

Tuskegee National Forest



Trail in Tuskegee National Forest

The smallest reserve in the nation at only 11,000-acres, Tuskegee National Forest was designated in 1959; the original tract, however, was purchased in several sections by the U.S. government in 1935 and 1938 as part of the Submarginal Land Program. The forest lies in east-central Alabama in the East Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic section and is wholly within [Macon County](#). Although the land was not as rich and fertile as that in the [Black Belt](#), [cotton](#) growers moved into the hills in the area after the [boll weevil](#) ruined plantations in the more fertile soils of Macon County and nearby Black Belt lands. Absentee landowners bought up the land and developed it into [tenant farms](#) that within a short time exhausted the soil. Under the Submarginal Land Program, the eroded, worn-out farmland was purchased for forestry, wildlife management, and recreational uses.

In 1959 after the land had been largely reforested, it was placed under the management of the USDA Forest Service, and that same year the federal government officially named it the Tuskegee National Forest. As in the other national forests, the USFS has undertaken longleaf pine restoration and protection of hardwood stands to help the forest recover from the days of loblolly planting and logging. The historic [Bartram Trail](#), part of which runs through Tuskegee, is a major attraction. The trail was designated to commemorate the travels of naturalist and author [William Bartram](#), who explored the Southeast between 1775 and 1778. It is the first trail in Alabama to be named a National Recreation Trail. Tuskegee's Tasca Recreation Center features a replica of [Booker T. Washington's](#) log cabin home.