by glacial rock grinding during the Great Ice Age and was carried downstream by the glacial melt-water. When this fine "rock flour" or silt dried, it was picked up by the prevailing westerly winds and deposited on the ridge.

Unlike the other ridges and mountains of Arkansas, which have a foundation of solid bedrock, Crowley's Ridge has a foundation of clay, sands and gravel. The erosive nature of the soil creates some unusual terrain. Steep ravines and hog-back ridges as well as sheer-sided bluffs are typical, and are common sights along the trails.

Remember, the way you care for and use the trails will influence trail management decisions and policies. Thank you.



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**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.

Toward fulfillment of our conservation mission, we have printed this brochure on recycled paper using soy ink.



## Village Creek State Park



Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism  
#1 Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
1-888-AT-PARKS  
www.ArkansasStateParks.com



Welcome to Village Creek State Park. Remember, this is your park. Please treat it carefully so others may enjoy it as you have. State Park lands function as preserves; protecting the plants, animals, and other features for future generations to come.

Most of the multi-use trail system is open to hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. Because of horses, most of the creeks in these areas do not have bridges. Some areas of the multi-use trails are rugged.

Some of the trails are restricted to hikers only. These trails are constructed with bridges and steps for a more comfortable experience. The trail signs are also closer to the ground for easier reading. All hiking trails are blazed in yellow and multi-use trails are blazed in white.

## Trail Regulations

- Please leave plants and animals along the trail undisturbed. Removing, defacing, destroying any rock, fossil, or plant or hunting or capturing any wildlife within the park is prohibited.
- Hike on designated trails only. Taking short cuts greatly accelerates soil erosion and destroys both trail and environment.
- Camping or campfires are not permitted on trails.
- When encountering horses, please stop and step off the trail; horses may be frightened by unfamiliar individuals.
- It is crucial to hear others approaching. Wearing ear phones can cause serious safety hazards between hikers, bicycles, and equestrians.
- Bicycles are NOT allowed on hiking trails; please use the bicycle entrance to the trails, located across the bridge from the visitor center

## Hiking Suggestions

- Before your trip, calculate the total distance traveled by considering the distances to and from the trailhead, not just the loop mileage.
- Wear footgear appropriate for hiking.
- In the warmer months, insect repellent may be desirable due to mosquitoes, ticks, and chiggers.
- If hiking the longer multi-use trails, take plenty of water and snacks. Other important items you should consider taking are flashlight, cell phone, compass, whistle, and rain gear.
- Leave no trace—leave nothing behind and pick up any litter you see.

## Trails and Distances

### HIKING TRAILS (BLAZED IN YELLOW)

**BIG BEN NATURE TRAIL:** This trail is 0.5 miles in length and is the most popular trail for families with small children. The trail begins and ends at the same point. A self-guided brochure for this trail is available at the visitor center. The brochure identifies plants and trees and can help you understand this unique environment. Park interpreters lead guided hikes on this trail throughout the year.

**AUSTELL TRAIL:** This trail is 1.12 miles in length. It begins at the visitor center and ends at the Lake Austell picnic area. Allow an hour or more for a leisurely hike. The trail takes you along hogback ridges, stream valleys and alongside Lake Austell. Some areas of the trails are moderately steep. From this trail, you can access the Old Military Road Trail.

**ARBORETUM TRAIL:** This trail is 0.25 miles in length. The shortest and easiest of the park's trails, it features signs identifying some of the area's more common trees and shrubs. Benches and picnic tables are provided for your convenience.

## Village Creek State Park Multi-Use Trail System

- Park Roads
- Multi-use Trails (horses, bicycles, hikers)
- Hiking Trails (hikers only)
- Horses, hikers only
- Bicycles, hikers only
- Easy
- Intermediate
- ◇ Difficult

