



# River to River Trail



Supervisor's Office 50 HWY 145 South Harrisburg, IL 62946 (800) 699-6637 [www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee) 2003

The River to River Trail spans 160 miles from Battery Rock on the Ohio River to Devil's Backbone Park in Grand Tower on the Mississippi River. The trail is part of the American Discovery Trail that extends coast to coast from Point Reyes National Seashore in California to Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware and spans more than 5,000 miles. Whether you're experiencing southern Illinois for the first time or have loved this area for years, there are many surprises along the trail. If you want to truly experience the Shawnee National Forest and southern Illinois then the River to River Trail is for you.

## Trail Highlights

The River to River Trail passes through some of the most scenic areas in the country with a combination of plains, bayous, bluffs and upland forests. It crosses five of the seven Shawnee National Forest Wilderness', as well as designated natural areas, Giant City State Park, Crab Orchard Wildlife Refuge, Ferne Clyffe State Park, historic landmarks and Devil's Backbone Park. Enjoy numerous tranquil settings, such as the sleepy waters of Cedar Lake, vast scenic overlooks or a painted sky at sunset. The trail passes many wonderous natural features, such as Camel Rock, Battery Rock, the Gap and small, seasonal waterfalls. Peaceful little towns like Alto Pass, Makanda and Rock Creek remind you of how things used to be. Trail visitors will encounter many challenges and experiences from crossing river levee roads, to riding through rugged wilderness terrain, to viewing scenic rock bluffs, to visiting small, quaint towns crossing rippling waters of the rocky creeks.

## Wildlife Viewing

Southern Illinois is home to many diverse ecosystems because it is at the junction of North American southern/northern and eastern/western ecosystems. This overlapping of ecosystems provides habitat to many wildlife species, such as the bald eagle, river otter, wild turkey, coyote and bobcat. A birder's paradise, it's riverways, bottomlands and forests support a multitude of both resident and migratory birds, such as the great blue heron, blue-winged teal, great egret, Mississippi kite, red-shouldered hawk and yellow warbler. Through adaptation some unlikely species like the ancient cypress swamps, mosses and lichen have survived from the ice age.

## Surrounding Area

Sites that are within driving distance of the trail include Garden of the Gods Recreation Area, Bell Smith Springs Recreation Area, Millstone Bluff Archaeological Site, Trigg Tower, Little Grand Canyon, Cedar Lake, Rim Rock National Recreation Trail and Lusk Creek Canyon Natural Area.

## Emergencies

Area hospitals include:  
Harrisburg Medical Center – Harrisburg  
Massac Memorial – Metropolis  
Heartland Regional – Marion  
Memorial –Carbondale  
Union County - Anna

**Length:** 160 miles

**Travel Time :** Approximately 2 to 3 weeks

**Surface Type:** Dirt, pavement, rock, gravel and grass

**Difficulty Level:** Easy – Difficult

**Recommended Season:** All year. Summer brings usual midwest insects, cobwebs and extreme heat and humidity. The average daytime winter temperatures will be in the 40's, which is good hiking and riding weather.

**Facilities:** At different points on the trail you will encounter interpretive sites, restrooms, campgrounds, picnic areas and parking.

**Access:** There are many points of access along the trail (see map). The Ohio River trailhead is located at Battery Rock: from Highway 1 turn east on Lambs Rd. Approximately 1 mile past the point when the road pavement changes to gravel there is a small trailhead parking lot. The Mississippi River trailhead is located in Devil's Backbone Park: From Highway 3 turn west towards Grand Tower and follow signs to the park entrance.

**Safety:** Although the trail is well marked, use a map and compass to navigate your way. There have been reports of poisonous snakes and bobcats. Poison ivy and sumac flourish in various areas. Extra caution should be used while hiking/riding and crossing roads and streams.

**Trail Markings:**  River To River Trail (blue i)

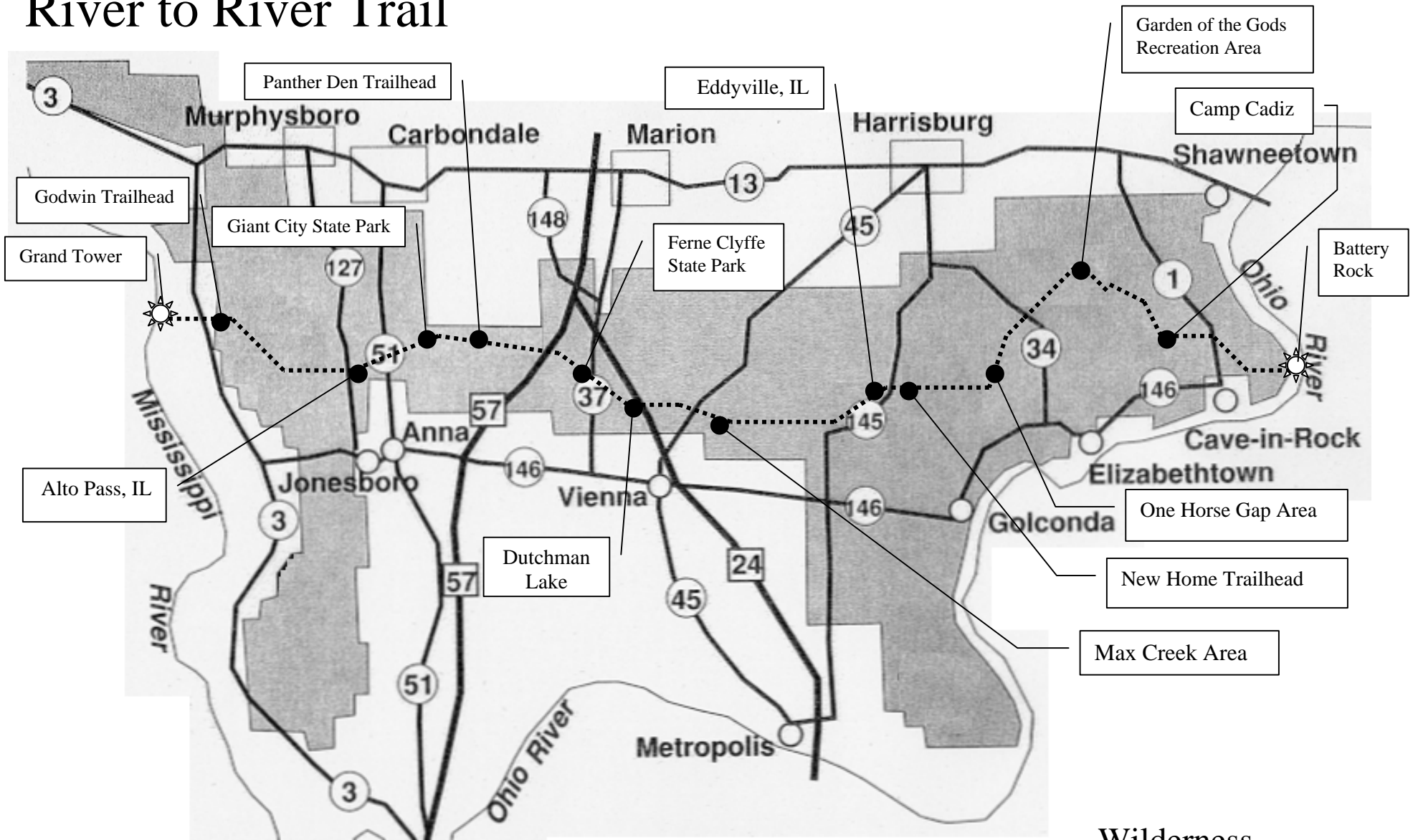
**Trail Ethics :** Pack it In, Pack it Out. Respect other trail users, wildlife encountered and adjacent private landowners. Leave the natural and historic features for others to enjoy. Equestrians are prohibited in natural areas. Natural area boundaries are marked with a painted yellow oak leaf on the trees.

## For More Information

Shawnee National Forest River to River Trail Society  
Supervisor's Office 1142 Winkelman Rd.  
50 HWY 145 South Harrisburg, IL 62946  
Harrisburg, IL 62946 (618) 252-6789  
(800) 699-6637

To purchase the River to River Trail Guide; a comprehensive description of the trail with maps, directions and resources; visit your local Shawnee National Forest Ranger Station or send \$23 to the address of the River to River Trail Society.

# River to River Trail



- Trail Markings**
- River To River Trail (blue i)
  - Hiker/Equestrian Trail
  - Hiker-Only Trail (blue)

● = Access points along the River to River Trail  
 Carrying a compass is recommended since you may encounter non-system trails.

- Wilderness**
- A**= Clear Springs
  - B**= Bald Knob
  - D**= Panther Den
  - E**= Burden Falls
  - F**= Bay Creek
  - G**= Lusk Creek
  - I**= Garden of the Gods

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