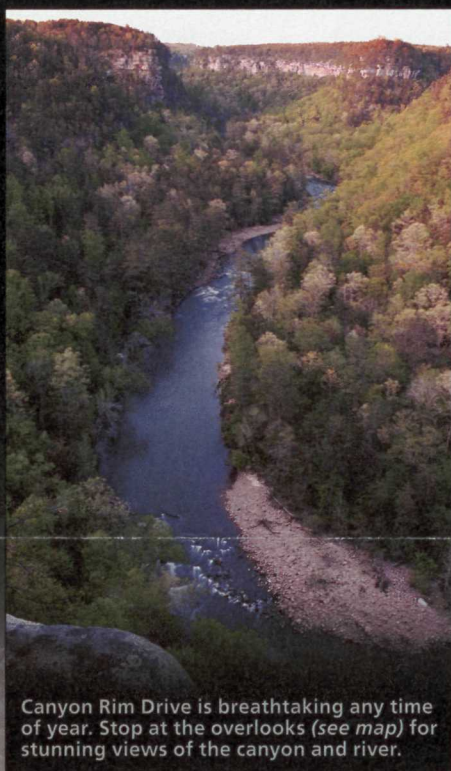


# Little River Canyon

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



National Preserve  
Alabama



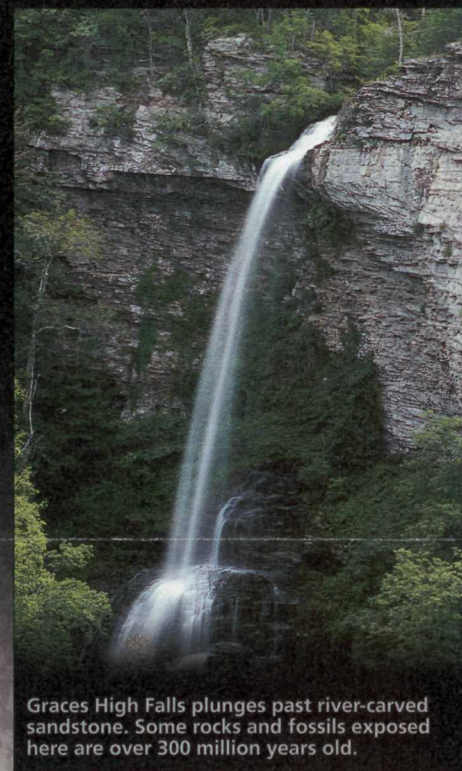
Canyon Rim Drive is breathtaking any time of year. Stop at the overlooks (see map) for stunning views of the canyon and river.

© BERT M. YOUNG



Winter rains can make the Little River a raging torrent. Whitewater paddlers—experts only—test their skills in the rapids.

© SARIA SPRINGER



Graces High Falls plunges past river-carved sandstone. Some rocks and fossils exposed here are over 300 million years old.

© ROBERT P. FALLS, SR.

## A Mountain-top River Plunges into a Surprising Nature Sanctuary

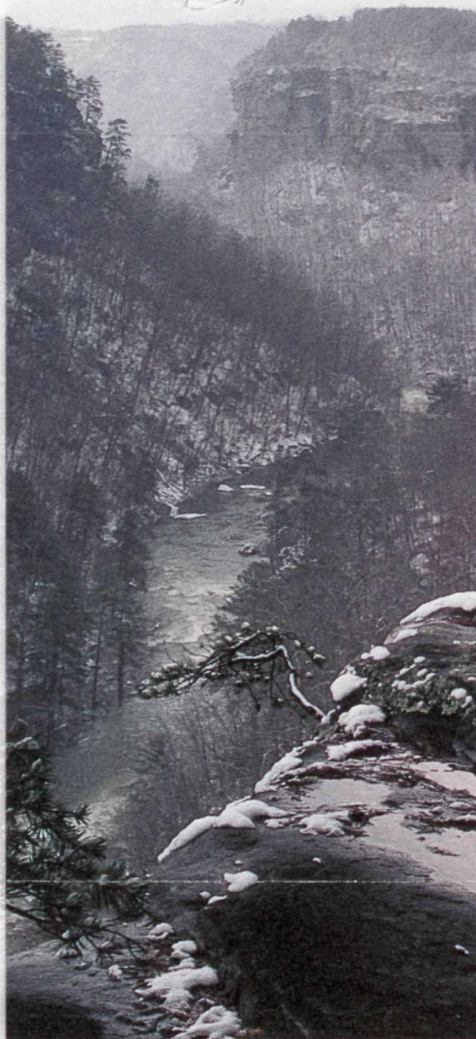
It is one of the nation's longest rivers that forms and flows for most of its length atop a mountain. Then it plunges off the Cumberland Plateau at the head of Little River Canyon. Beginning at 1,900 feet above sea level on Lookout Mountain, the Little River ends up at 650 feet above sea level at Weiss Lake. The result is one of the most extensive canyon and gorge systems in the eastern United States and one of the South's clearest, wildest waterways. No more than a trickle in the dry summer months, the river surges with the rainfall in cooler months.

Congress added Little River Canyon National Preserve to the National Park System in 1992. The Preserve protects 14,000 acres of the 199-square-mile Little River watershed and many rare, threatened, and endangered species of plants and animals. Alabama's DeSoto State Park, a long-established vacation area with resort lodge and other accommodations, lies within the Preserve boundary and is a partner in its operation.

Carving the region's sandstone over time, the Little River has created habitat for carnivorous green pitcher plants (see photo on other side); Kral's water plantains, an aquatic herb; six varieties of caddisflies found nowhere else on Earth; green salamanders; and threatened blue shiner fish.

Canyon Rim Drive follows the west rim of Little River Canyon for 11 scenic miles (see map on other side). From the nine overlooks you may see river and canyon scenery and rock climbers, kayakers, soaring birds, and creeks flowing into the river.

Little River Canyon National Preserve, an extraordinary place rich in history, promises a future of conservation, education, and recreation for all. The National Park Service and its partners work to guarantee that these places will always be here for people to enjoy.



Little River flows through rugged, beautiful, forested landscapes into the 12-mile-long and 600-foot-deep Little River Canyon.

BACKGROUND PHOTO: © ROBERT P. FALLS, SR.

### Things To See and Do in the Preserve

**Canyon Rim Drive** You can enjoy spectacular overlooks, trails, and picnic spots along Canyon Rim Drive (Ala. 176). Don't miss the 45-foot-high Little River Falls.

**Activities** The Preserve's Canyon Mouth day-use area features picnicking and hiking. Trails thread through the lower canyon and look over rapids and boulder fields. This is a popular take-out point for the whitewater enthusiast. The backcountry offers fishing, horseback riding, and

hunting (in season). You can find solitude far from developed areas and enjoy the opportunity for peaceful reflection. World-class white water and outstanding rock climbing challenge visitors prepared for such adventures. *Read For a Safe Visit on the other side of this brochure.*

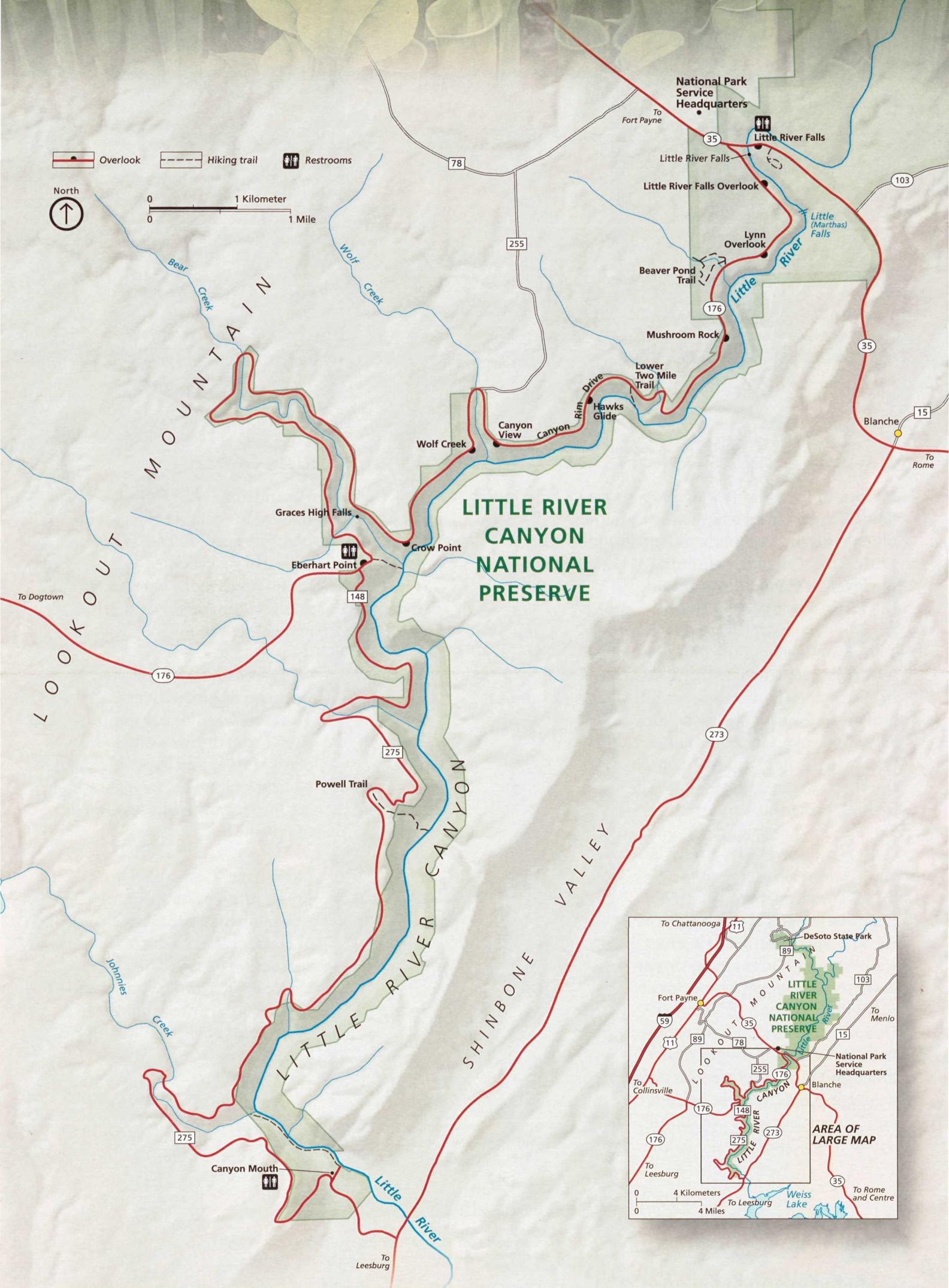
DeSoto State Park, a National Park Service partner, has a lodge, restaurant, cabins, camping, camp store, nature center, pool, playground, trails, and picnic areas.

**Camping** You may camp in the Preserve at three designated backcountry sites from February 1 to September 30. First-come, first-served. Bring your own water. For permits and details: 256-845-9605; [www.nps.gov/liri/planyourvisit/camping.htm](http://www.nps.gov/liri/planyourvisit/camping.htm).

DeSoto State Park camping information: 256-845-5075; [www.alapark.com/desotoresort/camping](http://www.alapark.com/desotoresort/camping).



# Little River Canyon



## Getting Here and Your Safety

**Getting Here** The Preserve is in north-eastern Alabama near I-59 southwest of Chattanooga, Tenn. DeSoto State Park is at its north end, and Canyon Mouth is at its south end.

**For a Safe Visit** Be alert. Hiking and exploring can be fun, but if you get hurt you may be a long way from help. Cell phones may not work, and getting medical help to you can be difficult. *Remember, your safety is your responsibility.* • Watch children closely. High bluffs, fast water, and water-

falls can be dangerous. • Canyon trails are steep and strenuous. Stay on trails, wear sturdy shoes, and take plenty of water.

• Watch for poisonous snakes and poison ivy. • Pets must be leashed and attended. Service animals are welcome. • Know hunting seasons and regulations if you go into the backcountry. For firearms regulations, check the park website. • Lock valuables in your trunk or out of sight. • Do not disturb plants, animals, rocks, artifacts, or other natural or historic features; all are protected by federal law. **Emergencies: call 911.**

## More Information

Little River Canyon National Preserve  
472 Alabama Highway 35  
Fort Payne, AL 35967  
256-845-9605  
[www.nps.gov/liri](http://www.nps.gov/liri)

The Preserve is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).