



DAY TRIP TO FORT MCCLELLAN

From Anniston · Calhoun County, Alabama



RAILROAD AND
ROAD



Photo: Chris Pruitt, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

PARTLY REDEVELOPED

Partly lived in again, per an October 2026 travel article. Abandoned buildings were reported in 2020 and idle barracks in 2023. The wildlife refuge west of Ridge Road is closed to the public for ordnance cleanup, per the Fish and Wildlife Service, read October 2026.

A half day takes in the old post from the street, a lake walk and a hike on the open part of the refuge. Everything here is outdoors. The empty buildings are off limits, so this is a drive-and-look trip around them, with the parks and the refuge for walking.

A SAMPLE DAY

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| ☐ 9:00 | Leave downtown Anniston on Quintard Avenue for the old post. |
| ☐ 9:15 | Drive the Buckner Circle loop through the old headquarters district, home to Buckner Hall, Stanley Barracks and the red-tile officers' houses. Silver Chapel stands by Headquarters Road at the east end of the loop. |
| ☐ 10:00 | Walk the half-mile trail around Lake Yahou. |
| ☐ 11:00 | Head for the refuge's eastern gate on Bain's Gap Road and walk in the open eastern part, keeping out of posted closed areas. |
| ☐ 13:00 | Back to Anniston for lunch. |

The refuge has permitted hunting seasons. Check its page before you go.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **Buckner Hall.** Shoot across the lawn from the street to get the long red-tile roofline and the flagpole.
- **Silver Chapel.** The carved doorway over the wooden doors is the detail to frame.
- **Longleaf pines.** On the refuge, look for open stands of pine with grass below.
- **Drones.** Federal rules bar unauthorized aircraft take-offs and landings on a national wildlife refuge, so get the refuge office's permission before you launch one there. We found no drone rule for the old post's streets and parks. Keep away from Guard land and its ranges.



USGS topographic map, 1900 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	5 mi, about 11 min each way from downtown Anniston. From Birmingham: 71 mi, about 1 h 24 min.
OLD POST	City streets. Look at the headquarters, chapel and barracks from the road. Vacant buildings are private.
LAKE YAHOU PARK	Daily 6 a.m.–7:30 p.m. from April to September, 6 a.m.–5 p.m. from October to March, per the McClellan Development Authority. Free. Half-mile lake trail, walking only. No swimming. Fishing is catch and release and needs a \$5 license, cash only, bought in person at the authority's office.
MULTI-USE TRAILS	18 miles of forested trails, same hours as the park. The authority's trail map warns that unexploded munitions such as mortars and shells may still lie on the site, and tells users to stay on the trail. Cell phones may not work there.
REFUGE	Daylight hours only. Only the eastern part is open, through the eastern gate on Bain's Gap Road. The area west of Ridge Road is closed for unexploded-ordnance cleanup, and closed areas are posted.
RESTROOMS	The refuge's only restrooms are at its office, 407 Baby Bains Gap Road. The authority's page doesn't list any at the lake.
BRING	Maps, water, sunscreen and insect repellent, as the Fish and Wildlife Service advises.
RULES	No camping, campfires, ATVs or collecting plants, rocks or artifacts on the refuge. Pets on a leash.
CONTACT	McClellan Development Authority (256) 236-2011; Mountain Longleaf NWR (256) 848-6833.
WEBSITE	exploreMcClellan.com

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Keep out of unstable buildings and off fenced ruins.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 33.71694, -85.79639 · 33°43'01"N
85°47'47"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/alabama/fort-mcclellan/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.