



Accessibility



Visitor Center

The park visitor center is in the former Fordyce Bathhouse, located in the middle of Bathhouse Row in downtown Hot Springs. The national park does not have any parking lots, but parking is available within two blocks in lots owned by the city and private companies. There is also a pull off area just north of the Fordyce for loading and unloading passengers.

An entrance ramp is located on the north end of the Fordyce porch. There is an automatic door opening button to the left of the door on the porch; it is on the right to exit the building. The information desk inside is the original bath registration desk of the Fordyce Bathhouse and is very high, but an adjacent Dutch door desk has been lowered to serve people in wheelchairs. At the information desk, you can get printed information and ask questions. All brochures produced by the park are available in large print. Blind visitors may borrow an audio tape of the park brochure.

An elevator allows access to all floors today as it also did in historic times. For visitors who are temporarily disabled and need a wheelchair, the park has two available for loan. A driver's license is requested as security for borrowing a wheelchair.

A theater on the ground floor has a captioned 15- minute movie that tells the story of the hot springs and their use. The theater is equipped with an FM sound enhancing system. If you would like enhanced sound, ask for a neck loop and turn on the T- switch on your hearing aid.

Blind visitors can experience a touchable model of Bathhouse Row in the anteroom of the theater. There are also life- size models of architectural

features from some of the bathhouses. A sighted guide may be available to accompany visually impaired visitors throughout the building. Ask at the information desk.

Accessible rest rooms and a water fountain are located in the basement. Exhibits of old machinery and the Fordyce Spring are also on display in the basement.

Bathhouse Row, Grand Promenade and Geothermal Features

Bathhouse Row is a Historic Landmark District and each bathhouse is on the National Register of Historic Places. Other than the Buckstaff Bathhouse which still offers baths, the Visitor Center is the only building that can be entered. The vacant bathhouses, however offer beautiful architectural features. There is a major rehabilitation underway to bring the empty bathhouses to a leaseable state.

At the south end of Bathhouse Row is the park headquarters building. All administrative and management personnel are located there.

The Bathhouse Row/Grand Promenade area is the only place where the hot springs emerge. Most of the springs have been covered for a hundred years to protect the purity of the water for use in the bathhouses and drinking fountains. Visitors can see open hot springs on display just north of the Visitor Center, via the park's former grand carriage entrance. The concrete walkway leading to the springs has a grade of about 7 percent. Another hot spring water display cascades down the hillside at the north end of Bathhouse Row, at Fountain Street. A ramp to the Grand Promenade is also adjacent to the former carriage entrance, behind the Fordyce Bathhouse Visitor Center. It has a slope of about 10 percent. At the top of the ramp, visitors can see the south end of the Grand Promenade, which is a staircase. The north end of the Grand Promenade slopes downhill to Fountain Street with a slope of 5 percent. From the top of the ramp to the north entrance is a little less than half a mile.

Guided thermal features tours to the hot springs and the Grand Promenade area are conducted as staffing allows from March through October, weather permitting. These free tours depart from the Visitor Center porch and last about thirty minutes. The area covered is about one-half mile in length. Visitors needing a sign language interpreter for a regularly scheduled park tour should contact the park at least two weeks in advance. Group tours can be arranged with advance notice.

Jug Fountains

Fountains for collecting the hot spring water free of charge are located near the corner of Central and Reserve - one on Reserve Street and one in the Hill Wheatley Plaza parking lot. They are at an accessible height but have spring-loaded handles.

Scenic Drives

Hot Springs Mountain Drive offers several accessible scenic overlooks. Each overlook area has one ISA designated parking space. The Hot Springs Mountain Tower, a concessionaire of Hot Springs National Park, is accessible with two ISA parking spaces. Very sharp switchbacks on this road cannot accommodate vehicles over 30 feet long. West Mountain Drive also has ISA designated parking at each overlook and each is accessible. Both mountains afford spectacular views of the surrounding Ouachita Mountains.

Picnic Areas

At the top of Hot Springs Mountain is a picnic area with accessible restrooms and water fountain. One table is accessible for wheelchairs. Gulpha Gorge has a picnic area at the entrance to the park campground. There is one accessible picnic site with one ISA designated parking space. Accessible restrooms are nearby.

Camping

Gulpha Gorge Campground has one fully accessible campsite marked with an ISA sign. All restrooms are accessible. The campground is managed by self-registration. The free Golden Access Passport may be used for a 50% discount on the \$10.00 daily camping fee. Qualified individuals may get a Golden Access Passport at the Visitor Center.

Tours

An American Sign Language interpreter can be provided for deaf visitors for regularly scheduled tours. Please call us at least two weeks before your visit to make arrangements.