Backpack and Canoe camps are not accessible by vehicle.
Firewood may not be available. Please plan accordingly.
Campers must be checked in at the gatehouse at least one hour before sunset to have time to safely hike to the camp and set up. Campers arriving with less than one hour before sunset will not be allowed to use this area.
Water Trail info. - From Deer’s Mill access to Canoe Camp is approx. 1.8 miles or 30 to 45 minutes float time.
Backpack Trail info. - From parking lot to Backpack Camp is approximately 2.5 miles.
ABOUT THE BACKPACK TRAIL

The trail begins in young second-growth forest, marked by many tall, straight tulip trees. Occasional meadows provide splashes of late summer color, as flowers such as Queen Anne’s lace, asters and goldenrod bloom.

The trail then follows an old fire lane through another second-growth forest. Shagbark hickory, honey locust, ash and black cherry trees are common. This area was once logged. Only a few big trees remain; look for these growing in the ravine walls.

The trail follows the fire lane through an old pine plantation on top of a ridge. The surrounding ridge tops are also covered with pines. This ridge tops were once logged and then reforested with white pine (five needles/bunch), jack pine (three needles/bunch), and Scotch pine (orange bark).

The pines give way to a young forest with red oak, sassafras, cherry and dogwood. Once again look along the ravine walls for bigger trees like the smooth gray-bark beech. These areas may not have been logged. In openings, look for junipers, small tulip trees and pine seedlings.

The trail descends into a low area. The forest next is a typical upland forest, including beeches, maples, gray-barked beech trees. Above the campground is a young forest with red oak, bald cypress, red maple, hackberry and poison ivy. The riparian area was recently farmed but forest is slowly moving in to meet campers at these areas.

Looking along the ravine walls for bigger trees like the smooth gray-bark beech. These areas may not have been logged. In openings, look for junipers, small tulip trees and pine seedlings.

ABOUT THE CANOE CAMP

The canecamp campground is located on the bank of Sugar Creek in a rich bottomland forest that produces abundant saplings. Large white-barked sycamore trees grow across the stream and near the campground. Look for warty-bark hackberry and big, gray-barked beech trees. Above the campground is a typical upland forest, including beeches, maples, tulip trees and several kinds of oaks and hickories.

The steep cliffs you see while canoeing are massive deposits of sandstone formed hundreds of millions of years ago. At that time, this area was under an ocean. Sand, mud, and plant and animal remains washed in and accumulated on the ocean floor. Eventually thick deposits of sandstone fossilized. Look for these fossils on the sandbars. They are frequently released from the stone as Sugar Creek cuts through the sandstone.

The hemlocks grow on the edges of the cliffs. During the Pleistocene, glaciers covered this portion of Indiana. The hemlocks are a relic of the forest that covered Indiana during the glacial period. As the glaciers melted and the glaciers moved south, water through the sandstone and formed the steep cliffs and canyons along the creek. Seeds of hemlocks and other plants carried down in the ice from northern forests were left behind.

BACKPACK CAMP USE-RESTRICTIONS

1. The backpack camp is restricted to backpacking campers only. The backpack camp is not accessible by automobile.
2. The area is restricted to those backpacking into the area and backpacking out. 2½ miles one way. Campers are expected to be equipped for this type of camping.
3. Campers must be checked in at the gatehouse at least one hour before sunset to have time to safely hike to the camp and set up. Campers arriving with less than one hour before sunset will not be allowed to use this area.
4. Area is on a first-come, first-served basis. There are seven backpack sites in the camp.
5. The area is strictly primitive; there are no modern facilities. Potable water is available up the hill at the backpack camp. A pit toilet is located approximately 75 yards up the access road toward the backpack camp.
6. Firewood may not be collected at the camp. Firewood sold to campers by the park is not guaranteed. (see #4 under “Planning your Backpack or Canoe Camp Outing”)

CANOE CAMP USE-RESTRICTIONS

1. The canoe camp is restricted to canoeists only. It provides an opportunity for an overnight canoe trip. Occupancy is limited to one night.
2. The canoe camp is not accessible by automobile. It is not on a road access, and canoeists may not be taken out at this location. Canoeists have the option of going upstream 2 miles to Deer’s Mill Access or downstream 9 miles to Brush Creek Access, which is located at Turkey Run State Park.
3. A site may be occupied by no more than six people with a maximum of two tents.
4. The area is strictly primitive. There are no modern facilities. Potable water is available up the hill at the backpack camp. A pit toilet is located approximately 75 yards up the access road toward the backpack camp.
5. The canoe camp may be very busy at certain times. People desiring to use this area will not be denied access at such times because there is a lack of alternative camping area along the stream.
6. Firewood may not be collected at the camp. Firewood sold to campers by the park is not guaranteed. (see #4 under “Items for Planning your Backpack or Canoe Camp Outing”)

SHADES STATE PARK

PLANNING YOUR OUTING

1. Both of these areas are closed seasonally. Camping is strictly prohibited from late November to April. There are no reservations—camping is first-come, first-served.
2. These are primitive areas. The areas are NOT accessible by automobile or other motorized vehicles. Please plan accordingly.
3. Campers are required to register and pay fees. Contact the main park office for specifics.
4. Plan for low-impact camping. Bring portable cook stoves or similar items for cooking. Bring lanterns or similar items for light. Firewood cannot be picked up at the camp. One bundle of firewood per site per night may be available from the park security officer; however, this is not guaranteed. Please plan accordingly. Fires are permitted only in provided fire rings.
5. These are considered “remote areas.” When camping in remote areas, the users accept more responsibility for their own needs and safety. The response time for emergencies at these areas can vary one to two hours, depending on the method used for reporting (such as when campers have to hike out to report an emergency).
6. Transportation will not be provided to users.
7. The backpack camp cannot be used as an access site.
8. Both campgrounds (canoe and backpack) are strictly primitive. There are no modern facilities. The areas have a potable water source and pit toilets.