

## OMH Trail Data / History

### Lake Sylvia Loop

Ouachita National Forest (AR)

This is a five-mile loop with several variations for Saturday hikes. The basic loop starts at Lake Sylvia campground and goes south to meet the Ouachita Trail (Sect 9). It follows the trail for 1.4 miles eastward to Chinquapin Gap, then leaves the OT and heads back toward the lake. A short (0.4 mile) spur on the northbound leg goes up to Chinquapin Overlook. This is a steep climb, but a beautiful spot during leaf-off. About 1/4 mile past spur to Chinquapin overlook are two inner loops. A right turn at this intersection leads to the dam and shortest return route. A left turn at this intersection leads to another beautiful overlook and view area. To finish the loop, take the right fork at either of the next two intersections and come down above Lake Sylvia dam. A short spur at the dam leads to a lookout above the dam and great views of the cliffs and the canyon, which typify Ouachita Mountain geology. Trail follows the lake past the campground and swimming dock, and back to cars. The trail has several climbs and some good leaf-off views; several rocky stretches; and some small streams to jump across. Each of the intersections provides an alternate loop back to the trailhead, with wildlife interpretive signs, for those who need variety.

**Planning notes:**

1. Wintertime is best for views; there is no significant view from overlook after leaf out.
2. If you have a large crowd, consider breaking this hike into several smaller groups, based on hiking interest and intent. Let one group go to the summit overlook without delaying others; one group can spend more time on wildlife trail; One can do the four-mile loop and go home.
3. This makes a good "Hike and Swim" in late spring or early fall.
4. Drive from HSV East Gate is about 45 minutes. from Desoto park in HS about 1 hour. Use 50 miles round trip for carpool share.

**Access Notes:** 1. Drive to Lake Sylvia recreation area via Hwy 9 and CR 324. CR 324 is 2 miles north of hwy 9 and hwy 10 merger. Coming into Lake Sylvia, go past the campground to last parking area on your left. An interpretive nature trail (Trees of the forest) goes off directly from parking lot. The main trail is across the road from parking lot.

**For additional info:** US Forest Service map TR-27 Lake Sylvia Trails  
Tim Ernst: Arkansas Hiking Trails (p. 149)

### Recent Hikes

**Sept 13, 2008**      **Leader:** Anita Moore      **13 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**

**Route:** Full Loop counter-clockwise. TH to OT, east to Chinquapin Gap, south to overlook spur, up to overlook and back, through Big Gap, to dam and along lake back to TH

**4.2 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**

*First Saturday of the new season. Several new hikers joined the group; all seemed to do well*

**Feb 10, 2007**      **Leader:** Cliff & Pamela Harrison      **23 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**

**Route:** Loop clockwise from TH parking to OT; spur to Chinquapin Summit; outside loop to dam and back to TH

**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**

*We had an escaped dog event, that caused some breakdown of hiking discipline but ended happily (the dog being the more intelligent of the combination of Hike Leader and Dog Owner).*

*Of much more interest was the opportunity to get some hands-on and show-and-tell trail maintenance training from the founders of FoOT, immediately after the hike.*

**sss:** View from Chinquapin Summit (Lake Maumelle and Pinnacle Mountain); Flatside Pinnacle & Ouachita Pinnacle  
Views of dam and canyon below dam.

**Sept. 30, 2006**      **Leader:** Anita Moore      **26 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**

**Route:** Loop clockwise from TH parking to OT; spur to Chinquapin Summit; inside of wild life loop past overlook; to dam and back

**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**

*Anita's "rookie" hike lead - great job.*

*USFS had recently cleared view from summit - great view ; also great view from overlook on wild life trail loop - view of Flatside Pinnacle and Ouachita Pinnacle.*

7/2/2010 **sss:** View from Chinquapin Summit (Lake Maumelle and Pinnacle Mountain);  
View from Overlook (Flatside Pinnacle & Ouachita Pinnacle)  
Views of dam and canyon below dam.

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- Feb 11, 2006**      Leader: Ken Schultz      **8 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** From TH to OT, east on OT to Chinquapin gap; continue to Nancy Mt shelter and return; northon Lake Sylvia Loop to inner Chinquapin loop, past overlook, to dam and return.  
**5.7 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**  
*Lake Sylvia is full again !!! (first time in over a year)*  
*Cold, snowy day. There was a slight coating of snow in the forest - very pretty*  
*Five hikers took a side trip to the recently completed Nancy Mt shelter.*  
**sss:** Snow in forest; view from overlook; rock formations at dam;  
canyon below dam
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- Oct 8, 2005**      Leader: Ken Schultz      **big crowd Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** Clockwise  
**4.5 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 2**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*Lake still very low*
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- Apr 28, 2005**      Leader: Rex Greer      **3 Hikers**      **OMH Thursday**  
**Route:** Clockwise loop; starting with the climb  
**4.1 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*We did the hike clockwise, instead of the usual counter-clockwise. It was a good hike this direction, because you get the climb out of the way first, but you miss the dramatic effect of descending above the dam. Hike took 2:15 minutes.*  
*This hike was scheduled to be on the Boy Scout trail, Burns Park, Little Rock, but do to the low turn out and threat of rain, it was changed to Lake Sylvia.*
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- Jun 12, 2004**      Leader: Jim Gifford      **8 Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** Full Loop from TH, including spur to Chinquapin Overlook  
**4.2 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*Season finale. Intended as Hike & Swim, but only two stayed for lunch at lake and only hike leader swam.*
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- Jan 31, 2004**      Leader: Maria McClead      **24 Hikers**      **OMH schedule**  
**Route:** Counter-clockwise loop; including trip to overlook  
**4.5 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 2**      **Scenic Rating 3**  
*Beautiful day; view from overlook the best I have seen. We could see Flatside Pinnacle, Forked Mt, Ouachita Pinnacle, and Pinnacle Mountain.*  
**sss:** Awesome view from Chinkapin Peak
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- Sep 7, 2002**      Leader: Harry Thomas      **Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** Hike and swim; loop plus trip to Chinquapin Overlook  
**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**  
*Great day for hiking and swimming*
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- Jun 13, 2002**      Leader: Mike Moriarty      **Hikers**      **OMH Saturday**  
**Route:** Hike and Swim; loop trail including trip to Chinkapin overlook  
**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**  
*Swimmin' with lots of kids*  
**sss:** Cliffs at dam

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**Apr 18, 2002**      **Leader:** Martha Doty, Task Master      **Hikers**      *Trail Maintenance*

**Route:** General trail maintenance

**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 4 hours**

*General clearing of entire trail; cleaned interpretive signs on lower loops; created rock crossing in lower wet section near lakes*

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**Mar 16, 2002**      **Leader:** Martha Doty      **Hikers**      *OMH Saturday*

**Route:** Full loop plus spur to Chinquapin summit; Includes 1.4 miles of OT

**5.0 miles**      **Difficulty Rating 3**      **Scenic Rating 4**

*Steep climb to Chinquapin summit, but worth it*

**sss:** Chinquapin Overlook  
Cliffs, rock formations around dam