

THE DAN BEARD TRAIL AT CAMP MITIGWA

The Dan Beard Trail at Camp Mitigwa was named after Daniel Carter Beard, one of the founders of the Boy Scouts of America. The trail has been constructed by and is maintained by the Mitigwa Lodge of the Order of The Arrow. The purpose of the trail is to provide units and individuals the opportunity to hike and camp through areas of Camp Mitigwa that are not commonly used for over 20 years, using the principles of Leave No Trace, while enjoying the nature and wildlife observation opportunities available.

In the words of Dan Beard when he signed many of his photographs; the Dan Beard Trail at Camp Mitigwa is “Yours for the boys, Dan Beard”.

Brochures And Maps

Due to the cost of printing this brochure and the maps, it is requested that you limit the number you take to those you need for planning or making your hike or overnight campout. The brochure and maps are available on the council website.

Rules For Hiking The Dan Beard Trail

- * Make sure that someone knows that you're hiking the trail and let them know when you're done. This can be someone from your unit who will be staying in the main part of camp while you're hiking, the camp Ranger, or the Campmaster during the fall through spring. Do not hike the trail alone.
- * Cub Scouts and Webelos are encourage to hike only on the Orange Trail marker posts 18 to 65, then the Blue Trail and return on the Orange Trail marker posts 142 to 148 and 0 to 18. The trail south of this area is designed primarily for the Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts and may be too long and too much of a challenge for the younger Scouts.
- * Hike only on the trail, leaving the trail increases the probability of erosion and the destruction of native plant life.
- * Hike in a single file staying on the trail. Hikers traveling in the direction of trail marker posts increasing in numbers have the right of way. If you encounter another group hiking that has the right of way or is coming from behind at a faster rate, step off the trail about a yard to the downhill side. If the downhill side is not safe, step off to the uphill side.
- * Keep hiking groups small. If there are more than 10 hikers, split the group into smaller groups at least 10 minutes apart.
- * Report any downed limbs, etc, that you can't easily move off the trail; do not try to cut them up yourself.
- * Report any erosion problems, etc, on the trail.
- * All hiking, camping and other activities on and along the trail must be done following the principles of Leave No Trace. If you don't know them, see the chart on the sign kiosk at the trailhead. If your troop, crew or pack has not completed the Leave No Trace Awareness program, contact the council Service Center or your District Executive to schedule the training with a Leave No Trace Trainer, or get someone in your unit trained and certified as a Leave No Trace Trainer.
- * Water is not available along the trail except in the main part of camp along the Orange Trail and the Blue Trail. Take plenty of water with you; you may find that you need more water than you think.
- * Latrines are not available along the trail except in the main part of camp along the Orange Trail and the Blue Trail and at the Dan Beard Outpost near marker post 113. You should take a part roll of toilet paper in a zip-lock bag and a trowel (a garden trowel works well) with you for emergencies if you're going to be on the trail for an extended period of time. Dig your cat holes 6-8 inches deep at least 200 feet from the trail and cover completely in accordance with the principles of Leave No Trace.
- * Garbage cans are not available along the trail. Pack out all garbage.
- * Camping along the trail is permitted. See the section on camping below.
- * No fires are permitted anywhere along the trail, except as noted in the section on camping below.
- * There is a large variety of wildlife along the trail (deer, turkey, squirrels, rabbits, eagles, hawks, a large selection of song birds, etc). DO NOT disturb them or their nesting areas. Take along a camera and, if you're quiet, take pictures of the wildlife and the scenery.
- * There is very little poison ivy along the trail outside the main part of camp and poison oak has not been observed. There are isolated locations that do have poison ivy, mainly in open areas, so be observant.
- * Quite a bit of the trail runs adjacent to public property where hunting is permitted. These areas can be identified with the map or fences and signs. Please exercise caution and be observant of hunters, especially during deer and turkey season. Periodically hunters will ignore fences and signs and cross onto camp property or not realize that they've left the public hunting area; be courteous and, if you feel comfortable with it, remind them that hunting and personal firearms are not permitted on camp property if approached. Report violations to the Camp Ranger or Campmaster. Do not jeopardize the safety of Scouts and Scouters.

Trail Markers And Distances

Trail markers are spaced at 50 yard intervals. The trail is made up of the outer trail (the orange trail); four interconnecting trails (the blue trail, the yellow trail, the pink trail and the red trail); and a trail going from the orange trail to Old Baldy (silver trail) and back. This configuration allows unit junior and adult leaders the flexibility to design their hikes for desired distances for day hikes or overnight hikes using the leave no trace outposts throughout the trail network. Trail distances, starting at the trailhead near the Blank Dining Hall, are as follows in feet/yards/miles (5280 feet or 1760 yards per mile):

Orange trail from 0 to the Dan Beard Trail sign near Bear Creek Lodge: 2806/935.3/.531

Orange trail from the Dan Beard Trail sign near Bear Creek Lodge to the blue trail: 6996/2332/1.325

Orange trail from the blue trail to the yellow trail: 2260/753.3/.428

Orange trail from the yellow trail to the pink trail: 1738/579.3/.329

Orange trail from the pink trail to the red trail: 1697/565.7/.321

Orange trail from the red trail to the silver trail: 533/177.7/.101

Orange trail from the silver trail to the red trail: 671/223.7/.127

Orange trail from the red trail to the Dan Beard Outpost: 249/83.0/.047

Orange trail from the Dan Beard Outpost to the pink trail: 1588/529.3/.301

Orange trail from the pink trail to the yellow trail: 460/153.3/.087

Orange trail from the yellow trail to the Oviatt Outpost: 202/67.3/.038

Orange trail from the Oviatt Outpost to the blue trail: 2111/703.7/.400

Orange trail from the blue trail to the trail head: 985/328.3/.187

Orange trail (total): 22296/7432.0/4.223

Orange trail (total including Old Baldy): 24066/8022.0/4.558

Blue trail: 1750/583.3/.331

Yellow trail: 1176/7.8/.223

Pink trail: 682/227.3/.129

Red trail: 477/159/.090

Silver trail (trail to Old Baldy and back): 1770/590/.335

Old Baldy

Old Baldy has been part of the hiking experience on the south end of camp for several decades and the hike to Old Baldy is well worth the walk. When you get to the wide path just above the creek crossing, take it to near the top and go east to the Des Moines River valley overlook. It's an awesome view of the river valley and a great place for a short break. It is on private property starting just south of the creek, but the owner has granted us the privilege of hiking to it. Please respect the property, the owner and his family. If they are there, please return to the Dan Beard Trail without disturbing them. Please make it a leave no trace visit and do not build a fire or leave any trash on the property.

Wet Weather Hiking

The Dan Beard Trail is not normally impacted significantly for hiking during wet weather, the ground along the trail is soft enough that rain soaks in rapidly and water runs off the trail fairly quickly. There are two locations on the Orange Trail where the trail can be rather slick; between marker posts 28 and 29 and between 131 and 132. Creek crossings are generally usable unless there has been very heavy rain. There are four locations on the Orange Trail that can be impassible when Saylorville Lake is at a high flood level; the Orange Trail at marker post 45 (889), 46½ (888), 75½ (907), and 95½ (910). The emergency spillway is at 895 feet and the pneumatic gates are at 900 feet. These are approximate lake elevations that will impact hiking during flooding. The lake level can be checked in the weather portion of the Des Moines Register or at <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=dmx&gage=sayi4> to verify if there will be an impact.

Camping While Hiking The Dan Beard Trail

Units are encouraged to hike and camp the Dan Beard Trail as part of their program. There are numerous potential Leave No Trace camp sites along the trail. You may use those identified on the trail map, or other suitable sites where safety is not an issue. All camping must be done under the principles of Leave No Trace. Cooking should be done on backpack camping stoves. Ground fires are not permitted except in the established fire rings at the Dan Beard Outpost (near Orange Trail marker post 113) and Oviatt Outpost (near the Orange Trail marker post 128).

Reporting Downed Trees, Erosion Problems, Etc

Downed trees, erosion problems, missing trail markers, etc, should be reported to mitigwatrailcrew@gmail.com. Include what the problem is, what trail it's on and what marker post it's near.