

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. Trail now connects to LO Vista Trail, making combination hikes possible.
 3. Starting at Charlton, the toughest part of hike is first half mile; very steep up. After that, hike is moderate. It is 2.4 miles to road crossing and spring; 1.9 from there to Crystal Springs Rec area. The nice picnic area is about .4 mi from the trailhead at Crystal Springs.
 4. 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.
 5. Round trip makes a good, local Thursday hike - perhaps as a bonus hike (in lieu of overnight) or substitute hike.
 6. 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)

Ü^&^} oPã^•

Sept 9, 2010	Leader: Anita Moore	27 Hikers	OMH schedule
Route: Charlton Campground to Crystal Springs			
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3	
<i>Annual "Welcome Back" Hike, followed by pot luck picnic at Crystal Springs. Thirty participants; 4 new members. Rainy day, with showers before and after - but not during - hike. Much of the crowd was raring to go (after being inside for all of a very hot August), and came out of the blocks like sprinters. There was a great deal of happy chattering between hikers glad to see one another after the summer layoff.</i>			
sss: Lake; Pond at Charlton Spring flowing strongly			
Oct 3, 2009	Leader: Chuck Dumas	19 Hikers	OMH Saturday
Route: Charlton Campground to Crystal Springs			
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3	
<i>Large and enthusiastic Saturday crowd. Three new hikers. Trail was in excellent shape.</i>			
Sept 11, 2008	Leader: Loretta Melancon	36 Hikers	OMH Special Event
Route: Charlton Campground to Crystal Springs			
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3	
<i>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.</i>			
sss: Lake; Pond at Charlton Spring Occasional views through trees			
Jan 13, 2007	Leader: Marv Weitzenfeld	? Hikers	OMH Saturday
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3	
<i>No hike report received</i>			



OMH Trail Data / History

Oct 12, 2006	Leader: Ken Schultz	15 Hikers	OMH Thursday	
<i>Route:</i> Charlton campground to Crystal Springs and back.				
8.6 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 2		
<i>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".</i>				
<i>Grey fall morning with threat of rain; we got out our parkas for a while, but never got more than a sprinkle.</i>				

Jan 14, 2006	Leader: Phil Simpson	18 Hikers	OMH Saturday	
<i>Route:</i> Crystal Springs to Charlton campground				
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3		

Sept 8, 2005	Leader: Martha Doty	33 Hikers	OMH Special Event	
<i>Route:</i> Crystal Springs to Charlton Campground (and vice - versa)				
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3		
<i>"Welcome Back" Hike 2005. Picnic at Charlton end, because Crystal Springs facility closed</i>				

Feb 28, 2004	Leader: Jim Gifford	23 Hikers	OMH Saturday	
<i>Route:</i> Crystal Springs to Charlton (or vice-versa)				
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3		
<i>Glorious day. Spring must be here. Hiked opposite directions. Charlton lake was drained; the flood gate wide open. "Lunch at The Shack" after</i>				
<i>sss: Views down toward Charlton.</i>				

Sept 11, 2003	Leader: Martha Doty	34 Hikers	OMH Special Event	
<i>Route:</i> Crystal Springs to Charlton				
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 3		
<i>Annual "Welcome Back" Hike, followed by pot luck picnic at Crystal Springs. 34 participants; 8 new members.</i>				

Jan 25, 2003	Leader: Martha Doty	18 Hikers	OMH Saturday	
<i>Route:</i> Crystal Springs Rec area to springs and back				
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 2	Scenic Rating 2		
<i>Half of us went to springs and back (4.0 miles); others went to Charlton campground and back (8 miles)</i>				

Feb 21, 2002	Leader: Kris & Billy McMillen	6 or 8 Hikers	Trail Maintenance	
<i>Route:</i> Hiked round trip, from Charlton; work mostly at Charlton end of trail				
8.6 miles	Difficulty Rating 4 hours			
<i>OMH crew does general clearing and tread repair for Forest Service after logging crews tore up trail. Martha Doty (usual task master) not available.</i>				

Sep 7, 2000	Leader: Martha Doty	lots of Hikers	OMH Special Event	
<i>Route:</i> Crystal Springs to Charlton campground (and vice versa for half crowd).				
4.3 miles	Difficulty Rating 3	Scenic Rating 2		
<i>Fall 2000 "Welcome Back" Hike. Pot luck at Crystal Springs rec area.</i>				