

Shackleford Ridge Park Trails – Signal Mountain

Blue Trail: The blue loop trail provides a pleasant woodland walk, approximately 1.7 miles in length, with mostly gentle gradients. Care should be taken at the two points where it crosses the road. It is mostly well marked by signs, and by blue blazes on trees. At one point it splits into two, but soon rejoins. Part of the route is shared with the yellow trail, which can be somewhat confusing.

Pink Trail: The pink trail is a loop off the blue trail, skirting the soccer fields at the western edge of the park. It is approximately 0.8 miles long, and is mostly flat. At its northern end, where it joins the blue trail, is an impressive swing bridge.

Directions: From the stop light at the top of the mountain, continue along the main road, past Lynn's Market and the water towers. At Signal Mountain United Methodist Church, fork left onto one of many unconnected segments of Anderson Pike, and left again on Shackleford Ridge Rd. Continue until you see Nolan Elementary School on the right. Turn right immediately before the school, and follow the trail map to the parking area and "Trail Central". The park may also be reached via James Boulevard and Timberlinks.

Coordinates:

Trail Central N35° 9.64' W85° 22.10'

Map corners:

Top left N35° 9.93' W85° 22.57'

Top right N35° 9.92' W85° 21.49'

Bottom left N35° 9.35' W85° 22.58'

Bottom right N35° 9.33' W85° 21.51'

Yellow Trail: The total length of the yellow trail is 3.9 miles, but it is in three sections, each of which may be hiked separately. There are no steep gradients on the trail. I thank Sharon Brueggeman for help in mapping the trail.

The first section (0.9 miles) starts at "Trail Central" within Shackleford Ridge Park, and sets off northeastwards, then turning south. It crosses the road within the park (at which there is a display board with a trail map), and continues to the southwest, as though it was going to complete a loop. However, at the southwest corner, where there is another display board, it dives off towards the south.

The second section (1.1 miles) leaves the park altogether, continues southwards for some distance, crosses Edwards Point Road, and eventually joins a "jeep track", used by bicycles, motor bikes and ATVs.

The third section (1.9 miles) consists of the jeep track itself, which runs all the way down to Edwards Point - a dramatic viewpoint, high above the Tennessee River, which is unfenced and dangerous!

The first and second sections of the trail are fairly well marked, with yellow blazes on trees (although it can get confusing, when sections of the trail are shared with other trails). The jeep track has almost no trail markings, and repeatedly divides and rejoins,

mostly to avoid flooded sections. The yellow trail follows the main north-south line of this track.

Directions: for the northern part of the trail, follow the directions given above, to Shackleford Ridge Park. For the center and southern parts of the trail, park in Edwards Point Road, which is ¼ mile south of Nolan Elementary School. The easiest parking is where the Jeep track reaches Edwards Point Road, southwest of the junction with Hassler Road.

Approximate distances:

Trail central to park road	0.6 miles
Park road to display board	0.3 miles
Display board to Edwards Point Road	0.5 miles
Edwards Point Road to junction with Jeep track	0.6 miles
Junction with Jeep track to Edwards Point	1.9 miles

Coordinates:

Trail central	N35° 9.64' W85° 22.09'
Park road crossing	N35° 9.66' W85° 21.80'
Display board	N35° 9.51' W85° 22.00'
Edwards Point Road crossing	N35° 9.15' W85° 21.93'
Junction with Jeep track	N35° 8.61' W85° 22.02'
Edwards Point	N35° 7.40' W85° 22.65'

Map Corners (Yellow/Orange Northern Section):

Top left	N35° 9.92' W85° 22.73'
Top right	N35° 9.90' W85° 21.25'
Bottom left	N35° 8.99' W85° 22.75'
Bottom right	N35° 8.97' W85° 21.27'

Map Corners (Yellow/Orange Southern Section):

Top left	N35° 9.05' W85° 23.07'
Top right	N35° 9.02' W85° 21.21'
Bottom left	N35° 7.37' W85° 23.10'
Bottom right	N35° 7.34' W85° 21.24'

Orange Trail: This trail is not for the faint-hearted! It is difficult to find (it took me three tries - thank you, Pam & Colin, for your patience!) and in places the terrain is extremely rough, with loose rocks and fallen trees. From Trail Central to the swing bridge, where it joins the Bee Branch trail, is 2.2 miles. From the swing bridge to the trailhead on Ohio Avenue is a further 1.1 miles. From the swing bridge to the other (better known) swing bridge below Rainbow Lake is 0.4 miles; from there to Ohio Avenue is 0.7 miles.

From Trail Central in Shackleford Ridge Park, the trail goes off to the southeast, crossing the park road. At an information display, it is joined by the yellow trail, and continues

south to Edwards Point road. The trail markers on this section are yellow. It crosses Edwards Point Road, and runs parallel to it for a while, then arriving at a path junction, where the orange trail turns left (southeast), and the yellow trail continues straight on (southwest).

Orange (and similar colors) of trail marker are present on this section, and take the trail right at a fork, over a ridge, and down to a path junction (point G on the map). However, this is where your problems start! There is an orange blaze on a tree down the path to the right (south), but this is **not** the trail! Two trails go off to the left (northeast) - the further one is the orange trail, which then branches off to the right (southeast). If you reach the stream, you have missed the turning!

The trail now follows Middle Creek to the south, and in places it is very picturesque. Despite there being few trail marks along this section, it is easy to follow, eventually going down a steep section to the west bank of Middle Creek. An inviting trail to the southwest, alongside the creek, eventually dead-ends! Instead, you have to climb a steep, narrow and unmarked trail up the hillside on the right, to the foot of the cliffs. It may well be that there is another way to get to this point, but if so, I missed it, and you probably will as well! The trail then follows the foot of the cliffs for some distance - this is the rough section of the trail! There are occasional trail markers, but if in doubt, follow the foot of the cliffs! Eventually the trail leaves the cliffs and descends gently towards the stream, joining the Bee Branch trail at the western end of the swing bridge. To get to Rainbow Lake, follow the trail along the western side of the stream. To get to the trailhead on Ohio Avenue, cross the bridge and follow the Bee Branch trail.

Directions: for the northern part of the trail, follow the directions given above, to Shackelford Ridge Park. For the southern part of the trail, park in Edwards Point Road, which is ¼ mile south of Nolan Elementary School. The easiest parking is where the Jeep track reaches Edwards Point Road, southwest of the junction with Hassler Road. Alternatively, the trail can be hiked from south to north, parking at the trailhead for Rainbow Lake.

Approximate distances:

Trail central to Edwards Point Road	0.7 miles
Edwards Point Road to Orange/Yellow junction	0.2 miles
Orange/Yellow junction to point G (see map)	0.4 miles
Point G to Bee Branch trail	0.9 miles

Coordinates:

Trail central	N35° 9.64' W85° 22.09'
Display board	N35° 9.51' W85° 22.00'
Edwards Point Road crossing	N35° 9.15' W85° 21.93'
Yellow/Orange junction	N35° 9.00' W85° 22.00'
Point G	N35° 8.82' W85° 21.65'
Bee branch swing bridge	N35° 8.11' W85° 21.50'

Map Corners (Yellow/Orange Northern Section):

Top left	N35° 9.92' W85° 22.73'
Top right	N35° 9.90' W85° 21.25'

Bottom left N35° 8.99' W85° 22.75'

Bottom right N35° 8.97' W85° 21.27'

Map Corners (Yellow/Orange Southern Section):

Top left N35° 9.05' W85° 23.07'

Top right N35° 9.02' W85° 21.21'

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