

## Please observe the following:

- Hike/bike only on designated trails to prevent erosion.
- Keep horses and motorized vehicles off trails.
- Take plenty of water on especially warm days.
- Leave wildlife and plants undisturbed for the enjoyment of others and to allow the plants to reseed.
- Pets must be leashed and under control at all times.
- While hiking/biking the trail, pick up any litter you see and do a valuable service in keeping the trails clean.
- Glass containers are not allowed on any trails.



**White Oak Lake State Park**  
**563 Hwy. 387**  
**Bluff City, AR 71722**  
**(870)685-2748**  
**(870)685-2132**  
**whiteoak@arkansas.com**  
**www.ArkansasStateParks.com**



# Fern Hollow Trail Guide



## Where is the Fern Hollow Trail?

Fern Hollow Trail is a multi-use trail for mountain bikes and hiking. It starts at the Beech Ridge trail head in the tent camp area. Allow 4 to 5 hours for hiking and 2 to 3 hours for biking to complete the 9.8-mile loop. Approximately half-way through you will find a cut-off back to the trail head. At the half-way cut-off you will also find a primitive camp area. If you plan to camp over night be sure to register at the park visitor center.

The trail gets its name from the many resurrection ferns that grow like ivy on the trunk of trees or on stumps. In dry weather the fern curls up and appears dead. However, with the return of moisture it promptly uncurls and becomes green again. White blazes with a red center mark the route. The Fern Hollow Trail meanders through some of Arkansas's most unique terrain where you'll see the unusual plant life of the sand hills, including fascinating members of our woody flora. The Arkansas Oak is another rare member of the sand hill plant community. The tree grows in sandy and loamy soils around the head of small creeks and is usually found under other hardwoods.

## Climate

The climate of the park and the trail is mild. The average temperature is about 64 degrees, and the yearly average precipitation is 50 inches. The highest rainfall month is April and the lowest is August. The yearly average snowfall is 2 inches. Since records have been kept, the highest amount of snowfall occurred in 1999 at 16 inches. The greatest amount of rain fell in July of 1971 when 13.3 inches of rain fell in one day.

Most days are mild, even in winter, allowing for a variety of outdoor recreation at any time of the year. However, you should always check the weather conditions before venturing onto the Fern Hollow Trail.

## Soils

Within the Fern Hollow Trail there are several types of soil. Most of the soils consist of 90% sand and contain only 5% organic matter. The average Ph is 5.5, which means the soil is very acidic. Only certain plants and trees can grow in this type of soil.

## Trees

The combination of climate and soils create a rich forest and a remarkable group of plants known as the Sand Hill Plant Community. Along the Fern Hollow Trail are thousands of trees, including many old, tall pines. The most common is the loblolly pine. Loblolly reach a height of 130 feet and a diameter of 50 inches or more. They can attain an age of 300 years under favorable circumstances. The cones are three to six inches long. The needles are five to nine inches long and grow three in a cluster. These pines can live in very wet areas, hence the name "Loblolly."

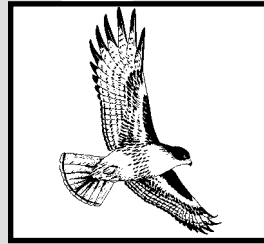


Loblolly pine

Look closely and you will see a variety of trees including sweet gum, elm, muscle wood, black gum, maple, American holly, water oak, white oak, and beech.

## Wildlife

Many birds and mammals are found in the park and on the Fern Hollow Trail. Along the trail, do not be surprised if you startle a red-tailed hawk, wild turkey, black vulture, or mourning dove. As you walk or ride near the lake, watch for great blue herons, green herons, and great egrets. In winter look in the sky and in larger trees along the lake for bald eagles. If you travel the trail around dusk, you will probably hear a great horned owl or maybe a screech owl.



Red-tailed hawk

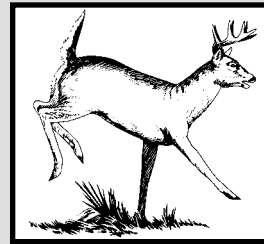


Pileated woodpecker

A great number of woodpeckers also live near the trail. The pileated woodpecker is the largest woodpecker in North America, except for the rediscovered ivory-billed woodpecker of eastern Arkansas. The redheaded woodpecker is very striking with its bright red head and black and white body. Most of these birds are elusive and avoid contact with people. You will have better luck if you walk or ride quietly and watch for movement a good distance ahead of you. Binoculars will help.



Gray squirrel



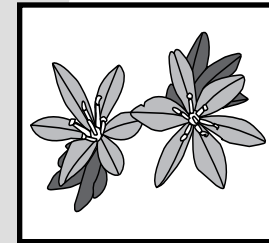
White-tailed deer

The most common mammal found here is the gray squirrel, and the eastern cottontail rabbit is often seen hopping across the trail. If hiking or biking early in the morning, it is likely that you will quietly see a white-tailed deer. Other common animals include armadillo, opossum, and raccoon.

## Wildflowers

In spring, summer, and fall there are a beautiful variety of wildflowers along the Fern Hollow Trail. Some of the more common are the false garlic, southern twayblade, pokeweed, cottonweed, tall larkspur, and Indian strawberry. Some of the most rare and interesting plants are the beechdrops. All plants and animals are protected within White Oak Lake State Park.

The wildflower season begins in late February and continues through fall as various flowers reach their peak blooming time. March and April are particularly good months for combining camping, wildflowers, and the spring bird migration.

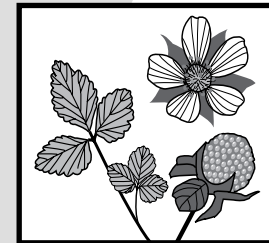


False garlic

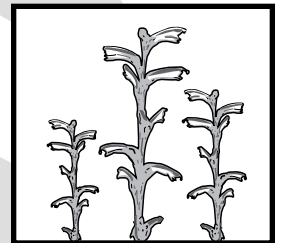


Pokeweed

Contact the visitor center for more information concerning peak dates for wildflower viewing.



Indian strawberry



Beechdrop

## Visitor Center

The visitor center gift shop has hats, walking staffs, maps, and trail guides along with food and drinks. You will also enjoy our exhibit area and interactive CD-ROM program where you can see many of the unusual plants that grow on the Fern Hollow Trail.

## Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in working on trail maintenance, ask the visitor center staff about our volunteer program. We'd love to have you join us.