DESGOTO SCOUT TRAIL REGULATIONS

1. Check with Camp Ranger at Comet Scout Reservation.
2. Scout troops and youth groups must have adult leadership on the trail.
3. Cutting of live trees prohibited.
4. Damaging or defacing of markers or signs will result in disqualification of entire group.
5. Overnight camping in designated camping areas only.
6. Trail will be closed during Deer Season (Nov. 1 – Dec. 31)
7. Trail committee is not responsible for accidents or loss of property.
8. Litter should be carried to the end of the trail for disposal.

Trail patches may be ordered after completion of entire trail. Trail patches are $1.25 each (Medal $3.50) and may be ordered with the form below from:

C. M. T. Sawyer, III
P.O. Box 71
Ft. Payne, Ala. 35967

DESGOTO SCOUT TRAIL HIKERS

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I certify the above hikers have hiked the Desoto Scout Trail.

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Leader

HIKING – CAMPING
ON LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN
NEAR FORT PAYNE, ALABAMA
IN
SCENIC DEKALB COUNTY
DESMOST SCOUT TRAIL

The DeSoto Trail originated with the District Committee of the Sequoyah District of the Choccolocco Council, BSA. Since its inception, many Scout troops have contributed countless time and effort toward what we know today as the DeSoto Scout Trail.

The Trail Committee administers the Trail which is strictly a hiking trail in the scenic area of Lookout Mountain and along Little River in DeKalb County. The Trail traverses about 16 miles through Comer Scout Reservation, DeSoto State Park and property belonging to Alabama Power Co., ending at the Edna Hill Church near Ala. Highway No. 35.

The Trail covers varied terrain; rugged in many areas along the course of Little River which is in an uninhabited area. Scout troops desiring to hike this trail should be well prepared and equipped and should consider spending the night in order to enjoy and appreciate to the fullest extent all the Trail offers.

For the wildflower buffs, Rhododendron and Mountain Laurel are in full bloom during the month of May while the fall foliage reaches its peak during the months of October and November.

MARKER NO. 1: Comer Scout Reservation forms the northern terminus of DeSoto Scout Trail and is located 4 miles south of Mentone, Ala. on DeSoto Parkway. Featured by a 90 acre lake and 2 camps located on a reservation exceeding 1,000 acres, this is one of the finest such facilities in the country. The reservation was officially opened in 1966 following a fund-raising campaign under the leadership of A. C. Michaels of Gadsden, Ala. Each year hundreds of scouts and scouters from Choccolocco Council attend the summer camp or engage in other scouting activities.

MARKER NO. 2: Lake Howard, formed by this dam, is one of the many enterprises of Col. Milford Howard, Ft. Payne attorney and developer. Below this dam are the remains of an old fashioned raceway and grist mill. The summer camp and charming cottages surrounding the lake form the community known as Alpine. Ever mindful of the public interest, Col. Howard dedicated the river frontage on the west side of the lake to public use. The Boy Scouts of DeKalb County, who own one of the cabins in the area, have been principal beneficiaries of this gesture.

MARKER NO. 3: One of the most constructive of the New Deal Programs of the 1930's was the Civilian Conservation Corps, a plan devised to give young men a chance to work. The poverty of the depression made jobs hard to find and men came from all over the south to join the Corps and improve areas like DeSoto Park. The beautiful stone work and carpentry in this shelter are good examples of their handiwork. Most of the original cabins and other improvements in the Park were done by them.

MARKER NO. 4: Lookout Mountain is a unique place in the kind of plant life it supports. Pink Rhododendron is rarely found this far south and never as abundant as along Little River and its tributaries. At this point are some of the largest specimens on the mountain.

MARKER NO. 5: The clear waters of Little River, thankfully unpolluted thus far, are famous for blue catfish, Coosa bass, and various panfish. The Sand Hole, located here, is one of the favorite fishing holes for residents of the surrounding area.

MARKER NO. 6: To the east is the elevation known as Branner's Ridge. Like many other landmarks up and down the river, it is named for an early settler. At the foot of this height the east and west forks of Little River come together.

MARKER NO. 7: Fording Little River in times of high water is extremely dangerous. Rock ledges offering reliable footing for crossing are few. This one is known as "Hartline Ford." Like most of the fords up and down the river, it is named for a family which lived nearby during the early days. For example, other fords are named for the Bowmans, the Branners, and the McSpaddens. Some, such as "Burnt House Ford", are named for some occurrence of local legend.

MARKER NO. 8: Presently Little River lies within a virtual wilderness, but this condition has existed only for the past few decades. Many years ago this was an isolated but thriving community of substantial mountain cabins and considerable cultivated land. Most of the settlers came here to escape the pressures of the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era. Here and there in the timber you can stumble on the rock piles made when they cleared "new ground". The remains of some of the homes they lived in can also be found. A typical example is the Smith place marked by the clearing a few feet west of here. A few shade trees, shrubs, planted flowers, and chimneys are all that remain of a vanishing page of history.

MARKER NO. 9: About ½ mile east of here a prominent bluff known as Shelter Rock overlooks the river. This is representative of the many prominent cliffs found along the stream.

MARKER NO. 10: Here at Billy's Ford is a crossing that very likely played a part in one of the most tragic episodes of American history. In 1838 the Cherokee Indians living in the valleys of this region were forcibly removed from their homes and herded into small stockades such as Fort Payne. From these they were marched to the Tennessee River and transported by flatboat to reservations west of the Mississippi River. Because they suffered so greatly during this time their trek westward has come to be known as the "Trail of Tears". Literally speaking, the "Trail of Tears" was actually many trails like the road which crosses the river here. The deep cut outs leading onto each side of the river attest to the age of the crossing and portions of the road are shown on the government survey of 1840. It takes little imagination to visualize captives being transported through here from Fort Larkins in Cherokee County toward Belle Fonte, the nearest point on the Tennessee River.

MARKER NO. 11: The southern terminus of the trail is at Edna Hill Church, organized in 1907 through the leadership of W. C. Hill, who dedicated it as a place of worship for all denominations. This church is typical of the country church served by "Circuit Riders" and supported by the founder and his descendants, who are still active in Scouting and other civic projects.