

SUNSHINE GUIDE TO THE BANKHEAD FOREST RECREATION AREA, ALABAMA

LOCATION: The Bankhead Forest Recreation Area covers some 300 square miles and is located in northwestern Alabama. The area lies almost entirely in the drainage of the Sipsey River, a tributary of the Black Warrior River. Elevations range from just over 500 feet in the south along the shores of Louis Smith Lake to some 1,074 feet above sea level at the summit of Penitentiary Mountain at the northern edge of the area. Most of the area is administered by the William B. Bankhead National Forest, with its HQ at Double Springs. Within the area is the 41-square mile Sipsey Wilderness Area, the largest such are east of the Mississippi River. Activities include swimming, boating, camping, hiking, hunting, and fishing. More than half of the present forest area consists of abandoned farmland gone back to trees.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
HOURS OF DAYLIGHT	10:10	10:57	11:57	13:01	13:56	14:24	14:12	13:26	12:26	11:22	10:26	9:56
HOURS OF SUNSHINE	4:24	5:26	6:32	8:07	9:09	9:30	8:39	8:33	7:56	7:28	5:48	4:27
AREA OF BLUE SKY	34%	37%	38%	43%	42%	44%	40%	44%	47%	54%	45%	36%
LOW FOR MONTH	5°	9°	23°	36°	46°	52°	58°	58°	47°	36°	24°	15°
SUNRISE TEMPERATURE	29°	31°	38°	48°	56°	63°	67°	66°	60°	48°	38°	32°
AFTERNOON TEMPERATURE	50°	54°	62°	73°	80°	86°	89°	89°	84°	74°	62°	53°
HIGH FOR MONTH	63°	68°	75°	82°	86°	94°	97°	94°	92°	83°	72°	66°
FROSTY MORNINGS	65%	57%	35%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	33%	58%
AFTERNOONS OVER 90°	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	30%	55%	52%	20%	0%	0%	0%
AFTERNOON HUMIDITY	56%	52%	48%	44%	49%	52%	55%	54%	54%	48%	51%	56%
DRY DAYS	63%	63%	64%	68%	69%	68%	63%	69%	75%	80%	71%	65%
REASONABLY DRY DAYS	77%	75%	74%	77%	81%	80%	77%	84%	80%	87%	80%	77%
5-DAY PRECIPITATION	0.94	0.95	1.16	1.01	0.77	0.66	0.77	0.60	0.79	0.53	0.78	1.00
DAYS WITH SOME SNOW	7%	5%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%
DAYS WITH SOME THUNDER	4%	8%	14%	16%	23%	30%	37%	29%	16%	6%	6%	4%
DAYS WITH SOME FOG	8%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%

COMMENTS: Bright sunshine is likely on 58% of the year's daylight hours. This might range from a low of 43% in January, to a high of 66% in May, June, and October. The year's lowest temperature should be close to 3°, and the highest should be near 99°. Sensible afternoon temperatures (the ones you feel) will be up to 3° cooler than actual ones during the winter months, and up to 6° hotter than actual ones during midsummer. The area has a standard four-season year, with long, fairly sunny, hot to very hot, and humid summers. Winters days are moderately short, moderately sunny, usually mild but sometimes cold, and humid. Most of the rainy days tend to come during the cooler weather by a slight margin. Winter rains tend to be less intense and last longer than the thundershowers of summer. Snow flurries and light falls are common during the winter, but snow rarely remains on the ground for long.