



Explore the Forest

Discover the Incredible Variety of Habitats and Birds in the Bankhead National Forest

1 Walston Ridge Road

The road along Walston Ridge provides a variety of forest habitats. Prescribed fire maintains the open oak-pine woodlands. Further down the road are wildlife openings, young pine forest, riparian coves, and creeks. You might see a Prairie Warbler or a Yellow-breasted chat.

2 Brushy Lake

Brushy Lake offers overnight camping and day-use facilities. Look for Osprey or Belted Kingfisher around the lake. Follow the trail downstream to the bluffs and the rushing streams of the cove forest. Explore upstream towards a switchcane thicket along the creek.

3 Northwest Road

The Northwest Road winds around sheer bluffs and limestone rock outcrops through mature hardwood forests and cedar woodlands. The karst topography of this area influences the forest vegetation in many ways. In this area, listen for a Scarlet Tanager or a Kentucky Warbler.

4 Sipse Trail

This trail follows the Sipse Fork, a Wild and Scenic River corridor. It traverses extensive mature hardwoods, an area famous for nesting Cerulean Warblers. This is a stronghold for the species within the state, so look for one of these dazzling jewels.



About the Forest

Originally named Alabama National Forest, the area was set aside in 1914 to protect watersheds and streams. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) replanted forests on this abandoned farmland. The name was changed to honor William B. Bankhead, a Congressman. The forest of 180,000 acres lies within Lawrence, Winston, and Franklin counties. The Forest Service manages the land for native forests and wildlife habitats uncommon on private land, while providing recreation opportunities, timber resources, and soil and watershed protection.



U.S. Forest Service

Oak and Pine Woodlands

Oak and pine woodlands are open forests with an understory of forbs, shrubs, and native warm season grasses. Prescribed fire maintains the open characteristics of this habitat. This unique forest creates habitat for several priority species.



U.S. Forest Service

Canyon Corridors and Coves

The canyons of the Bankhead are some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the U.S. A combination of rock outcroppings, water, slope, and shady forest cover provide excellent habitat for a variety of birds.



U.S. Forest Service

Hardwood and Pine Interior Forests

The most common type of forest found on Bankhead are extensive stands of mixed hardwood-pine. These forests are dominated by oak, hickory and a variety of pines, with a midstory of native huckleberry and mountain laurel.