



## For your safety and to preserve the features of the park, observe these rules:

- 1. Remain on the trail.**  
Poison ivy is common along the trail.
  - 2. Children should remain with adults and not run ahead on the trails.** These trails are maintained in a natural state, and encounters with wildlife (like snakes) should be expected.
  - 3. Watch your footing.**
  - 4. Collecting artifacts, fossils, flowers, or animals is prohibited.** Please leave these objects for other visitors to enjoy. Remember to take only photographs.
  - 5. No pets, ATVs, or bicycles are allowed.**
  - 6. No portable stereos please.** Listen to the songs of birds and frogs.
  - 7. Hunting or carrying any type of weapon is prohibited.**
  - 8. Please do not feed or harass wildlife.** You are a guest in their environment.
  - 9. Place litter in the containers provided at the Museum or Mayes Lakes.**
- CAUTION:** The doors to the Museum are locked at 4:45pm. Outside access to the visitors parking lot is by way of a sidewalk on the north side of the Museum. The LeFleur's Bluff State Park gate locks at 5pm. Security assistance is available during Museum hours. 601 354-7303



Located within LeFleur's Bluff State Park

Security assistance is available during Museum hours.  
601 354-7303



Preserving Natural Mississippi

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DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS



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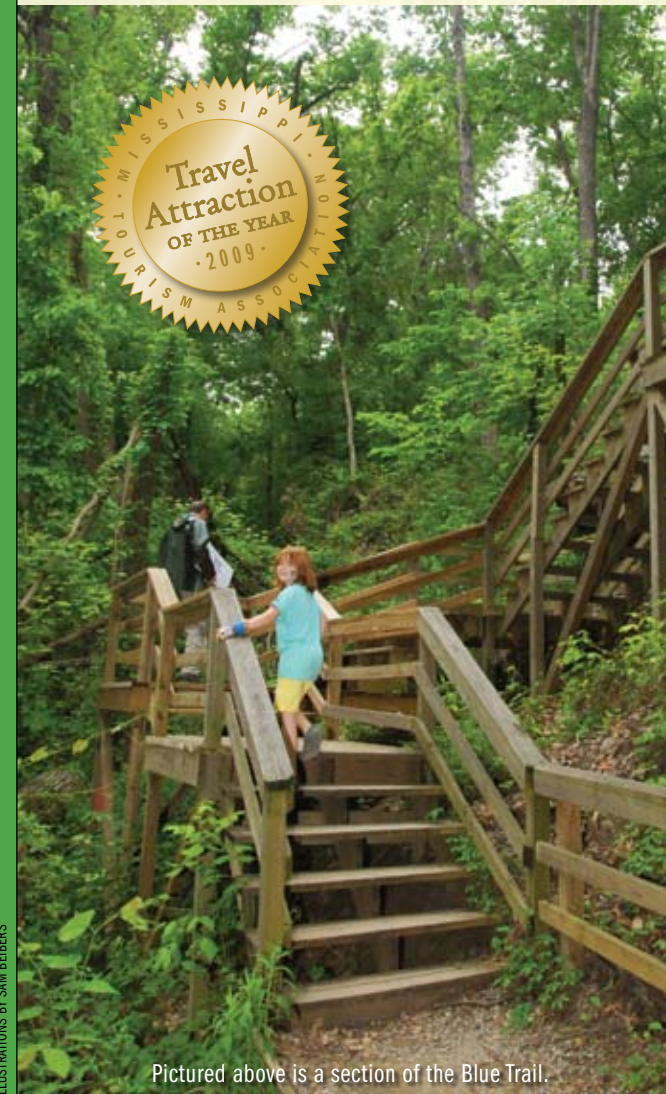
Call for admission prices.



MISSISSIPPI  
Museum of  
Natural  
Science



# OUTDOOR TRAIL GUIDE



ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM BEBERS

Pictured above is a section of the Blue Trail.

Welcome to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science nature trails.

These trails meander through wooded bluffs, river bottoms, lakes, and scenic swamplands, offering you opportunities for nature walks, photography, and the study of living things in their environment.

## The trails on the inside map are indicated by the following colors:

### Pink Garden Path

Near the front entrance to the Museum are paved and unpaved garden paths.

### Yellow Trail (0.16 miles)

The Yellow Trail is mostly paved and has some areas of boardwalk-type decking.



### Green Trail (0.21 miles)

From the Overlook you may take the Green Trail, which loops around to the Yellow Trail.



### Blue Trail (0.36 miles)

A section of the Blue Trail connects the Green and Red Trails and is very steep with a series of boardwalk steps and platforms.

### Red Trail (0.32 miles)

The Red Trail, a more naturally maintained path, connects the Blue and Purple Trails. This section may be closed during high water. The Red Trail does not loop back to the Museum.

### Purple Trail (0.49 miles)

The Purple Trail is a dirt path and sometimes muddy. It connects the Red Trail to Mayes Lakes, where restrooms and drinking water are available at the Camp Store. The Purple Trail does not loop back to the Museum.



## Garden Path

**A Native Plant Garden** Showcasing our state's natural beauty and diverse habitats, these native plants also provide food and shelter for wildlife. Here you will find such Mississippi natives as swamp azalea, bell flower, smooth phlox, mountain laurel, spiderwort, and sweet shrubs.

**B Prairie Garden Plot** Grown with minimal use of fertilizers and pesticides, these natives of Mississippi's prairie regions include purple coneflower, prairie coneflower, gay feather, goldenrod, thimbleweed, and New England aster.



**C Millennium Grove** Wander through history as you walk among America's Famous and Historic trees, many of which come from historic sites and the homes of former U.S. Presidents.

**D Wetland Ponds** These artificially constructed wetlands contain native plants that provide food and shelter for animals while also adding oxygen to the water and removing pollutants.

**1 Overlook** From here you can observe the different levels of the forest: the upper canopy of branches and leaves; the understory of smaller trees and shrubs that are adapted to low levels of sunlight; and the forest floor's ground cover of low wildflowers, ferns, mosses, logs, and leaf litter.

**2 Canopy Bridge** The Uplands forest features plants associated with calcareous soils—many of which will not be seen elsewhere in the park. From the boardwalk bridge, you will see a series of weirs. These erosion-preventing structures were built from mostly natural materials to retain rainwater.

**3 Woodland Pond** A remnant of an abandoned farm, this pond provides habitat for frogs, aquatic insects, and other smaller creatures, without the level of threat from predators found in larger bodies of water.

**4 Upland Ridge** Once used for agriculture, the open land atop the bluff is now the site of LeFleur's Bluff golf course. Although some birds and small wildlife such as rabbits are attracted to this open environment, more species diversity can be found in the woods. Plants associated with this drier, mixed woodland and field ecosystem include yucca, eastern red cedar, sugarberry and cherry laurel.

**5 Callaway Marker** This marker honors Robert Callaway, principal of the Pochontas Public School in the 1930s. Mr. Callaway encouraged his students' fascination with the natural world. On hikes that sometimes went on for miles, he warmly shared his understanding of nature. Mr. Callaway was instrumental in the development of the original nature trail.



# LeFleur's Bluff Nature Trails



**6 Hill, Ravine, and Swamp** Before rounding the switchback in the trail, you pass a ravine that drains the bluff. Depending upon the season, the ravine may go completely dry, provide seepage from springs, or funnel large volumes of water into the swamp during heavy rainfall. While cleared fields drain more quickly, in the forest we find tree roots, high organic matter in the soil, and a heavy blanket of leaf mulch holding water.

**7 Swamp View** Observe the life of the swamp from the Upper Slough Observation Deck, equipped with benches and a nature journal station.



The station encourages children to take in the sights and sounds on the trails and record their observations. Look for turtles sunning on logs, squirrels gathering nuts in the trees, or an array of blooming flowers at the water line.



**8 Fossil Gulch** Fifty to sixty million years ago, this tall bluff was part of the floor of an inland sea. This ravine is locally known as "Fossil Gulch" because of the marine invertebrate fossils found here. The bluffs have distinctive plant communities, including numerous ferns and flowering plants such as dogwood, mayapple, trillium, oakleaf hydrangea, and spice bush—host plant for the state's official butterfly, the spicebush swallowtail.



**9 Old River Run** Here the trail crosses an old channel of the Pearl River, which today provides a backwater for the river and drainage of the bluffs. Notice the logs strewn on either side, deposited here by floodwaters. (Note: Crossing the nature trail is a gravel, pipeline right of way road, which dead ends in both directions.)

**10 Plant Succession** Mature forests include plants in all stages of life. Younger plants provide food sources and low perches for wildlife; cavities in aged trees provide additional shelter; and older, dying trees create openings in the forest canopy for sunlight, nurturing new growth.

**11 American Beech** The large tree on the left of the trail is an American beech, easily recognized by its smooth, bluish gray bark. Few trees can grow in the low light below the canopy, but beech trees thrive here. Eventually, the beech trees will increase in number and become one of the dominant trees in the canopy.



**12 Mature Forest and Pawpaw Patch** Mature forests contain great plant diversity. Large trees found along the trail harbor life in their highest branches and provide perches and nest sites for squirrels and birds, arbors for vines, and habitat for resurrection ferns and Spanish moss. Notice the small shrubs and trees with very large leaves in this area? These are pawpaw trees. The small pawpaw trees produce banana-like fruit in the summer, which are quickly eaten by wildlife.



**13 Slough View** Sloughs (pronounced "slews") are areas that were once part of a river channel, but unlike an oxbow, sloughs do not retain water year-round. The water level fluctuates dramatically, sometimes even leaving sloughs completely dry. The Lower Slough Observation Deck is equipped with benches and a nature journal station.

**14 Eubanks Creek** Eubanks Creek flows through the park after journeying through the city of Jackson. Here the human impact on the natural environment is more evident than at other points along the trail. Clearing along the creek contributes to increased erosion and the murkiness of the water. Litter, another human impact, is both unsightly and dangerous to wildlife.

**15 Backwater** The backwater alongside the river is an important nursery for aquatic life. Spotted gar, redear sunfish, and blackspotted top minnows are at home in this environment.

**16 River View** The Pearl River is a dynamic environment, constantly in flux. Shifting channels erode banks and deposit sandbars used by birds, nesting turtles, and mussels. The river was named for the pearls the once-abundant mussels produced. One of the largest inhabitants of the river is the endangered Gulf Sturgeon, a prehistoric fish that can weigh up to 500 pounds.



GULF STURGEON ILLUSTRATION BY DUANE RAVER/USFWS

**17 Lakes and River** Here the trail is flanked by two oxbow lakes, both old channels of the Pearl River cut off by changes in course. The lake on the left is part of the Mayes Lakes system, which was dammed in the 1940s to maintain higher water levels year-round. To the right is an oxbow in its natural state, where bald cypresses and tupelo gums grow in open water.