Starved Rock State Park – First Day Hike

Check in at the Lodge

The visitor center and restrooms at the center will be closed that day, but the Lodge will be open with restrooms for the public. Every parking lot, trailhead, and trail intersection contains a map with a yellow "You Are Here" dot, trail information, and a QR code if those with a smartphone wish to scan for a download of the trail map. Each map coincides with a large brown park sign with directions to the next feature along the trail, such as the canyons and overlooks.

Lisa Son's (Natural Resource Coordinator) **Trail Recommendation:**

The Wildcat Canyon trail loop from the Lodge or Visitor Center will cover 2 canyons and 3 overlooks such as Beehive Overlook, Eagle Cliff Overlook, and Lovers Leap Overlook. 2 Miles total and 9 staircases! Visitors can start from the main parking lot by the visitor center (circled in blue on the map), or they can start from the Lodge parking lot trailhead to the top of the French Canyon (also circled in blue on the map).

Trails Currently Unavailable to Visitors:

Brown Bluff trail above French Canyon

Lone Tree Canyon Staircase

Tonti Canyon and Tonti Bridge

The west side trail from LaSalle Canyon to Tonti Canyon

Owl Canyon Overlook

Trail from the west entrance to the boat ramp area

Self-Guided Hikes

Wildcat Canyon – 2 Miles

St. Louis Canyon – 1.5 Miles

Starved Rock – 0.2 Miles

French Canyon – 0.4 Miles

Lover's Leap – 0.7 Miles

Eagle Cliff – 0.8 Miles

Beehive Overlook – 0.9 Miles

Sandstone Point – 1.3 Miles

LaSalle Canyon – 2.0 Miles

Parkman's Plain – 2.5 Miles

Hennepin Canyon – 3.1 Miles

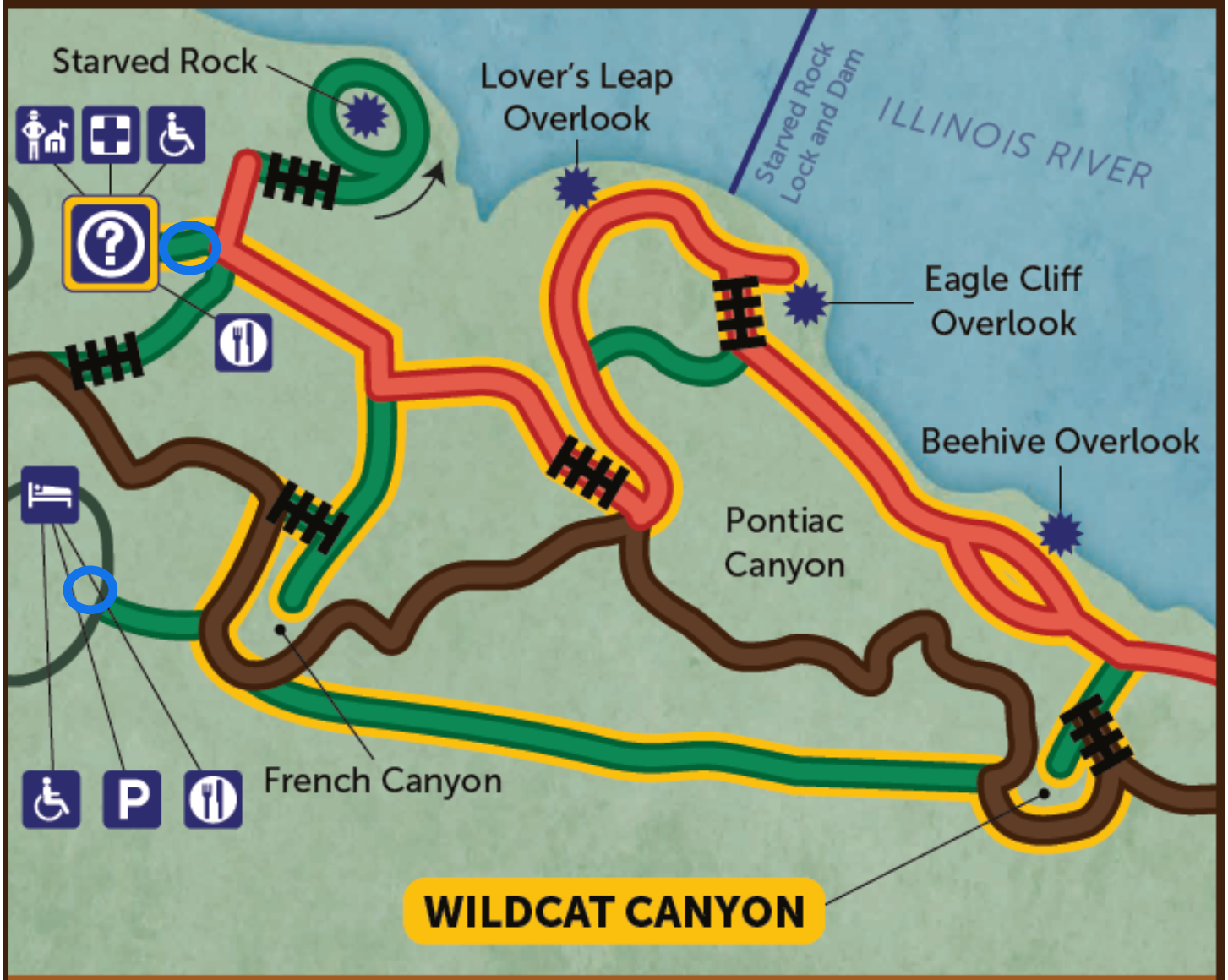
Ottawa Canyon – 3.9 Miles

Council Overhang – 4.0 Miles

Kaskaskia Canyon – 4.0 Miles

Illinois Canyon – 4.7 Miles

Wildcat Canyon – *Waterfalls at French and Wildcat Canyon*



Walking Distance **ROUND TRIP** – 2 miles
Walking Time — 1.5 hours
Difficulty — **MODERATE** with 9 staircases
1/4 paved, 3/4 sandstone, dirt, or sand mixture

Follow the brown directional signs posted along the sidewalk that runs from the parking lot past the Visitor Center and out to each location listed on the map. ***Maps, signs, and trail markers are posted at every trail intersection and parking lot at the park.***

1. **French Canyon**
2. **Wildcat Canyon**
3. **Wildcat (green trail)**
4. **Beehive Overlook**
5. **Eagle Cliff**
6. **Lover's Leap**
7. **Visitor Center**

Starved Rock State Park
Trail Map

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Legend

- / – Bluff Trail
- / – River Trail
- / – Interior Canyon or Connecting Trail
- | – Roads & Parking
- ⇶ – Major Stairways
- ✸ – Overlooks

- P Parking
- Park Office
- Dump Station
- First Aid
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- ? Visitor Center
- Food Service
- Playgrounds
- Campground
- Wheelchair Access
- Lodging
- Showers

Trail Markings

Trails are marked with colored posts or dots

- Brown – Bluff Trail
- Red – River Trail
- Green – Interior Canyon or Connecting Trail

- Yellow Dots – Going away from Lodge or Visitor Center
- White Dots – Returning to Lodge or Visitor Center

Length of Trails

All distances are measured one way from the Visitors Center

St. Louis Canyon	1.5 mi.
Starved Rock	0.3 mi.
French Canyon	0.4 mi.
Lover's Leap	0.7 mi.
Eagle Cliff	0.8 mi.
Beehive Overlook	0.9 mi.
Wildcat Canyon	1.0 mi.
Sandstone Point	1.3 mi.
Tonty Canyon	1.9 mi.
LaSalle Canyon	2.0 mi.
Parkman's Plain	2.5 mi.
Hennepin Canyon	3.1 mi.
Ottawa Canyon	3.9 mi.
Council Overhang	4.0 mi.
Kaskaskia Canyon	4.0 mi.
Illinois Canyon	4.7 mi.

Total Distance of Hiking Trails: 13.3 miles

1/2 mile

TO PROTECT THE VISITOR & THE PARK,

IT IS ILLEGAL TO:

- Hike after Dark
- Rappell or Scramble on Rock
- Hike OFF Marked Trails
- Swim or Wade
- Bicycle on Hiking Trails
- Pick or Remove Anything including Wildflowers
- Allow Pets Off Leash
- Camp Except at Campground
- Possess Alcohol
- Possess Intoxicating Compounds

It is a State Offense to pick, remove or destroy animals or plants, including wildflowers, in any State Park.

Have a safe visit and enjoy the park, but be aware that violating park rules will result in eviction and/or arrest.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

CALL 911



Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois • DNR-LANDS-18-0125 • 5M • 6/18 • IOCI 18-0656

Cold Weather Hiking – tips from the American Hiking Society

https://americanhiking.org/resources/cold-weather-hiking/

Hiking during the winter can be fun as long as you prepare with these tips. In addition to these tips and hints, remember to follow normal safety practices as well when hiking in the winter. Be sure of the gear you take with you and if you have any specific questions, ask a local outdoor expert so you can stay safe.

Just because the temperature has fallen like the leaves of a tree doesn't mean you can't have an enjoyable hike outside. With a little extra preparation, hiking in the winter can be every bit as enjoyable as hiking during the warmer months. If you have the gear for a warm-weather hike, you can easily modify it for the cold. Before you go, be sure to follow a few of these guidelines to stay safe and warm. Winter can be one of the most peaceful seasons to enjoy some solitude on the trail, but it also comes with increased risks that hikers need to prepare for.

Check the conditions

Trail and road crews aren't as active in the winter, so it's always a good idea to check trip reports to get a sense of conditions on the trail and access to the trailhead before you hit the road.

Dress in layers

While it is perhaps nice to have a huge, fluffy parka on the ski slopes, it really isn't practical for the trail. Instead, take several layers you can peel off or put on when you stop and go on the trail. Your base layer should be a wicking fabric that will pull your sweat away from the skin. Pack layers for every part of your body, not just your torso. Overheating is a dangerous threat since excessive moisture that isn't allowed to escape can freeze and cause hypothermia. If you ever wondered why some of your jackets have zippers under the armpits, they help vent sweat vapor and prevent your clothes from getting wet.

Pack extra layers for when you take breaks and in case you are delayed due to an injury or unforeseen situation. Could you survive the night if you had to? Check the forecasted low temperatures to be prepared for the unexpected. Carrying all of the 10 Essentials of Hiking is especially important in the winter.

Wear a hat

Our heads are filled with oxygen-carrying capillaries which fuel our brains and consume one-third of the body's energy. During the colder months, it is important to keep your head covered to maintain function and not lose precious body heat. You may want to bring a warmer/heavier hat for rest periods.

Keep the breeze out

An often overlooked jacket feature—a hooded jacket—helps seal out frigid air from around the neck and shoulders. Hoods also help with layering the head. When you stop for a break, throwing on a hood can help regulate your temperature during breaks.

Keep your water bottle warm

Staying hydrated in cooler temps is just as important as it is in the summer. Take extra precautions to keep your water from freezing.

- A foam sleeve like a koozie will increase the time it takes water to freeze in a bottle. In very frigid temps, some hikers will even add an active hand warmer inside the insulative sleeve.
- Water tends to freeze at the top of a water bottle, so carry the bottle cap down to prevent the opening from freezing first. Ensure the bottle properly seals to prevent leaks.
- Start your hike with warm water instead of cold tap water to slow down the freezing process.

- Nothing warms your body or your spirits like warm liquid on the trail or by a campfire. Vacuum-sealed water bottles and thermoses can help keep warm drinks steamy for hours, and they can also be used as standard water bottles.
- Sip water often to stay hydrated and also to check the state of your water. Is it starting to freeze?
- Do you hike with a hydration reservoir? Manufacturers make special hose, bite valve, and reservoir sleeves to slow down the water from freezing, but in many cases, reservoirs will freeze faster than traditional water bottles.
- Store soft-sided flasks or slim water bottles on the inside of your jacket – properly sealed, of course.

Watch your step

Snow and ice are often synonymous with cold-weather hiking. Adequate footwear and traction are part of the 10 Essentials of Hiking, and snow and ice present various hazards in the winter. The conditions should influence what traction and flotation devices are used. In deep snow, snowshoes reduce how much a hiker sinks into the powder. On packed snow and ice, micro-spikes and other traction devices provide additional traction for better footing. Many brands design traction that can slip over shoes and boots, and different designs are suitable for different conditions, terrain, and activities.

Trekking poles are also highly recommended, especially in snowy and icy conditions. Poles provide more points of contact with the ground, which increases balance and traction.

Keep batteries warm

Batteries in most electronics lose effectiveness in cooler temperatures. Pack batteries and electronics in interior pockets so body heat can keep them warm. This is especially important if you use any electronic devices as a primary form of navigation. American Hiking recommends hikers carry paper maps and a compass (and know how to use them) in the event a navigation device malfunctions.

Don’t toss the sunscreen

While this is most important if you are hiking in a snowy region, winter hikers often forget about the sun’s glare reflecting off of white snow.

Protect your eyes

UV-rated snow goggles or sunglasses that provide adequate protection from bitter wind and the sun’s harsh rays should be used even when it’s cloudy and not super bright at the beginning of a hike.

Pack freeze-resistant snacks

It can be discouraging to take a snack break only to find your favorite snack hard as a rock and uneatable in cold temps. Chewy and gooey snacks often become hard to eat in winter conditions. Either keep these snacks in an interior pocket or pack snacks that are less affected by cold temps. You can test which snacks work best by putting various snacks in your freezer to see what gets too hard to enjoy out on the trail. Crackers, nuts, and solid chocolate typically work well. Warm snacks are oven more appetizing when it’s cold outside so consider stashing your next snack in an interior pocket to warm it up a little before your next snack break.

Be prepared for shorter days

As early as October, dusk settles earlier and more quickly than in the summer. Have a good idea of the usable daylight hours before going hiking. Always carry a headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries.