



Little Grand Canyon



Erosion carved this deep box canyon, exposing its majestic bluffs. A cool, lush bottomland habitat thrives on the canyon floor. Along the upper portions of the trail, visitors encounter expansive views of colorful cliffs, Big Muddy River and the Mississippi River floodplain. The canyon features seasonal waterfalls, large sandstone overhangs and towering beech and sycamore trees.

Trail Highlights

The trail consists of a 3-mile loop. However, shorter and less strenuous paths lead to scenic overlooks before the trail descends into the canyon. You can reach these vistas by taking either leg of the trail leading from the parking lot. A unique feature of this trail is that both the approach and exit from the canyon is via steps carved into the rocky creek beds.

Nature Viewing

Known for its plant and animal diversity, this area also is a haven for neotropical migratory songbirds during the spring and fall. Year-round residents include raccoon, mink, fox, deer and bobcat, along with several birds, amphibians and reptiles. The rock ledges serve as snake dens for the copperhead, cottonmouth and timber rattler, along with a few nonpoisonous species. From the scenic overlooks, turkey vultures and hawks often are seen soaring over treetops. In 1980, Little Grand Canyon was designated a National Natural Landmark due to its unique ecological and geological features. It contains a variety of natural communities, including upland forest, dry hill prairies, sandstone outcroppings and an extensive floodplain ecosystem at the bottom of the canyon.

Length: 3 miles

Travel Time: 3 to 3 ½ hours

Trail Difficulty: Moderate to difficult. Portions of the trail are steep.

Trail Surface: Asphalt and dirt

Trail Markings: Some reassurance markers

Open: Daily from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Facilities: Parking, accessible restrooms, picnic area with grills and interpretive signs.

Directions:

From Murphysboro: Take Highway 127 south 6 miles to Etherton Rd.; *then west 2.5 miles, to Poplar Ridge Rd. Take Poplar Ridge Rd. 1 mile to Hickory Ridge Rd. Continue straight through the 4-way stop onto Hickory Ridge Rd. and go 2.3 miles to Little Grand Canyon entrance road. Turn right onto entrance road. Proceed to trailhead parking lot.

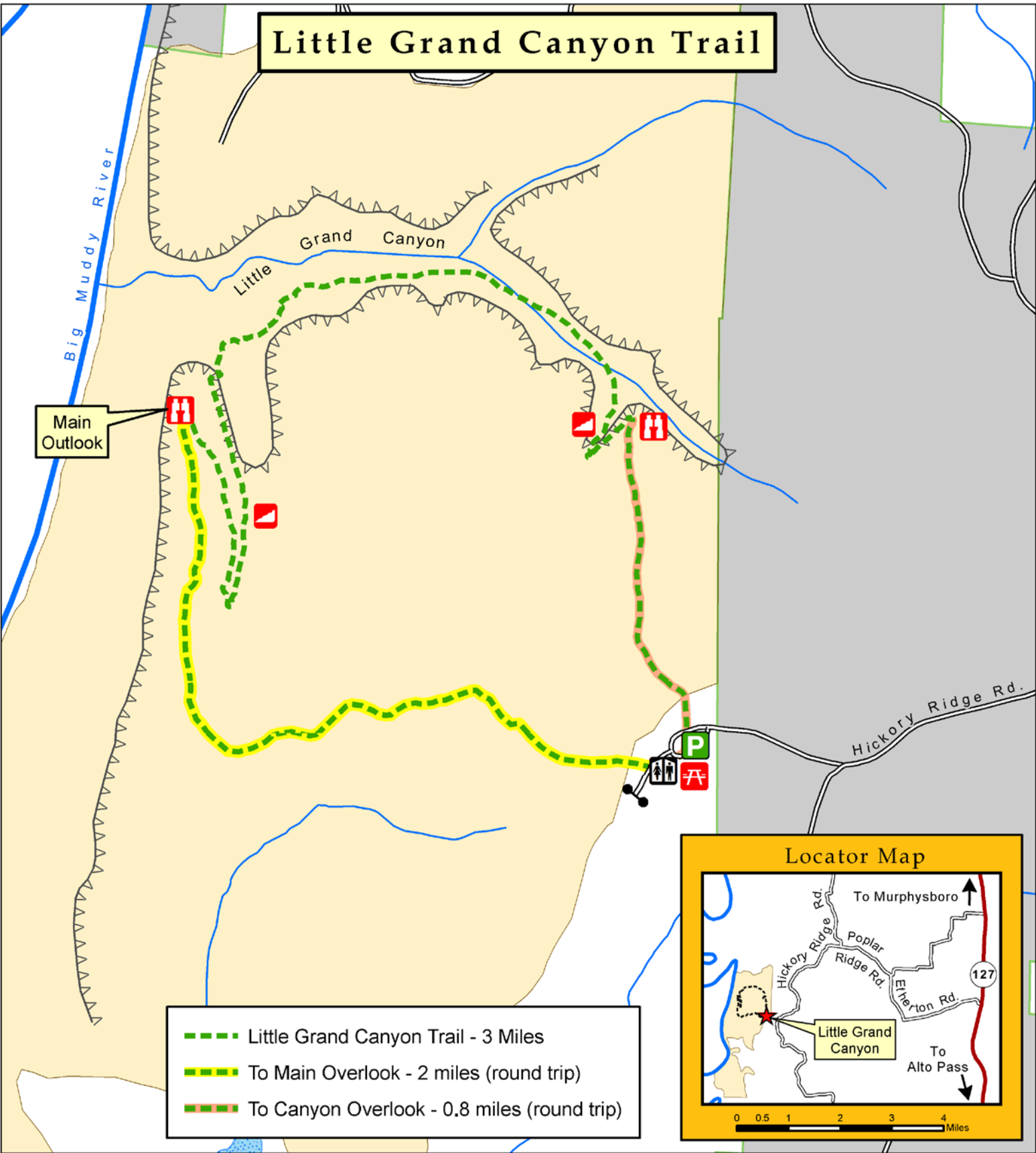
From Jonesboro: Take Highway 146 west 2.5 miles, then take Highway 127 north 16.3 miles to Etherton Road; continue at * in directions above.

Safety: Extra caution should be used where the trail is near the bluffs and when traveling on wet, slippery rocks. Beware of poison ivy and venomous snakes. Due to the remoteness of the canyon, precautions should be taken before hiking (carry water, food, first-aid kit, etc.). Flash floods occur in the canyon; be aware of developing weather conditions. Search and rescue efforts may not be as rapid as expected in an urban setting.

In the event of an emergency, call 911.

Trail Ethics: Pack it in, Pack it out. Stay on the designated trail and leave the beauty of the rocks, plants and animals for others to enjoy.





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Legend

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| | Observation Point | | Parking | | Road | | Little Grand Canyon Natural Area |
| | Canyon Descent | | Stream | | Hiker Only Trail | | National Forest Land |
| | Restroom | | State Highway | | Bluff | | Non-National Forest Land |

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

