

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 (or LOViT), 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. A 1.25 mile, ADA-accessible, Watchable Wildlife section is at the west end of the trail. OMH sponsored a bench which is located on the eastern slope of Hickory Nut Mountain, beside a pretty stream and small waterfall.

The trail continues to grow in length, under a master plan that would 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, starting at Denbu Bay. Additional sections have been completed each year, through 2011, working eastward. As of mid-2011, the trail is 22.5 miles in length (including side spurs) with six trailheads. It extends from Denby Point in the west, connecting to the Charlton Trail and going to Little Bear Creek just past Crystal Springs.

- 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 (large Shangri-La resort sign). 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:** Ouachita National Forest trail map TR-37 (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/ouachita/maps/>)
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.
Womble Ranger Station Vistor's Center, Mt Ida (870/867-2101).

Recent Hikes:

OMH Trail Data / History

May 12, 2011 Leader: Phil Simpson **7 Hikers** OMH Thursday /
local in lieu of
overnight

Route: Hickory Nut Mountain picnic area to Crystal Springs campground

7.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**

Hiked from Hickory Nut Mountain down to Charlton Trail and in to Crystal Springs. This is a wonderful trail through a beautiful creek drainage. The rocks were covered with moss surrounded by beautiful ferns. Water crossings were easy. Hike Leader says: "It was one of the best trails I have hiked in Arkansas."

There had been a tornado in the area prior to the hike. There were no downed big trees over the trail or other tornado damage.

sss: Views of lake from Hickory Nut Mt.
Creek and drainage; small waterfalls; rock formations; and
moss covered areas.
Walnut Creek

Jan 15, 2011 Leader: Chuck Dumas **23 Hikers** OMH Saturday

Route: Homestead TH to Denby Point TH, including the Sunset Vista spur; then across the new handicap accessible boardwalk and over new trail to (old) highway bridge and back to handicap parking lot.

5 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**

Beautiful day following a cold, frozen week. Still snow on the ground in the woods, and a little ice/slush on the trail

Hiked the oldest part of the trail and the newest part of the trail. This was our first club use of the new ADA boardwalk and the new section of trail over to the old hwy 270 bridge (trails not really finished and not officially opened yet)

sss: Views of Lake

Sept 23, 2010 Leader: Chuck Dumas **19 Hikers** OMH Thursday

Route: Denby Point TH to Homestead TH; counter-clockwise around loop to Tompkins Bend TH; and back to Denby Bay/Tompkins Bend TH

8.5 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**

Still very warm, but a beautiful day and big turn out for our first long hike of season.

Ben and Glenn moved cars to provide 'bail out' points along the way.

Many went to Shangri La after hike for lunch and pie.

sss: Views of Lake

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

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

OMH Trail Data / History

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

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

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.

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.

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

OMH Trail Data / History

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

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)

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

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