BEECH TREE TRAIL

Beech Tree Trail showcases many of the unique aspects of Crowley's Ridge in southeast Missouri. The trail begins on the top of the ridge and descends into bottomlands before returning to the ridge top, passing through different natural communities along the way.

Crowley's Ridge rises up to 250 feet above the surrounding flatlands of the Mississippi River delta. Some of the trees, wildflowers and ferns of Morris State Park are restricted in Missouri to this long-running ridge that extends from the Cape Girardeau area to the north into northern Arkansas to the south. American beech, Hercules club and many herbaceous plants commonly associated with forests of the eastern United States have their westernmost range on or around Crowley's Ridge. The fragile soils were formed through thousands of years of wind-blown deposition of glacial silt and are highly fertile. These wind-blown soils are called loess and often develop near floodplains of large river systems. Dissected slopes on the eastern edge of Morris State Park give a glimpse of the soil composition of Crowley's Ridge.

The first .1 mile of the trail is considered accessible. The final section of the trail along the orchard is private property so hikers are asked to be respectful of property owners. Mosquitoes are common and can be abundant during the late spring, summer and early fall.

**Distance:** 2.6 Miles

**Uses:** Hiking

**Blazes:** Red

**Class:** Loop

**Surface Type:** Natural, Paved/Concrete

**Trail Rating:** Moderate

**Estimated Hiking Time:** 1 Hour, 57 Minutes

**Trailhead & GPS Location:**
36.55361, -90.04499

**Elevation profile is not available**

**You may experience:**

- Natural Surface-dirt/mud/gravel, shifting rock, slippery surface, etc.
- Rocks, roots and/or downed vegetation on trail
- Steep grades and inclines more than 10%
- Bridges and/or structural crossings
- Occasional water over trail
TRAIL BLAZE COLORS & SURFACE TYPES

The maps on this website indicate the blaze colors for each trail. If more than one trail shares tread, that portion of the trail is identified by more than one color. The surface type of a trail is indicated on the maps generated by this website by a pattern overlapping the blaze color of the trail.

TRAIL TYPE – Loop, Multi-loop, One Way, System or Multi-section

A loop trail is one that will return you to the trailhead. Multi-loop trails offer two or more separate loops, ex. a trail having a north and south loop. A one-way trail takes you from the trailhead to the farthest point on the trail and you will have to retrace your steps to return to the trailhead. If you plan to return to your starting point on a one-way trail, you will have to double the distance to calculate your estimated mileage and/or hiking time.

A trail system is a series of interconnected trails that allow you to choose your own route.

A Multi-section trail offers two or more separate sections, ex. Katy Trail State Park, and distances are shown both for the entire trail and the sections.

YOU MAY EXPERIENCE

These conditions are all things you may encounter while on a Missouri state parks trail. Trailhead signs at the start of each trail also indicate which conditions exist on that trail.

ESTIMATED HIKING TIME

The estimated hiking time was determined by considering the average user’s speed and the conditions that might be experienced on a specific trail. Your speed may be slower or faster than the time listed.

GPS COORDINATES

There are several methods of communicating GPS coordinates. Most GPS units will convert from one coordinate system to another. If you require a different coordinate system for your unit, visit dnr.mo.gov/gisutils/ to convert the coordinates shown on this map to another version.

NATURAL AREAS / WILD AREAS

Natural areas are identified in pink. Natural areas are recognized as the best remaining examples known of Missouri’s original natural environments. These natural areas are managed and protected for their scientific, educational and historical values. Missouri state parks have 38 designated natural areas, encompassing almost 22,000 acres.

Wild areas are identified in brown. The Missouri Wild Area System is made up of large tracts of land set aside as wilderness, which make the perfect setting for hiking and backpacking. A wild area must be 1,000 or more acres in size, show little impact from humans, and possess outstanding opportunities for solitude. They are strictly protected for their wilderness benefits as well as for their use for environmental education and scientific study.