



*Our favorite places are quick references for users of the SNF to find recreational areas, sites, activities that are meant just for you. FoSNF members visit their favorite places in the forest and introduce you to them. Find the best places to hike, canoe, bike, ride, hunt, camp, and picnic. Whatever your favorite activity is we can tell you all about the place.*

Common Name:

## Inspiration Point

Off Highway 3 in Union County



Figure 1: View from Inspiration Point

### Presented by:

Chris Long - FoSNF Board Member

### Possible Activities:

- Day hiking
- Bird watching
- Views and Vistas
- Picnicking

### Potential Hazards:

- Falls

### Driving directions:

From Anna/Jonesboro take highway 146 west for approximately 8 miles until it ends at Highway 3. Turn right (North) and travel 8.8 miles to County Road 1525 N, Muddy Levee Rd. Caution: Do not cross the Big Muddy River and turn on Big Muddy Levee Rd.

From Murphysboro take highway 149 west for approximately 7 miles until it ends at Highway 3. Turn left (South) and travel 13.7 miles to County Road 1525 N, Muddy Levee Rd. Caution: You will cross the Big Muddy River and do not turn on Big Muddy Levee Rd.

From Muddy Levee Road travel east for 2.7 miles until it T's into Forest Road 345, Laure Road. The rock face that makes Inspiration Point will be in front of you. Turn left (North) at the T and follow Larue Road for .3 miles to Forest Road 236, Pine Hills Road, and turn right.

There are 2 trail heads for Inspiration Point, the first you will see immediately on your right after you turn onto Pine Hills Road. It is called McCann Springs Picnic Area and the trail is on the south side of the parking lot. From here you have approximately a ½ mile hike to Inspiration Point. The second trail head is .7 miles farther up Pine Hills Rd. The road will switch back to the right and then to the left before you see the parking lot for the Upper Trail on the right. The trail is on the south side of this parking lot as well. From here you have about a ¼ mile hike to Inspiration Point.



Figure 2: McCann Springs Trailhead

### Inspiration Point

Inspiration Point overlooks the flood plain of the Big Muddy River, and in the distance, the Mississippi River. The site offers stunning views of the floodplain and the Midwestern sky. It is a place that can be enjoyed with friends but at the same time offers a solitude and a tranquility that is hard to match, even at the other scenic overlooks in the Shawnee. This is because at Inspiration Point the flat floodplain beneath it exaggerates the height of the vertical rock cliff that you will be standing on. Birds will soar beneath you and very few sounds will reach you here.



Figure 3: Bottomland forest mixed with bottomland agriculture

With Muddy Levee Rd splitting your view in perfect equals, you will see a mix of agriculture and forest to the north and a unique marsh with stunted cedars to the south. The trail at Inspiration Point is not a loop trail, rather there are 2 trailheads, one at the bottom of the hill and one at the top. The trail is ¾ of a mile long.

The hike from McCann Springs is longer and more difficult as it makes its way to the top of Inspiration Point. But the avid hiker will not be disappointed, the hill is challenging and the forest is beautiful. From the top trail head Inspiration Point is a short walk, slightly uphill. It is a much easier hike and puts you at the cliff in a few minutes.

We hope you enjoy this unique spot in the Shawnee National Forest and encourage you to look around the area. La Rue Pine Hills offers camping and backpacking, the Big Muddy River offers boat launches and fishing, and Oakwood Bottoms is to the north with picnicking, fishing, and hiking all surrounded by a bottomland hardwood forest.

More Photos



Figure 4: The marsh



Figure 5: Inspiration Point



Figure 6: Turn to Pine Hills Rd