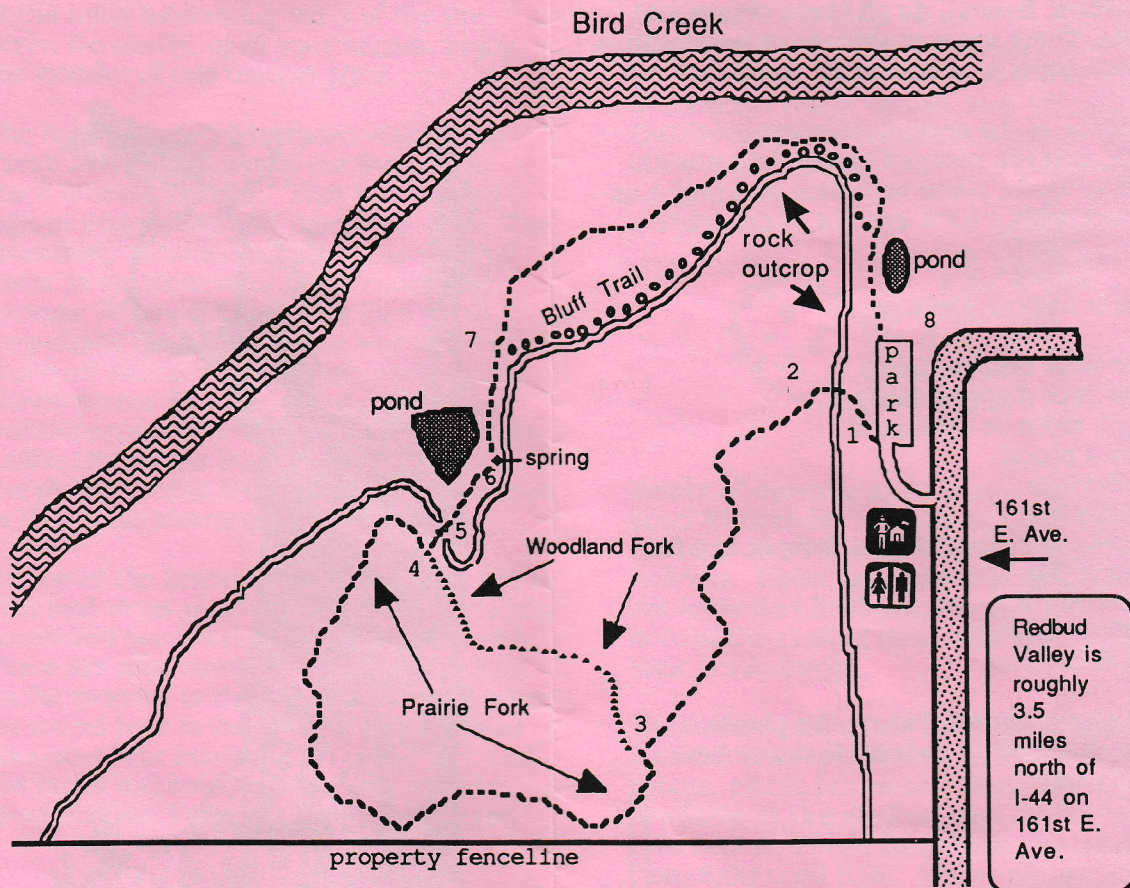


Welcome to Redbud Valley!



Redbud Valley Main Trail Map



The Redbud Valley Natural Area

is operated by

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center

Tulsa Parks and Recreation

for information: 669-6644

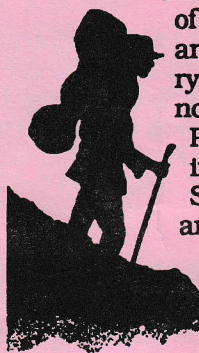


The Main Trail

Parking area gates are locked at 5:00 p.m. Before starting your hike, please be sure that you have ample time to return before closing. Allow at least one and a half hours to complete the Main Trail loop.

Currently, the main trail system at Redbud Valley consists of one loop trail, approximately one mile in length. The trail is steep and rugged in spots, and is faint or braided in others. The trail can be very rough in a few areas. Use caution and be sure of your footing, especially on slopes.

The trail begins at the parking lot ① and goes west up the steep hillside. From the top of the rock outcrop ②, the trail winds



through a stunted woodland of Post Oak, Blackjack Oak and scattered Texas Hickory. Soon you will begin to notice scattered Prickly Pear Cactus in the clearings. There is Fragrant Sumac throughout this area, and a few small trees of Chittamwood, or Gum Bumelia. The trail forks ③ at which point you may decide whether you want to choose the

Prairie Fork or the Woodland Fork. Either trail will lead you to the same spot. The Woodland Fork winds through a forested area, while the Prairie Fork will take you through a section where the soil is so thin that few trees grow. (If this is your first visit, we recommend the Prairie Fork.) Here you will find much more cactus and many grasses and flowers typical of a dry prairie habitat. Look carefully for the small *Mam-malaria* cactus found here, as well as for Yucca. Other interesting plants in this area are Smoke Tree and Deciduous Holly. This area is sometimes burned as a management tool.

Eventually the two forks rejoin at the top of THE RAVINE④. This break in the cliff allows the trail to drop down to the base of the cliff face. The environment here is radically different from the uplands, being cooler and much more moist. Notice that several types of fern grow on the limestone rocks. In spring, you may find Columbine growing here.

Turn right at the base of the Ravine ⑤. Not far is a good size cave, and after that, an active spring ⑥ emerges from the base of the cliff and feeds the pond below. If the weather has been dry, the spring may produce barely a trickle, but after a good rain, the spring will run with surprising force. Look for Sugar Maples which are common in this area. You will pass several more small caves before the trail begins to drop down the hillside to the bottom of the slope ⑦.

From the bottom of the hill, the trail wanders through the flood-plain of Bird Creek, in a habitat much more typical of north-eastern Oklahoma. Still, the hillside to the south has unusual plants, especially Dutchman's Breeches, which can be prolific in early spring.

The trail winds around large limestone blocks which have slipped to the bottom of the hill. One of these is now surrounded by trees and large grape vines. (This section can be very muddy in wet weather.) The trail continues around the hill and returns to the parking lot ①.

Hours:

Redbud Valley is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. The area is closed Monday and Tuesday, and we are closed most legal holidays. Admission is free.

The Redbud Valley Natural Area

is a place of quiet beauty and rugged scenery. Here are plants and animals found nowhere else in northeastern Oklahoma. It is a very special habitat, preserved for all of us to enjoy. The trail will take you to some of the most interesting parts of the Preserve. Go slowly, open your senses, enjoy the wonder of this unique place.

The habitat here was created where Bird Creek and its tributaries cut through a thick limestone layer. This has formed valleys edged with tall limestone cliffs. The limestone, in turn, has been dissolved by water to create several small caves and springs. Where the tall cliffs face north, they shade the area from the sun and keep it cool and moist. This special combination allows plants like ferns, Columbine and Dutchman's Breeches to grow, and shelters native Oklahoma Sugar Maples. Many of the plants in this habitat are more common in the Ozark Mountains to the east.

On top of the limestone, however, the soil is thin and dries quickly, allowing plants like yucca and two species of cactus to flourish. There are also many plants here common on the prairies to the west. One tree of interest found here is the Smoke Tree, *Cotinus obovatus*. The combination of the dry and the moist habitats, existing side by side, gives Redbud Valley its special character.

Our Purpose: The primary management focus at Redbud Valley is to preserve and protect the unique plant and animal life that is found here. The area is also used for environmental education and for public enjoyment, but only when these activities coincide with our main focus, protection. Enjoy your visit with us, and please help us maintain this beautiful area by observing the posted regulations and the Dos and Don'ts in this guide.

About using the area:

The trails... Besides some very basic improvements, we have left the trails rough and rugged. They are steep in places, rocky in others, and frequently muddy and slick after rain. Use extra caution as you walk through the area. **We encourage you to stay on the trails.** The soil on the top is very thin and excess traffic causes long-term damage. On the hillsides, erosion is a problem, especially where people short-cut between trail sections.



Hours of operation... At present, the area is open Wednesday through Sunday, closed Monday and Tuesday. It is also closed most holidays. **Gates are opened at 8:00 am and are locked at 5:00 pm.** Please make a special note of the closing time, and plan your activities accordingly.

Restrooms and other facilities... The visitors center is open from 11:00 to 3:00. Restrooms, picnic tables and drinking water are available in the shelter adjacent to the visitors center. These facilities are available from 8:00 until 5:00. Please picnic only in this area.

Things to be aware of... Snakes are not uncommon. Most are non-venomous, but copperheads have been found here, and rattlesnakes are possible. On the uplands, tarantulas and scorpions live among the rocks. The area can also have an abundance of ticks in season, and of course, chiggers, wasps and bees are common. Certain trail portions have some poison ivy. None of these things should deter you from visiting, but you need to be aware that they are here and take appropriate precautions.