

Trail Markings:

General Forest Trails marked by white diamonds with trail numbers written onto them.

River to River Trail (R2R) features white diamonds with a blue “i”, except in wilderness where it is a natural wood diamond with the “i” routed.



Safety: Personal safety-Make sure someone knows your route and establish a check in time. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear depending on the weather and terrain. Carry plenty of water, food, compass and a first aid kit.

Environmental safety-Be aware of poison ivy and stinging nettle. Various insects including ticks and mosquitoes are present here during spring, summer and fall. Venomous snakes are also present here including timber rattlesnakes and copperheads.

At all times, this hike is remote and the closest vehicle accessible areas is the trailhead if troubles occur. Precautions should be taken for long hikes (water, food, first-aid kit, etc.).

Emergencies: The nearest hospital is Harrisburg Medical Center in Harrisburg, IL. Cell phone service

along the trail can be spotty so be prepared and know where your closest outlet is when dialing 911.

Camping: There are no designated camping areas along the trail but numerous ideal trailside camping areas. Note camping is prohibited within Natural Areas. Use existing campsites, don’t create new ones. Use portable camp stove for cooking. If a campfire is needed, keep it small and use existing fire rings. Protect water quality by washing and camping 200 feet from any water sources. Leave the campsite cleaner than you found it.

Facilities: There are no facilities along this entire trail. Bury human waste and toilet tissue in a 6 inch deep “cat hole” at least 200 feet from water.

Travel Time: This depends entirely on how fast you hike and how much exploring you do but it is suggested that most should be able to do these hikes in 3-4 hours.

Surface Type: Dirt and rock



Max Creek Loop

Shawnee National Forest

2024

Description: Max Creek area is a great hiking area with a scenic 4 mile loop. The loop has 5-6 creek crossings and can be challenging in the spring when the water is up. It is a great winter hike when the water is low and it has been below freezing for several days because there is ice everywhere.

Local lore would have it that the area around the place where the Trail crosses Max Creek is a Vortex. People hiking in this area have reported feelings of dizziness and disorientation. Others have reported seeing mysterious lights after darkness. Whatever the truth of these claims, Max Creek is a in a beautiful area.

The River to River Trail goes right through the area and 1/3 of the loop travels the R2R Trail.

The area also includes several user made trails that are popular with the equestrians from Cedar Lake Horse Camp at end of trail 435 north east of the area. Several of these trails

are marked in red on the reverse map but not included in the Avenza Map because they are not official trails and are subject to change.

Highlights of the area include the Max Creek Vortex, Cave Waterfall (signed as Gay Cave), Max Creek Waterfall, Cougar Cave and the scenic overlooks near point 10 on the map.

Trail Ethics: “Please practice Leave No Trace principles” Pack It In, Pack It Out. Some rare and endangered species of plants are located in the area so please stay on the designated trails and leave the rocks and plants for others to enjoy. Equestrians frequent this trail system: hikers should yield to horses.



<https://goo.gl/maps/8uksorSvxxM9i4vp36>

The trailhead is located at the end of Taylor Ridge Road of Hwy 45 in the central portion of the Shawnee NF. The following dropped pin is a link to the trailhead so Google can give you the best directions depending on where you are coming from.

Directions to the Trailhead

This brochure will still be a handy reference to know what the points of interest might be.

Once the app is downloaded access the map store and search for the following map: “Shawnee NF Day Hikes”



Avenza: The map included with this brochure is available in the Avenza Map Store for downloading to your smart phone. The Avenza App can be downloaded by searching the app store on your phone for this:



Elevation profile is based on counter clockwise hiking

Trail Elevation Profiles

Cave Waterfall (Gay Cave)



Cougar Cave



Max Creek Waterfall



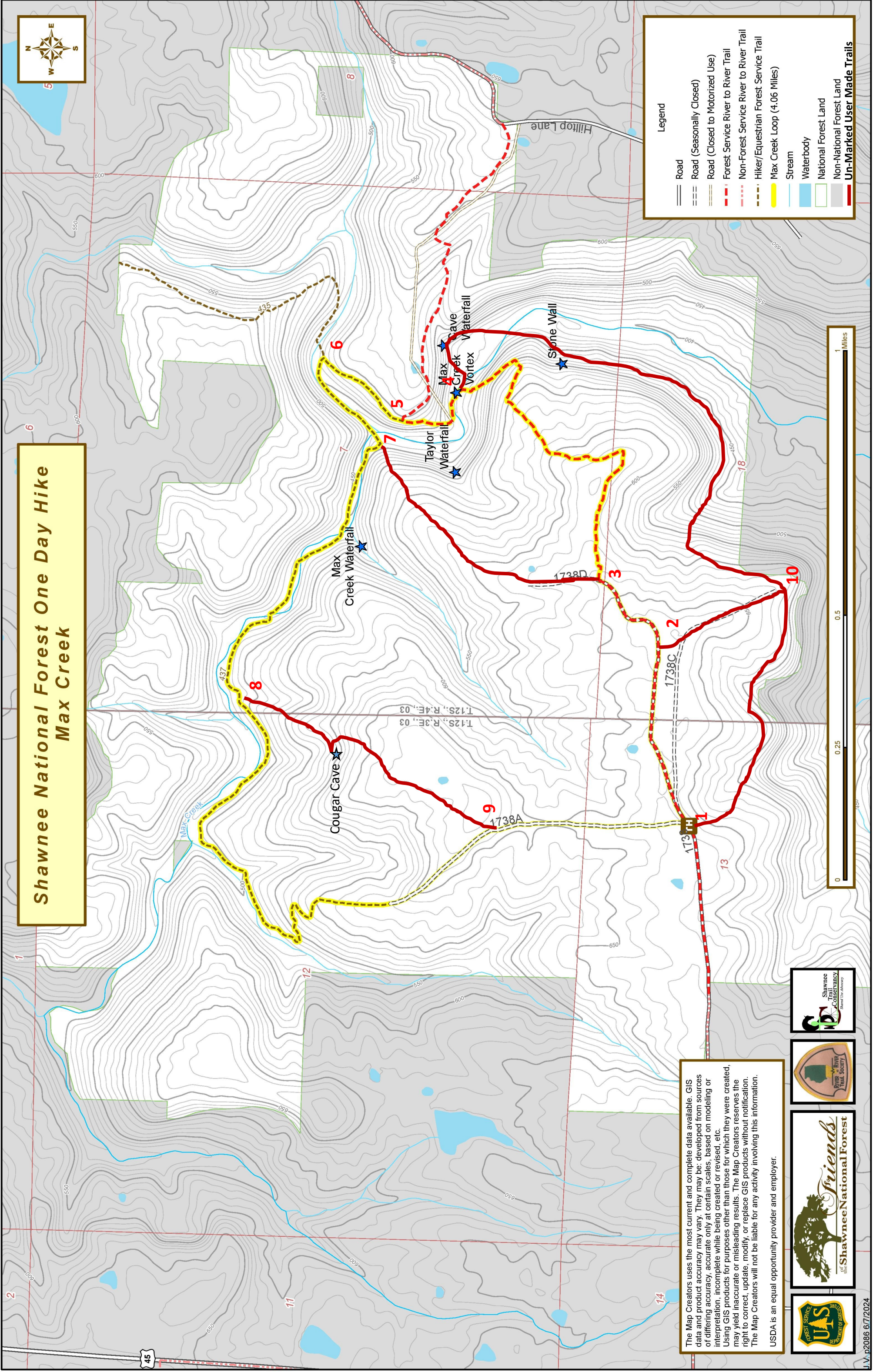
Taylor Waterfall



Max Creek Vortex



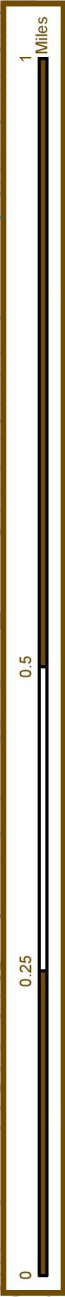
Trail Sections (see #s on reverse)	Point 1 to 3
Mileage	0.50 Miles
	0.85 Miles
	0.35 Miles
	0.30 Miles
	Point 6 to 7
	Point 7 to 8
	Point 8 to 1
	1.45 Miles



Shawnee National Forest One Day Hike Max Creek

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Legend

Road

Road (Seasonally Closed)

Road (Closed to Motorized Use)

Forest Service River to River Trail

Non-Forest Service River to River Trail

Hiker/Equestrian Forest Service Trail

Max Creek Loop (4.06 Miles)

Stream

Waterbody

National Forest Land

Non-National Forest Land

Un-Marked User Made Trails

J.V. 02086 6/7/2024