

Hot Springs

National Park
U.S. Department of the Interior

Hot Springs National Park
Arkansas



Hot Springs Mountain and North Mountain Trails



Goat Rock by Helen Stannard
July 2005 Artist-In-Residence

Grand Promenade (0.5 mile)

Started as part of a PWA project in the 1930s and completed in 1957, the brick promenade has been a National Recreation Trail since 1982. Several park trails begin and end from the Promenade. Running parallel with Central Avenue and Bathhouse Row from Reserve Street to Fountain Street, the path offers views of historic downtown Hot Springs, Arlington Lawn, the thermal cascade, quartz veins in the sandstone and tufa cliffs. The north end passes the site of the first superintendent's residence, demolished in 1958. The south entrance is below the impressive Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center. Built in 1933 as the second Army-Navy hospital, it has been used by the state for over 40 years.

Peak Trail (0.6 mile)

This short but rewarding trail begins at Tufa Terrace Trail above the Promenade and steeply ascends Hot Springs Mountain to the observation tower. The green boxes seen along the way are hot spring water collection boxes. Avoid the path to the right at the first mountain drive crossing; it dead-ends just out of sight at the door of a pump station. The trail ends at the picnic area below the tower.

Tufa Terrace Trail (0.2 mi.)

Beginning above the Grand Promenade at Stevens Balustrade, this trail is named for the massive tufa (calcium carbonate) deposits seen around it. For millennia the springs flowed down the mountainside, forming the tufa deposits seen here and on the promenade.

Dead Chief Trail (1.4 mi.)

From the trailhead at the Army- Navy Hospital gate above the Stevens Balustrade, this trail eventually intersects with Gulpha Gorge Trail for the easiest walk (1.6 miles) from Bathhouse Row to the park campground. At first quite steep, the trail levels off and follows the contour of Hot Springs Mountain towards Gulpha Gorge. This section is scarred from recent fires and ice storms. The historic Oertel Fitness Trail once followed the west end of Dead Chief Trail. This graduated exercise trail system created in 1915 was based on German trails developed by Dr. Max Oertel. Dead Chief Trail formed part of the Red Trail, the most strenuous.

Carriage Road (0.1 mi.)

This gravel path once took carriage parties entering through the Army- Navy grounds to the summit of Hot Springs Mountain. Starting above the Promenade at the cast iron Army- Navy gate, the trail follows a nearly straight line to Hot Springs Mountain Drive and Tufa Terrace Trail. Brick squares along the route were once bench foundations, and the Marine bandstand (removed before 1944) stood near the start of the old road.

<i>Short Cut Trail</i> (0.2 mi.)	As the name implies, this path is a short cut between Dead Chief Trail and the Hot Springs Mountain picnic area. Climbing steeply from Dead Chief Trail, it completed the Oertel Red Trail and was a popular bridle trail.
<i>Reserve Trail</i> (0.3 mile)	A spur leading from Reserve Street beyond park law enforcement headquarters, this brief climb to the intersection of the Dead Chief Trail offers a short cut to Gulpha Gorge Campground. Originally built in 1926 as the beginning of the Dead Chief Trail, the name derives from the park's designation as a reservation in 1832.
<i>Hot Springs Mountain Trail</i> (1.7 mi.)	One of the most rewarding trails in the park, this pleasant walk begins at the Pagoda shelter just below the Mountain Tower and continues to the left. The trail descends through a beautiful mixed hardwood and pine forest. The lower slope is steep, offering breath-taking vistas. About halfway down, a trail shelter provides rest at the Gulpha Gorge Trail intersection. Continue along the trail and descend the western side of the slope, turning left at the first junction (going straight puts you onto Dogwood Trail). Take the serpentine path to Hot Springs Mountain Drive, cross it, and hike up the western slope of Hot Springs Mountain. At the junction with Honeysuckle Trail, stay left to complete the loop. Cross Hot Springs Mountain Drive two more times and you will arrive back at the picnic area.
<i>Honeysuckle Trail</i> (0.5 mi.)	Packed with gravel but rather steep, this trail crosses Peak Trail and intersects with both Fountain and Floral Trails, featuring a stone shelter at the latter junction. The south end is in a curve of Hot Springs Mountain Drive; the north end joins Hot Springs Mountain Trail.
<i>Fountain Trail</i> (528 feet)	This short access trail begins on Fountain Street below the Hot Springs Mountain Drive entrance. Be careful; the trail has several concrete steps and crosses the drive before intersecting Honeysuckle Trail.
<i>Grand Avenue Trail</i> (0.2 mi.)	This informal spur of Dead Chief Trail ends at a motel on Grand Avenue.
<i>Gulpha Gorge Trail</i> (0.8 mi.)	This trail starts either at the Gulpha Gorge Campground or at the shelter off Hot Springs Mountain Drive. If you start from the campground, park at the amphitheater parking area and lock your vehicle. The trailhead is across Gulpha Creek at the end of the stepping stones in the creek. Take the trail to the left. The first half of this trail from the Gorge is STEEP, but you'll find a concrete bench at the first intersection (Dead Chief Trail). Gulpha Gorge Trail winds up the mountain to meet Hot Springs Mountain Trail. Mortared stone water bars cross this path, and another concrete bench offers rest in the last curve just before the summit. At the intersection with Hot Springs Mountain Trail, a metal sign, complete with a map, describes Gulpha Gorge Trail. A stone structure gives shelter from sudden downpours or the hot summer sun. Two more signs show distances for the trail leading from here.
<i>Goat Rock Trail</i> (1.1 mi.)	Start from the overlook on North Mountain. Take the short hike below the overlook and stay right, noting novaculite stones strewn along the trail. The stone bars that cross the trail to prevent erosion are a trip hazard, so be careful. Below the second curve, the lower side of the trail opens into flowery glades that offer great vistas of Indian Mountain and east Hot Springs. The trail then becomes uneven and rocky. After another several hundred feet you will pass beneath huge novaculite boulders and Goat Rock Overlook forty feet above. A trail sign indicates the stairway to the overlook.

Stone steps rise 240 feet to the summit, with spectacular views of Indian Mountain. Return down the stairs to Goat Rock Trail and take a right to continue on the trail, which descends in a serpentine path to the Gulpha Gorge Trail junction. Here you may take the left path to Gulpha Gorge Campground (0.8 miles) or the right path up the mountain via Gulpha Gorge Trail.

Floral Trail
(1.1 mi.)

This trail connects the Dogwood and Honeysuckle trails. Literally “uphill both ways,” it crosses Hot Springs Mountain Drive in a valley, with one end on North Mountain and the other on Hot Springs Mountain. The trailhead is on Hot Springs Mountain Drive about 50 yards past the Happy Hollow jug fountain. If you go right, you cross the drive and follow a zigzag path to a shelter at the Honeysuckle Trail intersection. To the left, a mortared stone staircase climbs to a gravel path alive with squirrels in autumn, bright with dog-woods in spring, and splashed with wild-flowers spring to autumn. The trail joins the lower Dogwood Trail loop at a mortared stone bench and a distance marker. Here you can go left to Arlington Trail or right for 0.2 miles to the upper Dogwood Trail loop.

Arlington Trail
(0.2 mi.)

One of the park’s shortest trails, it begins from the seventh floor pool area of the Arlington Hotel and ascends, gradually widening. Just past the first concrete bench on the left, an uneven mortared stone could cause you to trip or lose your footing. When you reach the lower Dogwood Trail loop, you have several options if you want to take a longer hike.

Dogwood Trail
Lower Loop
(0.7 mi.)

By taking a left at the east end of Arlington Trail, you begin the lower Dogwood Trail loop, a smooth but steep gravel path that climbs North Mountain. Sandstone boulders near the top mark the westernmost tip of the trail. From there the trail turns right and continues downhill for a hundred yards before making its way up the mountain again. Ignore the left trail in the steep curve; it is a dead end. Numerous water bars here cause a trip hazard, so watch your step. At the next two junctions, go right to return to the Floral Trail, completing the Lower Loop of the Dogwood Trail. Each left trail is a section of the Upper Dogwood Trail.

Dogwood Trail
Upper Loop
(1.0 mi.)

Starting from the overlook on North Mountain, a short hike to the northeast takes you to Goat Rock Trail, on the right. The upper Dogwood Trail loop continues left down the mountain. To the right is a stone drain below a rusted steel handrail, and in another hundred feet the trail crosses a second stone drain under a concrete bridge. Before the trail reaches the next intersection, another path crosses it. This is an old roadbed, not an established trail. Ignore it and continue up the mountain, passing between the rock piles on either side of the trail. Take a left at each intersection with the lower loop. Dogwood Trail joins Hot Springs Mountain Trail at a concrete bench. After about 100 yards you will cross Hot Springs Mountain Drive to the trail shelter. Gulpha Gorge Trail is straight ahead, or you can take the Hot Springs Mountain Trail to the right. To return to your vehicle, walk up the drive to the overlook.

Trail Manners

Please remember to *Leave No Trace* on the park trails. Leave rocks, plants, flowers, and artifacts for others to enjoy. Keep pets leashed and pick up the waste. Follow marked trails and ignore “cut-throughs.” Report vandalism or graffiti to a law enforcement ranger by calling 501- 620- 6780.

Lock your vehicle and keep valuables out of sight.
For an emergency, call 911.

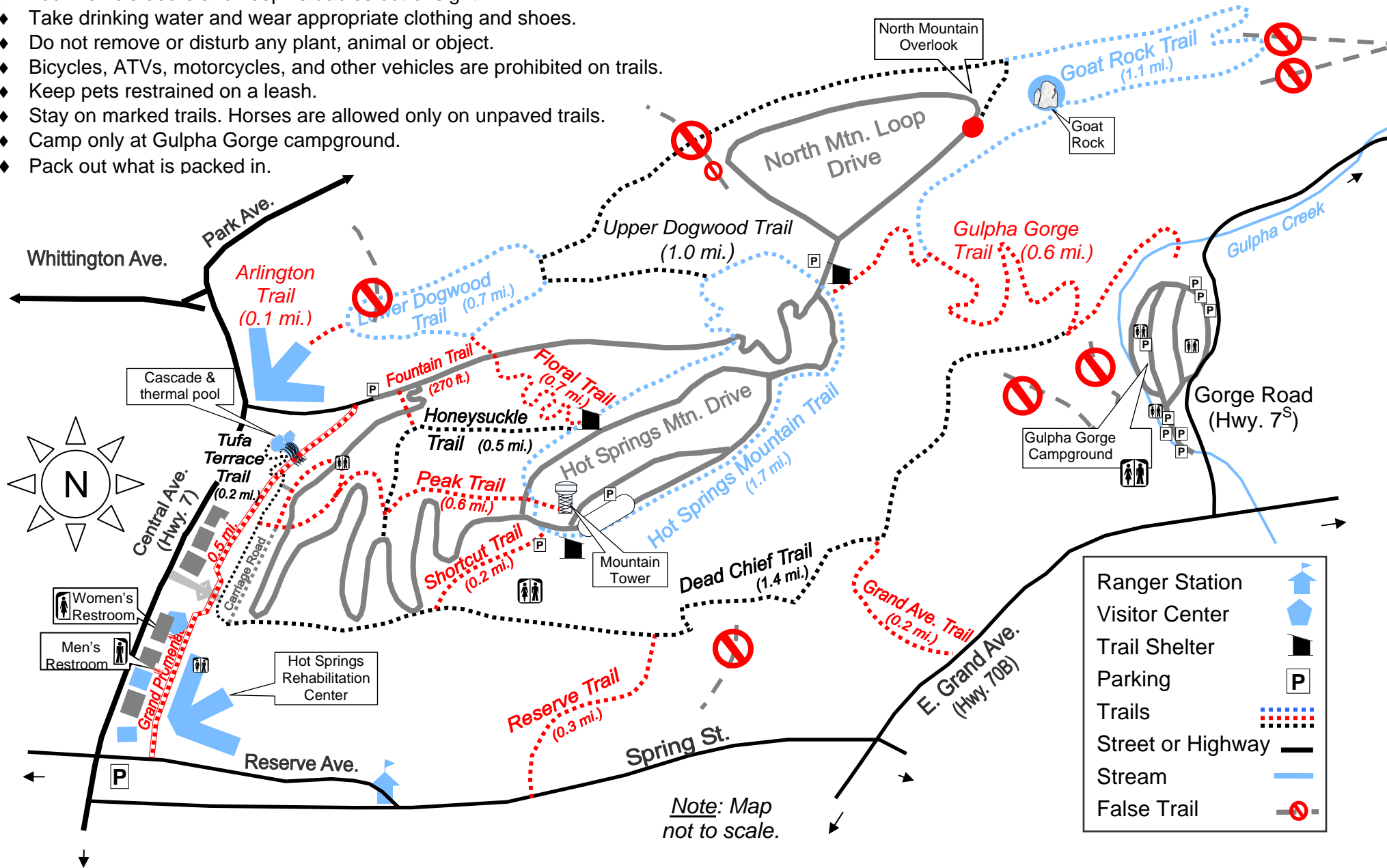
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Hot Springs Mountain Trails

- ◆ Lock vehicle doors and keep valuables out of sight.
- ◆ Take drinking water and wear appropriate clothing and shoes.
- ◆ Do not remove or disturb any plant, animal or object.
- ◆ Bicycles, ATVs, motorcycles, and other vehicles are prohibited on trails.
- ◆ Keep pets restrained on a leash.
- ◆ Stay on marked trails. Horses are allowed only on unpaved trails.
- ◆ Camp only at Gulpha Gorge campground.
- ◆ Pack out what is packed in.



Ranger Station	
Visitor Center	
Trail Shelter	
Parking	
Trails	
Street or Highway	
Stream	
False Trail	

Note: Map not to scale.