

OMH Trail Data / History

Ouachita National Recreation Trail / Sect 8

Ouachita National Forest (AR)

Section 8 of the 223-mile Ouachita National Recreation Trail is 27 miles long, with about 850' of vertical variance. This is one of the most scenic sections of the Ouachita Trail. The section runs from AR hwy 7 (mile 160.4) in west to FR 152 (mile 187.4) near Lake Sylvia in east. It includes ten miles traversing Flatside Wilderness and Flatside Pinnacle, a dramatic rock outcropping worth the climb. This section crosses several very scenic creeks (Sugar Creek; Crystal Prong) and an un-named creek and waterfall at mile 175 (referred to in OMH as "Mocassin Creek"; see 12/1/2005 entry). There are several steep climbs in either direction. There are two shelters in this section: Oak Mountain Shelter (m 167.4) and Brown Creek Shelter (mile 182.5).

In 2003, Ouachita Mountain Hikers "adopted" the ten miles of trail through Flatside Wilderness. This commitment to Friends of the Ouachita Trail (FoOT) includes responsibility for maintenance of this section of trail. Since that time, Flatside Wilderness has been the centerpiece of our trail maintenance activity.

Planning notes: This section has several good hikes for Thursday or Saturday.

For Thursday, the hike through Flatside Wilderness from Pinnacle to FR 124 (or vice versa) is stunning in any season. Ten miles; lunch at Moccasin Falls (m 172.5)

For Saturdays: Hike from FR 153 down to hwy 7. This is a beautiful 5-mile Saturday trip, but the rocks around Sugar Creek could be tricky for Saturday group in wet weather. If you go both ways, make sure the west to east group knows it is an 800' gain. Another Sat hike is from Flatside Pinnacle to Crystal Prong. Start at FR 94, go up to Pinnacle, then down to crystal Prong and back out. (about 5 mi)

Driving times range from Jessieville Ranger station vary from 5 minutes for hwy 7 TH to 45 minutes for FR 94/ Flatside wilderness.

Access Notes: All the access points are easy to find via FR 132, Winona Scenic Drive. From west to east:

Hwy 7 TH (m 160.4): 6 miles north of Jessieville Ranger station. Good parking lot.

FR 153 (m 165.4): Off FR 132; about 5 miles east of hwy 7. Limited parking.

FR 124 (m 168.8): About 1/4 mi off FR 132, about 8 miles east of hwy 7 (edge of Flatside Wilderness). Limited parking.

FR 124 is very rough; recommend parking at top of steep drop.

FR 132 Grindstone Gap (m 173.5; access point only). On FR 132 about five miles past 124. NO PARKING

FR FR 94/ Flatside Pinnacle TH (m 179.2). Take FR 94 from FR 132, about 20 miles from hwy 7 or 8 miles from hwy 9.

Three or four miles up FR 94 to top of hill, wide spot with terrific view. Parking for several cars. This TH is a long drive on forest roads. It is 50 minutes from HSV East Gate; Hour and five minutes from west gate, making East gate a preferred meeting spot.

FR 152 (m 187.4): Continue through Lake Sylvia area on CR 324. When pavement ends, it becomes FR 152; crosses trail about a mile later. FR 152 continues out to meet hwy 132, about 3 miles from hwy 9. NO PARKING

See Tim Ernst Guide map for sect 8

For additional info: Tim Ernst: Ouachita Trail Guide (Fourth Edition)

USFS Detailed Segment map of the Ouachita Trail (map TR-1/det). Available at USFS offices or at www.fs.fed.us/r8/ouachita/maps/

For current trail conditions, see: Friends of the Ouachita Trail (www.friendsOT.org)

Recent Hikes:

May 21, 2009

Leader: Marv Weitzenfeld

11 Hikers

OMH Thursday

Route: Flatside Wilderness. FR 94 to Flatside Pinnacle, then back to FR 124 [179.4 - 168.8]

11.0 miles

Difficulty Rating 4

Scenic Rating 4

Mike Lands finished the Trail today. Jim brought the champagne and shirt for ceremony at FR 124 TH. Mike did his last OT section; Joy did her first.

Jim led Anita, Marie, Joy, and Jeannie up to Flatside Pinnacle before heading into the wilderness. They caught the rest about five miles later after having lunch at Mocassin Creek Falls. (Mileage does not include 0.6 mi for round trip to Pinnacle).

Crystal Prong was roaring after month of heavy rain. Several took their boots off to wade it.

Beautiful day, except for a little haze. Floating clouds and occasional breeze kept the heat down.

This hike was rescheduled to accommodate Mike and reminded us of why we don't hike on club meeting day. Anita had to go directly to library; several others were a few minutes late, having barely enough time to shower and drive to town.

sss: Flatside Pinnacle

Mocassin Creek

views from ridge line

views of Forked Mountain

Waterfall Mocassin Creek Falls

OMH Trail Data / History

Recent Hikes:

- May 7, 2009** **Leader:** Glen McClain, Trail Boss **8 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** Green Thumb (m 170.6) to Grindstone Gap (m 173.5)
2.9 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating**
Second pass this year; trail in pretty good shape. Mostly lopping and drainage repair due to heavy spring rains.
- Apr 16, 2009** **Leader:** Glen McClain, Trail Boss **6 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** FR 124 (edge of Flatside wilderness) to Green Thumb Spring TH (170.6)
1.8 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating**
Having completed maintenance on the entire wilderness stretch in this hiking season, we actually had the opportunity to start over this year. Trail in remarkably good shape. Very little lopping needed. No cross-cut work; but some hand sawing. Cleaned out drains and rebuilt a couple of water bars.
sss: Views toward Forked Mountain
- Mar 19, 2009** **Leader:** Glenn Wortham, Task Master **12 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** General trail maintenance; Flatside Wilderness from 174.2 to 177.2 and back
6.5 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating 4**
*Worked section from 175 to 177.2 (Crystal Prong Creek) then walked back to starting point at 174.2
Glenn Wortham took over as "Task Master" in absence of Glen McClain (funeral)
Trail in pretty good shape. Loppers had little to do. Cross-cut crew (Steve & John) hiked six miles to get one large tree (near Crystal Prong). Jim did a lot of Fanno sawing, clearing two trees off the trail and a couple hanging across trail.
Light rain much of the morning; some got wetter than others depending on which group and where they worked.
Lunch at Shack afterwards.*
sss: Crystal Prong **Waterfall** Moccasin Falls
Ponds and creek near falls
- Mar 5, 2009** **Leader:** Marv Weitzenfeld **? Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
- Route:** FR94 Flatside Pinnacle to Hyw 9 [179.2 - 191.8]
12.6 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
No hike report received
sss: Flatside Pinnacle
- Dec 13, 2008** **Leader:** Marie Michalets **13 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*
- Route:** Fr 94 to Flatside Pinnacle to Crystal Prong (179.4 - 177.2) and return
4.6 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**
*Sort of a grey, day; but good views under the overcast. Wind was cold on Pinnacle, but ok in valley
Nice rest and snacks at Crystal Prong - which was flowing freely*
sss: Flatside Pinnacle
Crystal Prong Creek
- Nov 20, 2008** **Leader:** Glen McClain, Trail Boss **10 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** Green Thumb (m 170.6) to Grindstone Gap (m 173.5)
2.9 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating**
*Trail in pretty good shape; did some lopping and cut a few small trees with fanno saw.
Glen, Glenn, Billy, John, Steve worked cross-cut saw, cleared over a dozen trees.*

OMH Trail Data / History

Recent Hikes:

Sept 18, 2008 **Leader:** Glen McClain, Trail Boss **12 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*

Route: FR 124 (edge of Flatside wilderness) to mile 170 and back

miles **Difficulty Rating** **Scenic Rating**

First maintenance day of the new season

Trailhead area badly overgrown, sue to USFS repair and rebuilding of FR 124 (Wonderful improvement)

The five guys spent most of day working cross-cut saw. Cut about a dozen trees off trail, and several hangers/leaners.

sss: Views toward Forked Mountain

Jan 19, 2008 **Leader:** Cliff & Pamela Harrison **21 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*

Route: FR 153 to Hwy 7 trailhead (165.4 - 160.4)

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

Beautiful, clear, (but very cold) morning. Views were great, but temps never got above freezing

Cliff led half the group from hwy 7 to FR 153; Pam led the other half in opposite direction. Glenn did a little of each and provided 'drop-out shuttle' at fr 132 crossing

Although the pace did not seem fast or hurried, both groups finished the five miles in just over two hours (a blistering pace for Saturday hikers)

Most of crowd went to Shack after the hike for lunch.

sss: Sugar Creek rocks and small waterfalls;
Leaf off views; double vistas from ridge tops;
creek valley east of hwy 7

Jan 17, 2008 **Leader:** Glen McClain, Trail Boss **Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*

Route: Flatside Wilderness from Grindstone Gap almost to creek [173.5 - @175] and hike out

3.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3 hours** **Scenic Rating**

Glen, Glenn, John and Cliff worked the cross-cut saw and cleared all downed trees. Rest of us lopped. The trail is in such good shape that we couldn't find a lot to lop.

Jan 12, 2008 **Leader:** Glenn Wortham **16 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*

Route: Flatside Pinnacle to Crystal Prong and return (177.2 - 179.4) + Spur to pinnacle

4.6 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**

The weather was clear and the view was great. There were no significant water crossings. The ferns and holly trees were very noticeable as their green color stood out

The water level at Crystal Prong was high and the cascades were beautiful. We stayed at Crystal Prong for approximately 25 minutes and had trail snacks there. The hike out was more difficult as it was uphill most of the way

The hike leader showed the hikers the 300 yard reroute completed several years ago by other OMH'ers.

We encountered at least 10 other hikers on the trail either coming out or going to Crystal Prong and further. There were a couple of additional groups getting ready to hike into Flatside Wilderness as we were coming out, and at least 10 vehicles parked on FR 94 at the Trailhead. It was great to see that many hikers out on a Saturday.

sss: Flatside Pinnacle
Crystal prong

Nov 2, 2006 **Leader:** Marv Weitzenfeld **20 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*

Route: Hwy 7 to FR124 [Flatside Wilderness] [160.4 - 168.8]

8.4 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**

Perfect hiking day. Clear, fall colors out, high in 50s.

Split group; Jim led half group up from hwy 7 to FR 124. Marv led remainder downhill.

Included 2001 "Section from Hell" (ice storm)

sss: Creek canyon above Sugar Creek
Views of fall color

OMH Trail Data / History

Recent Hikes:

- Oct 5, 2006** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **20 Hikers** **OMH Thursday**
Route: FR 124 to FR 94 (Flatside Wilderness) [and vice versa]
11.2 miles **Difficulty Rating 4** **Scenic Rating 4**
Great day for hiking. Hazy morning, view from Flatside resembled the Smoky Mts. Split group and went opposite directions. Jim led eight hikers west to east, after a short side-trip to Flatside Pinnacle. Glen McLain led eight hikers eastbound, finishing with the trip up Flatside. Kris/Billy, Glenn W, and Ben scouted maintenance conditions and helped shuttle. Very dry. Crystal Prong had only a tiny flow, presenting no challenge to cross. Waterfall at "Moccasin Creek" had no flow whatsoever. Ponds were stagnant. Evidence from last springs wildfire almost non-existent. It clearly did more good than harm.
sss: Flatside Pinnacle **Waterfall** Moccasin Creek
Crystal prong
"Moccasin Creek"
Views of Forked Mountain
- April 1, 2006** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **30 Hikers** **OMH Saturday**
Route: Flatside Pinnacle to Crystal Prong and return (177.2 - 179.4) + spur to Pinnacle
4.6 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**
Gray day, with loooong drive across Winona Scenic Drive. Limited views, but lots of water in Crystal prong, and 30 folks enjoyed it. Hike leader never said "It's all downhill from here". In fact promised the opposite. Lunch at Shack afterwards.
sss: Flatside Pinnacle
Crystal prong
- Dec 1, 2005** **Leader:** Marv Weitzenfeld **20 Hikers** **OMH Thursday**
Route: FR 124 to FR 94 (Flatside Wilderness) [and vice versa]
10.4 miles **Difficulty Rating 4** **Scenic Rating 4**
Beautiful clear morning; high about 50. Great day for hiking. Marv led for Ken Schultz (sick). Split group and went opposite directions. Jim led west to east group, after a short side-trip to Flatside Pinnacle. Kris named "Moccasin Creek", the beautiful waterfall/pool area near mile 175 (named after the huge mocassin we saw there last spring). Lots of storm damage from last weekends storms (tornados?), especially near mile 169 - 170.
sss: Flatside Pinnacle **Waterfall** Moccasin Creek
Crystal prong
"Moccasin Creek"
Views of Forked Mountain
- Nov 17, 2005** **Leader:** Glenn Wortham, Task Master **16 Hikers** **Trail Maintenance / OMH**
Route: Drain and tread repair; Mile 174.2 to creek at 175
2.1 miles **Difficulty Rating 3 hours** **Scenic Rating 3**
A "training and work day". A lot of new maintainers got their first taste of tread work. Cleaned and built water bars/drains; cleared creeks and washes; did major tread repair. Only two pair of loppers, but four Pulaskis, several fire rakes, picks, and rock bars.

OMH Trail Data / History

Recent Hikes:

- Nov 10, 2005** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **24 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
Route: FR 124 to AR hwy 7 (168.8 - 160.4) [and vice versa]
8.8 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
*Split group and went in opposite directions; rendezvoused at hwy 7 TH.
Met John Joswick and "Model T" on their through hike of the trail at hwy 7 this morning. Hike planned to walk with them a way.
Nice fall day; color; high about 60. Lunch at sugar creek.*
sss: Views from ridge tops into Flatside Wilderness
Sugar Creek
- Sept 15, 2005** **Leader:** Glenn Wortham, Task Master **12 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
Route: Trail Maintenance - Mile 172.5 to 173.5 and return
2.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
First trail maintenance after summer recess. Trail in pretty good shape. I think we are proving that FoOT concept works.
- Apr 21, 2005** **Leader:** Glenn Wortham, Task Master **9 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
Route: General trail maintenance (mostly lopping); Flatside Wilderness from 174.2 to 177.2 and back
6.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating 4**
*Walked six miles for 1.2 miles TM; maintained from 177.2 (Crystal Prong Creek) back to 176.0.
Saw a HUGE water moccasin at the 175 pools / falls*
sss: Crystal Prong **Waterfall** Flatside Wilderness waterfall
Ponds and creek near falls
- Jan 22, 2005** **Leader:** Loretta Melancon **44 Hikers** *OMH Saturday*
Route: FR 153 to AR Hwy 7 (165.4 - 160.4) [and vice versa]
5.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
*Split group due to large size of group and hiked in opposite directions. Craig Henderson led the downhill group.
Trail in excellent condition. OMH/FoOT member finishing maintenance as group started.*
sss: Sugar Creek
- Nov 11, 2004** **Leader:** Harlan Jensen **23 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
Route: FR 94 / Flatside Pinnacle to Hwy 9 [179.2 - 191.8]
15.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**
*This hike scheduled to team up with Kris, EJ, Cramm on their OT thru-hike.
Kenny Thompson completed the OT today and we celebrated with champagne at hwy trailhead.
Becky G and Susan T were going to hike in and meet us, to walk out with Kenny, but we finished too quickly. We did thirteen miles
in under six hours !! Several of us, including Kenny, walked back in anyway (about a mile) to meet the back of the pack. Total
mileage assumes 2 extra miles for this walk. Back of pack was almost an hour behind.*
sss: Flatside Pinnacle (in fog)
Hillary Hollow

OMH Trail Data / History

Recent Hikes:

- Nov 10, 2004** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **7 Hikers** *OMH bonus*
Route: Flatside Wilderness / Green Thumb Spring to FR 94 [170.6 - 179.2]
8.6 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 4**
*Joined Kris, EJ, John on their thru-hike of OT.
Nice day; not hot; lunch at small falls, rocks just past 175.
Checked out the re-route we built last year (east of Crystal Prong). It is in great shape.
Followed hike with a fish fry, hosted by Dan Wingard, at Coffee Creek RV Park. Twenty people showed up to surprise the thru-hikers and show support.*
sss: Views along ridge **Waterfall** (un-named) near OT mile 175
waterfall/pools near mile 175
Crystal Prong Creek
- Mar 29, 2004** **Leader:** Tom Ferguson (USFS) **13 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance*
Route: FoOT work group: Built about 300 feet of new trail around section that had collapsed (just east of Crystal Prong creek (@ mile 177.2). Walked in from Flatside Pinnacle/ FR 94 (179.2)
4.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 6 hours** **Scenic Rating 3**
*This was a FoOT project under leadership of Tom Ferguson of ONF main office. OMH provided all the workers; Jessieville Ranger district provided the tools.
Built about 300 feet of trail in about six hours and declared victory after one day of a two day project.*
sss: Creek
Overnight notes: Kris/Billy, Maria/Richard, Bobby/Donna, and David camped near Wilderness nights before and after.
- Jan 8, 2004** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **20 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
Route: FR 124 to FR 122 [168.8 - 157.0]
11.8 miles **Difficulty Rating 2** **Scenic Rating 3**
*Cold, damp day; walking in the clouds. Beautiful walk down to Sugar Creek.
Big crowd, so split the group and went opposite directions.*
sss: Sugar Creek
- Dec 4, 2003** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **19 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
Route: FR 124 to FR 94 (Flatside Pinnacle) [168.8 - 179.2]
11.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 4** **Scenic Rating 4**
*Perfect hiking day, clear with temps ranging from 45 - 55 max. Beautiful views of Forked Mountain. Waterfall running; lots of water in Crystal Prong (wet crossing for 2 people).
Accompanied by Corbett Dreary, who writes the "Taking Outside" feature for Ark Dem-Gaz. He wrote an article about this hike (with pictures) and about our club (and FoOT).*
sss: Forked Mountain **Waterfall** (un-named) at mile 175
Creek/waterfall site
Crystal Prong
Flatside Pinnacle
- Nov 24, 2003** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **11 Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
Route: FR94 Flatside Pinnacle to Hyw 9 [179.2 - 191.8]
12.6 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
*Spectacularly clear, cold morning. First really cold morning of season (25 deg at TH); Great view at start from Flatside Pinnacle.
Ben & David shuttled cars.*
sss: Flatside Pinnacle

OMH Trail Data / History

Recent Hikes:

- May 15, 2003** **Leader:** Martha Doty, Task Master **5 Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** Flatside wilderness [179.2 - 177.9] Cleaned 1.3 mile of trail + walkout + hike roundtrip to Pinnacle
3.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3 hours** **Scenic Rating**
- This completed a two month effort to clean up all 10.8 miles through Flatside Wilderness.
After trail work, hiked the spur trail up to Flatside Pinnacle and had lunch -- beautiful day, but muggy*
- sss:** Flatside Pinnacle
-
- Nov 14, 2002** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
- Route:** FR124 [Flatside Wilderness] to Hwy 7 [168.8 - 160.4]
8.4 miles **Difficulty Rating 2** **Scenic Rating 4**
- First casual hike through 2001 "Section from Hell"*
-
- May 16, 2002** **Leader:** Jim Gifford **Hikers** *OMH Thursday*
- Route:** FSR 153 to Hwy 7 [165.4 - 160.4]
5.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 3** **Scenic Rating 3**
- "Bonus Hike" on monthly meeting day (Martha gave us day off from trail maintenance)*
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- Oct 18, 2001** **Leader:** Martha Doty, Task Master **Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** "Section from Hell"; FR 124 - FR 153 (168.8 - 165.4)
3.4 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating**
- Eight months later, we finally finish cleaning the "section from hell", a two mile stretch we first tackled in Mar 2001 after ice storm and gave up on because it was so devastated*
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- Apr 5, 2001** **Leader:** Martha Doty, Task Master **Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** Ice Storm cleanup; North Fork Pinnacle Spur/FR 132 - FR 152 (Lake Sylvia) [184.8 - 187.4]
4.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 4 hours** **Scenic Rating**
- Hopefully the last of the Ice Storm trips; this is hard work.*
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- Mar 15, 2001** **Leader:** Martha Doty, Task Master **Hikers** *Trail Maintenance / OMH*
- Route:** Ice Storm clean-up / "Section from Hell" [168.8 - 168.4]
3.0 miles **Difficulty Rating 6 hours** **Scenic Rating**
- The "section from hell". Following Christmas 2000 Ice storm; four two-man teams attempted to clear trail after Forest Service chain saw crews had been in. Devastation was such that we had difficulty finding the trail at the TH. Constant clearing of large trees on trail. After four hours each crew had progressed less than 1/2 mile; combined crews did about 1.5 miles total. Gave up due to a combination of futility and exhaustion.
Note: we returned in October 2001 to finish this section (See separate entry)*