



DISMALS CANYON

SOARING BOULDERS, BREATHTAKING WATERFALLS, AND COUNTLESS OTHER
NATURAL WONDERS AWAIT VISITORS TO THIS BIOLOGICALLY RICH LANDMARK
IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE APPALACHIANS.

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Located in northwest Alabama in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains is a hidden treasure of pristine untouched nature. With a secluded 85 acres of land, Dismals Canyon is privately owned and operated and was named a National Natural Landmark in 1975 by the National Natural Landmarks Program.

Along the canyon floor is a 1.5-mile hiking trail with sky-high boulders, splashing waterfalls, mossy-green giant trees, and native plants to guide you along your way. Through this hike flows Dismal Branch, a stream that enters the canyon and ends at roaring Rainbow Falls. The canyon has six natural bridges and shelters made by the previous Paleo, Cherokee, and Chickasaw inhabitants before they departed on the Trail of Tears. Perhaps this is what gives the place its appealing sense of mystery that draws thousands of visitors each year.

The canyon was named a National Natural Landmark due to its rich geological and cultural history. Massive boulders that were strewn about the area by ancient earthquakes built the canyon and make it what it is today. Once a swamp, it was lifted by an earthquake some 300 million years ago during the Paleozoic era. Over the years, the draining waters carved the canyon.

With Alabama being one of the most biologically diverse states, it is also home to abundant native plants. Dismals Canyon is known for a 138-foot-tall, 360-year-old Canadian hemlock tree that will only get taller and larger as it continues to age. This tree is believed to be the largest one of its species in the world.





FROM THE MOSS-COVERED BOULDERS TO THE RUSHING WATERFALLS TO THE LUMINESCENT EFFECT OF GLOW WORMS KNOWN HERE AS DISMALITES, DISMALS CANYON INVITES VISITORS TO DISCOVER THE COUNTLESS GEOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WONDERS OF THE LAND AROUND THEM.



As daylight fades, the canyon walls come alive with hundreds of lights from rare, luminescent creatures known as Dismalites. These glow worms emit a bright, blue-green light that helps them attract food. They require a very specific habitat with humidity and hanging surfaces in order to survive, which is what makes them so rare. The largest colony of Dismalites lives among the moss-covered boulders at Witches Cavern, located just below Rainbow Falls. Guided night tours are available to take in the wonders of these creatures, with the best months being May through September.

Two romantic cabins (available for rent at \$175 per night) are constructed from Western red cedar and boast high ceilings and stone fireplaces. A country store offers supplies, and there is a soda fountain and grill. Hospitality is key at Dismals Canyon, with a complimentary wine basket, rocking chairs, warm throws, and freshly ironed sheets welcoming you to your stay. For a more rustic experience, secluded campsites start at \$27 per night. Sleeping Water is the most popular campsite, accommodating up to 15 campers.

For entrance fees and hours of operation, visit dismalscanyon.com or call 205.993.4559.

