

Trail Map

National Natural Landmark

Dismals Canyon



Entrance to Canyon

Rainbow Falls

Swinging Bridge

Burr's Hideout

Pulpit Rock

Witch's Cavern

Phantom Falls

Grotto

Fat Man's Misery

Kitchen /
Stove Pipe /
Indian Head Rock

Foot
Bridge

Dance Hall

Temple Cave

Secret Falls

Stepping
Stones

Fishing Hole

Dismals
Branch

Weeping Bluff

Foot
Bridge

Tree Bridge
(end of trail)

Champion
Tree

- Trails
- Water
- Canyon Floor
- USGS Contour Lines

Map By: Ronnie Harris

**LEAVE NOTHING...
TAKE NOTHING...**

PLEASE STAY ON TRAIL
TO AVOID DAMAGING VEGETATION

www.dismalscanyon.com

Trail Map Points of Interest (GPS coordinates included)

Rainbow Falls - these falls were the source of power for a great mill destroyed by a flood sometime in the 1950s. You can see the holes bored in the rock, which were used to support the wheel. As you continue your hike you will see the millstone and timbers scattered along the canyon floor. The pool at the top was used to baptize members of the local churches back in the early 1800's. If the sun is shining on the falls move around until you see a rainbow - sometimes there are two - but there is always one if the sun is shining on the falls. 34° 19' 30.07" N, 88° 13' 4.46" W

Burr's Hideout - It was originally thought that Arron Burr hid here after shooting Alexander Hamilton, but upon further investigation it became apparent that Rube Burrows, an 1800's Alabama outlaw, used this area as a hideout. The sound of the names, accompanied by the Southern dialect, resulted in the mistaken identity of whose hideout it was. 34° 19' 29.44" N, 88° 13' 5.06" W

Phantom Falls - about 10' before you get on the walkway leading into the Grotto walk up on the rocks to your left and face North toward Rainbow Falls. Do you hear the waterfall behind you? There is no waterfall behind you but the rock picks up the sound of the actual falls 250' downstream and throws the echo down to this spot which is only 10' around. 34° 19' 24.79" N, 88° 13' 4.52" W

Grotto - 10,000 years ago a massive earthquake tumbled these house-size boulders together to form the natural bridges you see above and this cool green grotto. In 1925 the Girl Scouts built the small pool to your right for drinking water. 34° 19' 29.49" N, 88° 13' 4.41" W

Pulpit Rock - follow the trail through the rocks on your right. Don't be afraid - you'll see the light at the end as soon as you enter this fissure. During the massive earthquake the rocks were sheared off the 60' canyon walls and shoved out just enough to make this winding natural rock stairway. At the top is Pulpit Rock from which you will have a panoramic view of the canyon. Go back down the stairway, turn right and continue following the main trail. 34° 19' 29.66" N, 88° 13' 3.98" W

Kitchen - before the Chickasaws ceded Dismals Canyon to the U.S. in 1818 this covered area was used for cooking and tribal rituals. The Girl Scouts built the fireplace in 1925. 34° 19' 27.55" N, 88° 13' 4.8" W

Stove Pipe - back up about 10' from the fireplace and look up to your left, move around until you see light streaming through a small hole up high on the wall. This is a natural 30' long chimney. Smoke from fires built under these rocks was drawn up through this hole. Continue following the trail curving to your right.

Indian Head Rock - after you have walked about 15' from the Kitchen look back at the rock up on your left. Do you see the profile of an Indian Warrior facing East? See his "Mohawk" haircut and his majestic nose. Move around - but beware only a Kindred Spirit can see him. 34° 19' 29.32" N, 88° 13' 3.79" W

Temple Cave - this bluff shelter about 10,000 years ago was home to a tribe of Paleo Indians - first man known to inhabit this part of the U.S. This shelter has never been excavated but samples of Paleo spear points have been found in different areas of the Canyon. Fires were built in front of the small flat rock at the back to reflect heat out into the cave. The large rock in front was used for grinding corn. See the depression. 34° 19' 24.29" N, 88° 13' 4.76" W

Fishing Hole - throw some fish food in and then watch closely. The area is teeming with fish - Bass, Bream, Perch, Trout and bottom feeders called "Hog Suckers". The constant 50 degree temperature of the water limits their size but not their quantity. 34° 18' 24.29" N, 88° 13' 4.76" W

Champion Tree - this Eastern/Canadian Hemlock is the first Champion Tree in Franklin County. There were 2 Champion Trees until an ice storm destroyed 1 of them. The tree is 138' tall, 8'9" around and has a crown spread of 50'. It is the largest of its species in Alabama, and one of the largest in the world. 34° 19' 14.46" N, 88° 13' 5.04" W

Weeping Bluff - look up at the bluff on your right. Do you see the face of an Indian Maiden? The water that seeps from this bluff is said to be tears shed by the Canyon for the loss of its only true friends - the Chickasaw Indians. In 1838 U.S. Troops rounded up the Chickasaw and held them under guard in this Canyon for 2 weeks before herding them like cattle to Muscle Shoals where they began the Trail of Tears. 90% of the Chickasaw Nation perished on the Trail of Tears. 34° 19' 9.91" N, 88° 13' 5.72" W

Secret Falls - the water creating these falls flows from an underground mountain stream that opens onto the earth's surface about 3/4 of a mile upstream. After you've rested, double back on the main trail until you come to some stepping stones that cross the creek. Use the stepping stones to cross the creek and then follow the trail on your right, which will lead you back to the Kitchen. At the Kitchen take the trail to the right and cross the creek using the stepping stones. You are now in the Dance Hall. 34° 19' 24.88" N, 88° 13' 7.02" W

Dance Hall - this well camouflaged area-protected from the sun and the elements-was used by the Chickasaw Indians for secret rituals. It is the only place where the rock has been worn smooth by centuries of human use. Backtrack re-crossing the creek and follow the trail to the right (do not go back through the Kitchen). Cross the wooden bridge and follow the trail on the right. This will take you to Fat Man's Misery. 34° 19' 26.99" N, 88° 13' 5.28" W

Fat Man's Misery - look up to your right. The narrow opening (16" wide) between the two big boulders was the original entrance to the Canyon floor. Warning: No one is permitted to climb through this opening. Backtrack to the bridge. Now follow the trail straight-ahead (do not re-cross the bridge) between the rocks if you want to go to the Witch's Cavern. Caution: if you are unable to climb over rocks and roots do not attempt this trail, re-cross the bridge and exit the canyon floor by following the trail you came in on. 34° 19' 28.36" N, 88° 13' 5.56" W

Witches Cavern - a strange and beautiful labyrinth of moss and fern covered boulders where the largest colony of Dismalites resides. 34° 19' 28.7" N, 88° 13' 5.14" W



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Rules & Policies

- The swimming pool and the Canyon Floor are closed to all guests at sunset.
- NO Alcoholic Beverages. NO Littering. No Glass Containers.
- Picnicking permitted only on deck of Country Store.
- We do not furnish wood for camping. Should there be any wood cut, you may use it. Please DO NOT bring your own firewood. This is to protect our forest from invasive disease & insects.
- NO refunds on night tours, unless the tour is cancelled by Dismals Canyon.
- Park in designated parking spaces only. DO NOT drive or park on the grass.
- Hikers must stay on designated trails.
- NO fishing
- NO metal detectors.
- NO rappelling anywhere on Dismals Canyon property.
- NO firearms, fireworks, BB gun, air-guns, bows/arrows, explosives or any type of projectile firing device.
- NO Camping, Picnicking, or Fire Building except in designated areas. Fires in fire rings & grills only. Fires must be attended at all times and must be completely extinguished after use.
- If a No Fire Alert has been issued, anyone building a fire will be reported to the Forestry Service and immediately evicted from Dismals Canyon with forfeiture of all fees.
- Only dead wood on the ground may be collected for firewood. NO cutting of trees. NO chainsaws.
- DO NOT climb, walk or go near the dam.
- DO NOT remove, destroy or disturb any plants, vegetation, animals, bugs, wildlife of any nature, rocks or rock formations. ANY DAMAGE will be punished to the fullest extent allowed by Law.
- DO NOT remove, destroy or disturb bridges, handrails, fences, or erosion control walls.
- Children under 16 must be attended by an adult at all times.
- Swim at your own risk. No Lifeguard provided. All children must be supervised by an adult.
- All pets must be on a leash.
- NO hiking or swimming after sundown.
- If you must relieve yourself in the woods-deposit waste in a hole at least 6 inches deep and cover it up.
- DO NOT put cigarette/cigar butts, trash, etc. in flowerpots or flowerbeds.
- DO NOT walk or play in flowerbeds or flowerpots.
- NO off-road vehicles are allowed-motorcycles, motorized bikes, 3/4-wheelers, etc.

Violation of any rule will result in immediate Eviction and Forfeiture of all fees/deposits!

Dismals Canyon is not responsible for accidents/injury/loss of money/valuables!

LEAVE NOTHING . . TAKE NOTHING . .

"Dismals Canyon" is a National Natural Landmark registered with the U.S. Department of the Interior.

\$1000.00 FINE FOR REMOVAL OR DEFACEMENT OF ROCKS, PLANTS OR ANIMALS. PLEASE STAY ON TRAIL TO AVOID DAMAGING VEGETATION