

THE SCENIC BYWAY

The most popular form of outdoor recreation in your national forests is driving for pleasure. Millions of visitors each year take advantage of this opportunity in the 156 national forests across 44 states. The USDA Forest service responds to the public's request by establishing the National forest Scenic Byway Program in May 1988. This program promotes and recognizes highways in national forests with outstanding scenery and historical significance. The Talimena Scenic Drive is in the western part of the Ouachita Mountains, on the Arkansas and Oklahoma boundary. One of the first National forest Scenic Byways, the drive was designated in February 1989. Located between the city limits of Mena (Polk County), Arkansas, and a point of U.S. Highway 271 just north of Talihina (LeFlore County), Oklahoma, the entire drive is within the Ouachita National forest. The Oklahoma and Arkansas Highway departments constructed Talimena Scenic Drive with federal public highway funds beginning in 1964 and completing the project in 1969. The route followed and connected two truck trails that were originally built and maintained by Civilian Conservation corps (CCC) enrollees in the 1930s. The Oklahoma and Arkansas highway departments' local maintenance forces at Mena and Talihina now maintain the scenic highway.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

VISIT US AT:

www.TalimenaScenicDrive.com



TALIMENA SCENIC DRIVE ASSOCIATION

The mission of the Talimena Scenic Drive Association is to serve and promote the Talimena Scenic drive, to educate the public, government, business, management, and others concerning the vital role that the Talimena Scenic Drive plays in our social and economic life.

The Talimena National Scenic Byway is supported by The Talimena Scenic Drive Association and its Members. The Talimena Scenic Drive Association (TSDA) is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that was established to support works to promote the entire region surrounding the Talimena Scenic Drive. Our goal is to promote understanding of this unique area that is a treasure to our community and to this great nation. You can join us! We are reaching out to everyone! People across the country and the world to raise awareness for the Talimena National Scenic Byway and our Gateway Cities.

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**NATIONAL SCENIC
BYWAY**

TRAVEL GUIDE

The Talimena Scenic drive winds 54 miles along the crest of Rich Mountain and Winding Stair Mountain in the Ouachita National Forest (pronounced Wash-i-tah). If you can resist stopping to enjoy the many vistas and attractions along the way, the route takes 1 hour and 10 minutes to drive. A leisurely drive can take all day.

ACTIVITIES

TRAILS

On foot:

- Ouachita National Recreation Trail
- Queen Wilhelmina State Park trails
- Interpretive trails at the Kerr Arboretum
- Orchard Trail at the East End Visitor Information Station

Shared use trails:

- Billy Creek Trail
- Horse Thief Spring Trail
- Old Military Boardstand Trail
- Kerr Nature Center Trail
- Earthquake Ridge Trail Complex

Information sheets with maps are available at Ranger and Visitor Information Stations.

HORSEBACK

The Winding Stair Equestrian Trails and Cedar Lake Recreation Area Equestrian Camp are just south of Heavener, Oklahoma. Camping facilities are available to horseback riders year round.

MOUNTAIN BIKES

The Earthquake Ridge Trail complex and Forest Service roads offer opportunities for mountain bike enthusiasts. Bikes are allowed on the Winding Stair Equestrian Trails and Horse Thief Spring Trail, however horses have the right of way.



THE DRIVE

Along the drive are several historic sites and numerous turnouts with panoramic vistas. Many of the sites have exhibits that explain the natural and historical significance of the area. Learn about the prehistoric Caddoan people, early settlers of Rich Mountain, the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Choctaw Nation (tribe) in Indian Territory. Discover interesting facts about the natural environment while absorbing the beauty of shortleaf pine and hardwood forests.



From the West (OK) . U.S. Highway 271 intersects OK Highway 1. The Talimena Scenic Drive, at the West End Visitor Information Station, 7 miles northeast of Tahina, OK or 30 miles southwest of Poteau, OK. . U.S. Highway 259 intersects the halfway point of the Talimena scenic Drive 5 miles north of Big Cedar, OK, and 18 miles south of Heavener, OK. From the East (AR) . AR Highway 88 intersects U.S. Highway 59/71 in the town of Mena. The Talimena Scenic drive begins at the East End Visitor Information Station north of town. . AR Highway 272 intersects U.S. Highway 270/59 at the town of Rich Mountain, 8 miles north west of the town of Acorn, AR. This highway goes directly to Queen Wilhelmina State Park.

TRAVEL TIPS

- Make sure you have plenty of gas before you begin. There are no gasoline stations on the drive.
- Before you enter the drive, pack a picnic lunch or take along snacks. Vending machines, located at the West End Visitor Information Station, and the restaurant at the Queen Wilhelmina Lodge, offer food and drink.
- Check weather conditions on the drive before leaving. Ice and fog can be a challenge on the drive even when they are not a problem on lower roads. .
- Visit the East End or West End Visitor Information Stations. These stations are staffed from springtime through fall. They offer area information, brochures and have unique educational materials for sale.
- Take water with you to drink. Most of the stops along the way do not provide drinking water. Water from streams or springs, although they may run clear, may not be safe to drink.
- Light jackets are appropriate for windy days, or for fall, winter and spring outings.
- If you plan to hike, wear comfortable shoes.
- On most days, photo opportunities are numerous. Take along extra film. .
- During the late spring, summer, and early fall you may want to take insect repellent if you plan to enjoy the trails.
- Restrooms are located at all Ranger stations, West End VIS (Visitor Information Station), Old Military Road, Horse Thief Spring, Wind Stair Recreation Area, Pipe Spring, Kerr Arboretum and Nature Center, Queen Wilhelmina State Park, Rich Mountain Fire Tower, East End VIS (Visitor Information Station).