

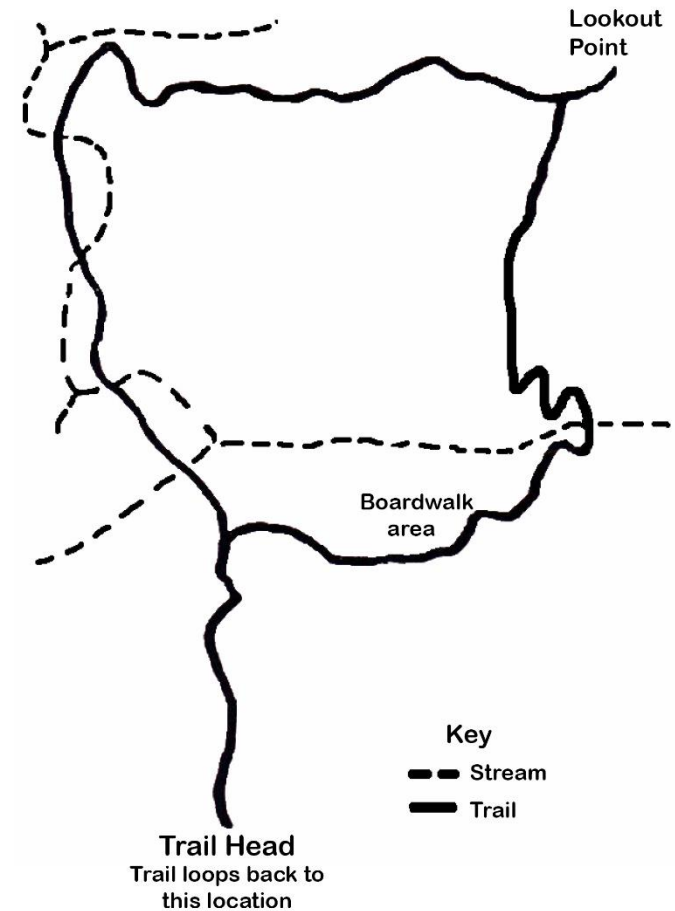
Lookout Point Trail Guide and Map



"To assure our people permanent access to their outdoor heritage"

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Welcome to Lookout Point Trail! This moderate-hiking trail loops back to the Oak Bluff Parking Area, and is approximately 1-mile in length.

Thank you for hiking Lookout Point Trail. You may keep the trail guide or return it to the box for others to use!

After descending down the first hill and steps, Lookout Point Trail splits into two paths. Either path direction will bring you back to the base of the stairs and back to the parking lot. This guide will follow the trail to the left.



Before the first bridge over the creek, there is a large tree on the left side with three trunks. This tree is a Sycamore tree. As you look up the trunk, notice how the bark begins to peel or flake off before becoming all white at the top. Sycamore trees prefer to live in moist, deep, rich well-drained soil with ample sunlight. They can be found throughout the bottom forest areas on Lookout Point Trail. How many other sycamores can you find as you hike?

After crossing the third wooden bridge, a grove of Pawpaw trees can be found along the trail and across the stream. Pawpaw's are the only local member of a mainly-tropical plant family and produces the largest edible fruit native to North America. The pawpaw fruit, which begins to ripen in late summer and peaks in September and October, has a flavor that is often compared to bananas, but with hints of mango, vanilla, and citrus.



Lookout Point Trail will now take hikers up a hill to an upland forest habitat.

Some common trees that are found in the upland forest are shagbark hickory, white oak, and black oak. Can you find a tree with shaggy bark? These are called Shag-bark Hickories. While hiking through this area, be sure to look at the trees in the distance and listen for birds, including the tapping of woodpeckers hunting for insects underneath the tree bark.



Eventually, the trail will have a short side path to the left that will take you to the Lookout Point View. There is a small bench to relax and enjoy the view of the Middle Fork River Valley. This valley was created by the river moving and washing away soil and rocks for thousands of years through the process of erosion. While we cannot see the river from this view point, the Middle Fork River is the only National Wild and Scenic River in Illinois. After enjoying the view, you can return back to the main trail.



Our trail will take us back down to the lower part of the forest. Along the boardwalk area in late summer and early fall, jewelweed flowers are in bloom. This flower blooms as hummingbirds and butterflies begin their migration south. If you are quiet and patient while standing on the boardwalk, you may hear or see hummingbirds as they visit the flowers for nectar. After flowering, the fruit will form an elongated capsule with several seeds inside. When the capsule is ripe, they will burst open at the slightest touch.