• 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 the 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. These ridge tops were once logged and then reforested with white pine (five 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 beechn. 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 crosses a small stream, and climbs to another ridge top. Stop in the ravine and notice how different the forest seems. Water-loving trees like the sycamore, with its white under bark, the warty-barked hackberry and the ironwood (musclewood) tree are found here. A thicket of scouring rush grows in the little stream. Occasional meadows provide splashes of late season flowers. Pine and oak were recently farmed but forest is slowly moving in. The steep cliffs you see while canoeing are steep canyon walls.

ABOUT THE CANOE CAMP

The canoe camp ground is located on the bank of Sugar Creek in a rich bottomland forest that probably ones never been logged. Large white-branched sycamore trees grow along the creek and near the campground. Look for warty-bark hackberry and big, gray-barked beechn 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 fossils on the sandbars. They are frequently released from the stone as Sugar Creek cuts through the sandstone.

Helping to prevent forest fires

• Build fires only in designated areas.
• Be sure to properly dispose of all smoking materials.
• Report any violation of fire regulations to park officials at once.
• Leave only footprints. Take only memories.