

Ouachita National Recreation Trail / Sect 1
Ouachita National Forest (OK)

Section 1 is the western-most portion of the OT, running from Talihena State Park (Mile 0.0) in the west to Winding Stair Trailhead (mile 23.7) in the east. This section is completely within Oklahoma; it parallels Talihena Scenic drive and lies mostly within the Winding Stair National Recreation Area. Section 1 is perhaps the most difficult section of the trail as well. The vertical challenges are not as severe as in section two and some of the later areas, but the footing is terrible. This is a VERY rocky area. The trail crosses several rock glaciers, and at times there is no tread at all, simply blue blazes on rocks. The second stretch (Deadman's Gap to Horsethief Springs) is 12 miles of very rough terrain with no easy way to break it up. There are some beautiful scenic overlooks in this section and areas where the trail runs along a shelf with steep rock bluffs above you and sharp drop offs below.

Planning notes:

There is no good way to break this trip up, because of the 12 mile stretch from Deadman's Gap to Horsethief Spring. Past trips have done a two day trip from State Line to 259 (17 miles) and a three day trip from 259 to Talihena. This leaves that awful 12 mile stretch in the middle of three day trip. Recommendation: Next time make the trip from state line to Winding Stair TH (22.6 miles) and the next trip all of Section 1 only (23.7 miles). Either can be two long hiking days or three shorter ones.

To do Sect 1 in two days, do miles 0 - 8 first; then do miles 19.9 - 23.7 as a second hike on the first day. Mile 8 - 19.9 are a full day by itself, and you would not want to stretch it out any.



Access Notes:

All trailheads are well marked and offer good parking.

West end of Trail (Mile '0'): Talimena State Park on 271, several miles N of Talihena, OK

Deadman's Gap TH on scenic hwy 1; 8 miles from West end

Horsethief Springs TH and Winding Stair TH also on scenic hwy 1

Big Cedar Creek off Hwy 259; south of rte 1

For additional info:

Tim Ernst: Ouchita Trail Guide

USFS map

Ben Glazer knows area well; Jim Gifford led trip in 2006

Recent Hikes:

Mar 5, 2003 Leader: Mike Zeller 18 **Hikers** OMH Overnight

Route: Deadman's Gap to Talimena SP [mile 8.0 - 0.0]

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

Overnight to complete western sections of OT Cold start (about 30 deg)

Overnight notes:

2003: Stayed at Lazy R motel in Talihina; campers stayed at Talimena SP; potluck dinner at SP (cold evening)

Great dinner at Italian Cafe in Talihina (closed 2004).

Good breakfast at "The Little Store" (gas station/mart) across from Italian restaurant.

Mar 6, 2003 Leader: Mike Zeller 14 **Hikers** OMH Overnight

Route: Deadman's Gap to Horsethief Springs [8.0 - 19.9]

11.9 miles Difficulty Rating **4** Scenic Rating **4**

Overnight to complete western sections of OT. Very rocky, difficult footing; but not overly strenuous.

Trip participants not hiking: Ben Glazer; Ann Haase; Sadie Wingard; Maureen Greer; Charline Knight

Mar 7, 2003 Leader: Mike Zeller 15 **Hikers** OMH Overnight

Route: Winding Stairs: Hwy 259/Big Cedar Creek to Horsethief Springs [30.5 - 19.9]

10.6 miles Difficulty Rating **4** Scenic Rating **4**

Six hikers complete the Ouachita Trail!

(Don Haase; Rex Greer; Sallye Waddell; Pat Zeller; Kris and Billie McMillan.)

40 degrees warmer than first day of this trip. Lunch at tower site (2451' elev);

then met rest of gang at Winding Stairs TH for walk in and completion celebration.

First distribution of new T-shirts.

Overnight notes:

Participants not hiking: Ben Glazer, Maureen Greer; Bob Hostler and Mary

Jan 10, 2006 Leader: Jim Gifford 13 **Hikers** OMH Overnight

Route: Talimena SP to Deadman's Gap (00.0 - 8.0)

8.0 miles Difficulty Rating **3** Scenic Rating **3**

First hike of first day of three-day, thirty-mile trip. Gray, overcast day precluded much visibility. Ben & Sadie "shuffled cars".

Jan 10, 2006 Leader: Jim Gifford 10 **Hikers** OMH Overnight

Route: Horsethief Springs to Winding Stair Trailhead (19.9 - 23.7)

3.8 miles Difficulty Rating **3** Scenic Rating **3**

Second hike of the day. Did this piece out of sequence to make second day easier.

Overnight notes:

Stayed at Big Cedar RV Park in Hogden, OK (corner of OK 63 and US 259.

Have cabins, RV hookups, and campsites.

Great hosts. 918/851-3271 www.bigcedar.net .

Kris and Brenda led us in games .

Jan 11, 2006 Leader: Jim Gifford 14 **Hikers** OMH Overnight

Route: Deadman's Gap to Horsethief Springs (8.0 - 19.9)

12.0 miles Difficulty Rating **4** Scenic Rating **3**

SSS: Views from ridge tops, particularly on the ledges where a rock structure is above you on one side, with steep drop off on the other. Rock glaciers.

This is perhaps the toughest piece of the Ouachita Trail. It took it out of most of us.

Ten of us did the whole thing; two did a partial hike; and Ben/Sadie shuttled.

Bo & Brenda Lea completed the Ouachita Trail on this hike.

Games this evening gave way to massage.