



DeSoto State Park and park partners like Little River Canyon National Preserve, Jacksonville State University Field School, Little River Arts Council and more, team up to bring you many fun events throughout the year.

Campfire Talks, Classes, Demonstrations, Guided Interpretive or Fitness Hikes, Tours, Outdoor Adventures, Workshops.....topics covering art, science, nature, and much more!

DeSoto State Park also adds community events such as classes, festivals, workshops, local craft shows, etc to our calendar so that we can help our guests and visitors make their visit to Lookout Mountain, Alabama even more memorable.

For more events on Lookout Mountain, see www.discoverlookoutmountain.com



Alabama State Parks, a division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, operates and maintains 21 parks encompassing approximately 48,000 acres of land and water. These parks rely on visitor fees and the support of other partners like local communities to fund the majority of their operations.

For more information on Alabama State Parks, visit www.alapark.com



DeSoto State Park's Campfire Talk Series

Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located in the great outdoors. Campfire programs are held almost every Friday & Saturday evening (May –October) in DeSoto's James L. Wynn Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground. All programs are open & free to everyone. *Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable chair if you wish. In case of bad weather, programs are moved inside.*

Serious Skills Series

Hosted by DeSoto State Park. The Serious Skills series is a variety of classes and workshops that provide opportunities to discover a hidden talent or learn a new skill for personal enrichment. Classes are open to local residents, overnight guests and park visitors.



DeSoto State Park challenges you to become a DeSoto State Park Trail Trekker!



Hike the designated 23 miles of trails in DeSoto, (whether on your own or in a group, no time limit) and collect your prize, a Trail Trekkers Patch. Just log your hikes in the Trail Trekker log and record the date for each trail listed. Sign completed form and turn in to DeSoto State Park Country Store or Lodge to receive your patch!

This hike series is designed for those that prefer some company out on the trails with experienced park staff or volunteers. Each month there will be a different hike so you can start marking them off towards your patch!

Keep checking back for more 2024 events to be added!

Fee: \$85-includes all supplies. Adults only. Class space is limited to 6, pre-registration is required for attendance in this class. Pre-registration: <https://forms.office.com/g/Cgud7E8bSd>

JULY

Fort Payne's Fourth of July Celebration

Celebrate America's independence in Fort Payne with a spectacular fireworks show! The skies above Fort Payne will come alive with pyrotechnics in honor of Independence Day. No accompanying events are planned this year due to renovations at the Sports Complex, but you can see the fireworks from all the same locations as before.

Date: July 3, 2024

Time: 8:45 p.m.

Where: Around Fort Payne Sports Complex Parking Lot/Fort Payne High School

Address: 4501 Gault Ave N & 45th Street-Fort Payne, Alabama 35967

Info: www.facebook.com/fortpaynechamber

42nd Sand Mountain Potato Festival

Henagar, Alabama

Car show, tractor show, live music, pony rides, food trucks, bounce house craft vendors, & parade at 10:00 a.m.; firework show at 9:00 p.m.

Date: July 4, 2024

Info: www.facebook.com/cityofhenagar

DeSoto State Park's Annual Independence Day events atop Lookout Mountain

This annual event is fun for both children & adults!

Celebrate Independence Day and enjoy good ol' fashioned fun at DeSoto State Park. Participate in the flag making contest & eat ice cream at the annual ice cream social.

Date: July 5th-6th

Where: DeSoto State Park in Fort Payne, Alabama

Fee: Free to everyone; Great for all ages!

Independence Day Flag-Making Contest

Make your own homemade flag to be judged in this fun contest. All ages are welcome to participate. Materials & flag-making rules will be available at the campground pavilion in the Improved Campground starting Thursday, July 4th if needed (Flags are made on white foam boards, participants use natural materials). Flags can be turned in any day that week but MUST be turned in no later than 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 6th to be judged. (Turn in flags at DeSoto's Nature Center) Winners will be announced on DeSoto's facebook page on Saturday July the 6th (Winners will be contacted) Open to everyone-Be sure to join in the fun- Free to participate and open to all ages!

Splish & Splash Pool Party

Join the fun at our 11th Annual Splish & Splash Pool Party! Cool off in our Olympic-size pool, eat ice cream, & enter for door prizes!

\$1.00 per person-admission fee.

Friday, July 5, 2024 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Subject to cancellation if inclement weather

Ice Cream Social

Social starts at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 6th, located at the Campground Pavilion in DeSoto's Improved Campground. Sit around & relax, eat ice cream, & meet your fellow guests at DeSoto State Park. Flag-Making Contest winners will be announced at the Ice Cream Social.

You are welcome to bring your own favorite homemade ice cream recipe or other desserts to share with your fellow guests.

Bring your own comfortable camp chair as seating is limited. Free to participate, & open to everyone!

Campground gate will be open for you.

Subject to cancellation if inclement weather

MUSIC FOR THE PEOPLE Summer Music Series: The Locals

Mentone, Alabama. Sponsored by Little River Arts Council, made possible in part by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Bring your own chair or blanket to enjoy the show & enjoy some food from Fontastic Food Truck.

Date: July 4, 2024

Times: 6:00-9:00 pm (CST)

Where: Linger Longer Pavilion-Behind Mentone Inn in Mentone, AL (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park) Address: 6139 AL-117, Mentone, AL 35984

Fee: Free & open to everyone! www.littleriverartscouncil.org

<https://www.facebook.com/curtisandrobmusic>

Hike with a Naturalist

Lower Two-Mile Trail in the Little River Canyon National Preserve.

Join JSU Field School staff on a beautiful outdoor adventure hike to Lower Two-Mile. This hike is a challenging, arduous and steep 1/2 mile hike. This hike is extremely steep and not recommended for pets or people who have difficulty climbing stairs and steep terrain.

Things to bring: Plenty of water and/or sports drink, snacks, hiking poles/staff (optional), sturdy shoes (open toe shoes are not recommended). Please be sure to dress appropriately according to seasonal temperatures/weather.

WEATHER: As with all outdoor events, if it's raining/stormy or very poor trail conditions, we may have to cancel. If the weather is questionable, please check with the park before leaving home. Please make every effort to arrive early or on time.

Date: July 6, 2024

Where: Meet at JSU's Little River Canyon Center-Fort Payne, Alabama on AL Hwy 35. We will caravan to the trail head.

Time: 10:30 am (CST).

Fee: Free and open to everyone! For details, contact 256-845-3548 (Canyon Center)

Beginner 101 Hike: Guide for Newbies CCC Quarry

If you are new to hiking or just need a refresher, this once-a-month hike series is for you. We will start out with a Hiking 101 Class that covers everything you need to know to plan and have an enjoyable & safe hiking experience. We will touch on trail safety, the 10 hiking essentials, map reading, and Leave No Trace. Afterwards, we will head out on a short, beginner friendly hike to try out some of your new skills.

About the hike: White trail to CCC quarry. Hikes along any of the trails at DeSoto State Park are considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. However, we will be hiking slowly so these are all perfect for beginners. If you would like to bring a hiking stick for stability, you are welcome to do so.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, lunch, snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: July 6, 2024

Time: 4:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-BeginnerHike101>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Whisk Broom Workshop

Make your own handmade appalachian-style whisk broom!

Spend an afternoon learning the Appalachian craft of broom making! Participants will make and take home a turkey wing style whisk broom made with traditional broomcorn and hemp cordage. This class is for total beginners as well as avid craftspeople.

Age limit: 13+ or with special permission of instructor. This class has space for ten participants.

Date: Saturday, July 6, 2024

Time: 2PM-5PM CST

Where: Mentone, Alabama (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: \$65. Includes all supplies. Pre-registration: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/whisk-broom-workshop-mentone-al-tickets-927276558147?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl&fbclid=IwZXhobgNhZWwCMTAAAR1Ohs_57Y1QP6u1z3j7pzdNoz26Hb5crBJHTtAgiw7c18XNPoUnXrbfNTc_aem_y4l7gJgMKCdREu5JzrXipQ

source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl&fbclid=IwZXhobgNhZWwCMTAAAR1Ohs_57Y1QP6u1z3j7pzdNoz26Hb5crBJHTtAgiw7c18XNPoUnXrbfNTc_aem_y4l7gJgMKCdREu5JzrXipQ

Forest Tales Outdoor Storytime Hike

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, for an OUTDOOR story time catered towards you and your young nature lovers twice per month from April to September. Enjoy captivating tales and engaging movement activities amidst the beauty of nature. Get the chance to interact with the natural world around you, spotting wildlife, exploring hidden nooks, and perhaps even encountering a few surprises along the way.

About the hike: the hike is considered easy, perfect for little feet. Around 0.6 Miles Total

What to bring: Backpack with water & snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: July 10, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Forest-Tales>

This program is for grown-ups and their children -NO PETS PLEASE. Participants are invited to stay after for time to play, explore DeSoto State Park and socialize with other families.

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Junior Ranger Adventure Series: Animal Investigations (Scat, Tracks, & Other Clues)

This once-a-month hike is designed for explorers aged 3 to 103! Participants will have the opportunity to earn the coveted DeSoto State Park Junior Ranger Patch while discovering the wonders of nature and the park's historical treasures.

DSP Assistant Naturalist Mirandi Watson will be guiding this fun hike, geared toward all ages. This program will begin with an overview of the DSP Jr Ranger Program and will hike along different trails and focus on several topics in the booklet.

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Each month will utilize a different trail in the park, be beginner friendly, and be between 1-3 miles each. We will take our time, so this hike is good for all skill levels.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, lunch, snacks. And a journal with a pen or pencil. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: July 11, 2024

Time: 11:00-2:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-JR-Adventure>

Cherokee Ways of Knowing Ancestral Walk

Importance of Community: Relationships with Ourselves, Others, & the Land

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, on her monthly excursions to learn about the Cherokee people and their cultural tie to the environment. Each monthly excursion will feature a unique topic and a walk in the woods with stops along the way to learn more about the Cherokee Ways of Knowing.

About the hike: We will walk a small portion of the Red Trail to see a shelter that was used by Native Americans. Although the hike is considered moderate (because of the uneven, rocky terrain), we will be taking a slow walk through the woods. Please bring a hiking stick for stability if you wish. This program is perfect for beginners or those just wanting a leisurely stroll through the woods.

Date: July 12, 2024

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Cherokee-Ways-of-Knowing>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Campfire Talk: Birds of Alabama

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Bird watching has become a popular pastime for many people-not only do birds offer tremendous recreational, economic, and psychological benefit, they are often great indicators of environmental health. Over 400 species of birds are known to occur in Alabama. Of these, 141 species have been reported from DeSoto State Park, which is stop #47 on the North Alabama Birding Trail. Guest speaker Ashley Peters returns to showcase some of the resident species and some of the migrants that should be moving through our area on their Fall migration.

www.alabamabirdingtrails.com/trails/north-alabama/

Date: Friday, July 12, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Birding 101 Hike

DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama

Have you always wanted to learn more of the basics of bird identification? Birding is an excellent way to explore and connect to nature in a new and different way. It is a great skill, a fun activity, and easy to learn. Join Ashley Peters from AL DCNR (State Lands Division) for an early morning hike on the boardwalk and along some of the trails around Azalea Cascade. There are approximately 430 species of birds that call Alabama home, so we hope to see some of our feathered friends and learn how to identify them based on sight and sound. Discover how to use current technology to become a better birder. Prior birding experience is not necessary, just have your eyes and ears ready for bird activity!

Feel free to bring binoculars.

Date: Saturday, July 13, 2024

Time: 8:00 a.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Talmadge Butler Boardwalk Trail on County Road 89

Fee: Free, no pre-registration required. Great for all ages! For any details about the hike, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov

Daybreak Flatwater Paddle Trip

DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Alabama

DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided morning paddle trip on scenic Little River. Enjoy the peace and quiet of nature as we paddle upstream on the 'coke bottle clear' waters of the West Fork of Little River. Learn about this outstanding water source with its clear water, plant & animal life, and about the history of the area around DeSoto Falls in Dekalb County, Alabama.

What to know: This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, under your own power & spans a 3 to 3 1/2-hour period. Includes kayak, paddle, & personal flotation device.

What to bring: Appropriate clothing, bug spray, snacks, and drinking water.

Date: July 13, 2024

Time: 7:00 am-10:00 am

Where: DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Miller's Bend Paddle Shack (about 7 miles from main park area of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: \$30.00 for single kayak rental (tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50.00)

Pre-registration closes July 9, 2024 – at 5:00 p.m. Pre-registration form:
<https://forms.office.com/g/9XRO4tTLnd>

Nature Journey Journal Hike

Join naturalists and artists for this creative nature observation hike, combining art & nature! The focus of this nature walk is to reflect your observations of nature using a personal journaling style.....in many different ways! Learn how to keep your own nature journal while strolling along trails in DeSoto State Park. Will hike about 1/2 mile to the West Fork of Little River and hang out for a while working on our nature journals with provided materials. For ages 8 to adult, we encourage all ages to join!

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Total 1 1/2 mile loop.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water and snacks. Closed-toed shoes. A favorite journal if you have one, and we will supply watercolor paper, watercolor pencils, clipboards, etc. Bring something to sit on if you prefer.

Date: July 13, 2024

Time: 11:00-2:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: \$5.00-includes all supplies RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Nature-Journal-Journey>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

#Hike24in24AL

Enjoy the Moment: Hike & Hammock

Gilliam Loop

Discover a secluded hammock spot and immerse yourself in the tranquility of the great outdoors! Let's unwind and recharge together amidst breathtaking scenery and the soothing sway of hammocks.

Hiking offers the opportunity to connect with nature, explore new trails, and get some exercise, while relaxing in a hammock allows you to unwind and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson will lead a short hike to a peaceful hammock spot. Participants will be supplied a hammock to use and shown how to hang it. Afterwards, 30-45 min will be spent relaxing in the hammocks before hiking back out.

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Each month will utilize a different trail in the park, be beginner friendly, and be between 1-3 miles each. We will use the Gilliam Loop trail for this hike.

Date: July 13, 2024

Time: 2:00-4:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89. Will caravan to Lost Falls Trailhead

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://alapark.itinio.com/register/DSP-Hike-Hammock>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Traditional Chair Weaving Workshop

The craft of chair seat weaving and chair caning has been practiced for centuries and is still a viable craft today, experienced all over the world. Only a few common tools are necessary to repair chair seats, making this a craft that nearly anyone can master with just a little patience and tenacity. Participants will discover how to weave a simple chair bottom, while learning the herringbone pattern using flat reed. Small ladderback chairs will be provided, as well as all tools & supplies.

This class is for ages 12 to adult (please no younger children for safety reasons)

What to Bring: Enthusiasm (all materials and tools needed to complete this project will be provided).

Wear comfortable, casual clothing (this craft can get messy), and bring a sack lunch if you wish. This workshop emphasizes the use of hand tools, students should have moderate hand strength.

Date: July 14, 2024

Time: 10:00 – 4:00 (CST)

Where: JSU's Little River Canyon Center-Fort Payne, Alabama

Fee: \$150 supply fee. Pre-registration required by July 18th. Space is limited to 5 participants.

Pre-registration required. For details and to pre-register email Southernchick888@hotmail.com

www.facebook.com/JSUFieldSchools

Think Like a Naturalist-iNaturalist Walk

Want to learn what app naturalists use for identifying things in the Great Outdoors? Want to try to ID things in your own backyard?

Join DeSoto State Park Naturalist Brittney Hughes for an easy walk along the ADA-accessible Talmadge Butler Boardwalk Trail. Discover what can be observed & recorded using iNaturalist, a free app that can be used to record observations of all sorts of things — plants, animals, and even fungi. Learn how to use the simple app to help contribute to park species lists and about species seen in the park.

What is iNaturalist?-It is a way for people that are interested in nature to share what they see with others, as well as gaining identifications on species that they may not be familiar with. The app also helps to collect data, collaborating with others to gather information for a common project or purpose (i.e. species lists, bioblitzes, etc.) Users can also access the observational data collected by other iNaturalist users. If you've ever wanted to learn more about the plants and animals around you but you didn't have someone along for your hike or walk to ask, you'll want to download iNaturalist. And you can even make observations in your backyard or on the street walking in your neighborhood. Bottom line: this app gives you the opportunity to have your own personal naturalist resource whenever you decide to go, as long as your battery is charged!

Date: Friday, July 19, 2024

Time: 10:00-12:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, AL. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

Campfire Talk: Alabama Paleontology

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Paleontology is the scientific study of the history of life on Earth through the examination of plant and animal fossils. These fossils include bones, shells, footprints, and even traces of ancient organisms, which help scientists understand the evolution, biology, and environmental conditions of past geological periods.

Join JSU Field School Instructor Christian Braswell on a journey back in time to discover Alabama's earliest fossil plants and animals! Investigate how these prehistoric remnants reveal the state's geological past and its diverse ancient ecosystems.

Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish.

Date: Friday, July 19, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-in

Fort Payne, Alabama

The Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-In is a great car show, featuring over 200+ classic vehicles on display in Fort Payne's historic downtown district. This is a monthly event starting in April and ending in October (skipping September for Boom Days Festival). Music across the street from DeKalb Theatre and food vendors.

Date: Saturday, July 20, 2024

Time: 5:00-9:00 pm

Where: Downtown Fort Payne, Alabama (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Free & open to everyone. Info: www.facebook.com/3rdSaturdayFortPayneAl

Insect Pinning Workshop

Join the JSU Field School and Instructor Christian Braswell as we learn all about insect collecting and pinning and start your very own bug collection. Pinning insects is an important education tool and hobby. Join us at 1:30pm to learn how to start your very own bug collection. All supplies are included, however, if

you have an insect you have collected and would like to use, you are welcome to bring your own bug. Ages 10 and older.

Date: July 20, 2024

Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm (CST)

Where: JSU's Little River Canyon Center-Fort Payne, Alabama (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: FREE, but registration required. Space is limited.

https://secure.touchnet.net/C20901_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=282&SINGLESTOR E=true

Meandering Moonlight Guided Paddle

DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided moonlight paddle trip on scenic Little River. Enjoy the peace and quiet of nature as we paddle upstream on the 'coke bottle clear' waters of the West Fork of Little River. Enjoy this flatwater paddle as the sun goes down and the full moon comes up. Experience the peace & quiet of the gloaming-time!

What to know: This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, spans a 3 to 3 1/2-hour period and includes kayak, paddle, & personal flotation device. Must be able to paddle upstream and back (no current) Weight limits: 300 pounds for singles & 450 for tandems. Ages 8 to adult.

What to bring: Appropriate clothing for weather (you may get wet), headlamp or flashlight, bug spray, snacks, and drinking water.

Date: Saturday, July 20, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm-10:00 pm

Where: DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Miller's Bend Paddle Shack (about 7 miles from main park area of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: \$30.00 for single kayak rental (2 person-tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50.00)

Pre-registration closes July 16th. Pre-registration: <https://forms.office.com/g/pF4Td672Ks>

#Hike24in24AL

Park After Dark-Night Walk

Join DeSoto State Park staff to get to know the park after dark! You never know what you can discover during the night; we will be using our senses to discover what can be seen, heard, or even smelled on this fun hike! About the walk: we will be on the cabin road & go to the frog pond, near DeSoto's South entrance. All ages welcome, children must be supervised. We will meet & walk from DeSoto State Park Lodge-short distance, terrain will be a mix of asphalt and dirt road, closed toed shoes are preferred.

Date: 7/20/2024

Time: 9:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Lodge

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Civilian Conservation Corps History Hike: Trailside Shelter Along Little River

Join DeSoto State Park Staff on a moderate hike to the trailside shelter located on the West Fork of Little River. Learn how the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the original structures built in the mid 1930s that you can still see in the park today. About the hike: moderate hike along rocky terrain.

Approximately 1.10 miles round trip. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89.

Date: 7/20/2024

Time: 12:00-2:30 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89. Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Forest Tales Outdoor Storytime Hike

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, for an OUTDOOR story time catered towards you and your young nature lovers twice per month from April to September. Enjoy captivating tales and engaging movement activities amidst the beauty of nature. Get the chance to interact with the natural world around you, spotting wildlife, exploring hidden nooks, and perhaps even encountering a few surprises along the way.

About the hike: the hike is considered easy, perfect for little feet. Around 0.6 Miles Total

What to bring: Backpack with water & snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: July 24, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Forest-Tales>

This program is for grown-ups and their children -NO PETS PLEASE. Participants are invited to stay after for time to play, explore DeSoto State Park and socialize with other families.

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Hike with a Naturalist

Little Falls Trail in the Little River Canyon National Preserve.

Join JSU Field School staff on a beautiful outdoor adventure hike to Little Falls. This hike is a moderately challenging 1.5 mile hike. This hike has 140 uneven, stone steepers that are steep. It is not recommended for pets or people who have difficulty climbing stairs and steep terrain.

Things to bring: Plenty of water and/or sports drink, snacks, hiking poles/staff (optional), sturdy shoes (open toe shoes are not recommended). Please be sure to dress appropriately according to seasonal temperatures/weather.

WEATHER: As with all outdoor events, if it's raining/stormy or very poor trail conditions, we may have to cancel. If the weather is questionable, please check with the park before leaving home. Please make every effort to arrive early or on time.

Date: July 25, 2024

Time: 10:30 a.m. (CST)

Where: Meet at the picnic area at Little River Falls (Little River canyon National Preserve) at 10:30 am (CST).

Fee: Free and open to everyone! For details, contact 256-845-3548 (Canyon Center)

Windows to Nature: Fairy Houses

“Build them and the fairies will come!”

Join Renee S. Raney, Alabama State Parks Chief of Interpretation, and the author of the book *Hairy, Scary, but Mostly Merry Fairies: Curing Nature-Deficit Disorder through Folklore, Imagination, and Creative Activities* for a workshop filled with fairy stories and “leave in the woods” natural fairy house building.

Building fairy houses gives children, ages 7 to 107, an opportunity to balance their play time away from the world of technology. A daily dose of nature will improve attention, focus and memory. Nature also has a healing power, improving children's cognitive development. Creative play in nature nurtures language and collaborative skills, awareness, reasoning, and observational skills. Creative nature play helps to instill a sense of place and connectivity through observation.

All children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited.

Date: Friday, July 26, 2024

Time: 10:00 am – Noon (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. CCC Pavilion in Picnic Area, across from the Country Store & Information Center

Fee: \$10 per participant. Ages 7 to 107. Pre-registration is required, as space is limited.

Info: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Fairy-Houses>

Plant Discovery Walk-July Blooms

In the H. Stanley Sims Native Plant Area

Join DeSoto State Park Staff for a meandering walk in the park, taking in every opportunity to learn more about the natural world. On this walk we will identify many native blooming plants of the southern Appalachians and will be teaching you how to recognize the species found in the park. Bring a notebook/camera if you wish and discover what can be seen along the way. All ages welcome

About the walk: We will be walking from the Lodge to the H. Stanley Sims Native Plant Area, which is a short 1,000-yard loop. Easy terrain, approx. 1 mile total

Date: Friday, July 26, 2024

Time: 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet outside DeSoto's Lodge

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of Walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

Sensory Hike for Kids

Join JSU Field School for a guided 1 mile hike for kids. We will be using our senses to make observations as we learn on the trail. This hike is designed for children 10 and under, but all ages are welcome!

Please wear footwear suitable for hiking, bring water, sun protection.

Date: July 26 2024

Time: 10:30 a.m. (CST)

Where: JSU's Little River Canyon Center-Fort Payne, Alabama(within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: Free. No registration required. For details, contact 256-845-3548 (Canyon Center)

#NationalMothWeek

Winged Wonders: Moths

National Moth Week celebrates the beauty, life cycles, and habitats of moths. "Moth-ers" of all ages and abilities are encouraged to learn about, observe, and document moths in their backyards, parks, and neighborhoods.

Moths are among the most diverse and successful organisms on earth, Scientists estimate there are 150,000 to more than 500,000 moth species. Anyone who's ever sat near a streetlight or porch light on a summer evening has seen the effect that light has on moths—they love it! You can use this use this behavior to easily observe night-flying moths. All you need is a light source, a surface for moths to rest on, and a dry, still evening outside.

Join DeSoto State Park Staff and guest Stott Noble during National Moth Week for an opportunity to observe different species and add to our biodiversity list in Alabama. Stott will be set up with a sheet and light and you can come and go as you wish!

Date: Friday, July 26, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m (CST) (stop by anytime!)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (campground gate will open at 7:30)

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no pre-registration required. For any details about the program, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov

Alabama Paleontology

Join JSU Field School and Instructor Christian Braswell on a journey back in time to discover Alabama's earliest fossil plants and animals!

Date: July 27, 2024

Time: 10:30 a.m. (CST)

Location: JSU's Little River Canyon Center (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: Free and open to everyone! For details, contact 256-845-3548 (Canyon Center)

www.facebook.com/JSUFieldSchools

Winged Wonders: Moths

National Moth Week celebrates the beauty, life cycles, and habitats of moths. "Moth-ers" of all ages and abilities are encouraged to learn about, observe, and document moths in their backyards, parks, and neighborhoods

Moths are among the most diverse and successful organisms on earth, Scientists estimate there are 150,000 to more than 500,000 moth species. Anyone who's ever sat near a streetlight or porch light on a summer evening has seen the effect that light has on moths—they love it! You can use this use this behavior to easily observe night-flying moths. All you need is a light source, a surface for moths to rest on, and a dry, still evening outside.

Join DeSoto State Park Staff and guest Stott Noble during National Moth Week for an opportunity to observe different species and add to our biodiversity list in Alabama. Stott will be set up with a sheet and light and you can come and go as you wish!

Date: Saturday, July 27, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. (CST) (stop by anytime!)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. DeSoto State Park Native Plant Area near the Lodge

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no pre-registration required. For any details about the program, email Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov

www.nationalmothweek.org #nationalmothweek

Cherokee Ways of Knowing Ancestral Walk Phenology: How Changing Seasons Impact Living Things & the Environment

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, on her monthly excursions to learn about the Cherokee people and their cultural tie to the environment. Each monthly excursion will feature a unique topic and a walk in the woods with stops along the way to learn more about the Cherokee Ways of Knowing.

About the hike: We will walk a small portion of the Red Trail to see a shelter that was used by Native Americans. Although the hike is considered moderate (because of the uneven, rocky terrain), we will be taking a slow walk through the woods. Please bring a hiking stick for stability if you wish. This program is perfect for beginners or those just wanting a leisurely stroll through the woods.

Date: July 28, 2024

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Cherokee-Ways-of-Knowing>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

AUGUST

World's Longest Yard Sale

The World's Longest Yard Sale starts each year on the first Thursday in August and continues for 4 days (Thursday thru Sunday.)

Running from Gadsden, Alabama to West Unity, Ohio, this event allows you to travel more than 690-miles of scenic beauty and see tons of yard sales. Get started on your journey by traveling the 93-mile Lookout Mountain Parkway route from Gadsden, Alabama to Chattanooga, Tennessee for the most "scenic rural America" in the United States

A section of this popular annual event travels thru DeSoto State Park, so be sure to use the park as your base as you travel to see the sights! (reservations recommended early)

Dates: August 1-4, 2024

For more info, see: www.discoverlookoutmountain.com/yardsale.shtml OR www.127yardsale.com

#Hike24in24AL

Birding 101 Walk

Have you always wanted to learn more of the basics of bird identification? Birding is an excellent way to explore and connect to nature in a new and different way. It is a great skill, a fun activity, and easy to learn. Join DeSoto State Park staff for an early morning walk on the boardwalk and along some of the trails around Azalea Cascade. Easy, staying on and near the boardwalk. ½ mile total.

Date: 8/3/2024

Time: 6:30 a.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at Boardwalk Trailhead on County Road 89.

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Beginner 101 Hike: Guide for Newbies

Gilliam & Chalet Trail

If you are new to hiking or just need a refresher, this once-a-month hike series is for you. We will start out with a Hiking 101 Class that covers everything you need to know to plan and have an enjoyable & safe hiking experience. We will touch on trail safety, the 10 hiking essentials, map reading, and Leave No Trace. Afterwards, we will head out on a short, beginner friendly hike to try out some of your new skills. About the hike: Gilliam & Chalet trail. Hikes along any of the trails at DeSoto State Park are considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. However, we will be hiking slowly so these are all perfect for beginners. If you would like to bring a hiking stick for stability, you are welcome to do so.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, lunch, snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: August 3, 2024

Time: 4:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-BeginnerHike101>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Forest Tales Outdoor Storytime Hike

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, for an OUTDOOR story time catered towards you and your young nature lovers twice per month from April to September. Enjoy captivating tales and engaging movement activities amidst the beauty of nature. Get the chance to interact with the natural world around you, spotting wildlife, exploring hidden nooks, and perhaps even encountering a few surprises along the way.

About the hike: the hike is considered easy, perfect for little feet. Around 0.6 Miles Total

What to bring: Backpack with water & snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: August 7, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Forest-Tales>

This program is for grown-ups and their children -NO PETS PLEASE. Participants are invited to stay after for time to play, explore DeSoto State Park and socialize with other families.

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Campfire Talk: Cherokees: The Way We Were

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June – October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson to delve into the rich history and cultural heritage of the Cherokees of Lookout Mountain, Alabama, spanning across Etowah, Cherokee, and DeKalb counties. Discover the fascinating stories and traditions of the Tsalagi Tribes of Lookout Mountain, Alabama, to honor their legacy and delve into the depths of their past.

Date: Friday, August 9, 2024

Time: 8:00-9:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Junior Ranger Adventure Series: Tree Discovery

This once-a-month hike is designed for explorers aged 3 to 103! Participants will have the opportunity to earn the coveted DeSoto State Park Junior Ranger Patch while discovering the wonders of nature and the park's historical treasures.

DSP Assistant Naturalist Mirandi Watson will be guiding this fun hike, geared toward all ages. This program will begin with an overview of the DSP Jr Ranger Program and will hike along different trails and focus on several topics in the booklet.

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Each month will utilize a different trail in the park, be beginner friendly, and be between 1-3 miles each. We will take our time, so this hike is good for all skill levels.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, lunch, snacks. And a journal with a pen or pencil. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: August 10, 2024

Time: 11:00-2:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-JR-Adventure>

Sunset Simmer-Down Paddle Trip

DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Alabama

DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided sunset paddle trip on the scenic Little River. Enjoy the peace and quiet of nature as we paddle upstream on the 'coke bottle clear' waters of the West Fork of Little River. Learn about this outstanding water source with its clear water, plant & animal life, and about the history of the area around DeSoto Falls in Dekalb County, Alabama.

What to know: This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, spans a 4-hour period and includes kayak & personal flotation device. Must be able to paddle upstream and back (no current)

What to bring: Appropriate clothing, headlamp or flashlight, bug spray, snacks, and drinking water.

Date: Saturday, August 10, 2024

Time: 4:00 pm-8:00 pm

Where: Meet at DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Miller's Bend Paddle Shack (about 7 miles from main park area of DeSoto State Park) Coordinates: 34.549124, -84.589668

Fee: \$30.00 for single kayak rental (tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50.00)

Pre-registration closes August 6th. Pre-registration: <https://forms.office.com/g/vE4EV6xLAb>

MUSIC FOR THE PEOPLE Summer Music Series: Henri's Notions

Mentone, Alabama. Sponsored by Little River Arts Council, made possible in part by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Bring your own chair or blanket to enjoy the show & enjoy some food from Fontastic Food Truck.

Date: August 10, 2024

Times: 6:00-9:00 pm (CST)

Where: Linger Longer Pavilion-Behind Mentone Inn in Mentone, AL (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park) Address: 6139 AL-117, Mentone, AL 35984

Fee: Free & open to everyone! www.littleriverartscouncil.org

#Hike24in24AL

Nature Journey Journal Hike

Join naturalists and artists for this creative nature observation hike, combining art & nature! The focus of this nature walk is to reflect your observations of nature using a personal journaling style.....in many different ways! Learn how to keep your own nature journal while strolling along trails in DeSoto State Park. Will hike about 1/2 mile to the West Fork of Little River and hang out for a while working on our nature journals with provided materials. For ages 8 to adult, we encourage all ages to join!

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Total 1 1/2 mile loop.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water and snacks. Closed-toed shoes. A favorite journal if you have one, and we will supply watercolor paper, watercolor pencils, clipboards, etc. Bring something to sit on if you prefer.

Date: August 16, 2024

Time: 11:00-2:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: \$5.00-includes all supplies RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Nature-Journal-Journey>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Park After Dark-Night Walk

Join DeSoto State Park staff to get to know the park after dark! You never know what you can discover during the night; we will be using our senses to discover what can be seen, heard, or even smelled on this fun hike! About the walk: we will be on the cabin road & go to the frog pond, near DeSoto's South entrance. All ages welcome, children must be supervised. We will meet & walk from DeSoto State Park Lodge-short distance, terrain will be a mix of asphalt and dirt road, closed toed shoes are preferred.

Date: 8/17/2024

Time: 9:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Lodge

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-in

Fort Payne, Alabama

The Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-In is a great car show, featuring over 200+ classic vehicles on display in Fort Payne's historic downtown district. This is a monthly event starting in April and ending in October (skipping September for Boom Days Festival). Music across the street from DeKalb Theatre and food vendors.

Date: Saturday, August 17, 2024

Time: 5:00-9:00 pm

Where: Downtown Fort Payne, Alabama (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Free & open to everyone. Info: www.facebook.com/3rdSaturdayFortPayneAl

Meandering Moonlight Guided Paddle

DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided moonlight paddle trip on scenic Little River. Enjoy the peace and quiet of nature as we paddle upstream on the 'coke bottle clear' waters of the West Fork of Little River. Enjoy this flatwater paddle as the sun goes down and the full moon comes up. Experience the peace & quiet of the gloaming-time!

What to know: This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, spans a 3 to 3 1/2-hour period and includes kayak, paddle, & personal flotation device. Must be able to paddle upstream and back (no current) Weight limits: 300 pounds for singles & 450 for tandems. Ages 8 to adult.

What to bring: Appropriate clothing for weather (you may get wet), headlamp or flashlight, bug spray, snacks, and drinking water.

Date: Tuesday, August 20, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm-10:00 pm

Where: DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Miller's Bend Paddle Shack (about 7 miles from main park area of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: \$30.00 for single kayak rental (2 person-tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50.00)

Pre-registration closes August 16th. Pre-registration: <https://forms.office.com/g/1Bh261fzZd>

Forest Tales Outdoor Storytime Hike

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, for an OUTDOOR story time catered towards you and your young nature lovers twice per month from April to September. Enjoy captivating tales and engaging movement activities amidst the beauty of nature. Get the chance to interact with the natural world around you, spotting wildlife, exploring hidden nooks, and perhaps even encountering a few surprises along the way.

About the hike: the hike is considered easy, perfect for little feet. Around 0.6 Miles Total

What to bring: Backpack with water & snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: August 21, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Forest-Tales>

This program is for grown-ups and their children -NO PETS PLEASE. Participants are invited to stay after for time to play, explore DeSoto State Park and socialize with other families.

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Cherokee Storytelling

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, on her monthly excursions to learn about the Cherokee people and their cultural tie to the environment. Each monthly excursion will feature a unique topic and a walk in the woods with stops along the way to learn more about the Cherokee Ways of Knowing.

About the hike: We will walk a small portion of the Red Trail to see a shelter that was used by Native Americans. Although the hike is considered moderate (because of the uneven, rocky terrain), we will be taking a slow walk through the woods. Please bring a hiking stick for stability if you wish. This program is perfect for beginners or those just wanting a leisurely stroll through the woods.

Date: August 30, 2024

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Cherokee-Ways-of-Knowing>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Campfire Talk: Poisonous & Venomous Organisms Trivia

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the great outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located in the great outdoors. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (May –October) in DeSoto State Park.

Enjoy a fun trivia game presented by Jacksonville State University Toxicologist Dr. James Rayburn. Learn about how some plants & animals really get your attention with their special lines of defense. Beware out there! Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish.

Date: Friday, August 30, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m.

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Follow Your Art

Sponsored by Little River Arts Council and the Mentone Educational Resources Foundation

The Sweetest Little Festival in Mentone! Music, Storytelling, Children's Art Projects, Face painting, Mobile Munchies Food Truck, Freudian Sip coffees, smoothies. Art vendors will line the winding walking trail behind the MERF House, on Highway 117, just east of Mentone. 30 of the areas favorite artists and makers will have work for sale in a variety of media: painting, ceramics, woodcarving, photography, textile arts, jewelry-making, and more. The focus at this show is community, with local artists and musicians, a return of the popular sidewalk chalk contest, storytelling, face painting and more.

One of the main attractions of Follow Your Art is the return of the popular Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest. The contest is open to all ages, individuals, or groups, interested in creating works of art along the track. Prizes will be awarded!

Exhibiting Artists: Awards totaling \$900 for Best of Show (Art); Best of Show (Craft); & 1st & 2nd places.

PLUS awards for Best Chalk Art (Adult); Best Chalk Art (Youth); and a People's Choice Award.

Little River Arts Council will provide the chalk or participants can bring their own. Chalk artists can arrive as early as 7:00 AM on Saturday morning, so that their creations are completed or nearly completed when visitors start to arrive.

Date: Saturday, August 31, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: MERF's Pathway to Community Walking Track in Mentone, AL, 4561 AL HWY 117, Next door to MOON LAKE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

More Info: www.littleriverartscouncil.org/fya

Environmental Education Excursions: (Animal Clues)

Experience this monthly series of nature programs designed to immerse you in the beauty of the outdoors! These offerings provide adults with the opportunity to relish a taste of "camp life," featuring activities like tree identification, birdwatching, tracking scat and prints, fossil exploration, and refining your nature journaling skills. Don't miss out on the chance to reconnect with nature and foster a deeper appreciation for the world around us!

Join in on the hunt for clues to see what animals live here! Assistant Interpretive Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, will lead you on a journey to look for animal clues along the trails of DeSoto State Park. Bring along a backpack with plenty of water, snacks, and lunch. You may also want to grab your favorite journal and some crayons or colored pencils to write down your clues as we go along. While tailored for adults, this program warmly welcomes children to join in and learn alongside you.

Date: August 31, 2024

Time: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-EE-Excursions>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Campfire Talk: Amphibian Metamorphosis: From Egg to Frog, What a Leap!

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the great outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located in the great outdoors. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (May –October) in DeSoto State Park.

Enjoy a fun trivia game with Jacksonville State University's Dr. James Rayburn while exploring how amphibians transform from a single cell to the wonderful hopping creatures we all know. Meet live tadpoles...and perhaps adopt your own non-native tadpole pet! Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish.

Date: Saturday, August 31, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m.

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

SEPTEMBER

Beginner 101 Hike: Guide for Newbies

Neverland Trail

If you are new to hiking or just need a refresher, this once-a-month hike series is for you. We will start out with a Hiking 101 Class that covers everything you need to know to plan and have an enjoyable & safe hiking experience. We will touch on trail safety, the 10 hiking essentials, map reading, and Leave No Trace. Afterwards, we will head out on a short, beginner friendly hike to try out some of your new skills.

About the hike: Neverland (short loop). Hikes along any of the trails at DeSoto State Park are considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. However, we will be hiking slowly so these are all perfect for beginners. If you would like to bring a hiking stick for stability, you are welcome to do so.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, lunch, snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: September 1, 2024

Time: 4:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-BeginnerHike101>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Environmental Education Excursions: Nature as Art (land art, & natural pigment painting)

Experience this monthly series of nature programs designed to immerse you in the beauty of the outdoors! These offerings provide adults with the opportunity to relish a taste of "camp life," featuring activities like tree identification, birdwatching, tracking scat and prints, fossil exploration, and refining your nature journaling skills. Don't miss out on the chance to reconnect with nature and foster a deeper appreciation for the world around us!

Have you ever thought of Nature as Art? Come learn how to use the natural world around you to create your own art! During this program, led by Assistant Interpretive Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, we will learn about nature photography, how to create land art in an environmentally friendly way, and how to use pigments from our natural world to create art. Bring along a backpack with plenty of water, snacks, and lunch. Please also bring a journal, crayons or colored pencils. While tailored for adults, this program warmly welcomes children to join in and learn alongside you.

Date: September 2, 2024

Time: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-EE-Excursions>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Campfire Talk: Gardening for Wildlife

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

By nurturing the natural world in your own backyard, you become a steward of biodiversity, creating a haven for wildlife and a sanctuary for yourself. A wildlife-friendly habitat garden replaces manicured lawns with native plants that attract birds, butterflies, and other wildlife seeking food and shelter. Join guest naturalist Michelle Reynolds to discover proven ways to create an inviting home environment that attracts and protects birds, butterflies, insects, and many other species.

Date: Friday, September 6, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov.

Sandstone Glade Hike

A glade is an open area where the bedrock is at or near the surface, and where soils are so thin, trees and shrubs find it difficult to grow, yet you'll find thriving, rare and unique plant communities that depend on the chemistry and conditions the environments provide. Join guest naturalist Michelle Reynolds for a hike to explore the glades in DeSoto State Park. Scout out rare, beautiful plants and wondrous rock formations among the natural clearings dotting Lookout Mountain's porous cap. About the hike: Moderate hike along rocky terrain. Approximately 1.10 miles round trip

Read about sandstone glades here: <https://www.alapark.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/Sandstone%20glades%20of%20Lookout%20Mountain%20Fall%202015%20Lookout%20Alabama.pdf>

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5DhtypZlsJUUVzVH2ZLsehA4sojZfoRNd5ntrr

Date: Saturday, September 7, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov for any details.

Things to bring: Plenty of water and/or sports drink, snacks/lunch, hiking poles/staff (optional), sturdy shoes (open toe shoes are not recommended)

WEATHER: Please be sure to dress appropriately according to seasonal temperatures/weather. As with all outdoor events, if it is stormy or very poor trail conditions, we may have to cancel. If the weather is questionable, please call the park before you leave home to check if the hike is still on (256.845.0051)

Please note: GPS can be unreliable in this area, for directions to Desoto State Park see www.alapark.com/DSP-Plan-Your-Trip

Campfire Talk: Fierce Flyers: The World of Loggerhead Shrikes"

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

The Loggerhead Shrike has some extraordinary habits that make it one of the most unique birds in North America You might have seen this small, unassuming bird perched on a fence post or utility wire, but don't let its modest appearance fool you. Despite its size, this bird is a fierce predator, earning it the nickname "Butcher Bird." One of their most fascinating behaviors is impaling their prey on thorns, barbed wire, or sharp twigs. Join guest naturalist Michelle Reynolds to discover the fascinating world of the Loggerhead Shrike.

Date: Saturday, September 7, 2024

Time: 8:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov.

Enjoy the Moment: Hike & Hammock

White Trail

Discover a secluded hammock spot and immerse yourself in the tranquility of the great outdoors! Let's unwind and recharge together amidst breathtaking scenery and the soothing sway of hammocks.

Hiking offers the opportunity to connect with nature, explore new trails, and get some exercise, while relaxing in a hammock allows you to unwind and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson will lead a short hike to a peaceful hammock spot. Participants will be supplied a hammock to use and shown how to hang it. Afterwards, 30-45 min will be spent relaxing in the hammocks before hiking back out.

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Each month will utilize a different trail in the park, be beginner friendly, and be between 1-3 miles each. We will use the white trail for this hike.

Date: September 9, 2024

Time: 2:00-4:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89. Will caravan to Lost Falls Trailhead

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://alapark.itinio.com/register/DSP-Hike-Hammock>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Forest Tales Outdoor Storytime Hike

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, for an OUTDOOR story time catered towards you and your young nature lovers twice per month from April to September. Enjoy captivating tales and engaging movement activities amidst the beauty of nature. Get the chance to interact with the natural world around you, spotting wildlife, exploring hidden nooks, and perhaps even encountering a few surprises along the way.

About the hike: the hike is considered easy, perfect for little feet. Around 0.6 Miles Total

What to bring: Backpack with water & snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: September 11, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Forest-Tales>

This program is for grown-ups and their children -NO PETS PLEASE. Participants are invited to stay after for time to play, explore DeSoto State Park and socialize with other families.

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Girl Scouts Love State Parks Weekend

Alabama State Parks

Come and explore our State Parks to celebrate the national event, Girl Scouts Love the State Parks! Over 25,000 Girl Scouts around the USA will be participating with their troops and families. Your troop or family can bring their own picnic style lunch to enjoy at the park.

While this year will be self-guided in DeSoto State Park, there are many ways Girl Scouts can enjoy Their state park. Take a hike, go birding on a walk along the Talmadge Butler Boardwalk Trail, kayak the river, go waterfall hunting, go mountain biking, take a dip in Little River. Visit the Benefield Interpretive Center to learn about the people and the critters that have called Lookout Mountain home, and discover the park's history by visiting the Civilian Conservation Corps Museum. Complete DeSoto's Jr. Ranger booklet and turn it in for a free patch to be mailed; work on finding the trees along the boardwalk with our tree scavenger hunt. Enjoy the day or the weekend in the Great Outdoors!

Dates: September 13-15, 2024

Info on the weekend & how to get the patch: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/ways-to-participate/camp-and-outdoors/love-state-parks.html#:~:text=Every%20year%2C%20Girl%20Scouts%20explore,10%20and%2011%20this%20year>

Events in Alabama State Parks: <https://www.alapark.com/alabama-state-parks-love-girl-scouts>

Girls Scouts Love the Outdoors Challenge: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/activities-for-girls/for-every-girl/girl-scouts-love-the-outdoors-challenge.html>

Campfire Talk: Plants & Natural History

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Delve into the fascinating world of plants and their natural history. Dr. Jimmy Triplett from Jacksonville State University will talk about how various cultures have used plants for medicinal purposes over the generations, and also showcase the rich variety of local flora found in our region.

Date: Friday, September 13, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov.

Outdoor Observations Hike

Have you ever seen a plant, mushroom, or critter and wondered what it was? Especially in the Spring there are some cool things to see, so join DeSoto State Park staff to discover what can be observed & recorded using iNaturalist! iNaturalist is a free app that can be used to record observations of all sorts of things – plants, animals, and even fungi. Learn how to use the simple app to help contribute to park species lists and about species seen in the park. About the hike: Moderate hike along mountainous terrain, some rocky terrain. Approximately 2 miles round trip.

Date: Saturday, September 14, 2024

Time: 10:00-12:30 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89.

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Cherokee Ways of Knowing Ancestral Walk

First People's Principles of Learning

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, on her monthly excursions to learn about the Cherokee people and their cultural tie to the environment. Each monthly excursion will feature a unique topic and a walk in the woods with stops along the way to learn more about the Cherokee Ways of Knowing.

About the hike: We will walk a small portion of the Red Trail to see a shelter that was used by Native Americans. Although the hike is considered moderate (because of the uneven, rocky terrain), we will be taking a slow walk through the woods. Please bring a hiking stick for stability if you wish. This program is perfect for beginners or those just wanting a leisurely stroll through the woods.

Date: September 18, 2024

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Cherokee-Ways-of-Knowing>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Campfire Talk: Natural History of the Appalachian Fiddle

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors!

Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Traditional Appalachian fiddlers celebrated the beauty and mystery of the natural world with their music, giving tunes commemorative names like “Piney Woods,” “Head of the Creek,” “Horses in the Canebrake,” “Icy Mountain” and “Shaking Down the Acorns.” Join botanist and fiddler Dr. Jimmy Triplett from Jacksonville State University on a musical journey through this rich heritage and learn about the interplay between Appalachian natural history and folkways.

Date: Saturday, September 14, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Meandering Moonlight Guided Paddle

DeSoto State Park staff offers this relaxing guided moonlight paddle trip on scenic Little River. Enjoy the peace and quiet of nature as we paddle upstream on the ‘coke bottle clear’ waters of the West Fork of Little River. Enjoy this flatwater paddle as the sun goes down and the full moon comes up. Experience the peace & quiet of the gloaming-time!

What to know: This trip is approximately 4 miles round trip on flatwater, spans a 3 to 3 1/2-hour period and includes kayak, paddle, & personal flotation device. Must be able to paddle upstream and back (no current) Weight limits: 300 pounds for singles & 450 for tandems. Ages 8 to adult.

What to bring: Appropriate clothing for weather (you may get wet), headlamp or flashlight, bug spray, snacks, and drinking water.

Date: Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm-10:00 pm

Where: DeSoto Falls Picnic Area-Miller’s Bend Paddle Shack (about 7 miles from main park area of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: \$30.00 for single kayak rental (2 person-tandem kayaks are available on a limited basis for \$50.00)

Pre-registration closes September 14th. Pre-registration: <https://forms.office.com/g/DsTrt2kgHa>

Boom Days Heritage Celebration

Boom Days Heritage Celebration honors Fort Payne’s rich cultural past with events that tie the history to the present, great historical artifacts, and clothing at the Fort Payne Depot Museum, a miniatures railroad system in the original office of the Coal, and Iron Company, music covering all musical genres. City Park, once the front yard of the DeKalb Hotel with its 1889 Ginkgo trees, is filled with some of the finest arts and craftsmen in the region. There is a children’s area, artist demonstrations, and a wine tasting. Boom Days begins on the third Friday of September each year and runs through Saturday ending with musical acts at the Rotary Pavilion

Dates: September 20-21 2024

Where: Fort Payne, Alabama (Within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

For more info, see www.boomdays.com

www.facebook.com/boomdays

Campfire Talk: Falconry in Alabama

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors!

Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Falconry is the hunting of wild animals in their natural state and habitat by means of a trained bird of prey. Join guest speaker Matt Whitfield to learn about falconry, which is one of the world’s oldest forms of

hunting. Falconry is currently practiced in many countries around the world. In Alabama, the most commonly used bird is the red-tailed hawk and squirrel is the most commonly pursued game animal. There are currently approx. 58 permitted falconers in the state.

Guest Speaker Matt Whitfield is a licensed Falconer in the State of Alabama and has 2 captive bred Harris Hawk he will be bringing. Come on out to meet them and learn about these beautiful birds!

Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish.

Date: Saturday, September 21st

Time: 7:00 pm

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area)

Fee: No pre-registration required, fee & open to everyone. For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov

Forest Tales Outdoor Storytime Hike

Join DeSoto State Park Assistant Naturalist, Mirandi Watson, for an OUTDOOR story time catered towards you and your young nature lovers twice per month from April to September. Enjoy captivating tales and engaging movement activities amidst the beauty of nature. Get the chance to interact with the natural world around you, spotting wildlife, exploring hidden nooks, and perhaps even encountering a few surprises along the way.

About the hike: the hike is considered easy, perfect for little feet. Around 0.6 Miles Total

What to bring: Backpack with water & snacks. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: September 25, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Forest-Tales>

This program is for grown-ups and their children -NO PETS PLEASE. Participants are invited to stay after for time to play, explore DeSoto State Park and socialize with other families.

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

#Hike24in24AL

Nature Journey Journal Hike

Join naturalists and artists for this creative nature observation hike, combining art & nature! The focus of this nature walk is to reflect your observations of nature using a personal journaling style.....in many different ways! Learn how to keep your own nature journal while strolling along trails in DeSoto State Park. Will hike about 1/2 mile to the West Fork of Little River and hang out for a while working on our nature journals with provided materials. For ages 8 to adult, we encourage all ages to join!

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Total 1 1/2 mile loop.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water and snacks. Closed-toed shoes. A favorite journal if you have one, and we will supply watercolor paper, watercolor pencils, clipboards, etc. Bring something to sit on if you prefer.

Date: September 26, 2024

Time: 11:00-2:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: \$5.00-includes all supplies RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-Nature-Journal-Journey>

Due to the nature of this hike only thunderstorms will cancel this event. Please dress accordingly.

Plant Discovery Hike-Fall Blooms

Join DeSoto State Park Staff for a meandering journey within the forest, taking in every opportunity to learn more about the natural world. On this hike we will identify many native plants of the southern Appalachians and will be teaching you how to recognize the species found in the park. Scout out rare, beautiful plants and wondrous rock formations among the natural clearings dotting Lookout Mountain's porous cap. Bring a notebook/camera if you wish and discover what can be seen along the trails. About the hike: Approx. 1 1/2 miles round trip, utilizing aqua trail & DeSoto Scout Trail. moderate due to slightly rocky terrain.

Date: 9/27/2024

Time: 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at Boardwalk Trailhead on County Road 89.

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

#Hike24in24AL

National Public Lands Day: DeSoto Scout Trail

Join DeSoto State Park Staff on a beautiful outdoor adventure hike on the DeSoto Scout Trail (DST). This hike is a challenging & steep 6.5 mile hike. The trail follows the West Fork of Little River and traverses a varied terrain of ridges, valleys, fern glades, rock formations, waterfalls, beside deep pools, riffles, through rhododendron tunnels, creek crossings, swimming holes, and sandy stretches. About the hike:

Approx 6.5 miles round trip, moderate to strenuous along rocky mountainous terrain. We will meet & start at DeSoto State Park Lodge, hike downstream to the backcountry trailhead off Road 5 in the Little River WMA (car caravan back to lodge)

Date: 9/28/2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at Lodge

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Junior Ranger Adventure Series: Carnivorous Plants

This once-a-month hike is designed for explorers aged 3 to 103! Participants will have the opportunity to earn the coveted DeSoto State Park Junior Ranger Patch while discovering the wonders of nature and the park's historical treasures.

DSP Assistant Naturalist Mirandi Watson will be guiding this fun hike, geared toward all ages. This program will begin with an overview of the DSP Jr Ranger Program and will hike along different trails and focus on several topics in the booklet.

About the hike: the hike is considered moderate, because of the uneven, rocky terrain. Each month will utilize a different trail in the park, be beginner friendly, and be between 1-3 miles each. We will take our time, so this hike is good for all skill levels.

What to bring: Backpack with plenty of water, lunch, snacks. And a journal with a pen or pencil. Closed-toed shoes.

Date: September 30, 2024

Time: 11:00-2:00 (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park, Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at the Benefield Nature Center next to the Country Store on County Road 89

Fee: Free, but RSVP is required, so we know how many to expect.

RSVP here: <https://reserve.alapark.com/register/DSP-JR-Adventure>

OCTOBER

Campfire Talk: Cherokee Trail of Tears

Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

In 1838, the Cherokee Nation, comprising over 16,000 men, women, and children, was forcibly removed from their ancestral lands in the Southeastern United States and relocated to the Indian Territory, now known as Oklahoma. This harrowing journey, which also affected other tribes such as the Creek and Choctaw, resulted in the deaths of approximately 4,000 Cherokees. The Cherokee refer to this event as Nunna daul Isunyi—“the Trail Where They Cried.” Retired JSU professor Dr. Kelly Gregg will recount the experiences of Native American people before, during, and after this tragic period in our nation's history.

Date: Friday, October 4, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

#Hike24in24AL

Civilian Conservation Corps History Hike: The CCC Quarry

Join DeSoto State Park Staff on a moderate hike to the CCC Quarry from the 1930s. Learn how the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the original structures that you can still see in the park today. About the hike: Moderate hike along mountainous terrain, some rocky terrain. Approximately 2 miles round trip.

Date: 10/5/2024

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89. Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Serious Skills Series: Dutch Oven Campfire Cooking Demo

Hosted by DeSoto State Park. The Serious Skills series is a variety of classes and workshops that provide opportunities to discover a hidden talent or learn a new skill for personal enrichment. Classes are open to local residents, overnight guests and park visitors.

Dutch ovens have been in use for hundreds of years; especially when our country was expanding and families were on the move. Unable to bring their large cook stoves with them, women learned how to cook entire meals from stews & soups to bread & desserts, in their Dutch ovens. Learn the basics about Dutch ovens, how to clean & care for your cookware, AND cook (& eat!) dinner & dessert at the same time!

Starts around 4:00 p.m, located at the DeSoto State Park Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground.

This is a demonstration so you can swing by anytime, & the best time is when food is just coming off the fire!

Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish. Drop in whenever you like & check out the food!

Date: Saturday, October 5, 2024

Time: 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. (CST) Stop by anytime!)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground next to site 93 (gate will open to the public)

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no pre-registration required. For any details about the demo, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov

Campfire Talk: History of Moonshine

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors!

Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Moonshining began very early in American history & for early moonshiners, making and selling alcohol wasn't just for fun or a few extra bucks — it was a means of survival. Learn about the history of moonshining in the Appalachian chain. Bring the family along for fresh popcorn! (Sorry, no samples of the moonshine) Seating is limited, so bring your own comfortable camp chair if you wish.

Date: Saturday, October 5, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Canyon Half Marathon

Possibly one of the most scenic half marathons in the country, the certified course loops 13.1 miles on paved roads, starting and ending at JSU's Little River Canyon Center.

Starting at 8:00 am, the first 5 miles of the run will follow the Little River Canyon National Preserve's scenic and sometimes challenging rim of the canyon, as the remainder winds through gently rolling farm country including Randy Owen Drive and his famous Tennessee River Music Hereford and Angus cattle ranch.

Date: October 12, 2024

Time: 8:00 a.m. (CST)

Where: JSU's Little River Canyon Center (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Info: https://www.active.com/fort-payne-al/running/distance-running-races/11th-annual-canyon-half-marathon-2024?fbclid=IwARogdC8MoVJgCI_TvjmF_RIVEYFNCQ7P6mKeHS5x8mNz9oM-HCedjw_Mnno_aem_ARdrqhlSWT33iDPG2RIFG-E_zBEWV8vGRbuCzsFox0MEYnx187eDmW5a7xJ9iNy6YGsGs_WhV1QsClBadkFc7bxd

#Hike24in24AL

Trail Trekker Hike: Gilliam Loop

About the hike: We will be hiking from the Lodge to Gilliam trailhead along the Green trail, then on the Gilliam Loop Trail/Chalet Trail back to the Lodge. Mileage is approximately 4.8 miles round trip, moderate along rocky terrain. No major inclines.

Date: 10/12/2024

Time: 1:00-5:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at Gilliam Loop Trailhead (past the Lodge on cabin road)

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

Campfire Talk: Backyard Habitat for Wildlife

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Join Mercedes Maddox, Nongame Wildlife Biologist from the AL Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries, to learn how to create a wildlife-friendly backyard. Whether you have a plethora of acres or a small fenced-in yard, there are many things you can do to add natural value to your landscape. Mercedes will focus on the three necessities, food, water, and shelter, and explore both artificial and natural ways

you can incorporate these into your backyard. With a few key habitat traits, your backyard can turn into your own wildlife refuge.

Date: Friday, October 18, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-in

Fort Payne, Alabama

The Third Saturday Sunset Cruise-In is a great car show, featuring over 200+ classic vehicles on display in Fort Payne's historic downtown district. This is a monthly event starting in April and ending in October (skipping September for Boom Days Festival). Music across the street from DeKalb Theatre and food vendors.

Date: Saturday, October 19, 2024

Time: 5:00-9:00 pm

Where: Downtown Fort Payne, Alabama (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Free & open to everyone. Info: www.facebook.com/3rdSaturdayFortPayneAl

Campfire Talk: Golden Eagles

Join us for a fun campfire talk in the Great Outdoors! Campfire Talks are a series of educational & entertaining programs located outside in DeSoto State Park. Campfire programs are held many Friday & Saturday evening (June –October) in our large campfire ring inside the improved campground. Talks are for all ages, & open to everyone!

Golden eagles are among North America's largest birds of prey, some with wingspans broader than 7 feet (2.1 meters). They're mostly brown, but are named for the golden feathers at the back of the head and neck.

Golden eagles are uncommon visitors to Alabama in late summer and winter, usually starting to arrive in mid- to late November and staying through March. They are most commonly found in the western half of the United States, but can be seen in eastern locations, especially during migration or the winter. Join Mercedes Maddox, Nongame Wildlife Biologist from the AL Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries to discover more about Alabama's golden eagle research.

Date: Saturday, October 19, 2024

Time: 7:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Campfire Ring in the Improved Campground (In case of inclement weather will be located in the CCC Pavilion in picnic area) Campground gates will open 30 minutes before program.

Fee: Free and open to everyone, no pre-registration required; For any details about the talk, email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Spookapalooza Pumpkin Carving Contest 2024

DeSoto State Park is glad to host the 14th Annual Spookapalooza Pumpkin Carving Contest! Entries will be judged on overall appearance, creativeness, neatness, and originality. Entries can have any theme or design, i.e., Halloween, nature, fall season, etc. All ages may enter contest.

Date: Entries must be turned in no later than 12:00 noon on Saturday, October 26th 2024 to be judged. Turn in at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89-table will be set up on porch. Winners will be announced on Sunday, October 27th via DeSoto's Facebook/Instagram(#desotostatepark)

Where: DeSoto State Park in Fort Payne, Alabama.

Entries may be picked up at the DSP Country Store on Sunday, October 27th. Free and Open to all ages. Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

Spookapalooza Spooktacular Campsite Contest 2024

Campers in DeSoto State Park have been decorating their campsites with Halloween decorations for years.....now there is a campsite decorating contest! Decorate your site with the most original and creative Halloween décor you can find ... you might win a prize! The best decorated sites will win great prizes like free camping and more-there will be a 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place winner, as well as Most Creative to boost that competitive spark!

Winners will be announced on Sunday, October 27th via DeSoto's

Facebook/Instagram(#desotostatepark) Winners will be contacted via email or phone

Regulations: We ask that decor remains on the individual sites and does not bleed over into others sites, roadways, trails, etc. Décor must be completely removed from site at camper checkout-PLEASE no glitter/confetti, paint, toilet paper or other materials that cause damage to the park. Please help us observe Leave No Trace in the park where we can, especially with picking up litter.

Date: Halloween Weekend 2024

Where: DeSoto State Park in Fort Payne, Alabama. Improved Campground Email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details.

BATS ALIVE!

Vicky Beckham Smith of A-Z ANIMALS presents a fascinating program about those night creatures people either love or hate....Bats!

Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight. With extremely elongated fingers and a wing membrane stretched between, the bat's wing anatomically resembles the human hand. Almost 1,000 bat species can be found worldwide. In fact, bats make up a quarter of all mammal species on earth! A little known fact is that the bat plays an important role in many ecosystems. They help to keep the populations of insects and bugs from getting too high & also help with pollination, something that the bees and birds are usually given all of the credit for. Bring along the family to see Vicki's live collection of bats!

Be sure to bring your own comfortable camp chair or blanket, as seating is limited. crafts/activities will follow @11:00

Date: Saturday, October 26, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park in Fort Payne, Alabama. CCC Pavilion in Picnic Area, across the road from the Country Store

Fee: Free & open to everyone. For info call 256.997.5025 or email Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov

NOVEMBER

#Hike24in24AL

Outdoor Observations Hike

Have you ever seen a plant, mushroom, or critter and wondered what it was? Even during the Winter there are some cool things to see, so join DeSoto State Park staff to discover what can be observed & recorded using iNaturalist, a free app that can be used to record observations of all sorts of things — plants, animals, and even fungi. Learn how to use the simple app to help contribute to park species lists and about species seen in the park. About the hike: Moderate hike along mountainous terrain, some rocky terrain. Approximately 2 miles round trip.

Date: 11/2/2024

Time: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89. Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

CanyonFest

JSU's Little River Canyon Center

Canyon Fest is an annual celebration of art and nature featuring local art, crafts, live animal shows, music, food and fun for the entire family. Pets welcome on leashes.

Date: Saturday, November 2, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Where: JSU's Little River Canyon Center on AL Hwy 35 (within 10 miles of DeSoto State Park)

Fee: Free and open to everyone. INFO: www.facebook.com/littlivercanyoncenter

9th Annual Creative Spirit Market

Hosted by DeSoto State Park & Little River Arts Council

Adding a new twist to a typical art fair, this event is designed as an open air showcase, with artist demonstrations, locally & regionally created fine & folk art, premium hand-crafted goods, & live acoustic music. Shoppers can browse and watch artists in their creative process, listen to music, plus purchase goods from fine and folk artists such as painters, potters, quilters, weavers & basket makers, fabric spinners, culinary artists and craftsmen. Some unique and one-of-a-kind gifts will be available for purchase. Stop by and get some early gift-shopping in!

Dates: November 9 & 10, 2024 (Second weekend of November) Times: 10:00 am-3:00 pm each day

The market is held near DeSoto State Park's picnic area across from the Country Store on County Road 89. If the weather is chilly, market-goers can enjoy a blazing fire in the stone fireplace in the CCC pavilion. Bring your own camp chair to hang out a while and listen to the music. Dogs on a leash are allowed in the park.

There is limited parking in the picnic area, the tennis court area, and in front of the Country Store. If parking anywhere in the picnic area, a \$2 per vehicle fee applies. There is no fee to attend the open-air market. Rain or shine event. Call 256.997.5025 or email for more details. Artist Entry Info: www.littliverartscouncil.org/artist-entry-form.html

Facebook page #creativespiritmarket #desotostatepark #littliverartscouncil
www.littliverartscouncil.org

#Hike24in24AL

Discovery Hike: Unveiling the Geological Wonders

During the Fall months, particularly along Laurel Creek, it's common for the waterfalls at DeSoto State Park to experience reduced flow or even dry up. Surprisingly, this dry spell enhances the hiking experience, providing a unique opportunity to observe the rocks beneath and the intricate markings etched on them over countless eons. Embark on this expedition with DSP staff to uncover the mysteries concealed within the rocks. About the hike: the trail will be moderate, rugged terrain over approx. 3 miles. We will utilize the orange and blue trails for this hike.

Date: 11/23/2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Country Store on County Road 89. Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

DECEMBER

#Hike24in24AL

Civilian Conservation Corps History Hike: Morris Branch Bridge

This incomplete bridge stands as a powerful testament to the commitment of the CCC in advancing the development of DeSoto State Park. Between the mid-1930s and early 1940s, the CCC undertook various stone projects in the park, including the construction of this bridge over Morris Branch. Their ambitious goal was to establish a direct highway connecting DeSoto State Park to May's Gulf, which is today recognized as Little River Canyon. Regrettably, their honorable mission was left unfinished when the CCC disbanded in 1942. Take the opportunity to accompany DeSoto State Park staff as they delve into the history and significance of this remarkable endeavor. About the hike: the trail will be moderate, no major inclines, approx. 2 1/2 miles total. Meet at DeSoto State Park Lodge and car caravan to the trailhead in the Little River WMA.

Date: 12/7/2024

Time: 10:00-12:30 p.m (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto's Lodge

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of walk. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking

#Hike24in24AL

Adventure Hike-DeSoto Falls Basin

Set out on an adventure hike with DeSoto State Park staff to the bottom of one of Alabama's tallest waterfalls, DeSoto Falls! Learn about Little River, an outstanding water source with its clear water & plant & animal life. Discover the history of the area around DeSoto Falls in Dekalb County, Alabama. About the hike: This hike is approximately 1.5 miles total but considered moderate to strenuous due to the mountainous terrain and elevation. Will be hiking on rocky terrain down to the West Fork of Little River and walking upstream to the view of DeSoto Falls.

Date: 12/14/2024

Time: 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (CST)

Where: DeSoto State Park-Fort Payne, Alabama. Meet at DeSoto falls Trailhead on County Road 613

Fee: Free & open to everyone, no-preregistration required. Weather-dependent, please call the Lodge at 256.845.5380 beforehand to check on status of hike. Contact Brittney.Hughes@dnr.alabama.gov for any details. www.alapark.com/desoto-state-park/hiking



**For even more fun events,
see**

www.Alapark.com/Events

**DeSoto State Park~Fort Payne,
Alabama #desotostatepark**



Contacts for event planning/programs:

DeSoto State Park	256.997.5025	Brittney M. Hughes Brittney.Hughes@dcnr.alabama.gov www.Alapark.com/DeSotoresort
JSU Field Schools	256.845.3548	Rebekah Taylor or Beth Sewell fieldschool@jsu.edu www.jsu.edu/epic/field_schools/
Little River Canyon National Preserve	256.845.9605	www.nps.gov/liri/index.htm