

River Ridge Back Pack Trail FAQ

1. Can I just show up at the Visitor Center the same day I want to hike?

If you are hiking for the day only – you may pay the \$5.00/person hiking fee through PayPal on our website. Please complete the date of hike, vehicle information, and emergency contact information through PayPal.

If you are hiking and camping – All hikers that plan to camp need to register using the hiking/camping registration form at least one week prior to your trip. This must be confirmed by the office before your planned arrival. The fee for hiking AND camping is \$25.00 for 1-6 people or \$50.00 for 7+ people. The Lorna J. Konsis Visitor Center hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. Changes to your registration such as additions to your hiking group, or vehicle information must be reported to the office by noon at least one day before your planned arrival.

2. What if I just want to hike during the day and not camp overnight?

If you are hiking for the day only – you may pay the \$5.00/person hiking fee through PayPal on our website. Please complete the date of hike, vehicle information, and emergency contact information through PayPal.

3. How soon does my registration need to be sent?

One week notice is required for overnight camping. There are limited campsites in the two campgrounds on the trail.

4. How do I pay the fee?

Once your registration form is approved, the fee may be paid. The Pay Now button is located below the links to the Registration, Rules and map on our website.

5. Can I arrive or leave Forest Glen anytime?

Forest Glen has gates that are locked each day. Please check Forest Glen Park opening and closing times before you register.

6. What if I need to cancel?

Please let us know as soon as possible. There are no refunds or credits for rescheduled hikes. If you have to reschedule your hike for any reason, a new registration form must be submitted.

7. Where does the trail start?

The trail head is located in the corner of the Visitor Center parking lot.

8. Where do I park?

Overnight parking is allowed only in the Visitor Center parking lot.

9. What do I need to do when I arrive?

Check in is not necessary and no hiking permit will be issued; your registration form with each vehicle's information and license plate number is sufficient. If you would like any additional trail information, the Visitor Center is open Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. You can email or call 217-662-2142 during regular business hours. The Visitor Center and Ranger Station have paper copies of the River Ridge Backpack Trail map this is also available at www.vccd.org.

10. Where can I fill up my water container?

There is a water tap located on the west side of Audubon Barn. There are no man-made water sources on the trail. Plan to pack your drinking water. Many hikers use water filtration systems or purifiers. The Vermilion River is accessible in the Group Campground area and just before reaching East Campgrounds. Several creeks and streams are accessible along the trail.

11. Are there restroom facilities?

There are two outhouses located at the Group Campground; no outhouses are located at East Campground. It is respectful and important to learn how to go the restroom while hiking. Human waste pollutes water and can make animals sick.

12. Will I be assigned a campsite?

Each group or solo hiker registration form is allowed one campsite. The sites at Group Campground and East Campground are larger than our public campsites. Your registration assures that there will be a site for those listed on your registration, but campsites are first-come, first-serve.