

For detailed maps of complete trail sections and specific information concerning the Ozark Trail, you may contact:



**Ozark Trail Association**  
573-436-0540  
ozarktrail.com



**Missouri Department of Conservation**  
573-751-4115  
mdc.mo.gov



**National Recreation Trails**  
530-605-4395  
americantrails.com



**U.S. Forest Service**  
An Agency of the United States  
Department of Agriculture  
Mark Twain National Forest  
573-364-4621  
fs.usda.gov/mtnf



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
573-222-8562  
usace.army.mil



**National Park Service**  
Ozark National Scenic Riverways  
573-323-4236  
nps.gov/ozar



**L-A-D Foundation**  
Since 1962  
314-621-0230  
ladfoundation.org



**Missouri State Parks**  
A Division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
800-334-6946  
mostateparks.com



# THE OZARK TRAIL



## MISSOURI'S RUGGED BACKYARD

### TAKING YOU PLACES

The Ozark Trail, a National Recreation Trail, is one of Missouri's hidden treasures. Extending from near Onondaga Cave State Park in Crawford County toward Arkansas, the OT is 430-plus miles long with 230 miles of connected thru-trail. You can stand on Taum Sauk Mountain, Missouri's highest point, visit Mina Sauk Falls, the state's tallest wet-weather waterfall, and take in the dramatic landscape of Missouri's Ozarks. You can watch beavers build lodges, see Missouri's only wild horse herd, hear an elk bugle, travel through hardwood forests and near bluffs, ford crystal-clear streams, and pause on rocky balds with impressive views. These places are home to deer, turkeys, bobcats, bears and bald eagles. It's all here in Missouri's rugged backyard—the Ozark Trail.

For most of its length, the trail is multi-use for hiking, backpacking, horseback riding and mountain biking. Motorized vehicles are prohibited on the entire trail and some land stewards restrict sections to foot-only traffic, as noted on the section descriptions. Most of the Ozark Trail is located on U.S. Forest Service land in the Mark Twain National Forest, some portions are on state lands and others cross private property.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME

The trail consists of 14 sections of various lengths. Each is named for natural features, like the Courtois ("coat-away,") Creek and Current River or a historical element, like the Karkaghne, a ferocious mythical beast similar to Bigfoot.

### SHOW ME HOW

You can take a trip on Missouri's Ozark Trail for a few hours, a day, or spend weeks exploring. The Ozark Trail is an easy day trip from St. Louis (about 90 minutes), around 100 miles from Springfield and a great weekend getaway from Kansas City (four hours). It's close to many smaller towns in southeast Missouri, including Cuba, Eminence, Ironton and Van Buren.



## FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS

### How can I plan a trip and get out on the Ozark Trail?

The best resource for planning a trip is the Ozark Trail Association website: [ozarktrail.com](http://ozarktrail.com). The Ozark Trail Association is a nonprofit volunteer organization that supports and helps manage the trail in coordination with land stewards. In addition to free downloadable trail maps and maps for purchase, the website has information on trail conditions, closing announcements, thru-hiking resources, photos and more.

### OZARK TRAIL TRIP PLANNER

Try the Trip Planner, an online interactive tool that lets you create a trail trip based on hiking, horseback riding or mountain biking and then choose total miles and a starting trailhead with a difficulty rating. You get a customized itinerary including trailheads, highlights, parking and camping options, water sources and other information. You can print a detailed topographical map of your trail trip with GPS waypoints to take along. Go to [ozarktrail.com](http://ozarktrail.com) and click on Trip Planner.

SCAN HERE TO PLAN YOUR ADVENTURE



[www.ozarktrail.com/planner](http://www.ozarktrail.com/planner)

The OTA's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/pages/Ozark-Trail-Association](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ozark-Trail-Association)) and Instagram ([www.instagram.com/ozark\\_trail](http://www.instagram.com/ozark_trail)) are also great sources for what's new and to get in touch with others who can help you.

### Where can I find Ozark Trail maps?

On the OTA website, [ozarktrail.com](http://ozarktrail.com), you can find detailed topographical maps with features, notes and water sources, as well as overview maps with key information, all available for free download.

High-quality Ozark Trail section maps are available for purchase; the maps are printed on water- and tear-resistant paper and folded to a pocket-ready size of 7 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches. Maps include topography, elevation profile, trailheads and directions, water sources, safety information and emergency contacts, weather tips and more. The maps also feature photos and information about historical and natural points of interest.

### How is the Ozark Trail marked?

Since the trail traverses land owned by a variety of stewards and organizations, it may be marked with various signs or blazes. The OT is predominantly marked by the white and green

OT assurance markers. There may be legacy markers, such as silver diamonds or white and brown signs with the hiker symbol, in place.

Any of these signs posted at an angle mark a curve in the trail in the direction of the marker's angle. Double markers indicate a switchback.

### How was the Ozark Trail established?

The idea for the Ozark Trail was developed in the late 1970s when a group of public land managers, trail users and private landowners met to discuss the concept of a long-distance trail that would traverse the Missouri Ozarks. A part of this effort was to develop a plan to extend the trail north to the St. Louis area and south to the Arkansas border where it could connect with the Ozark Highlands Trail to form more than 700 miles of contiguous thru-trail.

This initial effort led to the establishment of the Ozark Trail Council, which included the U.S. Forest Service, Missouri State Parks, Missouri Department of Conservation, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other land management agencies. Missouri State Parks served as the chair of the Ozark Trail Council and created an Ozark Trail coordinator position to work with agencies to develop the trail. The initial effort focused on creating the trail on public lands, particularly on state-owned and federal-owned lands.



By the end of 2016, the Ozark Trail had been developed on most of the available public land. The result was more than 400 miles of trail open to the public. However, gaps on private property need to be developed to make it a totally thru-trail.

### When was the Ozark Trail Association established?

The Ozark Trail Association was created in 2002 as an active volunteer organization to help build and maintain the Ozark Trail. The OTA was co-founded by John Roth, an avid trail volunteer who worked with others to help develop the association and its mission, "to develop, maintain, preserve, promote and protect the rugged natural beauty of the Ozark Trail." Since its creation, the OTA has organized numerous volunteer trail building and maintenance events and created an Adopt-A-Trail program that provides maintenance for more than 90% of the trail.

The OTA has taken on the role as chair of the Ozark Trail Council and is leading the effort to develop and construct new sections of the trail.

### What is the purpose of the Ozark Trail Council now?

The Ozark Trail Council continues to promote and guide the direction of the Ozark Trail and establishes guidelines for building, marking and mapping it. With the OTA serving as its chair, the council consists of representatives from US Forest Service - Mark Twain National Forest, NPS Ozark National Scenic Riverways, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri State Parks, LAD Foundation's Pioneer

Forest, Sierra Club, Backcountry Horsemen of Missouri along with private landowners.

### How can I help the Ozark Trail grow and develop?

There are multiple ways you can help the OTA fulfill the mission to develop, maintain, preserve, promote and protect the rugged natural beauty of the Ozark Trail. The OTA is always looking for new volunteers to help build or maintain the trail, or to adopt a section of trail to keep it trimmed and clear. To learn more about these opportunities, visit [ozarktrail.com](http://ozarktrail.com) and click on the Volunteer link.



## BE TRAIL WISE

Any time you plan a trip outdoors to a remote area, safety is the most important issue to consider. A safe, well-planned and fun trip with the right equipment, clothing and supplies should always be your goal.

### NATURAL HAZARDS

The Ozark Trail traverses rugged lands that are subject to sudden changes in weather and flash flooding. Use caution when crossing streams and other natural trail obstacles. Do not attempt to cross streams in high water.

Most snakes you meet on the trail are harmless and all are protected by the Missouri Wildlife Code. The best practice is to avoid them and the places they frequent, such as brush, rock piles and sunny rock ledges. Learn to identify irritating plants, such as poison ivy and avoid contact if possible.

To minimize bites from chiggers, ticks and other insects, wear appropriate protective clothing and use insect repellent on your skin. Spray clothing, bedding and shelter for additional protection. Follow manufacturer's application instructions when applying repellents.

### TRIP PLANNING

**PLAN AHEAD:** When you take a trail trip, leave an itinerary with someone and make sure it includes your planned route and return time, or use an online resource such as [trailnote.com](http://trailnote.com).

**INFORMATION:** Know the name of the county and the municipalities nearby, as well as the U.S. Forest Service district name or state park, if applicable, for your trip. With this information, you can contact the nearest source of help in case of an emergency.

**RESTRICTIONS:** Be aware of and follow any restrictions in the area, including camping, fire use, foot-only travel, etc.

**IMPACT:** Use "Leave No Trace" practices developed by the Center for Outdoor Ethics: see [LNT.org](http://LNT.org)

**WEATHER:** Check the weather forecast and trail conditions before you leave.

**COMFORT:** Dress in layers and consider fabrics designed to keep the active outdoors person dry and comfortable. Long pants are recommended for protection from insects. Take a rain jacket, since weather can change quickly.

**FOOTWEAR:** Wear a pair of hiking shoes or boots you know are comfortable and avoid wearing new shoes before breaking them in adequately. Carry moleskin and a blister care kit.

**FOOD AND WATER:** Always take water and a snack. For longer outings, plan your menu before hitting the trail. Use a water purifier to treat any water you collect to use for drinking or cooking.

## 12 ESSENTIALS FOR THE OZARK TRAIL

No matter the weather or the length of your trip, ALWAYS take along:

- 1 Water
- 2 Food
- 3 Map
- 4 Compass
- 5 Rain jacket
- 6 Extra clothing
- 7 First aid kit
- 8 Matches & other fire starter
- 9 Flashlight and fresh batteries
- 10 Tent or shelter
- 11 Emergency blanket
- 12 Emergency whistle

**NOTE:** Cellular service is not available in all areas of the trail. Try higher ground or a clear area for best signal strength.

## COURTOIS SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 48 miles  
**Land Stewards:** U.S. Forest Service, Missouri Department of Conservation  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use  
**Note:** Only foot traffic is allowed within Huzzah CA.

The Courtois Section of the Ozark Trail has perhaps more options than any other part of the trail. You can enjoy a short walk along the Courtois Creek, a vigorous mountain biking challenge on the Berryman Loop, a sunset horseback ride to the Huzzah Creek bluffs, a long backpacking trip or even a hike-and-float adventure that combines a 12.5 mile hike with a canoe trip back to your car.



## TRACE CREEK SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 26 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use

This area of the Ozark Trail lies southwest of Potosi in an area steeped with history and full of hidden delights. It crosses moss-lined streams, passes a nice spring, and has good grades through hardwood forests with occasional pines.

The area around the Hazel Creek trailhead was a thriving mining community in the 1800s and once home to 1,000 people. Cherokees passed through here in 1837 on the Trail of Tears. The south end of this area of the trail has a connector to the 12-mile Council Bluff Lake loop trail.



## TAUM SAUK SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 35 miles  
**Land Stewards:** U.S. Forest Service, Missouri State Parks, Missouri Department of Conservation  
**Trail Use:** Hiking

**Note:** Foot-traffic only except northernmost two miles in Bell Mountain Wilderness. No fire allowed on state park land including trail between Taum Sauk Mountain and Johnson's Shut-Ins state parks. No camping on glades.

The portion of the Ozark Trail between Taum Sauk Mountain and Johnson's Shut-Ins state parks is considered one of the best trails in Missouri. It combines the state's highest point, its tallest waterfall, oldest exposed rock and best swimming hole.

The section lends itself to two different hikes of approximately the same distance: from Highway A to the Shut-Ins (15 miles) and from the Shut-Ins to Taum Sauk Mountain (12.5 miles). Due to elevation changes and rough terrain, this trail will slow your average travel speed.

## MIDDLE FORK-JOHN ROTH MEMORIAL SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 24 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use

This section lies at the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Black River. This deceptively rugged country includes hollows, creeks, springs and small waterfalls. The trail runs through dense hardwoods and stands of pine. Winter brings out the true topography while spring and summer showcase flamboyant color and growth. Always thinly populated, this section of the trail retains a remote feel in its Ozark "hollers and cricks."

John Roth co-founded the Ozark Trail Association in 2002 and inspired thousands of volunteers to build and maintain the Ozark Trail. Through their combined efforts, the Middle Fork section was completed in 2005, closing a longstanding gap, creating 230 miles of thru trail. After Roth's death in 2009, the section was renamed in his honor.

## KARKAGHNE SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 29 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use

The Karkaghne Section through the Mark Twain National Forest includes scenic bluffs, reliable water sources and multiple stream crossings. This section is one of the most popular for horseback riding. A network of private trails at Brushy Creek Lodge increases the options for riders. Scenic valleys and a refreshing swimming hole on the Black River add to the Karkaghne's appeal for hikers as well. Trail users should not miss Grasshopper Hollow, the largest fen complex in non-glaciated North America and home to diverse species of plants.

## UPPER CURRENT SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 29 miles  
**Land Steward:** Missouri State Parks, National Park Service, L-A-D Foundation  
**Trail Use:** Hiking

**Note:** Hammocks not allowed in NPS campgrounds

The Current River Valley is among Missouri's most beautiful and inspiring landscapes. This trail takes users through dark hollows and along towering bluffs, beneath richly diverse hardwood and pine forests, across open glades offering sweeping vistas of the river valley below, and passing by waterfalls and clear, cold spring-fed streams. These landscape attributes define the exceptional region, and this trail will provide intimate access to their beauties and mysteries.

# OZARK TRAIL SECTIONS MAP



## BLAIR CREEK SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 27 miles  
**Land Stewards:** U.S. Forest Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, L-A-D Foundation  
**Trail Use:** Hiking  
**Note:** Northern nine miles: Multi-use to USFS boundary. South of Midridge: Foot traffic only through Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry

The Blair Creek section passes through the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry on its way to the Current River at Owls Bend. The northern 6 miles of trail follow a major ridge line that divides Big Creek and Blair Creek. It then leaves the ridge and enters the watershed of Blair Creek. The trail follows Blair Creek southward as the creek carves a long, deepening valley in its descent to the Current River. Old homesites, springs and reverting fields clad with wildflowers dot Blair Creek Valley. The trail slowly makes its way to the bluffs high above the Current River and to the most outstanding views of the river along the entire trail.

## CURRENT RIVER SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 30 miles  
**Land Stewards:** U.S. Forest Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, National Park Service  
**Trail Use:** Hiking  
**Note:** No camping within Peck Ranch Wildlife Refuge boundary. Overnight parking at Rocky Falls prohibited.

No trail encompasses the heart, soul and history of the Ozarks like the Current River Section of the Ozark Trail. Running from Owls Bend to Highway 60 just west of Van Buren, this 30-mile trail is a magnificent tour of springs, streams, glades, waterfalls and Missouri heritage.

Among the springs that dot this area is deep-aqua Blue Spring just south of Owls Bend. Rocky Creek Conservation Area offers multiple waterfalls and shut-ins. The Peck Ranch Conservation Area is home to elk, reintroduced in 2011 after being gone since the 1860s. A herd of wild horses roam the area and are occasionally visible from the trail.

## BETWEEN THE RIVERS SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 29 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use

The Between the Rivers Section wanders among various tributaries of the Current River with plenty of valleys and drainages to explore. It's magnificent in the fall as the colors of white and scarlet oak contrast with the green of the pines. No trip on this part of the trail is complete without a visit to Big Spring, North America's largest, which can be accessed by a five-mile spur trail. The Devils Run area offers a stream locally renowned for fishing largemouth bass and trout along with a deep pool and lichen-covered rock formations.

## ELEVEN POINT SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 30 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use

This section winds along rugged ridges and drainages with many changes in elevation and terrain through Mark Twain National Forest. As it follows the Eleven Point National Wild and Scenic River, there are many great bluff views with chances to see eagles during the winter months. This area is fantastic in fall with oak, hickory, maple, sassafras, persimmon and black gum trees. Stop at McCormack Lake to camp or visit the world's tenth biggest spring, Greer Spring, to witness its 220 million gallon daily output below dolomite cliffs. The Eleven Point Section is a natural and historical slice of all Missouri's Ozarks has to offer.

## NORTH FORK SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 27 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use  
**Note:** In Devils Backbone Wilderness: no mechanized use; limit parties to 10 persons

The North Fork Section may be unknown to many but it has a lot to offer: promontories with great views, quiet hollows and the best whitewater in Missouri on the North Fork River. This section is also a gateway to other scenic areas including the Devils Backbone Wilderness, Noblett Lake Recreational Area and the Blue Buck Knob Scenic Byway. The Ridge Runner Trail is a connector and runs concurrently with the North Fork Section for approximately 7.25 miles. Visit the Missouri Children's Forest, dedicated by the U.S. Forest Service to protect old growth forests. The North Fork Section of the Ozark Trail is remote but full of hidden treasures.

## VICTORY SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 19 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use

Located within Mark Twain National Forest, the Victory Section is named after the one-room schoolhouse that stood near the trail. It wanders through oak forests with stands of pine and along sunny meadows, passing several creeks and streams. Popular with equestrians, Victory Section incorporates a portion of the Victory Horse Trail; access to the 6-mile loop is at the eastern end near the Wrangler trailhead. A 3-mile gap and the Black River separate Victory Section from the Wappello Section to the east.

## WAPPAPELLO SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 35 miles  
**Land Stewards:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service, Missouri State Parks  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use  
**Note:** Camping not permitted on Corps of Engineers property except north of Highway 67.

The Wappello Section begins at the southern entrance to Sam A. Baker State Park and follows the St. Francois River south for 15 miles through woodlands and stream bottoms to Lake Wappello and the Old Greenville National Historic site. Wappello Dam, completed in 1941, created the lake, along with fishing, boating and camping opportunities. The lake's creation also led residents of Greenville to move their town 2 miles north. Pause for the "Memory Lane" self-guided tour of the old Greenville town site before heading 15 more miles south through rolling oak and pine forests to the Black River, tour the Old Greenville National Historic Site.

## MARBLE CREEK SECTION

**TOTAL DISTANCE:** 12 miles  
**Land Steward:** U.S. Forest Service  
**Trail Uses:** Hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use  
**Note:** Camping not permitted at Crane Lake.

The Marble Creek Section winds through the St. Francois Mountains and hardwood forests. Named for the pink dolomite mined as "Taum Sauk Marble," Marble Creek is a rushing stream at the northern terminus that powered a gristmill until 1935. The southern Marble Creek Section terminates at Crane Lake Trailhead, connecting to a loop trail around the lake with views of the dam, shut-ins and rock formations there. Users can continue on the loop trail around the south side of the lake with views of the dam, shut-ins and rock formations.