

Trail Markings:

General Forest Trails marked by white diamonds with trail numbers written onto them.



River to River Trail (R2R) features white diamonds with a blue "i", except in wilderness where it is a natural wood diamond with the "i" routed.



Safety: Personal safety-make sure someone knows your route and establish a check in time. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear depending on the weather and terrain. Carry plenty of water, food, compass and a first aid kit. This hike is remote cell phone coverage could be spotty.

Extra caution should be used where the trail is near the bluffs and when traveling on wet slippery rocks. Beware of poison ivy and oak. Various insects including ticks and mosquitoes are present here during spring, summer and fall. Venomous snakes are also present here including timber rattlesnakes and copperheads.

Lusk Creek can rise quickly to flash flood levels during heavy rain events.

Emergencies: The nearest hospital is Harrisburg Medical Center. Cell phone service along the trail can be spotty so be prepared and know where your closest outlet is when dialing 911.

Camping: There are no designated camping areas along the trail but numerous ideal trail side camping areas. Note that camping is prohibited within Natural Areas. Use existing campsites, don't create new ones. Use portable camp stove for cooking. If a campfire is needed, keep it small and use existing fire rings. Protect water quality by washing and camping 200 feet from any water sources. Leave the campsite cleaner than you found it.

Trail Ethics: "Please practice Leave No Trace principles" Pack It In, Pack It Out. Some rare and endangered species of plants are located in the area so please stay on the designated trails and leave the rocks and plants for others to enjoy. Equestrians frequent this trail system: hikers should yield to horses. Approximately half of this hike is within Lusk Creek Wilderness. Please abide by wilderness guidelines and restrictions.

Facilities: There are no facilities along this entire trail. Bury human waste and toilet tissue in a 6 inch deep "cat hole" at least 200 feet from water.

Travel Time: Plan for two days if you are capable of hiking 13 mi. per day and three days at 9 mi. per day. Remember that exploring side trails and creeks can add several miles to the trip, so plan accordingly.

Surface Type: rock, dirt and mud

Avenza: The map included with this brochure is available in the Avenza Map Store for downloading to your smart phone. The Avenza App can be downloaded by searching the app store on your phone for this:



Once the app is downloaded access the map store and search for the following map: Shawnee NF Multi-Day Hikes

This brochure will still be a handy reference to know what the points of interest might be.

Multi Day Loop Trail Maps
Lusk Creek Loop

Shawnee National Forest

2020

Description: The 25.5-mile Lusk Creek Loop (LCL) is characterized by multiple creek crossings and the wooded slopes and valleys of one of Illinois' most pristine waterways. It features historical evidence of past use, rock formations, wilderness solitude, abundant wildlife, scenic views, and a section of the 158-mile River to River Trail. Plan for two to three days to backpack the loop.

Beginning at the Lusk Creek Trailhead on New Hope Road, follow the River to River Trail east along Little Bear Branch about one mile, then go left/north on 481B/Wishing Well trail. This section tells a story of the past: You'll pass the "wishing well" and the wheels of an Old Hay Rake. When you cross Stone Bottoms Rd. you'll see the remains of an old farm. Go left of the metal roof to start trail 487 for the next 5.5 mi. Pay attention at intersections and enjoy views of upper Lusk Creek and its tributaries. At the eastern terminus of 487K, keep left on 487 over to the Statue.

Optional side trip- Zimmer Cemetery lies north of the Statue .6 mi. up the forest road and is the resting place of some early pioneers and the former location of a St. Stephen's Catholic Church that burned by lightning strike in the 1920's.

From the Statue, continue east along 487 past a rock bluff, along a little creek, some mossy glades and a campsite. Then start trail 459 directly across FR 1624. You are now entering Dog Hollow, a place of solitude and abundant wildlife. After about 2.5 mi. on 459 you cross

Oak Blanchard Road, the unofficial halfway point and the last place with vehicle access to this trail loop.

Follow 459 for about 1.3 mi. to the beginning of a small bluff line with a table rock behind of which is a small guillotine formation. There is a small rock overhang and then Little Lusk Den a "doorway" in the side of the rock. Next, a huge boulder with beautiful rock formations called Liesegang rings. Named after German Chemist, Raphael E Liesegang, these sedimentary rocks feature ring-like designs in an array of colors.

Then you come to Little Lusk Creek and the end of 459. There is a natural spring on the eastern bank near here. The LCL continues right, uphill on 480. Along trail 480 you will pass a large campsite.

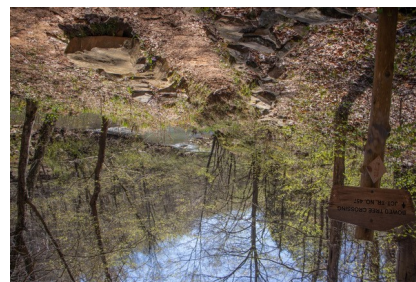
Follow the creek to the intersection with the River to River Trail (R2R), then across the creek and continue south 0.75 mi. to a campsite at another crossing. In the Wilderness Area follow wooden diamonds up a long gradual climb, past the Rock Wall through some open woodlands to "Owl Bluff," a scenic overlook.

From "Owl Bluff" hike 0.8 mi. along the bluff and down to Bowed Tree Crossing at Lusk Creek. From here continue west then up some steep switchbacks along the R2R to the Lusk Creek Trailhead and the end of the LCL.

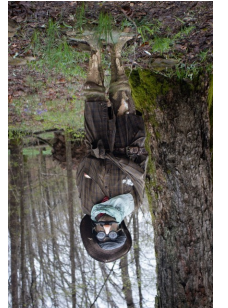


For shorter hikes, consider:
An 11 mile hike is turning off the yellow route onto magenta will take you past Salt Pe-ter Cave.
A 14 mile hike highlighted in green features Secret Canyon

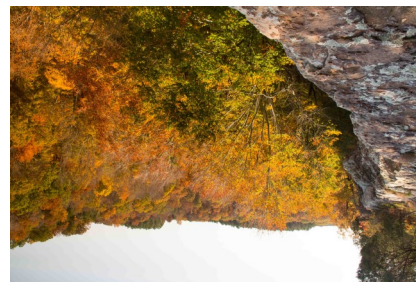
#	Directions (The numbers show on the map)	Mile
1	Start at the Lusk Creek Trailhead and head East along the R2R trail for 1.1 miles to Trail 481B Intersection.	0.0
2	Turn left/northeast onto trail 481B and follow it about 1.0 miles to the intersection with the trail 481.	1.1
3	Turn left/northwest onto trail 481 and follow it for 0.8 miles to Stone Bottoms Road where there is an old homestead.	2.1
4	Across the road, follow trail 487 where it takes off to the left of the old metal roof. Stay on 487 at the intersections with trails 487H, 487K, 487L and 487M. The forest land along 487 is outside the wilderness.	2.9
5	At about 6.1 miles 487 intersects trails 459, 484 & old forest road 1624. Continue on trail 459 across the road.	9.0
6	Follow trail 459 crossing Oak Blanchard Road at the 1.8 miles point. This could be an exit point. Continue on trail 459 another 3.7 miles to an old forest road.	15.5
7	Turn right/south on the old road which turns into trail 480 after about 0.3 miles. Trail 480 follows Little Lusk Creek for 0.9 miles and dead ends at the R2R trail.	16.4
1	Ver right/south on the R2R trail and follow it for 9.1 miles back to the Lusk Creek trailhead. Owl Bluff is reached at the 22.5 mile point and the Bowed Tree crossing at 23.2. Stay on the R2R trail when passing intersections with trails 425 and 490 before Owl Bluff, 457 and 404 at the bowed tree crossings, and 481B 1.1 miles from the end.	25.5



- Bowed Tree Crossing



- Statue



- Owl Bluff



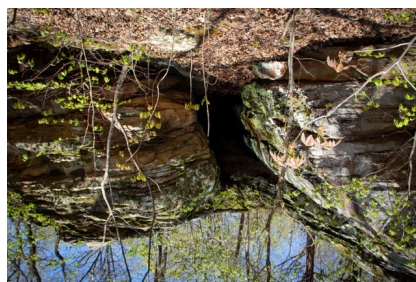
- Old Hay Rake



- Tuning Fork Tree



- Zimmer Cemetery



- Little Lusk Den



- Wishing Well

Points of Interest:

Shawnee National Forest Multi Day Hike Lusk Creek Loop

Legend

- ★ Point of Interest
- 🏠 Hiker/Equestrian Trailhead
- Road
- Road (Seasonally Closed)
- Road (Closed to Motorized Use)
- - - Forest Service River to River Trail
- - - Non-Forest Service River to River Trail
- - - Forest Service Hiker/Equestrian Trail
- Multi Day Hike (24.4 Miles)
- Multi Day Hike Alternate 1 (14 miles)
- Multi Day Hike Alternate 2 (11 miles)
- Stream
- Waterbody
- Natural Area
- Wilderness Boundary
- National Forest Land
- Non-National Forest Land



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