Knobstone Trail Background

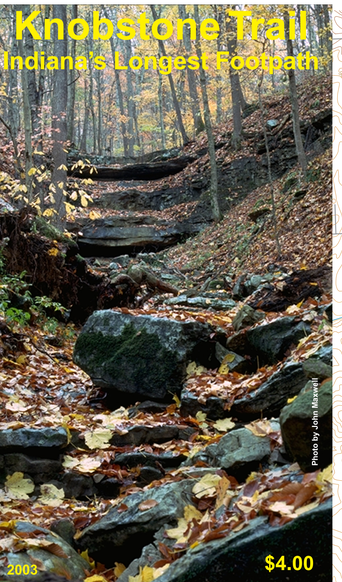
The KNOBSTONE TRAIL (KT) is Indiana's longest footpath - a 58-mile backcountry-hiking trail passing through Clark State Forest, Elk Creek Public Fishing Area, and Jackson-Washington State Forest. These state resource properties contain more than 42,000 acres of rugged, forested land in Clark, Scott and Washington counties in southern Indiana. The trail presently extends from Deam Lake, just north of S.R. 60 in Clark County, to Delaney Park, just east of S.R. 135 in Washington County. The initial 32-mile segment of the trail was opened in 1980. The latest addition is the John Stuart Oxley Memorial Trailhead, opened in 1999. A memorial fund was established in his honor for the Knobstone Trail. Contributions to the memorial fund may enable the KT to be developed further northward.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has developed the Knobstone Trail as a cooperative effort between the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Forestry and Outdoor Recreation. The Division of Outdoor Recreation's Streams and Trails Section coordinates development and maintenance of the trail. The Nature Conservancy has helped acquire land necessary to complete the trail corridor. Construction and maintenance of the trail has been aided by many hours of volunteer work donated by various hiking clubs and other groups. Much of the initial trail construction was accomplished through the Young Adult Conservation Corps program.

The Knobstone Trail passes primarily through state forests, which are managed for "multiple use" to obtain maximum benefits from recreation, timber and wildlife production, and watershed protection. They are open to the public for hunting during season, and are managed actively to increase the fish and wildlife population. The harvesting of timber provides valuable income for the state of Indiana. Timber management and harvesting also provide diverse cover and food necessary for the perpetuation of many game and non-game animal species, and helps ensure that our forest resources will be available for future generations.

The trail traverses land with extreme relief distinguished by narrow, relatively flat-topped ridges typical of the Knobstone Escarpment - a knobby slope between the Norman Upland and Scottsburg Lowland, two of southern Indiana's natural land regions. The Knobstone Escarpment is one of Indiana's most scenic areas, rising more than 300 feet above low-lying farmland in some areas as it snakes northward from near the Ohio River to just south of Martinsville. A central upland, mixed hardwood forest (oak-hickory and beech-maple association) dominates much of the escarpment. "Knobstone" shale, which is actually a combination of weathered brown shale, sandstone and siltstone, is common in the area and gives the escarpment its name.

For more information about the Knobstone Trail
and other hiking opportunities:
www.IN.gov/dnr/outdoor/



TRAILHEADS have been developed along the trail for parking. There are "KT" posts (4-foot brown posts with the letters "KT" in yellow near the top) at the entrance roads to the trailheads and information signs at the parking areas.

BLAZES, 3-inch by 6-inch white paint blazes, near eye level on trees to the right of the trail, mark the location of the trail. Two blazes indicate a possible change in direction of the trail and that the next blaze should be found before continuing.

PRIMITIVE BACKPACK CAMPING is allowed along the trail only on public lands at least one mile, by trail, away from all roads, recreation areas, and trailheads, and out of sight from the trail and all lakes. Campgrounds are located at Delaney Park, Clark State Forest, and Deam Lake State Recreation Area.

EVERYTHING CARRIED IN IS TO BE CARRIED OUT. Please respect these regulations, or camping may have to be prohibited in many areas.

HORSES AND WHEELED VEHICLES are not allowed on the trail. No mountain bikes, ATVs, motorcycles, or other motorized vehicles.

WATER is NOT available from most of the streams shown on the map near the trail because they are dry during much of the year. Hikers need to provide their own water supply.

OVERNIGHT TRAIL USERS should consider registering at:
South Region Headquarters
4850 S. St. Rd. 446
Bloomington, IN 47401
(812) 837-9536

EMERGENCIES should be directed to the South Region Headquarters (listed above)

TRAIL ROUTES may change due to environmental conditions or property management activities. Re-routes will be marked. Check the Knobone website www.IN.gov/dnr/outdoor/knobstone for updates.

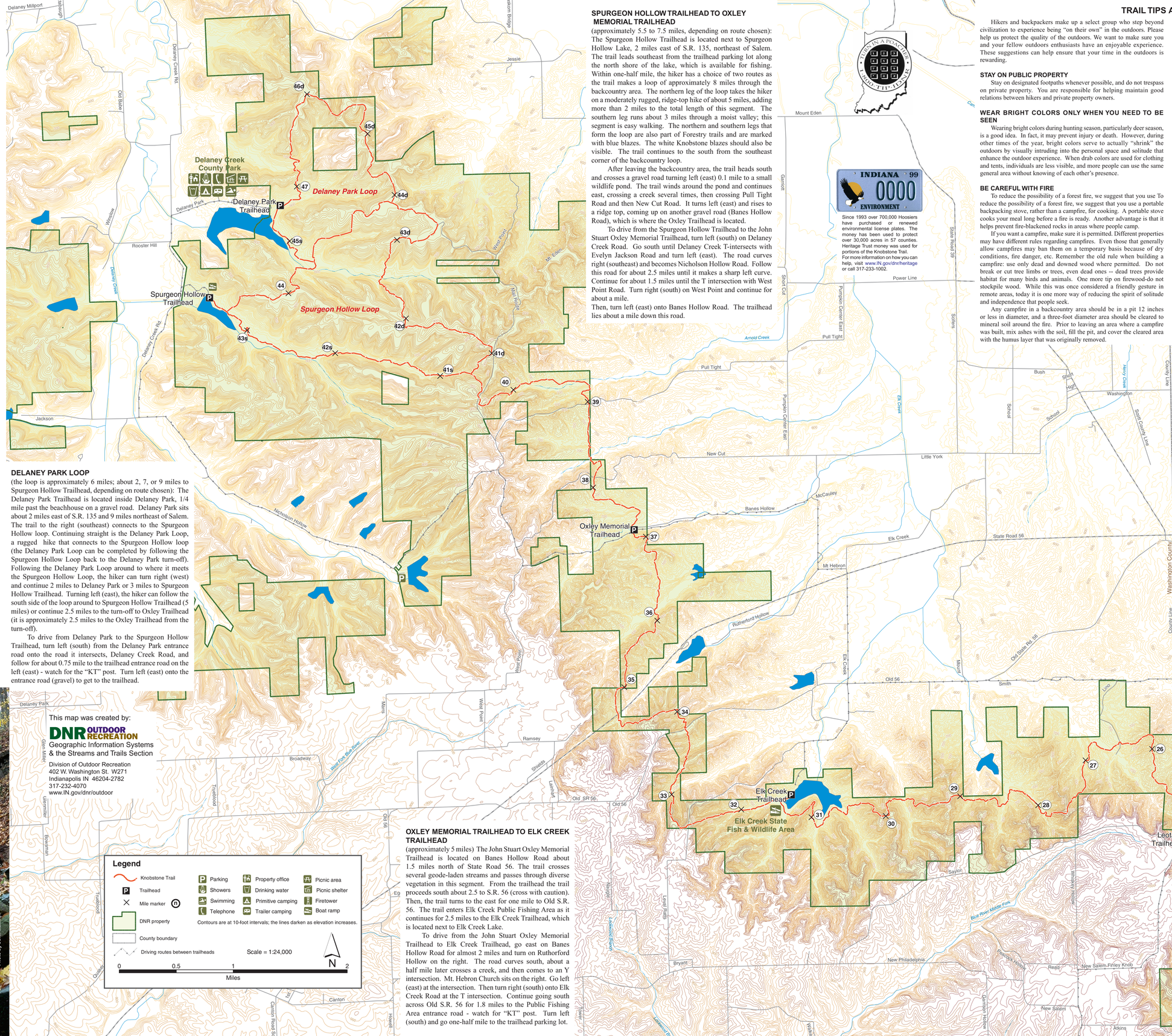
Other Recreational Area near the Knobstone are:

JACKSON-WASHINGTON STATE FOREST office
812-358-2160 or www.IN.gov/dnr/forestry

CLARK STATE FOREST office
812-294-4306 or www.IN.gov/dnr/forestry

DEAM LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA gatehouse
812-246-5421 or www.IN.gov/dnr/forestry

DELANEY PARK gatehouse
812-883-5101 or www.delaneypark.com



This map was created by:
DNR OUTDOOR RECREATION
Geographic Information Systems
& the Streams and Trails Section

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DELANEY PARK LOOP

(the loop is approximately 6 miles; about 2, 7, or 9 miles to Spurgeon Hollow Trailhead, depending on route chosen): The Delaney Park Trailhead is located inside Delaney Park, 1/4 mile past the beachhouse on a gravel road. Delaney Park sits about 2 miles east of S.R. 135 and 9 miles northeast of Salem. The trail to the right (southeast) connects to the Spurgeon Hollow loop. Continuing straight is the Delaney Park Loop, a rugged hike that connects to the Spurgeon Hollow loop (the Delaney Park Loop can be completed by following the Spurgeon Hollow Loop back to the Delaney Park turn-off). Following the Delaney Park Loop around to where it meets the Spurgeon Hollow Loop, the hiker can turn right (west) and continue 2 miles to Delaney Park or 3 miles to Spurgeon Hollow Trailhead. Turning left (east), the hiker can follow the south side of the loop around to Spurgeon Hollow Trailhead (5 miles) or continue 2.5 miles to the turn-off to Oxley Trailhead (it is approximately 2.5 miles to the Oxley Trailhead from the turn-off).

To drive from Delaney Park to the Spurgeon Hollow Trailhead, turn left (south) from the Delaney Park entrance road onto the road it intersects, Delaney Creek Road, and follow for about 0.75 mile to the trailhead entrance road on the left (east) - watch for the "KT" post. Turn left (east) onto the entrance road (gravel) to get to the trailhead.

SPURGEON HOLLOW TRAILHEAD TO OXLEY MEMORIAL TRAILHEAD

(approximately 5.5 to 7.5 miles, depending on route chosen): The Spurgeon Hollow Trailhead is located next to Spurgeon Hollow Lake, 2 miles east of S.R. 135, northeast of Salem. The trail leads southeast from the trailhead parking lot along the north shore of the lake, which is available for fishing. Within one-half mile, the hiker has a choice of two routes as the trail makes a loop of approximately 8 miles through the backcountry area. The northern leg of the loop takes the hiker on a moderately rugged, ridge-top hike of about 5 miles, adding more than 2 miles to the total length of this segment. The southern leg runs about 3 miles through a moist valley; this segment is easy walking. The northern and southern legs that form the loop are also part of Forestry trails and are marked with blue blazes. The white Knobstone blazes should also be visible. The trail continues to the south from the southeast corner of the backcountry loop.

After leaving the backcountry area, the trail heads south and crosses a gravel road turning left (east) 0.1 mile to a small wildlife pond. The trail winds around the pond and continues east, crossing a creek several times, then crossing Pull Tight Road and then New Cut Road. It turns left (east) and rises to a ridge top, coming up on another gravel road (Banes Hollow Road), which is where the Oxley Trailhead is located.

To drive from the Spurgeon Hollow Trailhead to the John Stuart Oxley Memorial Trailhead, turn left (south) on Delaney Creek Road. Go south until Delaney Creek T-intersects with Evelyn Jackson Road and turn left (east). The road curves right (southeast) and becomes Nicholson Hollow Road. Follow this road for about 2.5 miles until it makes a sharp left curve. Continue for about 1.5 miles until the T intersection with West Point Road. Turn right (south) on West Point and continue for about a mile.

Then, turn left (east) onto Banes Hollow Road. The trailhead lies about a mile down this road.

OXLEY MEMORIAL TRAILHEAD TO ELK CREEK TRAILHEAD

(approximately 5 miles) The John Stuart Oxley Memorial Trailhead is located on Banes Hollow Road about 1.5 miles north of State Road 56. The trail crosses several geode-laden streams and passes through diverse vegetation in this segment. From the trailhead the trail proceeds south about 2.5 to S.R. 56 (cross with caution). Then, the trail turns to the east for one mile to Old S.R. 56. The trail enters Elk Creek Public Fishing Area as it continues for 2.5 miles to the Elk Creek Trailhead, which is located next to Elk Creek Lake.

To drive from the John Stuart Oxley Memorial Trailhead to Elk Creek Trailhead, go east on Banes Hollow Road for almost 2 miles and turn on Ruthorford Hollow on the right. The road curves south, about a half mile later crosses a creek, and then comes to an Y intersection. Mt. Hebron Church sits on the right. Go left (east) at the intersection. Then turn right (south) onto Elk Creek Road at the T intersection. Continue going south across Old S.R. 56 for 1.8 miles to the Public Fishing Area entrance road - watch for "KT" post. Turn left (south) and go one-half mile to the trailhead parking lot.

Since 1993 over 700,000 Hoosiers have purchased or renewed environmental license plates. The money has been used to protect over 30,000 acres in 57 counties. Heritage Trust money was used for portions of the Knobstone Trail. For more information on how you can help, visit www.IN.gov/dnr/heritage or call 317-233-1002.

TRAIL TIPS AND ETIQUETTE

Hikers and backpackers make up a select group who step beyond civilization to experience being "on their own" in the outdoors. Please help us protect the quality of the outdoors. We want to make sure you and your fellow outdoors enthusiasts have an enjoyable experience. These suggestions can help ensure that your time in the outdoors is rewarding.

STAY ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

Stay on designated footpaths whenever possible, and do not trespass on private property. You are responsible for helping maintain good relations between hikers and private property owners.

WEAR BRIGHT COLORS ONLY WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SEEN

Wearing bright colors during hunting season, particularly deer season, is a good idea. In fact, it may prevent injury or death. However, during other times of the year, bright colors serve to actually "shrink" the outdoors by visually intruding into the personal space and solitude that enhance the outdoor experience. When drab colors are used for clothing and tents, individuals are less visible, and more people can use the same general area without knowing of each other's presence.

BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE

To reduce the possibility of a forest fire, we suggest that you use To reduce the possibility of a forest fire, we suggest that you use a portable backpacking stove, rather than a campfire, for cooking. A portable stove cooks your meal long before a fire is ready. Another advantage is that it helps prevent fire-blackened rocks in areas where people camp.

If you want a campfire, make sure it is permitted. Different properties may have different rules regarding campfires. Even those that generally allow campfires may ban them on a temporary basis because of dry conditions, fire danger, etc. Remember the old rule when building a campfire: use only dead and downed wood where permitted. Do not break or cut tree limbs or trees, even dead ones -- dead trees provide habitat for many birds and animals. One more tip on firewood-do not stockpile wood. While this was once considered a friendly gesture in remote areas, today it is one more way of reducing the spirit of solitude and independence that people seek.

Any campfire in a backcountry area should be in a pit 12 inches or less in diameter, and a three-foot diameter area should be cleared to mineral soil around the fire. Prior to leaving an area where a campfire was built, mix ashes with the soil, fill the pit, and cover the cleared area with the humus layer that was originally removed.

FINDING AND PROTECTING THE WATER

Sources of water in many areas are often limited and can fail during dry periods -- plan ahead! Remember to treat all collected drinking and cooking water by boiling for several minutes or with a commercial water filter. Always wash your dishes or yourself a few feet away from the edge of a lake or stream. This allows the soil to act as a filter, preventing soap suds and scraps of food from polluting the water. After washing your dishes, rinse them a safe distance from the bank. A few feet can make a big difference.

KEEP PETS UNDER CONTROL

Keep your pet on a leash and under control. Make sure all pet waste is kept away from the trail. Do not allow your dog to bark at or chase other trail users or wildlife. Remember to bring food and water for your pet, as well as for you.

PLAN YOUR TRIPS

Before starting out, study maps of the area and learn the terrain. Be surBefore starting out, study maps of the area and learn the terrain. Be sure you are familiar with all the options of time, alternate routes, and weather. Do not forget about the shorter daylight hours during late fall and winter. Be sure to travel with a first aid kit, map, compass, and cellular telephone (if available), and know how to use them. Remember to register at the nearest property office or gatehouse -- for your safety, someone needs to know where you are.

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF LITTER

Burying trash and garbage was once the ethical way to dispose of litter outdoors. However, animals and frost action usually undid the efforts after the campers were on their way. Today, the problem is compounded by the high number of people using the same areas. The best policy is to carry out what you carry in. You might consider going one step further and carry out any trash less thoughtful people may have left behind.

BE CONSCIENTIOUS WITH HUMAN WASTE

To avoid contamination in areas where restrooms are not provided, use areas at least 200 feet from any water supply and camping zone. Dig a small hole approximately eight inches deep, which can then be covered with loose soil and leaf litter to promote decomposition and sanitary conditions.

ELK CREEK TRAILHEAD TO LEOTA TRAILHEAD

(approximately 7 miles): The Elk Creek Trailhead is located at Elk Creek Public Fishing Area, 1 ½ miles south of S.R.56 and about 10 miles east of Salem. The trail leads from the southeast end of the parking lot and meanders around the south shore of the lake. It then rises about 170 feet to a ridge top, providing the hiker a view of the lake and surrounding valley. The trail then drops back to the lake level and continues eastward out of the state fish and wildlife area toward Clark State Forest. This section of the trail offers the hiker a variety of ridgetops and bottomlands. The trail also passes through some large clearings created by logging operations. These clearings provide excellent wildlife habitat - deer, grouse and other species may be observed here. The trail rises to an elevation of 1,000 feet as it reaches the Leota Trailhead. The trail runs about 7 miles in length between the Elk Creek and Leota trailheads.

To drive from the Elk Creek Trailhead to the Leota Trailhead, go north on Elk Creek Road until it intersects with Old State Road 56. Turn right (east) on Smith Road. Continue going straight on this road until it intersects at a T with County Line Road. Turn right (south) on County Line Road -- it will curve around and turn into Oak Hill Road. Go east on Oak Hill Road about a mile until it comes to a T intersection. Turn right (south) on Stage Coach Road and follow it until it Y-intersects with Leota Road, and turn right. Proceed 1.3 miles, then turn right (north) on Saylor Road, which curves off to the right at the top of the knob - watch for "KT" post. Turn right (east) again within 0.1 mile onto the Leota Trailhead entrance road (gravel) - watch for "KT" post.