

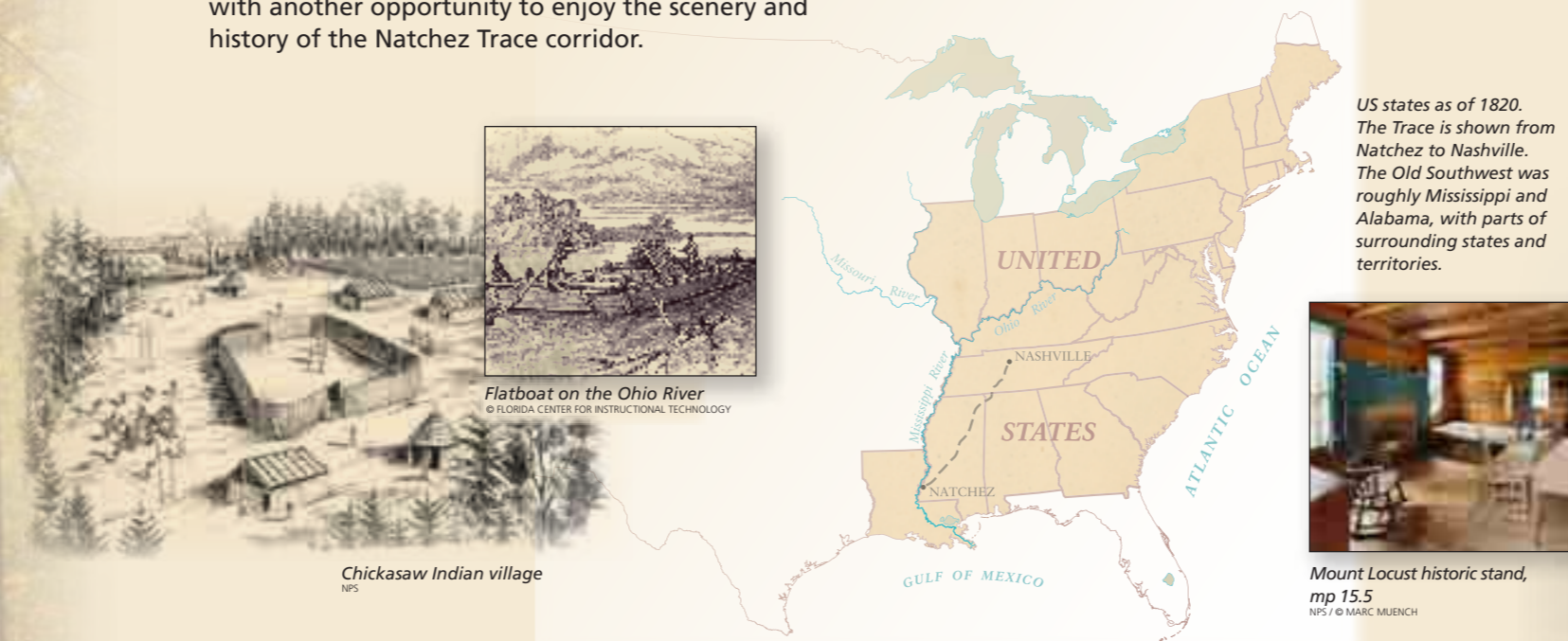


Fall color along the trail
NPS / © MARC MUENCH

From the Mississippi River Bluffs to the Tennessee Hills

The 450-plus-mile foot trail that became known as the Natchez Trace was the lifeline through the Old Southwest in the nation's early decades. The Natchez Trace Parkway was established as a unit of the National Park System in 1938 to commemorate this historic route. In 1983 the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail was established as a unit of the National Park System and the National Trails System. It runs parallel to the Parkway, providing visitors with another opportunity to enjoy the scenery and history of the Natchez Trace corridor.

Today the national scenic trail consists of five separate sections—over 60 miles—developed for hiking and horse-back riding (see maps on the other side of this brochure). Portions follow the segments of the original Trace. Like the parkway, the scenic trail is best enjoyed at a leisurely pace. Take your time and you will be rewarded with the sights and sounds experienced by those who came long before you.



Flatboat on the Ohio River
© FLORIDA CENTER FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Chickasaw Indian village
NPS



US states as of 1820.
The Trace is shown from Natchez to Nashville. The Old Southwest was roughly Mississippi and Alabama, with parts of surrounding states and territories.



Mount Locust historic stand,
mp 15.5
NPS / © MARC MUENCH

The Road Through the Old Southwest

People have walked the Natchez Trace for thousands of years. Choctaw, Chickasaw, Natchez, and other American Indians traveled long distances through the southern pine and hardwood forests via a network of northeast/southwest trails.

In the late 1800s, the Trace gained a new importance

among the American settlers of the Ohio River Valley. Kaintucks—farmers—transported products to market on wooden flatboats. The men floated down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the ports of Natchez and New Orleans. There the Kaintucks sold the farm goods and, because they couldn't float back upriver, sold the flatboats for lumber. Then

they set out on the Natchez Trace on foot or horseback, covering hundreds of miles on the journey home.

The Trace was not a single path, but many interconnected paths within a wide corridor. You can still see places where the old route is obvious—deeply sunken portions of the trail tramped down by millions

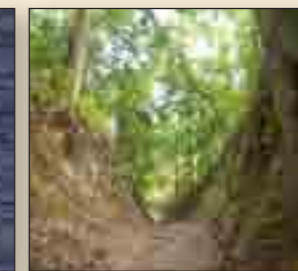
of footsteps home. It was a dangerous journey; extreme weather conditions, disease, or accidents could incapacitate or kill you. If you had enough money, you could get food, drink, and crude lodging at a stand, or inn. By the mid-1820s steamboats made travel upriver a far quicker way home than foot travel. The Natchez Trace soon became obsolete.



Red fox
PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.



Great blue heron with snake
VISUALS UNLIMITED



Sunken Trace, Potkopinu section
NPS



Wild turkey
VISUALS UNLIMITED



Southern magnolia
VISUALS UNLIMITED

Planning Your Visit

There are visitor information centers at Meriwether Lewis (mp 386), Tupelo (mp 266), Ridgeland (mp 102.4), and Mount Locust (mp 15.5). Each has information about the parkway and national scenic trail sections. The maps on the other side of this brochure give details about the trail sections.

There are campgrounds and picnic areas along the parkway. Back-country camping requires a permit; call 662-680-4014. Nearby towns have food, fuel, lodging, and other services.

Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail is one of over 390 areas in the National Park System. For more information on national parks, visit www.nps.gov.

Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail
c/o Natchez Trace Parkway
2680 Natchez Trace Parkway
Tupelo, MS 38804
1-800-305-7417
www.nps.gov/natt
www.nps.gov/natr

Emergencies: call 911

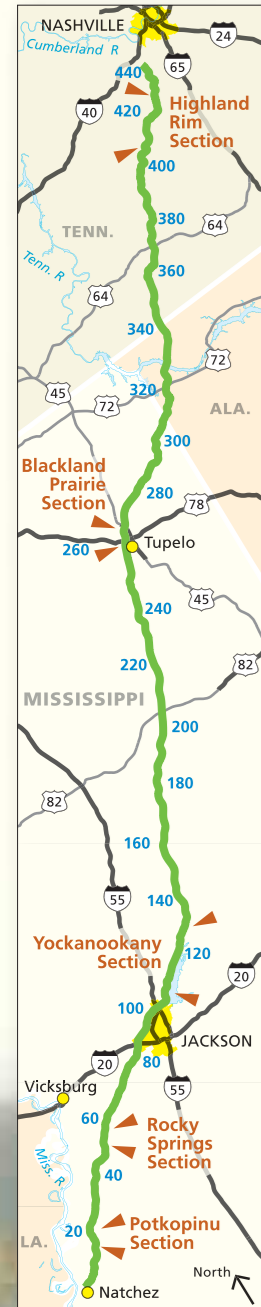
Have a Safe Visit, Help Protect the Park

Trails sometimes cross roads or follow the parkway's shoulder. Use extreme caution in these situations. • Trails may run close to private property. Please respect owners' privacy and posted signs. • Heavy rain can produce muddy and wet trail conditions, even long after the rain has ended. Always remain on the trail and tread lightly to prevent further erosion. • Pets must be on a leash six feet long or less and under physical control at all times. Service animals are welcome. • Motorized vehicles and bicycles are prohibited.

• Stream and reservoir water is unsafe to drink. • Campfires are prohibited. • Carry out all litter. • Be watchful for fire ants, poison ivy, and venomous snakes, and don't put your hands or feet in places you can't see. • If you carry firearms inside the park, you are responsible for understanding and complying with federal, state, and local firearms regulations. Visit the park website for more information. • All natural, historical, and archeological objects are protected by federal law. Do not damage or collect these items.



Blackland Prairie section
NPS / © MARC MUENCH



Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail

The five developed sections of the national scenic trail are accessed from many points along the Natchez Trace Parkway. The map at left shows the 444-mile length of parkway with the trail sections labeled. Specific information about each trail section is at right. When you're on the trail itself, look for markings of white blazes or brown and white signs.

- National Park Service visitor center
- National scenic trail trailhead
- Parking
- Restroom
- Wheelchair-accessible restroom
- Horse staging area water available
- Horse staging area no water
- Picnic area
- Picnic area available from trail only
- Self-guiding trail
- Campground
- Bike-only primitive campground
- Sanitary disposal station

Natchez Trace Parkway & milepost

Access to Natchez Trace Parkway

National scenic trail Hiking only (top)

Horse and hiking

Historic route of the Trace

Other trails Hiking only (top)

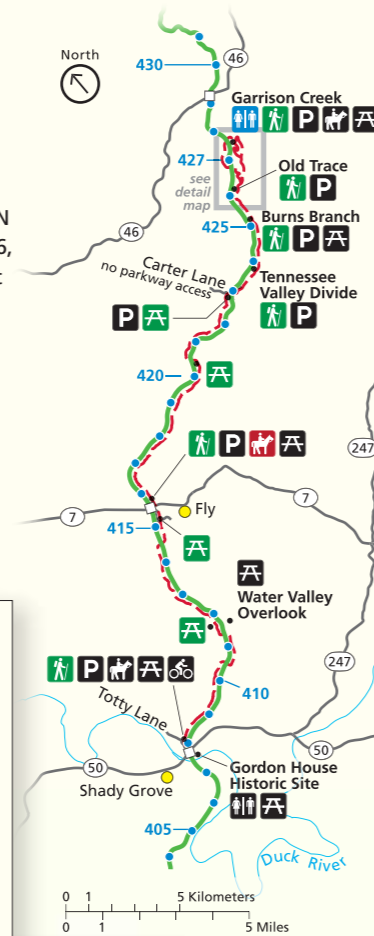
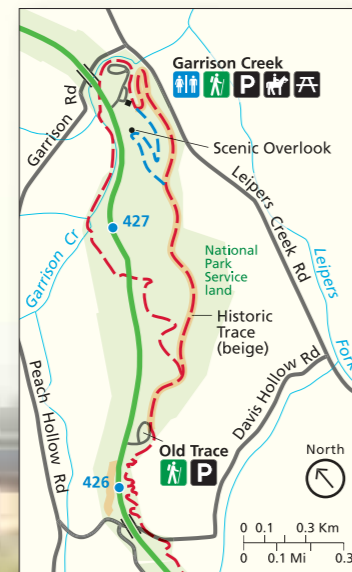
Horse and hiking

Highland Rim mp 407.9–427.4

This trail section just south of Nashville is very popular with horse enthusiasts. Garrison Creek is a good staging area for trail rides.

To reach the trailhead north of TN Hwy. 7, exit the parkway at mp 416, turn left on Hwy. 7, then turn left on Old Natchez Trace Road. The trailhead is at the top of the hill on the left.

Carter Lane picnic area is not accessible from the parkway; use Old Natchez Trace Road.

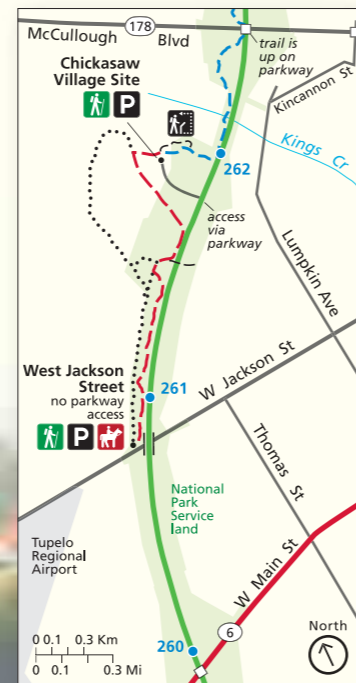


Blackland Prairie mp 260.8–266

In and around Tupelo, this section is a popular recreational corridor for visitors and residents alike.

Go to the Parkway Visitor Center for orientation information on the parkway and national scenic trail. There are exhibits on the area's history and natural features.

At two road crossings, you must walk up to the parkway and follow the road's shoulder: the creek crossing at mp 264.5 and the US 178 (McCullough Blvd.) crossing at mp 262.5. Be extremely careful on the road, at all road crossings, and at the railroad track crossing north of Chickasaw Village.



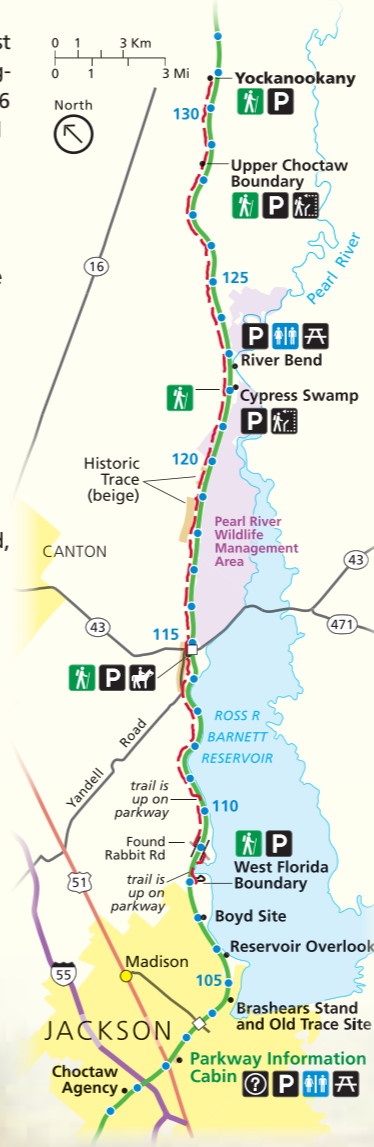
Yockanookany mp 108–131

North of Jackson, this is the longest trail section. Eight miles run alongside the reservoir, and the other 16 go through dense forests, seasonal streams, and open pasture land.

There's a lot to see on this stretch of trail; many sites are accessible via short side trails (you may have to cross the parkway).

The trail parallels the parkway roadbed; use caution at all times, especially at bridge crossings, where you must walk along the road.

To reach the MS Hwy. 43 trailhead, exit the parkway at mp 115; go west on Hwy. 43 a short distance to Yandell Rd.; turn left (south) for 100 feet; turn left into the parking area.

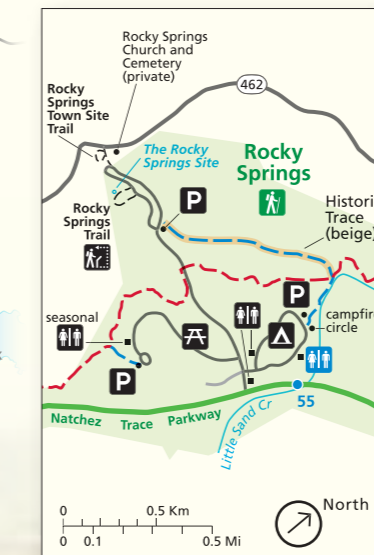


Rocky Springs mp 52.4–59

This trail crosses gently rolling, forested land. To get to the northern trailhead, exit the parkway at mp 59.2. Turn right at the stop sign onto Fisher Ferry Rd., cross over the parkway, and take the first right to the parking area.

At Rocky Springs, a side trail leads to the remains of the old town, including a church and cemetery.

South of Rocky Springs the trail is moderately strenuous in places—up and down through deep ravines. Near the south end of the section is the Owens Creek waterfall, a good spot to sit quietly and listen to the forest.



Potkopinu mp 17–20

Potkopinu is the Natchez Indian word for "little valley." This is the longest continuous section of sunken Trace. The trail cuts deep into the rich, fine-grained soil. It doesn't take much to erode this type of soil, and centuries of human and animal traffic have done an impressive job.

The land surrounding the trail is private; please stay on the trail.

The southern trailhead at mp 17 is not recommended for RVs because of the narrow access road and lack of turnaround space.

Prepare to walk through water at stream crossings. Crossing conditions vary from muddy areas to knee-deep water, depending on rainfall. Trail improvement is ongoing; call 1-800-305-7417 for current conditions.

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