

Viles Branch Trail

Region

Ouachita Mountains (Ouachita National Forest)

Trail Manager

District Ranger; Caddo Ranger District; 101 Smokey Bear Lane; Glenwood, AR 71943; (870) 356-4186

Location

There are two trailheads. The east trailhead is three miles north of Langley off State Highway 369 at Forest Road 2106. The west trailhead is 1/4 mile from the intersection of Forest Roads 38 and 502, which is 1/2 mile south of Shady Lake Recreation Area.

TOTAL LENGTH OF TRAIL

26 miles; time, 6–10 hours

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Horseback—difficult; hiking—easy to most difficult.

DESCRIPTION

The Viles Branch Trail consists of a 19.4-mile loop with a 3.3-mile leg. Trail surface is gravel and dirt. Travel time requires 6 to 10 hours on horseback and two days for hiking. Part of the route follows Forest Roads 38 and 106, while the remainder travels an old road which is no longer open to motor vehicles. The trail is marked with yellow rectangles.

This trail offers views of the Winding Stairs area of the Little Missouri River, which has been designated a Scenic River by the Natural Heritage Commission. Winding Stairs is known for its unique geological formations and outstanding water features.



The trail's most popular segment is the one from Winding Stairs to Shady Lake. A four-mile section connecting the Little Missouri Trail and the Athens-Big Fork Trail is popular with hikers.

SITE AMENITIES

Albert Pike Recreation Area offers swimming and fishing; Little Missouri Falls offers picnicking, fishing and a trail to a waterfall overlook.

CAMPING

Camping is available at Albert Pike Recreation Area.

LODGING

Available in Mena and at Queen Wilhelmina State Park

USGS QUADRANGLE MAPS

Umpire, Nichols Mountain, Big Fork, Athens, and Langley.

SPECIAL NOTE

- Be alert for oncoming traffic on Forest Roads 38 and 106.
- Use caution when crossing river and streams during high water.
- Treat water from springs, river and streams before drinking.

VILES BRANCH TRAIL

