

## OMH Trail Data / History

### Lake Ouachita Vista Trail

Ouachita National Forest (AR)

This is a beautiful trail along the southern shore of Lake Ouachita. Commonly referred to as the LOVista Trail, it runs up and down through mixed forest, and is designed for some spectacular views of Lake Ouachita at various spots along the entire length. The western end is not overly strenuous, but the climb up Hickory Nut Mountain is a steep 800' climb in less than a mile. The trail continues to grow in length, currently ending at the Charlton Trail. It is planned to some day extend along entire southern shore, connecting with Blakely Dam and Lake Ouachita State Park. The first section (western end) was completed in 2006, including 4.75 miles, plus two 1/4 mile spurs to vista points. Additional sections were completed each year, through 2010. As of mid-2010, the trail is 22.5 miles in length (including side spurs) with six trailheads. OMH sponsored a bench which is located on the eastern slope of Hickory Nut Mountain, beside a pretty stream and small waterfall.

**Planning notes:**

1. Plan 45 min to one hour from HSV to far trailhead (40 mi from west gate); about 30 min from HS (21 mi from Sutherlands).
2. The length of this trail and multiple trailheads give a variety of hikes for either Thursday or Saturday hikers.
3. The Thompkins Bend end (End of Leg One, Start of Leg Two) could become a nice Saturday "LOOP" Hike: From the Thompkins Bend Trailhead, follow the trail south (Leg 1) to the Hwy 949-3 Trailhead, Head East (LEFT) to meet the trail (Leg 2) turn North (LEFT) follow the trail back thru Thompkin's Bend back to the trailhead.
4. This area would be an excellent site for a combination "Hike and Paddle" partners outing. Canoeists and Kayakers would put boats in the water at the Denby Bay trailhead, partners would hike Leg One, and meet up with and swap out with the boaters at the Thompkins' Bend Vista Point; teams would then continue paddling/hiking to the next exchange point; continuing thus until exhaustion or the last available boat recovery point. Some Boat Portage might be required, depending on the evil-mindedness of the planners.

**Access Notes:**

1. Denby Bay: Turn (toward lake) off hwy 270 on Shangri La Road at Shangri-La resort. Take first left (less than 100 yards) and follow it straight about half mile to the end (do not take forks to right). Shangri La Rd is 22 miles west of Hwy 270 / Hwy 227 intersection; 9 miles east of Mt. Ida; or approximately 8 miles west of Crystal Springs. Large parking lot.
2. Homestead: Proceed up Shangri la Rd about 1.5 miles (from hwy 270). TH parking on left.
3. Tompkins Bend: Proceed up Shangri La Rd approximately two miles (from hwy 270) to entrance to Tompkins Bend Rec Area; TH parking on left (5-6 cars easily).
4. Joplin TH: Turn north (toward lake) off hwy 270 on Mt Harbor Road at Joplin. This is about 19.5 mi from 270/227 intersection; or 1.5 mi east of Shangri La Rd. Take first right and go 0.4 mile to TH parking on right. (Caution: the trail uses this 0.4 mi of road).
5. Hickory Nut Mt TH: Turn north (toward lake) off hwy 270 on Hickory Nut Mt Rd. This is about one mile into Montgomery County (17.5 mi from 270/227 intersection; @ 2.5 miles east of Charlton camoground). 2 mi west of Mt Harbor Rd. Proceed 3.5 miles up forest road to Hickory Nut Mt Picnic Area. Turn left into picnic area. TH and TH parking are just beyond picnic area.
6. Forest Road 47 and 47A: Turn north (toward lake) off hwy 270 on Hickory Nut Mt Rd. [see above]. Go about 1 mile and turn right on Forest Road 47. Go about 2 miles and park at the junction of roads 47 and 47A. [NOTE: USFS trail map shows 47A going up mountain to the overlook and on to trailhead. Don't believe it! Road does not go through.]
7. Crystal Springs: Take Crystal Springs Road in Royal. Go to end of road at Crystal Springs picnin area; turn left on FR 47. Go to trail crossing at spring spigot.

**For additional info:** LOViT Traildogs ( <http://www.lakeouchitavistatrail.org> ). LOViT Traildogs website has considerable information about this trail and the future plans for trail extensions. They have maps and detailed instructions about trailhead access.

OMH members John Joswick and Chuck Dumas are Trail Dog members

Ouachita National Forest trail map TR-37 (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/ouachita/maps/>)

Womble Ranger Station Visitor's Center, Mt Ida ( 870/867-2101 ).

#### Recent Hikes:

**Mar 20, 2010**

**Leader:** Chuck Dumas

**12 Hikers**

**OMH Saturday**

**Route:** Hickory Nut Mountain picnic area to Charlton Trail at spring pipe

**5.6 miles**

**Difficulty Rating 3**

**Scenic Rating 4**

*First hike for the new 2.5 miles connecting to Charlton Trail. First three miles was coming down Hickory Nut mountain through the beautiful creek drainage.*

*Stopped at our club sponsored bench on beautiful little point above the creek.*

*Lunch at Shangri La after hike.*

**sss:** Views of lake from Hickory Nut Mt.

Creek and drainage; small waterfalls; rock formations; and moss covered areas.

Walnut Creek

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**Nov 12, 2009**      **Leader:** Larry Kizer      **16 Hikers**      **OMH Thursday**  
**Route:** Denby Point Trailhead east to Tompkins Bend TH, continuing on to Mt Harbor Road and Joplin TH  
**10 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*Nice fall day; completed this ten mile hike in about 4 1/2 hours. For several, it was the first time on this trail.  
Lunch on the trail in view of lake.  
Sallye won the lottery at Mountain Pine road gas store after hike.*  
**sss:** views of lake

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**Sept 26, 2009**      **Leader:** Loretta Melancon      **12 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** Hickory Nut Mountain Trailhead down to FR 47 / 47A intersect  
**3.6 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**  
*Newest section of Vista Trail, may be the most scenic. It follows a creek bed down mountain eastward. Would be very steep coming up.  
First visit to OMH bench located on this section, at a small overlook above creek; view of little waterfall; fire ring.  
Loretta combined this hike with the Lake Ouachita clean-up day. Picked up many bags of trash at Crystal Springs in morning; then did hike at 2 pm.  
Five of seven did round trip 7 mile hike*  
**sss:** Vistas from upper sections      **Waterfall** small, un-named  
creek which the trail follows down the mountain

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**Jan 22, 2009**      **Leader:** Chuck Dumas      **21 Hikers**      **OMH Thursday**  
**Route:** Tompkins Bend TH east to Hickory Nut Mountain, including spur to Eagle Vista  
**11.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**  
*Cold to start, but otherwise beautiful day. Perfect for hiking.  
Lunch on trail east of Joplin TH  
Ken and Phil shuttled cars, so we could all hike same direction. Loretta and Sallye dropped out at Joplin (before Hickory Nut Mt climb)*  
**sss:** Views of Lake  
Eagle Vista Loop  
Creek below Hickory Nut mt  
views from Hickory Nut Mt

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**Dec 20, 2008**      **Leader:** Cliff Harrison      **16 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** From Denby Point east to Tompkins Bend TH (+ 1/2 for spur to Sunset Vista; 1/2 for spur to campground)  
**5.75 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*Grey, cloudy day. Threatened rain, but never did. Did both spur trails on this original section of trail.  
Jim set a torrid pace as "lead hiker" (almost 6 mi in 2 1/2 hours) -- must have been because of the cancelled Thursday hike.*  
**sss:** Sunset Vista  
Views of Lake Ouachita almost entire length of trail.

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**Oct 11, 2008**      **Leader:** Chuck Dumas      **23 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** Joplin TH up Hickory Nut Mountain to Hickory Nut Mt TH.  
**4.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*This was the first trip up Hickory Nut Mountain for the Saturday crowd. None of the hikers had difficulty with the final, steep ascent. Trail was in excellent condition.  
After the hike, group drove to Lake Ouachita Vista on Hickory Nut Mt (1.1 miles from TH) for a great view of the lake.*

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**May 29, 2008**      Leader: Tom Cornelius      **17 Hikers**      **OMH Thursday**

**Route:** Joplin TH (off Mt Harbor Rd) backward to old Mt Harbor TH; then backtrack east, past starting point and up to Hickory Nut Mt. TH

**5.5 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**

*First OMH hike on recently opened extension of this trail up Hickory Nut Mountain -- an awesome four miles of trail*

*Group hiked from Tompkins Bend TH (Shangri La Road) to Hickory Nut Mountain (8.5 mi)*

*Jim helped Ben & Ken shuttle seven cars, then joined group in middle (mileage is Jim's mileage). Seven car shuttle got very confusing, and we thought we had lost Chuck's car keys, but they were found at the intermediate trailhead shuttle spot (Joplin).*

**sss:** views near top of Hickory Nut Mt

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**Sept 15, 2007**      Leader: Ken Schultz      **30 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**

**Route:** Mt Harbor Rd TH to Tompkins Bend TH; with side trip up spur to Eagle Vista lookout.

**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**

*Big group; split to do a car-swap. Chuck led my group; I swept. Ken led other half opposite direction*

*Groups never met (Ken missed spur); We went to rescue them at far end, but they had already started hiking back (for a seven mile round trip)*

*Lunch at Mt. Harbor after hike, prompting another miss. Glen took my carpool to Shangri-La while I waited for rest of hikers to appear. I went to Mt Harbor and they weren't there. They finally figured it out and came over.*

**sss:** Eagle Vista  
Lake views

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**May 31, 2007**      Leader: John Joswick      **18 Hikers**      **OMH bonus**

**Route:** From Mountain Harbor TH west to Denby Point TH (+ 1 mi for spur to Eagle Vista)

**10 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**

*First OMH hike to include the extended (eastern half) trail, which officially opened this year. Current trail is now 9.0 miles, plus two 1/4 mi spurs to vistas; and one 1/2 mi spur to vista.*

*Most of crowd went to Shangri-La Resort after hike for pie and ice cream.*

**sss:** Eagle Vista  
Views of Lake Ouachita almost entire length of trail.  
Big (and fascinating trees)

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**Sept 23, 2006**      Leader: Ken Schultz      **22 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**

**Route:** From Denby Point east to Tompkins Bend TH (+ 1/2 for spur to Sunset Vista)

**5.25 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**

*Started this storm with forecast of strong cold front passage and potentially violent thunderstorms. Could see the dark clouds approaching, felt a little light rain, but finished before the storm hit. Within minutes of getting back in cars at upper trailhead, we were in torrential downpour.*

**sss:** Sunset Vista  
Views of lake from overlooks; approaching storm

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**March 16, 2006**      Leader: John Joswick      **12 Hikers**      **OMH bonus**

**Route:** From Denby Point east to Tompkins Bend TH (+ 1/2 for spur to Sunset Vista)

**5.25 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**

*First club hike on this trail, which had officially opened only the previous Friday. This was added as a "Bonus Hike" on day of evening meeting when we celebrated 20 years of OMH.*

*Current trail is 4.75 miles (+ 2 spurs of 1/4 mi each).*

*Rookie hike lead for John. Good job.*

**sss:** Sunset Vista  
Views of Lake Ouachita almost entire length of trail