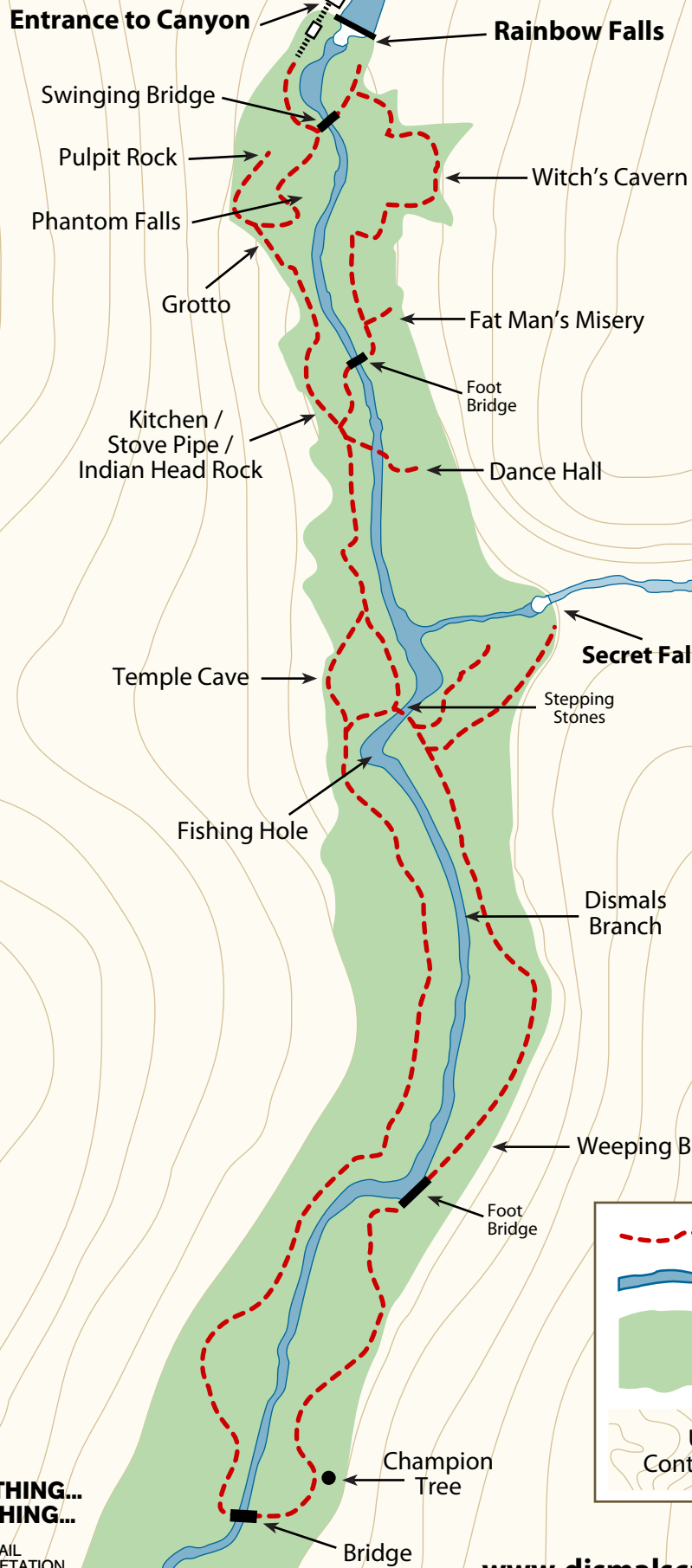


Trail Map

A National Natural Landmark

Dismals Canyon



**LEAVE NOTHING...
TAKE NOTHING...**

PLEASE STAY ON TRAIL
TO AVOID DAMAGING VEGETATION

Map By: Ronnie Harris

www.dismalscanyon.com



A National Natural Landmark

Trail Map Points of Interest

LEAVE NOTHING . . TAKE NOTHING . .

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\$1000.00 FINE FOR REMOVAL OR DEFACTMENT OF ROCKS, PLANTS OR ANIMALS.

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Rainbow Falls - these falls were the source of power for a great mill destroyed by a flood about 60 years ago. You can see the holes bored in the rock, which were used to support the wheel. As you continue your hike you will see the millstone and timbers scattered along the canyon floor. The pool at the top was used to baptize members of the local churches back in the early 1800's. If the sun is shining on the falls move around until you see a rainbow - sometimes there are two - but there is always one if the sun is shining on the falls.

Phantom Falls - about 10' before you get on the walkway leading into the Grotto walk up on the rocks to your left and face North toward Rainbow Falls. Do you hear the waterfall behind you? There is no waterfall behind you but the rock picks up the sound of the actual falls 250' downstream and throws the echo down to this spot which is only 10' around.

Grotto - 10,000 years ago a massive earthquake tumbled these house-size boulders together to form the natural bridges you see above and this cool green grotto. In 1925 the Girl Scouts built the small pool to your right for drinking water.

Pulpit Rock - follow the trail through the rocks on your right. Don't be afraid - you'll see the light at the end as soon as you enter this fissure. During the massive earthquake the rocks were sheared off the 60' canyon walls and shoved out just enough to make this winding natural rock stairway. At the top is Pulpit Rock from which you will have a panoramic view of the canyon. Go back down the stairway, turn right and continue following the main trail.

Kitchen - before the Chickasaws ceded Dismals Canyon to the U.S. in 1818 this covered area was used for cooking and tribal rituals. The Girl Scouts built the fireplace in 1925.

Stove Pipe - back up about 10' from the fireplace and look up to your left, move around until you see light streaming through a small hole up high on the wall. This is a natural 30' long chimney . Smoke from fires built under these rocks was drawn up through this hole. Continue following the trail curving to your right.

Indian Head Rock - after you have walked about 15' from the Kitchen look back at the rock up on your left. Do you see the profile of an Indian Warrior facing East? See his "Mohawk" haircut and his majestic nose. Move around - but beware only a Kindred Spirit can see him.

Temple Cave - this bluff shelter about 10,000 years ago was home to a tribe of Paleo Indians - first man known to inhabit this part of the U.S. This shelter has never been excavated but samples of Paleo spear points have been found in different areas of the Canyon. Fires were built in front of the small flat rock at the back to reflect heat out into the cave. The large rock in front was used for grinding corn. See the depression.

Fishing Hole - throw some fish food in and then watch closely. The area is teeming with fish - Bass, Bream, Perch, Trout and bottom feeders called "Hog Suckers". The constant 50 degree temperature of the water limits their size but not their quantity.

Champion Tree - this Eastern/Canadian Hemlock is the first Champion Tree in Franklin County. There were 2 Champion Trees until an ice storm destroyed 1 of them. The tree is 138' tall, 8'9" around and has a crown spread of 50'. It is the largest of its species in Alabama, and one of the largest in the world.

Weeping Bluff - look up at the bluff on your right. Do you see the face of an Indian Maiden? The water that seeps from this bluff is said to be tears shed by the Canyon for the loss of its only true friends - the Chickasaw Indians. In 1838 U.S. Troops rounded up the Chickasaw and held them under guard in this Canyon for 2 weeks before herding them like cattle to Muscle Shoals where they began the Trail of Tears. 90% of the Chickasaw Nation perished on the Trail of Tears.

Secret Falls - the water creating these falls flows from an underground mountain stream that opens onto the earth's surface about 3/4 of a mile upstream. After you've rested, double back on the main trail until you come to some stepping stones that cross the creek. Use the stepping stones to cross the creek and then follow the trail on your right, which will lead you back to the Kitchen. At the Kitchen take the trail to the right and cross the creek using the stepping stones. You are now in the Dance Hall.

Dance Hall - this well camouflaged area-protected from the sun and the elements-was used by the Chickasaw Indians for secret rituals. It is the only place where the rock has been worn smooth by centuries of human use. Backtrack re-crossing the creek and follow the trail to the right (do not go back through the Kitchen). Cross the wooden bridge and follow the trail on the right. This will take you to Fat Man's Misery.

Fat Man's Misery - look up to your right. The narrow opening (16" wide) between the two big boulders was the original entrance to the Canyon floor. Warning: No one is permitted to climb through this opening. Backtrack to the bridge. Now follow the trail straight-ahead (do not re-cross the bridge) between the rocks if you want to go to the Witch's Cavern. Caution: if you are unable to climb over rocks and roots do not attempt this trail, re-cross the bridge and exit the canyon floor by following the trail you came in on.

Witches Cavern - a strange and beautiful labyrinth of moss and fern covered boulders where the largest colony of Dismalites resides.

May the FOREST be with you!

901 HWY 8, Phil Campbell, AL 35581 • 205-993-4559 • www.dismalscanyon.com