

Ozark - St. Francis National Forests

Buffalo Ranger District - Arkansas

Alum Cove Natural Bridge Geological Area

Hiking
Picnicking
Geology



Southern National Forest

September 1999

Description of Area:

The Buffalo Ranger District is located within the heart of the Ozarks. Visitors can view picturesque rock bluffs and hike wooded hillsides.

Outstanding among the many natural features of the Ozark National Forest is the huge stone arch that forms a natural bridge at Alum Cove. The natural arch is all that remains of what was a quartz sandstone cave. The arch is 130 feet long and 20 feet wide. The weathering process of wind, rain and ice formed the opening between the arch and the rock overhang.

The Alum Cove Natural Bridge Area is designed primarily for visitors to be close to nature. The area offers picnic facilities and the Alum Cove National Recreation Trail for your enjoyment. This looping trail wanders past the natural arch, across a small stream and to the bluff line with overhangs. The entire trail is 1.1 miles long and takes about 1 hour to walk. Visitors may also take a short 30-minute round trip hike for 0.4 miles to view the arch. Exercise caution while hiking along bluff line.

History:

Early settlers reportedly used this arch to move their wagons and livestock across the streambed during wet weather. Water and wind also shaped other interesting rock formations along the bluff line across the cove, including the caves or overhangs. Native Americans used these rock overhangs for shelter while on hunting trips. At one time free-roaming goats inhabited the caves, giving the formations the local name, "goat houses".

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Facilities:

- Group Picnic Pavilion.
- 7 picnic tables with fireplaces.
- Vault toilets.
- Drinking water available April through October.
- 1.1-mile nature trail.
- Accessible trail in picnic area.
- Camping not permitted.

Surrounding Areas: Other scenic areas nearby are the Upper Buffalo Wilderness, Richland Creek Wilderness, and Arkansas Scenic 7 and 21 Byway and Ozark Highlands Trail. Points of interest include Sam's Throne and Glory Hole.

Fees: Current user fees and regulations are posted at self-service pay station.

Location: From Jasper take Arkansas 7 south for 15 miles, turn west on Arkansas 16 and go 1 mile, turn northwest on Newton County Road NE28 and go 3 miles.

For more information, contact:

Buffalo Ranger District
P.O. Box 427, Highway 7 North
Jasper, AR 72641
(870) 446-5122

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