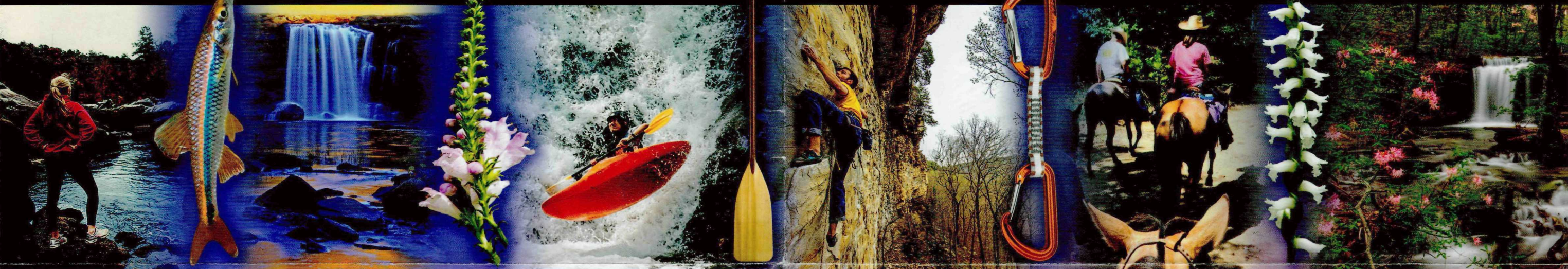


Little River Canyon

Little River Canyon National Preserve
Alabama

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



A hike along the river
© DOMINA MUCCIO

Blue shiner
© DR. CAROL JOHNSTON
STATE OF ALABAMA

Little River Falls
© JOHN DERSHAM

False dragonhead mint
© GAIL EICHLBERGER

Taking the plunge
© UNCLAIMED BAGGAGE CENTER

Canoe paddle
NPS

Pulling on razor edges
© CODY AVERBECK

Quickdraw for bolts
NPS

Horseback riding
© KATHY ZIMMERMAN

Nodding ladies' tresses
ERIC HUNT

Azaleas bloom along Lost
Falls at DeSoto State Park
© LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY

THE RIVER IS THE CENTER OF THE LAND,
THE PLACE WHERE THE WATERS,
AND MUCH MORE, COME TOGETHER.
HERE IS THE HOME OF WILDLIFE,
THE ROUTE OF EXPLORERS,
AND RECREATION PARADISE.
TIM PALMER, *LIFELINES*

THE RIVER FLOWS. Day after day, it carves and chisels the sandstone canyon as it has for millions of years. It is constant, persistent, but changeable, like the seasons. At times rushing, pounding, and crashing, its power is dangerous and undeniable. At other times, it meanders lazily from the top of Lookout Mountain to Weiss Lake.

Little River Canyon National Preserve is a special place to find inspiration, connect with family and friends, and discover the amazing natural world of forests, river and streams, a bountiful backcountry, and an incredible diversity of wildlife. Listen for the rush of the river, the wind whistling through the canyon, and the trill of birds in the forest canopy. Feel the spray of a

waterfall or the misty morning fog. Stop at an overlook, hike a trail, climb, kayak, or soak your feet at the river's edge. Explore this place where the river flows, connect with an ancient land, and perhaps, discover something new about yourself.

Little River is like no other; for most of its length it flows atop Lookout Mountain. One of the wildest and cleanest rivers in the southeastern US, it courses through the rugged terrain of the Cumberland Plateau, the most southern extension of the Appalachian Plateau. This is one of the deepest and most extensive canyon and gorge systems in the eastern United States, at times measuring 500 feet from the edge of the cliffs

to the river bottom. A visit here is like stepping back in time. Look closely for fossils, evidence the bottom of the canyon was once the floor of a shallow sea during the Paleozoic Era (541–242 million years ago). The sandstone cliffs and canyon walls, part of the Pottsville Formation (320–286 mya) consist of sandstone and conglomerate shale, siltstone, and coal.

In 1992 the canyon and surrounding areas became part of the National Park Service. The Preserve protects 15,288 acres of land and many rare, threatened, and endangered species. Year-round beauty and recreation are hallmarks of Little River Canyon. Each season transforms the canyon landscape.

Early spring-green leaves, red bud, and dogwood blooms give way to thick, green summer canopies and patches of wild flowers. As temperatures cool in the fall the hardwood forests burst with a palette of red, orange, yellow, and gold. The stark beauty of winter reveals intertwining branches, hidden nests in the forest, and prisms of icicles that form near waterfalls and along canyon walls. No matter the time of year, Little River Canyon has something for everyone. What is your favorite season in the Preserve?

Morning mist fills
the canyon.
© LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Black bear
© STEVE KASLOWSKI

NATURE'S SANCTUARY

Have you ever lived in a forest, river, or deep canyon? The thick stands of hardwood and pine forests and clean water provide shelter to the thousands of plants, animals, birds, and fish that live here. Little River Canyon National Preserve is their home. Ferns, grasses, moss, and wildflowers are abundant, as are rare, threatened, and endangered species like the green pitcher plant, Harperella, and Kral's water-plantain, a rare aquatic herb found in this river ecosystem. The blue shiner, a threatened species of fish, is found here, along with a variety of shiners, sunfish, bass, perch, catfish, and darters.

Green pitcher plant
© DR. BRAD WILSON

Green
salamander
© TODD W. PIERSON

Azalea
© MARK CHANDLER

Nuttall's rayless goldenrod
© JEFF MCMEILAN

Bluets
© TOM HOEFELICH

Bloodroot
© MATT ECHLER

Round-leaved
violet
© STAN LOCKWOOD

Joe-pye
weed
© DAVID G. SMITH

Indigo bunting
© BRYAN HIX

Yellow-rumped
warbler
© STEVE SHELASKY

White-breasted
nuthatch
© GORD SAWYER

Belted king fisher
© KEN SCHMIDT

White-tailed
fawn
© VICKI GIBSON

Cucumber magnolia
and seed pod
© BISSE BOWMAN
© MARK STEINMETZ

Northern long-eared bat
© MICHAEL DURHAM

Recreation Paradise

Looking for a scenic drive? Want to enjoy a picnic or a short stroll to Little River Falls? This is the place to do that and more. Some consider Little River Canyon a sports enthusiast's paradise—sheer cliffs and world-class whitewater beckon those looking for the extreme. The canyon is not for beginning kayakers or rock climbers. Experience is a necessity when running rapids known as "Avalanche" and "Suicide."

LITTLE RIVER CANYON NATIONAL PRESERVE is a day-use area only; no camping in the park.

CELL PHONES Please be aware that many places in the park have no cell phone reception.

CANYON RIM SCENIC DRIVE Follow AL 176 along this 11-mile drive, and enjoy a picnic lunch at one of the stops. There are no fees to tour the Scenic Drive or Little River Falls. Canyon Mouth

Picnic Area has a parking fee of \$15 per vehicle daily (cash only) or \$35 annual pass (available for purchase at the Canyon Center).

BACKCOUNTRY AREA Located upstream from the canyon and Little River Falls, this area offers 23 miles of numbered dirt/chert roads for horse-back riding, bicycles, and hikers. Pack out all trash.

BICYCLING The scenic drive along AL 176 is a narrow, two-lane road with no shoulder or bike lanes. We do NOT recommend bikes on this road. Biking is allowed in the backcountry on designated dirt/chert roads.

ACCESSIBILITY We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For more information go to the canyon center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

BE SMART. BE SAFE.

WATER SAFETY

ALWAYS USE CAUTION around water. Thousands of people enjoy water activities at the park each year, and each year we have near misses, injuries, and even deaths due to carelessness.

FISHING is allowed anywhere along Little River inside the park if you have a valid Alabama or non-resident fishing license. Children under 16 and adults over 65 are exempt from a fishing license. Fishing with nets is prohibited. Canyon Mouth Picnic Area is the perfect place to fly-fish; the clear water is easily accessible.

WADING Watch children closely; never leave them alone. Wade only during low water conditions. Avoid "whitewater" areas. If you can't swim, do not go into water over your head. Never wade alone.

CANOEING OR KAYAKING The canyon's waters are for expert level only (Class III+ to IV, spring runoff V). Come prepared with all your equipment and your own transportation. Never canoe or kayak alone. Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. Have the skill to manage and know the difficulty of the rapids you are attempting to navigate. The rapids at the park are for experts only. Always wear safety gear. Backcountry paddling is class I and II.

ROCK CLIMBING Climbing here is for experienced climbers only. Less than one percent of the climbing routes are 5.10 or easier. Come prepared with your own equipment and transportation. You can climb from any of the cliffs. You cannot add or remove any bolts or have any equipment with you that would allow you to do so.

AS A NATIONAL PRESERVE, hunting and trapping are permitted in the backcountry at designated times. Call or check the park website for firearms regulations and additional information.

WILDLIFE SAFETY

ANIMALS ARE WILD and should be viewed from a distance; never approach wild animals. Black bears, deer, squirrels, rabbits, bats, snakes, bobcats, and many species of birds inhabit the park. Never feed a wild animal, no matter how "cute" it may be. If you see a snake, keep your distance. Snakes will strike if they feel threatened in any way.

PET SAFETY

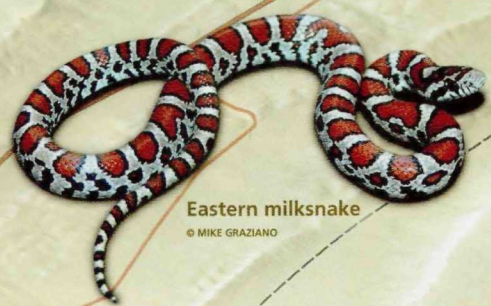
PETS must always be on a leash. Never leave your pet unattended. Please be responsible and dispose of pet waste in a trash receptacle or take it with you. Never leave your pet in a hot car. Always provide your pet plenty of water.

WASTE DISPOSAL Always dispose of waste properly in park-provided trash cans. Failure to obey regulations could result in a fine of up to \$5,000.00 and/or impoundment of your property.



DeSoto Falls at DeSoto State Park

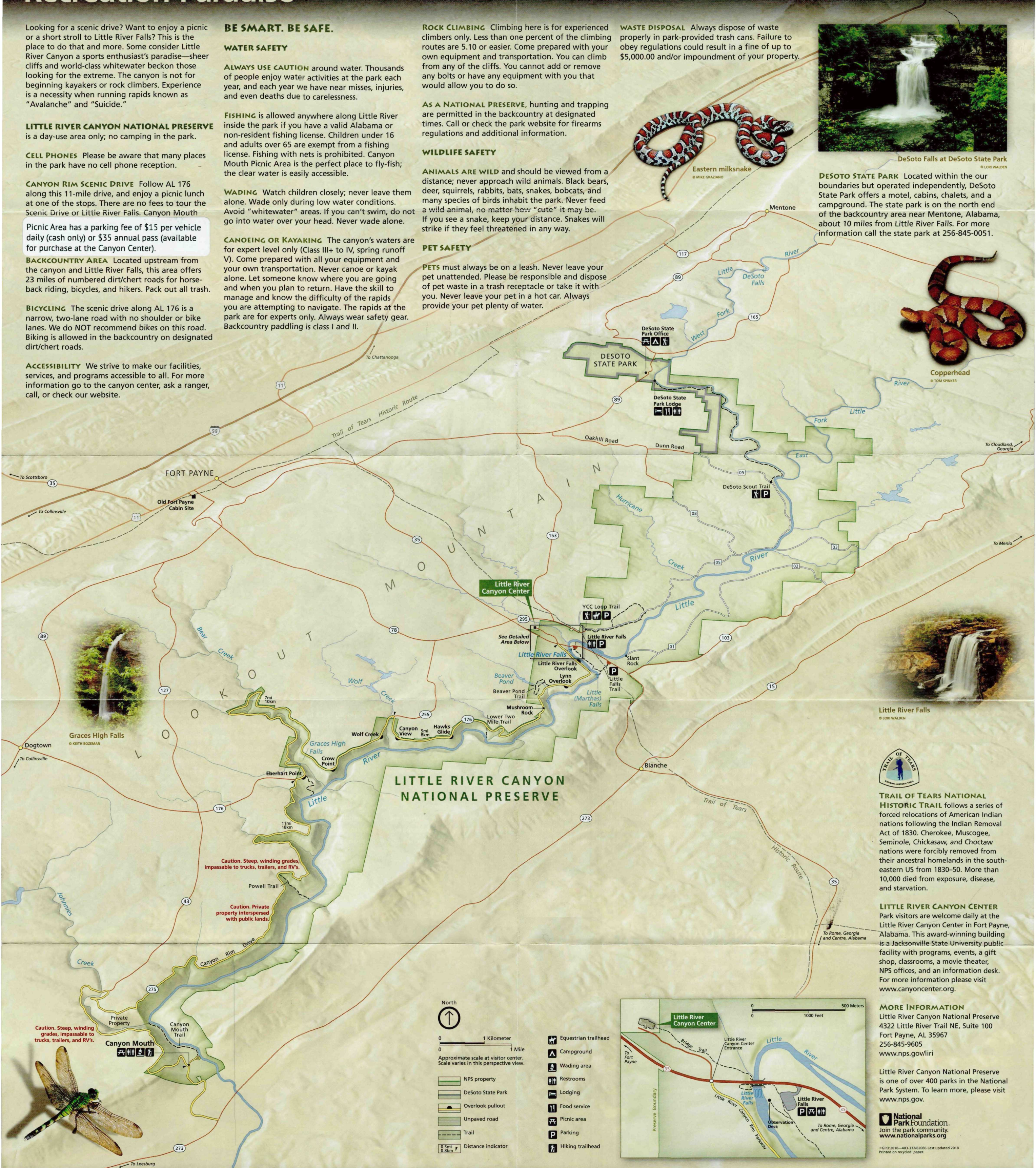
DESOTO STATE PARK Located within the our boundaries but operated independently, DeSoto State Park offers a motel, cabins, chalets, and a campground. The state park is on the north end of the backcountry area near Mentone, Alabama, about 10 miles from Little River Falls. For more information call the state park at 256-845-0051.



Eastern milksnake



Copperhead



Little River Falls



TRAIL OF TEARS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL follows a series of forced relocations of American Indian nations following the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Cherokee, Muscogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw nations were forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands in the southeastern US from 1830-50. More than 10,000 died from exposure, disease, and starvation.

LITTLE RIVER CANYON CENTER Park visitors are welcome daily at the Little River Canyon Center in Fort Payne, Alabama. This award-winning building is a Jacksonville State University public facility with programs, events, a gift shop, classrooms, a movie theater, NPS offices, and an information desk. For more information please visit www.canyoncenter.org.

MORE INFORMATION
Little River Canyon National Preserve
4322 Little River Trail NE, Suite 100
Fort Payne, AL 35967
256-845-9605
www.nps.gov/liri

Little River Canyon National Preserve is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more, please visit www.nps.gov.

National Park Foundation.
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

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Eastern pondhawk