

Trail	Long	Lat
Fountain Bluff Happy Hollow RD	89° 29' 58.95" W	37° 41' 36.85" N
Fountain Bluff Township RD	89° 29' 58.91" W	37° 41' 56.51" N
Oakwood Bottoms Parking	89° 27' 46.54" W	37° 40' 26.16" N
LaRue Swamp/Pine Hills	89° 26' 25.75" W	37° 35' 2.07" N
Trail of Tears	89° 21' 41.36" W	37° 28' 49.36" N
Cave Valley	89° 20' 37.39" W	37° 38' 27.21" N
Hickory Ridge FS Road 741	89° 22' 55.20" W	37° 40' 7.90" N
Alto Pass Quatil Trail	89° 19' 3.19" W	37° 34' 11.97" N
Borks Waterfall	89° 1' 19.44" W	37° 32' 29.41" N
Ferne Cliff State Park	88° 58' 55.92" W	37° 32' 27.32" N
Wild Cat Bluff	88° 55' 46.32" W	37° 22' 35.05" N
Heron Pond	88° 54' 35.80" W	37° 21' 12.93" N
Big Cypress Access Area	88° 58' 59.61" W	37° 18' 33.69" N
Cypress Creek Limekiln	89° 6' 39.83" W	37° 16' 43.09" N
Cypress Creek	89° 4' 53.44" W	37° 16' 49.91" N
Sand Cave	88° 38' 51.00" W	37° 29' 100.00" N
TriggTower	88° 44' 10.08" W	37° 29' 15.90" N
Lake Glendale	88° 39' 42.92" W	37° 24' 53.60" N
Dixon Springs State Park	88° 39' 58.07" W	37° 23' 8.70" N
Garden of the Gods Natural Bridge	88° 22' 42.70" W	37° 36' 4.02" N
Garden of the Gods Observation Trail	88° 23' 7.41" W	37° 36' 14.23" N
Garden of the Gods Window Arch	88° 21' 48.30" W	37° 36' 26.55" N
Camp Ondessonk	88° 45' 23.00" W	37° 30' 59.00" N

Foreword

As the hiking leader for the Shawnee Group – Sierra Club, I am aware that a significant population of folks wish to enjoy the outdoors but also prefer to avoid strenuous or hazardous outings. This booklet identifies twenty trails or sites that are either short or on level terrain. Many of these trails have fuller descriptions on the Shawnee Sierra website, <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/unclebob/adventures.htm> and <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

"Uncle Bob" Tyson

Murphysboro, Illinois

January 2011

1 Fountain Bluff area

From Route 3 take the turn into Gorham, Illinois (Lake Street.) Go through town and turn onto Second Street which will become Fountain Bluff Road (by two grain silos.) This road will go through two farmsteads and then become a gravel road. After another mile, look for a small parking spot near a small waterfall. Stroll along this road to enjoy views of a continuous steep cliff line. The best times to visit are during leaf-off in the winter and in the spring when wildflowers are in bloom. Along the way, there is an isolated grove of woods on the north side of the road. Directly across the road is a steep path which leads to petroglyphs on the cliff wall, 100 feet away.

Return to Route 3 and proceed south to Happy Hollow Road. Take this road to the top of Fountain Bluff. There are three overlooks affording views over the Mississippi River. Just park, walk along the road, and enjoy views over steep ravines on both sides of the road. Note: during late summer and fall, stands of giant ragweed may impede the view.

2 Oakwood Bottoms/Turkey Bayou

This area is accessed from Route 3. Turn east on Oakwood Bottoms Road/ Johns Spur Road (look for signs.) Pull into the picnic area. Park and look for a short trail to the boardwalk. Enjoy views of the wooded marsh which is flooded for waterfowl in October through February.

3 Larue Swamp/Pine Hills

Continue south on Route 3, cross the Big Muddy River bridge, and turn left onto the Big Muddy Levee Road. Follow it to the end, turn right, and park in the parking lot at Winter Pond. Enjoy walking along this flat gravel road (known as “Snake Road”) with the swamp on one side and a continuous steep cliff line and rock formations on the other side. This road is at least three miles long.

4 Trail of Tears State Forest

Continue south on Route 3 to the village of Wolf Lake, and turn left on the Trail of Tears blacktop (State Forest Road) at the Wolf Lake sign. Proceed about five miles and look for the picnic area on the right. Drive through the picnic area to the last parking area before the road begins to ascend. Park here and walk up the winding road, with views into steep ravines on both sides. You will also pass an old forest fire tower. Near the end, the road descends steeply. At this point, hikers can turn around, or arrange for a shuttle car to wait at the bottom of the hill. The views are best during leaf-off.

5 Cave Valley Trail

Take Route 127 south from Alto Pass and watch for the sign for Pomona. Turn west on Pomona Road and proceed to the village of Pomona. Continue north on Natural Bridge Road. Just after the road crosses the bridge over Cave Creek, look for a gated old road on the right. Park along the roadside.

This is an old railroad right of way which has been graveled. Enjoy views of the bluff line during leaf-off or spring flowers in April. There are great views of swamp and marsh. During spring migration, this is a good place to find warblers. The terrain is flat and the trail extends about 1.3 miles.

6 Forest Service Road 741

From Route 149 west in Murphysboro, turn south on 20th. Street (at the Huck’s gas station.) 20th. Street becomes Town Creek Road. Go over the bridge, around the bend, and up the hill. At the top of the hill, turn south (left) on Hickory Ridge Road. Follow Hickory Ridge Road to a four-way stop next to a water tower and a Grand Canyon (the sign is often vandalized, but it is the first blacktop to your right after the stop sign). About 5 miles from the 4-way stop, you will reach a bridge over Cedar Creek (about 1 mile north of Pomona Winery.)

20 Camp Ondessonk

This is a 100-acre Catholic youth camp which is open to the public when there are no campers in residence. (Phone 618-695-2489)

Take Route 45 to Ozark Road. Watch for the brown sign at the edge of Ozark, Illinois and turn east on Ondessonk Road. Check in at the office first, then drive to the parking area. Just east of the buildings, look for a level trail along pretty cliff lines.

21 Union County Refuge

From the intersection State Hwy 146 and 127, proceed east on 146 and turn left (south) on Refuge Road. Follow Refuge Road until you come to the Office/Visitor’s Center. Park in the parking lot or at one of several pull-off areas to observe large flocks of wintering ducks and geese from about November to February.

16 Trigg Tower

Take Route 147 to Simpson; look for Trigg Tower Road. Located north of Simpson on Trigg Tower Road/FS 424. The tower is at the parking lot.

The spiral wood steps to the top of the tower are fenced in; you can use the fencing and rails to assist the climb.

17 Lake Glendale Trail

From Harrisburg, take 145 south for 26.5 miles and watch for the Lake Glendale sign. This Forest Service trail is a relatively flat 3.5 mile loop which goes all around the lake. This offers constant views of the lake, wildlife, trees, and swamp vegetation. A car shuttle can be set up at a half-way point if desired. Avoid this trail during the rainy season because there are two creek inlet crossings.

18 Dixon Springs State Park

Located on Route 146. Watch for the signs and turn north into the park (not far from the Chocolate Factory). Walk on a paved road past many rock formations and huge boulders.

19 Garden of the Gods

From Harrisburg, take Route 145 south five miles and then turn south on Route 34. Follow 34 for five miles, then turn east on Karber's Ridge Road for 2.5 miles. Turn north on Garden of the Gods Road and proceed to the parking lot. (Note: look for directional signs posted along this route.)

The one mile, paved observation trail is gentle grade. Enjoy overlooks over the ridgetops and unusual rock formations. Upon leaving the Garden of the Gods parking area, watch for a wide spot off the road, just past the sign for a backpacker lot. Park here, cross the road, and climb approximately 75 feet to a natural bridge. Return to the county road, turn left, and drive 2-3 miles to the second right turn (watch for old signboard.) Drive a half mile and park by two big boulders. Cross the road and walk 50 feet to a formation with a natural bridge and a window arch.

Look to the left for a gravel lane and park at the entrance. This old gravel road-bed has gentle ascents and descents while affording views of swamp, wildflowers, and cliff lines. After 1.5 miles, it will end at a powerline crossing. Note: There are two entrances to FS Road 741 from Hickory Ridge Road.

7 Quetil Trail

Directions: Take Rt 127 south from Murphysboro to Alto Pass. Proceed thru town to a small parking lot. The entrance to the trail is well-marked, along with a historical display marker. This level-grade trail is a renovated old rail bed approximately 1/4 mile long. Most of it is graveled and there are 3 benches along the way. On the left we have a pretty, long cliff line averaging 40-50 feet. On the right, note all of the free-standing huge boulders. During leaf-off, note the adjacent valleys and ridge tops.

At one point there is a rock staircase in the cliffs to ascend to the top for the picnic area and further views over the horizon (you can also drive to that bluff top from downtown). Eventually, the cliff line will diminish and the trail continues thru the woods, ending at a private property gate.

This is an excellent easy trail.

8 Fern Clyffe State Park

Located off Route 37 south of Goreville and north of Vienna. Drive to the end of the park and picnic area. There is a level trail to an intermittent falls. You can also walk across a bridge to enjoy an easy trail around a cliff canyon.

9 Bork's Waterfall

One must take great caution when venturing to this spot. Regent Lane leads down a rutted gravel road that descends steeply to the creek bed. A 4 x 4 is highly recommended. You can drive over the top of the falls, but when water is flowing it is not advisable because the brink of the falls is just a few feet away. Directions: Take I-57 to the Goreville exit. Bork's Falls located on the detached section of Ferne Clyffe State Park. Go east to Regent Road and turn right. The road is made up of gravel and is very steep going down. At the bottom of the hill, a shallow creek goes over the road. Continue to a parking area at the top of the hill. Walk back down the hill, cross the creek, and look for

a narrow trail on the east side of this canyon. This flat rim trail affords views of the falls and into the canyon. Those who wish can climb down to the bottom to get a closer look at the falls. This is Illinois Department of Conservation property.

10 Cache River Wildlife Refuge: Heron Pond

Take US 45 south of Vienna to Belknap Road. Follow Belknap Road to the sign for Heron Pond. There is a boardwalk trail through the swamp (0.50 miles) and another easy trail to the State Champion Cherrybark oak tree (0.25 miles). Enjoy views of the swamp's tupelo and bald cypress trees as well as birds, reptiles, and amphibians. This is a good place to spot bright yellow prothonotary warblers.

11 Big Cypress Access

Follow Route 169 towards Karnak and turn north at the sign for Big Cypress Access. The trail leads to the State Champion bald cypress tree, 40 feet in circumference and probably 1000 years old.

12 Wildcat Bluff

From the junction of Routes 37 and 146, proceed east on Route 146 and turn south at the Wildcat Bluff sign on Oak Grove Road. Travel about six miles, following the directional signs. There is a parking lot at the end of Wildcat Bluff Road. Go to the stone wall overlook and turn left onto the observation trail. This 1 mile easy trail affords views over the wetlands and an observation point.

13 Cache River Wetland Center

Located on Route 37 just south of Whitehill, the Wetland Center has excellent exhibits, a brief film, and a deck and boardwalk for viewing the adjacent pond. There is a paved hiking trail and access to the Tunnel Hill bicycle trail.

14 Limekiln Trail

Take I-57 to the Shawnee College exit at Ullin. Go east approximately 4 miles on Shawnee College Road and turn left (north) at Cache Chapel Road.

Watch for the sign for Limekiln Springs (just before the bridge over the Cache River) and park in the parking lot..

Limekiln Trail is about three miles in length. This easy, flat grade affords views of wildflowers (best in May) and wet woods. For those who wish to complete the trail, a shuttle car can be placed at the parking lot on Long Reach Road.

For the first mile, we alternate prairie and floodplain forest. This wide grass trail is mowed well and small trees have been removed to make the trail. Tall grasses line the edges. Soon this becomes a rim trail overlooking the Cache River swamps. We arrive at a clearing point to view Tupelo and Cypress trees in the water. Note the thickets of Button bush across the river. Later, we arrive at another clear overlook with more extensive views of the same in the lake. Note the distant duck blind. Traveling on, there are private property signs - just don't venture off the trail. No fishing or hunting here. Continuing on, we cross two sets of 200-500 ft wood footbridges. Later, the trail becomes an old road thru the forest, and ends at the west trailhead parking. I clocked 1 hr and 20 minutes to complete the trail. The Cypress Creek Refuge office (618-634-2231) suggests that April and May are optimal for a visit as spring flowers/vegetation proliferate. With heavy rains, a couple spots on the trail could be flooded.

15 Sand Cave

Directions: From Exit 16 at Interstate 24 and Illinois 146, drive east on Illinois 146 for less than a mile to Illinois 147. Turn left onto Illinois 147, and drive 12.7 miles to Forest Road (FR) 423. Turn left onto Forest Road 423, and drive 3.8 miles to an unmarked road just before the Cedar Grove Church. Turn left and drive 0.2 miles. No parking area is here. You are able to park along the left branch of the road.

Description: Reputedly the largest sandstone cave in North America, Sand Cave near Eddyville is definitely worth visiting. After viewing the cave continue on past the cave along the massive rock face cliffs.

The trail is about 1 mile on a gentle grade. The cave is very deep, wide, and tall; no flashlight is needed.