

OMH Trail Data / History

Charlton Trail

Ouachita National Forest (AR)

This is a good, four-mile, forest trail that climbs two fairly steep hills. During leaf-off, it has some nice views. At about the mid-point, the trail crosses a forest road, with an 'always-running' spring that has cold, clear, safe-to-drink water. Trail is south of Lake Ouachita; about fifteen miles west of Hot Springs.

- Planning notes:**
1. Trail can be run in either direction, or both directions. Charlton Campground (USFS) is at southern end; Crystal Springs day use picnic area (Corps of Eng) at northern end on Lake Ouachita. Both with good parking. One way hike requires either a key swap or shuttle drivers.
 2. Both ends have nice picnic facilities. Used many times for annual "Welcome Back" hike. Also makes a good Saturday hike. The Charlton end is a fee-required day use area. The day-use area at Crystal Springs end has a nice picnic area, right on the lake, with a covered pavilion for about 40 - 50 people.
 3. Round trip makes a good, local Thursday hike - perhaps as a bonus hike (in lieu of overnight) or substitute hike.
 4. Use 60 miles round trip for carpool share. Assume 1 hour from HSV; 45 minutes from HS.

- Access Notes:**
1. Charlton campground: Right off of US 270, west of Hot Springs on US 270 (about 15 miles from intersection of AR 227 N to Mt Pine). TH is on far side of lake. This is a day use (fee) area, so you may want to park outside the gate.
 2. Crystal Springs: Turn North off of 270 onto Crystal Springs Road (a well marked county road) about 2 - 3 miles east of Charlton CG. Proceed about 1.5 miles to the trail head. Go past the pavilion parking and Day Use Area on the right, to a second parking area and roofed pavilion structure on left and bathrooms on right. The Trailhead is beside the pavilion.

For additional info: USFS Ouachita National Forest Trail Map TR-20
Tim Ernst: "Arkansas Hiking Trails" (p. 175)

Recent Hikes:

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- Oct 3, 2009** **Leader:** Chuck Dumas **19 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*
Route: Charlton Campground to Crystal Springs
4.2 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
*Large and enthusiastic Saturday crowd. Three new hikers.
Trail was in excellent shape.*
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- Sept 11, 2008** **Leader:** Loretta Melancon **36 Hikers** *OMH Special Event*
Route: Charlton Campground to Crystal Springs
4.2 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
*Annual "Welcome Back" Hike, followed by pot luck picnic at Crystal Springs. 34 participants; 7 new members.
Loretta led half group from Crystal to Charlton; Jim led other half from Charlton to Crystal. Key swap.*
sss: Lake; Pond at Charlton
Spring
Occasional views through trees
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- Jan 13, 2007** **Leader:** Marv Weitzenfeld **? Hikers** *OMH Saturday*
4.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
No hike report received
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- Oct 12, 2006** **Leader:** Ken Schultz **15 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
Route: Charlton campground to Crystal Springs and back.
8.4 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 2**
*Local hike in lieu of overnight. Fourteen hikers followed Ken's torrid pace across this trail and back. We met Maria McLead Boston on the way back; she had "come out to look for us".
Grey fall morning with threat of rain; we got out our parkas for a while, but never got more than a sprinkle.*
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- Jan 14, 2006** **Leader:** Phil Simpson **18 Hikers** *p. 1
OMH Saturday*
Route: Crystal Springs to Charlton campground
4.2 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
- 7/2/2010

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- Sept 8, 2005** **Leader:** Martha Doty **33 Hikers** *OMH Special Event*
Route: Crystal Springs to Charlton Campground (and vice - versa)
4.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
"Welcome Back" Hike 2005. Picnic at Charlton end, because Crystal Springs facility closed
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- Feb 28, 2004** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **23 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*
Route: Crystal Springs to Charlton (or vice-versa)
4.1 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
Glorious day. Spring must be here. Hiked opposite directions. Charlton lake was drained; the flood gate wide open. "Lunch at The Shack" after
sss: Views down toward Charlton.
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- Sept 11, 2003** **Leader:** Martha Doty **34 Hikers** *OMH Special Event*
Route: Crystal Springs to Charlton
4.1 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
Annual "Welcome Back" Hike, followed by pot luck picnic at Crystal Springs. 34 participants; 8 new members.
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- Jan 25, 2003** **Leader:** Martha Doty **18 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*
Route: Crystal Springs Rec area to springs and back
4.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 2** **Scenic Rating 2**
Half of us went to springs and back (4.0 miles); others went to Charlton campground and back (8 miles)
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- Feb 21, 2002** **Leader:** Kris & Billy McMillen **6 or 8 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance*
Route: Hiked round trip, from Charlton; work mostly at Charlton end of trail
8.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours**
OMH crew does general clearing and tread repair for Forest Service after logging crews tore up trail. Martha Doty (usual task master) not available.
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- Sep 7, 2000** **Leader:** Martha Doty **lots of Hikers** *OMH Special Event*
Route: Crystal Springs to Charlton campground (and vice versa for half crowd).
4.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 2**
Fall 2000 "Welcome Back" Hike. Pot luck at Crystal Springs rec area.