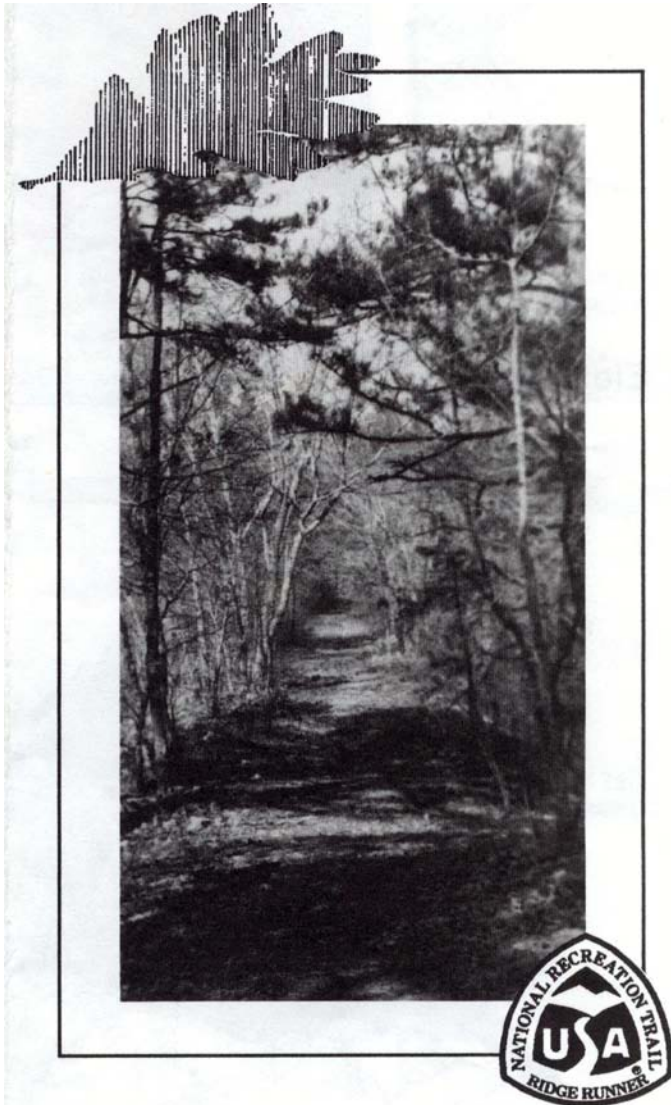


# THE RIDGE RUNNER TRAIL

## Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District



The Ridge Runner Trail is 22 miles long and extends from Noblett Lake in the north to the North Fork Recreation Area to the south. There are two hiking loops: an eight mile trail around Noblett Lake, and a 12.1 mile trail in the Steam Mill Hollow area. The trail will lead you through a part of the Missouri Ozarks known for its beauty and limestone karst topography. The landscape varies from gently rolling to very steep terrain with rock outcrops and bluffs. Vegetation along the trail is diverse and includes oak-hickory, shortleaf pine, and bottomland forests. Native wildflowers and flowering dogwood, are abundant. Remnant prairie plants can be seen, a reminder of a time when repeated wildfire burned the Ozarks allowing fingers of prairie to extend into the woods. If you walk quietly through the woods you may see a wild turkey, a white-tailed deer, or possibly even a sharp-shinned hawk. There are 334 species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds that can be found here.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Ridge Runner Trail is designed and maintained for foot traffic, horse use and mountain bicycle use. Motorized travel, including trail bikes and all terrain vehicles, is

not permitted.

Drinking water is available from April 15 to October 15 at North Fork and Noblett Lake recreation areas. Water from streams and springs, although crystal clear, has high bacterial levels and must be treated before using. Water sources along the trail are extremely limited; carrying drinking water is recommended.

There is a fee for camping at North Fork and Noblett Lake Campgrounds during the summer months. There are no fees during the remainder of the year or at trail camps. No camping is permitted within 100 feet of trails, streams, ponds, bluffs, and caves. Cans, bottles, and other non-burnables must be packed out. Garbage containers are provided at recreation areas in season. Please be careful with fires.

Trails are maintained in the spring and fall, but vegetation growth at stream crossings, as well as intersecting woods roads, may make the trail hard to follow. Occasionally, trees are across the trail. The trail is marked with grey assurance markers (sometimes missing due to vandalism or squirrel

damage). A map and compass are recommended. Topographic maps may be purchased at the Rolla District office. Average hiking speed is 1-1/2 miles per hour. Spring and Fall are the best times to use the trail. Mild periods in the winter are also good. Summers tend to be sweltering. The trail crosses south facing slopes, which can be quite hot.

## TRAIL SAFETY

Tell someone where you are going and what your planned return time will be. The Ozarks are subject to tornadoes and flash flooding. Be especially alert during severe thunderstorms. North Fork trailhead has flooded, so don't leave your vehicles there if it appears that the river might flood. Be careful of high water when crossing streams.

## TRAIL MANNERS



**HIKERS:** Be aware that you are sharing the trails with bicyclists and horse riders.

**BICYCLISTS:** Yield to hikers and horse riders. Announce your presence with a friendly greeting. Please use a helmet and gloves. Ride at a safe and controlled speed.



**HIKERS AND BICYCLISTS:** For safety reasons, when meeting horses, please stay well off the trails.



**CYCLISTS AND HORSE RIDERS:** Respect trail closures. They are enforced to protect visitors and resources.

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**Ava, Missouri 65608**  
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**Visit our web site at:**

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/mtnf>





Noblett  
(22.0 mi)

Horton  
(18.7 mi)

Dry Creek  
(15.7 mi)

Blue Hole  
(14.0 mi)

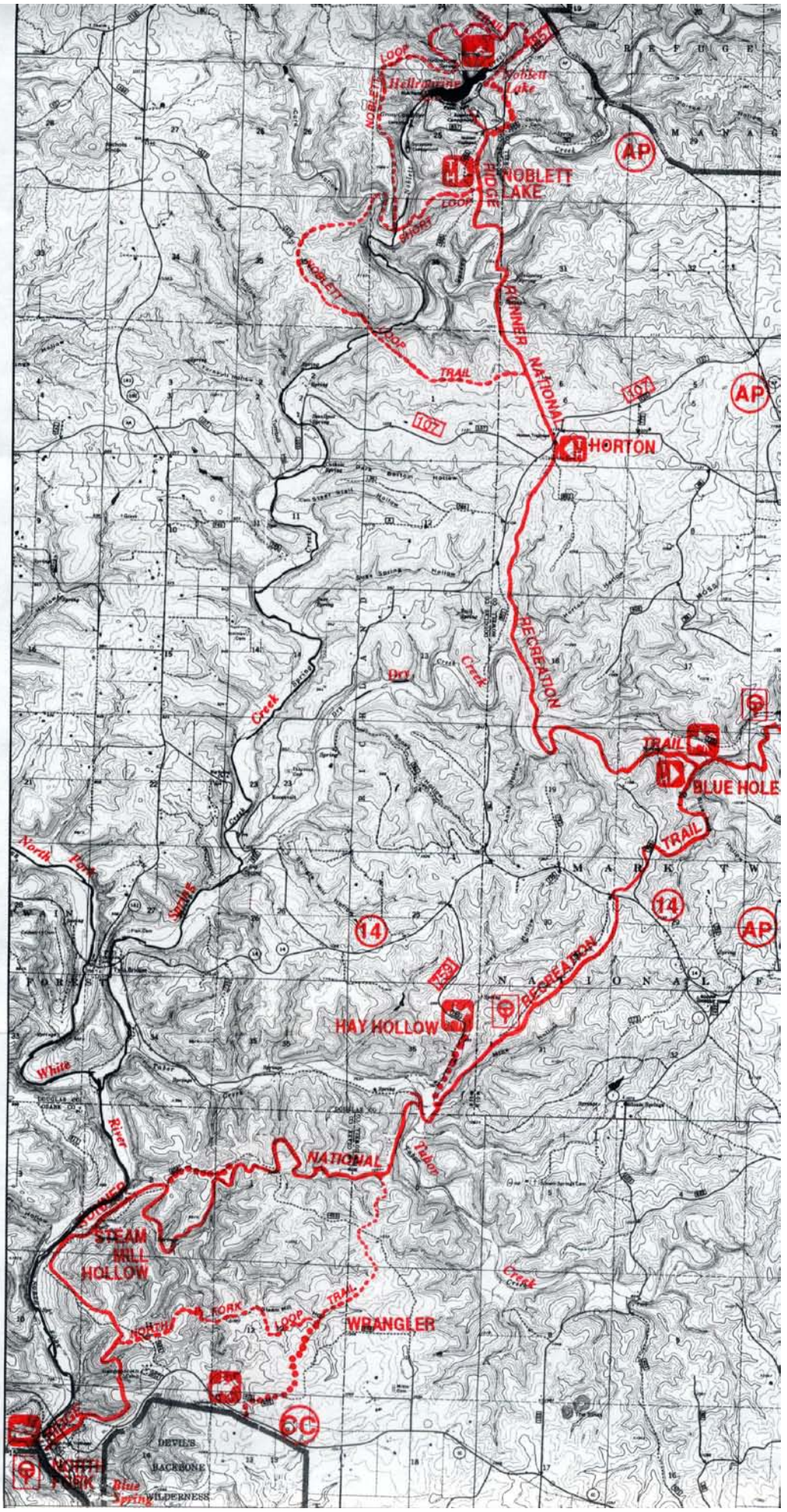
Tabor Creek  
(9.0 mi)

Steam Mill  
Hollow  
(3.0 mi)

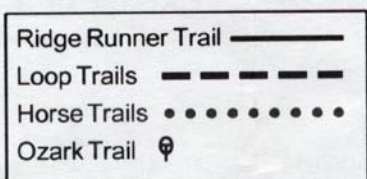
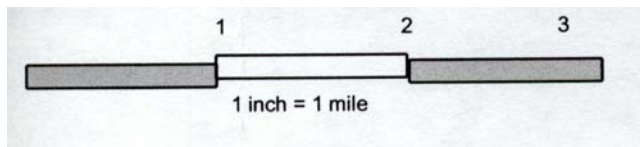
North Fork  
(0.0 mi)

1100  
1000  
900  
800  
700

Elevation (ft)







MILEAGE		LOCATION		FACILITIES						
				Parking	Toilet (Vault)	Picnic Tables	Camping	Drinking Water	Boat Ramp	
			Noblett Loop trail (12.0 mi)							
			Short Loop (6.0 mi.)							
0.0	22.0		Noblett Recreation Area	●	●	●		●	●	
3.3	18.7		Horton Trailhead	●						
8.0	14.0		Blue Hole Trailhead	●		●				
9.6	12.8		Wrangler Trailhead							
13.0	9.0		Hay Hollow Trailhead	●			●			
19.0	3.0		Steam Mill Hollow							
22	0.0		North Fork Recreation Area	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
			Loop trail (12.1 mi.)							

**12.0 Miles NOBLETT LAKE LOOP**

This loop starts at the Noblett Trailhead and circles Noblett Lake, crossing Noblett and Spring Creeks, and Cord Hollow. The trail passes near Hellroaring Spring on the northwest side of the lake. A number of old woods roads parallel or cross the trail.

**RIDGE RUNNER TRAIL**

**0.0 Mile NOBLETT LAKE RECREATION AREA**

22.0 Noblett Trailhead is on Forest Road 857 near the Recreation Area. The Ridge Runner Trail is restricted to foot, horse, and bicycle travel only. A dam on Noblett Creek was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the late 1930's, creating the 27 acre lake. Fish from the shoreline or boat. Boat access is limited to electric motors.

**3.3 Miles HORTON**

18.7 Several springs can be found along the

trail; Galloway Springs is a short walk to the east of the trail. Some old roads remain from the lumber town of Horton which thrived at the turn of the century; many of these either cross or parallel the trail. Tombstones in Horton Cemetery near the trailhead testify to a plague in 1902.

**8.0 Miles BLUE HOLE HOLLOW**

14.0 Misty mornings gave the hills a bluish cast, prompting early settlers to call the area Blue Hole. Burned by large wildfires in 1971, 1982, and 1987, prairie grasses and flowers are now common to this area. Blue Hole Trailhead is located ¼ mile to the east along AP Highway. The Ozark Trail ties into the Ridge Runner; from here south to the North Fork Trailhead, both trails will use the same tread.

**10.5 Miles STATE HIGHWAY 14**

11.5 The trail crosses State Highway 14 at this point. There is not a developed trailhead at this junction and leaving vehicles unattended at this location is not recommended.

**13.0 Miles HAY HOLLOW TRAILHEAD**

9.0 The trailhead can be accessed from Highway 14 by turning south onto Forest Road 759, as well as from the Ridge Runner Trail, where it drops down a hillside into the usually dry Tabor Creek bottom. Parking, primitive camping and picnicking are permitted.

**19.0 Miles STEAM MILL HOLLOW**

3.0 This area boasts a deep hollow with spring branches entering the North Fork of the White River. A portion of the trail overlooks the river. Motorized vehicles are not permitted in this primitive setting.

**22.0 Miles NORTH FORK**

0.0 This trailhead is located at the North Fork Recreation Area. The area has campgrounds, picnicking, canoe launch, toilets, drinking water, and garbage containers in summer. Blue Springs and the Devil's Backbone Wilderness are adjacent to the trailhead. Please keep in mind that horses are not allowed in this developed recreation area.

## 12.1 Miles NORTH FORK LOOP

The North Fork Loop leaves the Recreation Area and crosses CC Highway, passes through dense hardwood forest, then parallels the North Fork of the White River. After leaving the river, the trail continues over scenic ridges and hollows before completing the loop back at the North Fork Recreation Area. Perfect for hiking and horseback, but bicycle riders should consider turning left at the fork and traveling in the other direction.

### America's Great Outdoors Hiking Hints

**PLAN YOUR TRIP:** Before you hike, know your limitations, and check the weather forecast. Allow yourself one hour per mile of travel to fully enjoy your trip. Be sure to wear sturdy, comfortable shoes.

**TAKE A FRIEND:** To be safe, don't hike alone. Tell a reliable person your hiking schedule. Although the trail is safe, children by themselves could easily get lost or hurt. Don't let children hike the trail without an adult.

**WATER:** Any groundwater can be contaminated. Either carry ample water (even for an afternoon stroll), or be prepared to **purify or boil the water you drink. The campgrounds have water between April 15 and October 15.**

**PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT:** Pack out everything you pack in. Remember, that candy bar you ate will give you enough energy to carry out the wrapper. Go one step further and take out the trash that thoughtless people left behind. Don't bury garbage; animals will dig it up.

**KEEP THE WATER CLEAN:** Bury all human waste and unsightly toilet paper in a small hole 6-8" deep at least 100' from any water. Never wash or bathe in the creeks or rivers. Scatter wash water high on the bank so that the waste can be removed before it reaches the creek. Do use biodegradable soap.

**BE CONSIDERATE:** Let those who follow you on the trail enjoy the same things you have enjoyed. Don't damage or cut any flowers, ferns, shrubs, or trees.

**KEEP YOUR PETS TO YOURSELF:** For the protection of wildlife and for others' enjoyment, your pets should be kept under your control.

**BE PREPARED:** Know how to recognize poisonous snakes and plants and avoid them. During the summer avoid high grass to reduce contact with ticks and chiggers. Carry a first aid kit and know how to use it.

**BE AWARE OF HUNTING SEASONS:** Remember to wear bright, protective outer clothing during hunting seasons. Discharging firearms within 150 yards of the trails is prohibited.

**COOKING:** It is best to use a backpacking stove. If you must have a campfire, keep it small. Clear the ground to mineral soil and keep the fire away from flammable material. Cut only dead wood. Make sure the fire is DEAD OUT, then scatter the cold remains on the fire ring and make it look as natural as possible. Remember, aluminum foil does not burn.

**CAMPING:** Pick a flat spot at least 100 feet away from the trail or the creek, preferably out of sight. When you break camp. **LEAVE NO TRACE OF YOUR STAY.**

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**Mark Twain National Forest**

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401 Fairgrounds Road, Rolla, MO 65401



4/14/2011wfw