

HIKING AND BACKPACKING LOCATIONS GUIDE

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S5-420-13

EAGLE PATROL

PIEDMONT COUNCIL, NORTH CAROLINA

Introduction

This guide is intended to provide resources for Troops to improve the variety of backpacking and hiking outings that they offer. Many Troops have a number of traditional locations that they tend to return to year after year. Although tradition is quite important to any organization, in Scouting, traditional outings can lead to "enthusiasm burn-out" by older Scouts, if trips are repeated too frequently. Should older Scouts become disinterested in returning to places they have visited repeatedly, they may become disinterested in Scouting as well, and the Troop may lose valuable resources of experience and leadership. This guide is an effort to assist Troops in expanding the variety of outings that they offer.

Entries for this guide were compiled by interviewing and requesting suggested outing locations of many Scouters and Scouts at Heartland District Roundtables, Piedmont Council merit badge events, Blue Ridge Council, SC, camporee, Camp Old Indian summer camp, Camp Bud Schiele summer camp, and by informal telephone, email and personal contact. After compiling the suggested locations, an effort was made to visit and document as many of the locations as possible. Time constraints made it impossible to visit all suggested locations, however each location included has been visited by a contributor, if not by this author. In addition to descriptions of trails, campsites and surrounding attractions, a number of publications are cited and recommended to assist Troops in making safe plans for outings.

This guide is intended to be a "living document" in that corrections and additions are requested. Please send any corrections, changes, or descriptions of your Troop's favorite hiking and backpacking locations to brianhissom@gmail.com.

In addition to this project, Esau Huppeday, the Piedmont Council Order of the Arrow Lodge, publishes *Where To Go Camping Guide*, as a pdf file on the Lodge website. Their 2011 edition can be found here: <http://esau.net/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/03/Camping-Guide-2011.pdf>. The Lodge *Guide* provides basic contact information for many more locations than does this publication, however an attempt was made here to provide detailed descriptions, leading to fewer, but detailed entries. All photos by the author, unless otherwise noted.

Please use both guides to enhance your Troop's outing calendar.

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Zane Hissom, son, Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 74, Lincolnton, NC

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Georgia

Jekyll Island and Cumberland Island, GA

What

Private, commercial campground on Jekyll Island, GA. Hiking and backpack camping on Cumberland Island, GA.

Jekyll Island is a barrier island of the coast of Georgia near the towns of Brunswick and St. Simons Island, located approximately halfway between Savannah, GA and Jacksonville, FL. The island is managed by the Jekyll Island Authority and, although it is the home to several families and small tourist-oriented businesses including a few restaurants, it maintains the feel of a protected state park, which it was until 1950. A well-maintained private commercial campground featuring hot shower bath houses, restrooms, a camp store, and wi-fi, has group camping available.

Jekyll Island has many beach access points, a fishing pier, marshes, mud flats, tidal creeks, kayak rentals, a water park, and over 20 miles of paved bicycle paths that provide access to all areas of the island. Movie fans may want to visit Glory Beach on the south end of the island near the 4-H camp. Here the beach is reached via a long boardwalk that was built in the 1980s for the film *Glory* and passes through a variety of ancient sand dunes.

One of the unique beaches on Jekyll is Driftwood Beach on the north end of the island, across the road from the campground. The north end of the island is eroding as the south end grows from the natural processes that move barrier islands. The ocean reaches into the maritime forest at Driftwood Beach creating a spectacular environment of dead trees that are exposed during low tide but washed by the ocean at high tide.

Other features to visit on Jekyll Island include the Jekyll Island Club Historic District where former private cottages are open to tour or have been retrofitted into a variety of shops. Also, the Georgia Sea Turtle Center is near the historic district where visitors can tour a small exhibit on the life of sea turtles and the effects of human development and behavior on their environment and survivability. The Center is also a working hospital and rehabilitation center for the turtles and terrapins that are discovered sick or injured on Jekyll Island and the surrounding area. Visitors can tour the hospital and observe feeding time. Occasionally a release will be conducted and visitors can join the Center's staff in the surf to witness the release of a turtle back into the wild.

Cumberland Island National Seashore is the barrier island just to the south of Jekyll Island and is accessible only by private ferries departing from St. Mary's, GA. Ferry hours are limited and reservations are strongly recommended. Visitors can hike Cumberland for the day or backpack into one of several very primitive campsites. Fresh water pumps can be found on the island but the water from these sources must be properly treated as one would treat water from any wild source. Visitors should be prepared for significant heat, potential storms, and many varieties of biting insects during the warm weather months. A variety of animals inhabit the island including deer, squirrels, raccoons, armadillos, wild boars, alligators and feral horses. Ticks are said to be quite plentiful and stay in the live oaks during the day but drop to the ground in

the evening making sitting unprotected on the ground inadvisable. Insect repellent and camp chairs are a must. Day-visitors should pay careful attention to their departure time as once the last ferry leaves there is no way off the island for the night.

Additional information regarding visiting and camping on Cumberland Island can be found at the National Park Service website here:

<http://www.nps.gov/cuis/faqs.htm>

The waters off both Jekyll and Cumberland Islands are known to be home to a wide variety of sharks. Fishermen reported catching sharks up to eight feet off Driftwood Beach on Jekyll Island in 2012 and 2013 but shark attacks of bathers is extremely rare with only two reported incidents since 2006, both off Cumberland Island.

A camping trip to Jekyll Island with a day trip to Cumberland Island may prove the most convenient for many Troops with younger Scouts. Jekyll offers many comforts to be expected on a "beach trip" and comfortable camping where you can use your equipment trailer for support. Cumberland Island offers a wilderness backpacking experience with many challenges that Piedmont and mountain campers may not have previously experienced.

Where

Jekyll Island is approximately 350 miles from Gastonia, NC and is accessible from exit 29 on I-95, 169 miles south of Savannah, GA. From the exit take US 17 N/GA 520 S and turn right as GA 530 leaves US 17 to cross the causeway to Jekyll Island. Be mindful that terrapins often find their way onto the causeway seeking high ground making themselves vulnerable to injury by passing cars.

Cumberland Island is accessed by taking I-95 exit 3, some 26 miles south of exit 29 for Jekyll Island. Turn left onto GA 40 heading east toward Kingsland / St. Marys. After six miles turn left onto Charlie Smith, Sr. Highway and follow for one half mile into St. Marys. More information about the necessary reservations and ferry to Cumberland Island can be found at the National Park Website here:

<http://www.nps.gov/cuis/reservations.htm>

Fees

Jekyll Island Access

- One Day Parking Pass: \$6
- Weekly Parking Pass: \$28 (Valid for seven-days). However you may also purchase a day pass each time you re-enter the island instead of the seven-day pass.

Ferry to Cumberland Island National Seashore

- Adults: \$20
- Senior Citizens: \$18
- Children 12 & under: \$14

- Park User Fee: \$4

Additional information on the ferry is available here:

<http://www.stmaryswelcome.com/cumberlandferry.html>

Camping

Jekyll Island Campground on Jekyll Island. This private campground would serve well as a base camp to explore Jekyll Island as well as for a day-hike trip to Cumberland Island. Contact the campground for group camping rates. More information is available at <http://www.jekyllisland.com/stay/campground/>

Cumberland Island (Reservations Required):

- Sea Campground \$4.00 per person per night
- Back Country & Wilderness Campgrounds \$2.00 per person per night
- Day Use Fee (good for 7 consecutive days) \$4.00 per person

More information at <http://www.nps.gov/cuis/upload/Fax-Form-Updated-3-27-12.pdf>

Outfitters

4-H Tidelands and Nature Center

100 S Riverview Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

Phone (912) 635-5032

Kayak tours, canoe rentals, and fishing in a 17 acre saltwater pond. Phone for trip times, reservations, or additional information. More information is available at <http://www.tidelands4h.org/tours.html>

Other Area Attractions

Georgia Sea Turtle Center

214 Stable Road

Jekyll Island, Georgia 31527

Phone: 912-635-4444 More info at <http://www.georgiaseaturtlecenter.org/>

Admission Fees:

- \$7 for adults (13+ years)
- \$6 for Seniors (65+ years)
- \$5 for children 4 to 12 years, free for children 3 and under
- \$6 for Active Duty Military Personnel, College Students and Teachers (ID required)

Summer Waves Water Park
210 South Riverview Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

Phone: 912.635.2074

Admission Fees:

- Special rate for groups of 20 or more. Advance reservations are required.
- General Admission: \$15 per person plus 6% tax



Sunset from Jekyll Island Campground



Jekyll Island bike path near Driftwood Beach



Guided horseback trip on Driftwood Beach



Group campsites at Jekyll Island Campground





Not an unusual find in the surf at Jekyll Island. Sand dollars are living creatures and should be placed gently back into the surf after examination, if handled at all.

North Carolina

Doughton Park, Blue Ridge Parkway, NC

What

Doughton Park is a multi-use park on the Blue Ridge Parkway that offers hiking trails, primitive backcountry camping, and a campground that offers group camping. The campground could be used as a base camp to allow for a variety of day hikes in the park. The campground features potable water, flush toilets, and tent sites with pads.

Primitive backcountry camping is available along selected hiking trails and old logging roads that serve as hiking trails. Logging road trails are wide and relatively smooth with gentle grades. A map available at the Doughton Park website listed below indicates where primitive camping is located.

Some of the possible hikes are listed below, taken primarily from descriptions found on the park website. The park offers hikes that range from short and easy, to longer and more strenuous, providing troops with Scouts with a variety of skill levels and experience a broad range of challenges.

- Primitive camping near intersection of Grassy Gap Fire Road, Basin Creek Trail, & Bluff Ridge Primitive Trail.
- Bluff Ridge Primitive Trail to primitive camping (permit required) Approximately 3 miles from picnic area to camping. Strenuous with steep slopes.
- Basin Creek Trail from primitive camping to Caudill Cabin 3.3 miles.
- Bluff Mountain Trail, 7.5 miles, parallels parkway for some distance.
- Grassy Gap Fire Road, 6.5 miles, access from Long Bottom Road east off NC 18. Approximately 1.7 miles to primitive camping.
- Cedar Ridge Trail, 4.2 miles, access from Parkway at mi post 238.5 or Grassy Gap Fire Road.
- Many other short hike options throughout trail system in Doughton Park.

Trails along the ridge lines, such as Bluff Ridge Primitive Trail can offer spectacular views. The Bluff Ridge Primitive Trail passes through the picnic area, where area astronomy clubs occasionally conduct stargazes on weekends near the new moon phase. Check with the park office or ranger for any astronomy or other interpretive programs that can be enjoyed.

Troop 250 in Hickory, NC has used this area to enjoy a 4 to 4.5 mile loop hike with daypacks departing from the parking area on Route 1730 off Longbottom Road prior to backpacking in 1.5 miles to a the primitive campsite for the night. They have also used Doughton Park for Philmont training hikes, packing in to to the primitive campsite and then hiking the trails that converge near that location. Trails from the campsite include Grassy Gap Fire Road (96.5 miles), Bluff Ridge Primitive Trail (2.8 miles), and Basin Creek Trail (3.3 miles). Many other trails are accessible from these trails to string together hikes of almost any distance desired.

Where

Doughton Park is located at Blue Ridge Parkway mile post 240, north on the Parkway from the intersection of NC 18. Doughton Park lies due north of Wilkesboro and to the west of Stone Mountain Park, also described in this guide.

Fees

Phone the park for fees. See below.

Camping Details

Designated primitive backcountry camping areas can be accessed via relatively short hikes from a number of parking areas. Camping areas are quite large, but require permits that may limit the size of camping groups. This should be no problem for troops with patrols for backpacking. Camping areas offer open spaces for tents as well as substantial trees with clearings in between for hammock camping. Fire rings can be found in the primitive camping areas but water sources are natural and require appropriate water treatment prior to consumption.

Primitive backcountry camping requires a permit that can be obtained from:

District Ranger Office
49800 Blue Ridge Parkway
Laurel Springs, NC 28644
Phone: (336) 372-8568

Information and fees for group camping at the campground can be obtained by phoning (828) 765-6082

Additional Information:

- General information: <http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/upload/color%20DOUGHTON%20-PARK.pdf>
- General camping information: <http://www.recreation.gov/camping/doughton-park-cg/r/camp-groundDetails.do?contractCode=NRSO&parkId=72407>
- Basic trail map: <http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/upload/Doughton%20Park%20Trails.pdf>
- Interesting video of one hiker's trek: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWfx_oyFkw8
- Campground map: <http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/upload/doughton-park2.pdf>

John Rock, Transylvania County, NC

What

The John Rock Loop is a collection of trails of approximately five miles in length leaving from the parking lot of the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education and Trout Hatchery near Brevard, NC, peaking on John Rock and returning to the parking lot. The trails comprising this loop include Cat Gap Loop trail, Cat Gap Connector trail, and John Rock trail.

A hike west from the parking lot up the mountain behind the education center (to the right if facing the rock and building) will quickly steepen and become moderately strenuous. You will start off Forest Service Road 475C before climbing log steps to join Cat Gap Loop Trail and head up the mountain. Much of this hike will parallel Cedar Rock Creek and John Rock Branch, a plentiful water source. Be prepared for a slow, patient hike with new and inexperienced hikers, especially if backpacking.

A hike from the parking lot leaving to the east, or your left as you face the mountain, will parallel the Davidson River for some distance. Almost immediately, designated camp sites are available as you walk along this relatively flat portion of trail.

John Rock is an exposed rock face with a 200 foot drop from the top. It is not unusual to find rock climbers enjoying this resource but hikers should use great care when on top. If the rock is wet, covered with leaves, pine needles or moss, it can be very slick. Extreme care should be taken regarding fall hazards while enjoying the views.

To return to the parking lot on the loop continue east from the top of the rock heading downhill. An intersection with Cat Gap Loop trail will be found after crossing Horse Cove Creek at the bottom of the hill. This trail will eventually parallel Davidson River and return to the parking lot after passing a number of designated campsites.

More details are available here: <http://www.hikewnc.info/besthikes/davidson-river/john-rock-loop>

Photos available here: <http://www.hikewnc.info/gallery/john-rock-hike/>

Where

John Rock and the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education and Trout Hatchery are located just off National Forest Service 475 Road, also known as Davidson River Road, west of US 276 in Transylvania County. The parking lot is approximately a two hour drive from Gastonia, NC. The nearest town is Brevard, NC, located along US 64 west of the intersection of US 64 and US 276.

Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education and Trout Hatchery address;

1401 Fish Hatchery Road
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768

Phone: (828) 877-4423

Fees

There are no fees for hiking or camping along the John Rock Trail.

There are no fees to visit the Pisgah Center and Fish Hatchery but donations are accepted.

Camping

Camping is permitted along the Cat Gap Loop trail section of the trail but limited and there are no designated campsites. The first usable camping area is along Cedar Rock Creek at Cedar Rock Falls, a small but obvious waterfall. This camp site is overused with no significant ground cover left, but is adequate for a small troop or one patrol in a pinch.

After intersecting with Butter Gap trail, an area known as Picklesimer Fields will be on the right. This large, flat area is a popular camping spot and is often used by Scout troops.

When hiking the loop along the river by leaving the parking lot heading east, a number of designated campsites will be met almost immediately. Given the popularity of this area, arriving early on a weekend to claim a campsite will be important. These campsites will serve a troop well as a base camp for the John Rock hike and visiting other area attractions.

It should be noted that online blogs indicate that these campsites may have recently been impacted by falling hemlocks. A phone call to the Pisgah Center to inquire about camping status along Davidson River is advised.

Other Area Attractions

Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education and Trout Hatchery

Sliding Rock Recreation Area - http://www.ncwaterfalls.com/sliding_rock1.htm

Looking Glass Rock trail

Slick Rock Falls trail

Mountains to the Sea Trail - this trail traverses uphill from Cat Gap Loop trail and is accessible via Cat Gap trail.

Maps

Kennedy, P., Mohr, J. (2011) *WNC Trail Guide – South Pisgah Ranger District including Bent Creek* [map] (1:12,000) Asheville: Pisgah Map Company.

Additional Online Information:

- <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Learning/EducationCenters/pisgah.aspx>
- <http://www.hikewnc.info/besthikes/davidson-river/john-rock-loop>
- http://www.romanticasheville.com/john_rock.htm
- <http://www.main.nc.us/naturenotebook/hikes/johnrock.html>

South Mountain State Park, NC

What

South Mountain State Park is a popular North Carolina State Park within the South Mountains that cover over 100,000 acres in Burke, Cleveland and Rutherford Counties. The park itself is primarily in Burke County and easily accessed west of NC 18 in Burke County. South Mountain State Park offers more than 40 miles of hiking trails, primitive backcountry campsites, fishing streams, waterfalls, and a small family camp ground. Many of the hiking trails are actually old, wide logging roads, which make for relatively easy hiking. The park also includes the Henry Fork and Jacob Fork watersheds

Where:

South Mountain State Park is located approximately 24 miles south of Morganton, NC. From I-40 take NC 18 south from Morganton for approximately 12 miles then turn (west) right onto Sugar Loaf Road. After four miles turn left onto Old NC 18. After traveling approximately five miles turn left onto Ward Gap Road. Bear right onto S Mountain Park after approximately one mile and the park office will be on the right.

From Shelby, NC the park is approximately 28 miles north via NC 18. To reach the park turn left (west) from NC 18 onto Old State Highway 18. After traveling approximately five miles turn left onto Ward Gap Road. Bear right onto S. Mountain Park after approximately one mile and the park office will be on the right.

Directions on the Google Maps website are excellent: <https://www.google.com/maps>.

Fees

Fees apply. From the park website: "Unimproved campsites with pit toilets (composting or vault toilets, etc.) fees are \$13 minimum per day with an additional \$2 per day for every person over the minimum number of campers."

For more information check the park website or phone the reservation service.

<http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/facilities.php>

Reserve America: (877) 722-6762. A word of caution: This reservation service strictly applies penalty fees for cancellations under certain circumstances.

Camping

Backpack camping is offered in six areas in the park ranging from 1.2 to 5.4 miles from Jacobs Fork Parking area, the main parking area in the park. One of the most popular and easiest accessed primitive camping areas is Shinnery Creek just 1.2 miles from the parking area via HQ Trail. The shortest route to this campsite involves an uphill hike along old logging roads that are well maintained for backpacking. The campsite features pit toilets, fire rings, bear boxes,

and firewood supplied by park rangers. The camping area is an oblong field bordered on one side by HQ Trail and the other by Shinny Creek. The campsites are located along Shinny Creek, which provides a plentiful water supply, fishing and recreational wading. Each campsite features a fire ring and picnic table or two. There is plenty of open space for tents and bordering trees for hammock camping.

Shinny Creek campsite can also be accessed via High Shoals Falls Loop to Upper Falls Trail which leads to the west end of HQ Trail. HQ Trail can then be followed northeast to the Shinny Creek Campsites. Either route to Shinny Creek requires negotiating significant elevation changes and have periodic access to water along the way.

There are five more isolated primitive camping areas in the park as well. Consult the park's website at <http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/activities.php> or phone the office at (828) 433-4772 for additional information for additional campsite.

Walk-in camping is allowed in South Mountain State Park but reservations are strongly encouraged for all camping areas to prevent a disappointing trip. Shinny Creek is frequently reserved during all months of the year so planning ahead and making reservations a few months early will be helpful. Camping is also available on Sawtooth Trail, Upper Falls Trail, at Jacob Branch Campsites, Fox Trail Campsites, and Murray Branch Campsites. Reservations are made via an off-site commercial vendor by calling (877) 722-6762 up to 11 months in advance. Following the suggestions in this park webpage <http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/serve.php> to prepare for your reservation call will be helpful. Also, if you have questions about the campsites or trails, contacting the park office before calling the reservation vendor will be very helpful.

Be aware that most NC State Parks lock their gates a specific times for overnight hours but telephone access to the park ranger is available for after-hours emergencies.

Other Park Activities

The park rangers often provide weekend nature interpretive programs near the park office / visitor center, Jacob Fork Parking and Equestrian Parking areas. Check with the park office for schedules.

The Morganton Greenway is located just 25 miles north in Morganton, NC. For more information on the Greenway see the entry on Table Rock, NC in this guide.

Additional Information:

South Mountain State Park Office mailing address & telephone:

3001 S Mountain Park Avenue
Connelly Springs, NC 28612
(828) 433-4772

<http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/main.php>

<http://www.mappery.com/South-Mountains-State-Park-map>

Table Rock, NC

What

Table Rock is the name given a peak on the east rim of the Linville Gorge, northeast of Morganton, NC in Burke County. Located in the Grandfather District of the Pisgah National Forest, this area offers primitive camping, hiking, rock climbing and spectacular views of the Gorge to the west and Piedmont of North Carolina to the east. Visible for miles around, especially from Interstate 40, the peak looks like a rectangular table top from a distance, but upon summiting one discovers that it is, in fact, a knife edge ridge.

Where

The Table Rock Summit Trail and Shortoff Mountain Trail campsites are easiest accessed from NC 181 between Morganton and Marion, NC.

From NC 181 turn (right coming from Marion or left coming from Morganton) off NC 181 onto Forest Service Road (FR) 210 (Gingercake Road). At the first fork, turn left and continue through Gingercake Acres subdivision. To reach Table Rock Picnic Area, go one mile to the first intersection and turn right. Stay on this road, bearing to the right through several switchbacks to the picnic area. Before reaching Table Rock on FR 210 vehicles will pass three parking areas just past the Gingercake Acres development.

From the US Forest Service website:

"The first parking area is for Devil's Hole Trail (Sitting Bear), two miles from Gingercake Acres.

The second parking area is for Hawkbill (parking area on left and trail on right) one mile from Devil's Hole.

The third parking area is for Spence Ridge and North Table Rock trails, one mile from Hawkbill."

Google Maps provides excellent directions and GPS navigation via cell phone. Cell service is often available on the road to, and in, the Table Rock area.

Fees

There are no fees for camping or hiking although camping in the Linville Wilderness requires a permit. For more information contact:

US Forest Service

GrandGrandfather Ranger District

109 EastLawing Drive

Nebo, NC 2876

phone 828-652-2144

Website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nfsnc/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=48974&actid=34>

Camping

Backpack camping is available along Shortoff Mountain Trail where it departs the Table Rock parking area to the south. Table Rock Summit Trail departs the parking area to the north. Camp sites are obvious after only a five to ten minute hike along Shortoff Mountain Trail, initially to the right with one last one on the left before the ridge narrows.

Campsites are spacious with plenty of room for tents and plenty of widely spaced trees for hammock camping. Campsites include improvised fire rings but no water source. The parking lot also has no water source but camping is so close to the parking area that a Troop could easily leave large water containers in vehicles and return periodically to fill water bottles or jugs for daily use. Campers will be heading to the parking area to use the pit latrines, so combining that trip with fetching water would be quite practical.

These campsites could easily serve as base camp for a variety of day hikes. Shortoff Mountain Trail is approximately eight miles in length and passes The Chimneys as well as a number of spectacular drop-offs with great scenic views.

When hiking the Shortoff Mountain Trail from Table Rock parking lot, many campsites can be found along the trail beyond the initial cluster of campsites near the parking area. There is no stream but a good spring can be found along the trail. However, this trail requires proper planning as if it is a dry trail.

Wolf Pit Road trailhead can be found just off NC 226 past the Linville Boat Landing. It is reported to offer a good eight mile day hike out to Shortoff Mountain and back. Troops can also hike out to Shortoff to camp. Camping on Shortoff Mountain offers views upstream on Linville Gorge, across to Table Rock and Hawk's Bill, as well as down into the gorge.

Other Area Attractions

Morganton Greenway

The town of Morganton, an hour's drive south on NC 181 from the Table Rock parking area, provides a safe bicycling location in the form of the Catawba River Greenway. This 3.8 mile paved trail parallels the Catawba River as it passes through part of Morganton downstream of the Lake James Dam. This trail connects with the Freedom Trail Greenway adding another 0.6 miles and access to Freedom Park. Parking is available at five locations along the Greenway and there is no fee for use. For more information visit <http://www.ci.morganton.nc.us/index.php/living/activities/morganton-greenway-system>.

A tree identification guide to the Greenway is also available here, <http://www.ci.morganton.nc.us/index.php/documents/finish/9/25>.

Linville Falls Visitor Center and Overlook

A 40 minute drive from Table Rock will take you to the Linville Falls area where a number of easy trails, views of the waterfall, restroom, water supply, and picnic area with access to wade in the Linville River are available. There is no fee for access to the trails and picnic area at Linville Falls. For more information visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5188440>.

Linville Caverns

From Linville Falls, another 5 to 10 minute drive will take you to Linville Caverns along US 221. Linville Caverns offers an opportunity to enter a commercially managed cavern that is well-lit inside and has nicely maintained walkways throughout. The guided, educational tour provides information about the geologic and cultural history associated with the cave.

Group fees for Linville Caverns are \$5 for children 5 to 12 years old, and \$7 for visitors over age 13. General and reservation information are available here, <http://www.linvillecaverns.com>.

Additional Resources

<http://www.summitpost.org/linville-gorge/185523>

<http://www.visitnc.com/listing/table-rock>

<http://www.hikewnc.info/besthikes/linville-gorge-wilderness/table-rock/>

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nfsnc/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=48974&actid=34>

<http://www.thriftyadventuresnc.com>

Linville Gorge Adventures <http://www.linvillegorgeadventures.com>

Phalen, P (2013). The ultimate hiker's guide to the Linville Gorge hiking circuit: The toughest hiking circuit east of the rocky mountains, Linville Gorge Adventures.

Maps can be purchased online at the USDA Forest Service National Forest Service Map Store however not all maps available here include topographic lines.

<http://www.nationalforestmapstore.com/category-s/1844.htm>



Table Rock from the parking area



Rugged Table Rock Trail



Liville Gorge from the trail





Liville Gorge from the trail



The top of Table Rock



Looking in the direction of The Chimneys and Shortoff Mountain



Typical camp site on Shortoff Mountain Trail just beyond the Table Rock parking area



Typical camp site on Shortoff Mountain Trail just beyond the Table Rock parking area

Wilson Creek Area, NC

What

The Wilson Creek area, located in Caldwell County, NC, is part of the Grandfather District of the Pisgah National Forest. Wilson Creek was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River by Congress on August 18, 2000 after years of support from local governments and environmentalist groups. Since then this stream has become the focal point for a visit to the Grandfather Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest. The area contains 49,000 acres of wilderness, 24 trails offering more than 60 miles of hiking, dozens of primitive campsites, over 23 miles of Wilson Creek proper and scores of miles of smaller mountain streams. Licensed trout fishing, mountain biking, and 34 miles of roads for all-terrain vehicle use are also available.

Trails range from easy to extreme in difficulty and most have areas suitable for camping. Water can be plentiful along the many streams that trails follow but some ridge top trails offer no water supply for miles. All stream water must be properly treated.

The Wilson Creek Visitor Center, at 7805 Brown Mountain Beach Rd, Collettsville, NC 28611, (828) 759-0005, is an excellent place to start a day hike or backpacking trip. It is strongly recommended that groups advise staff at the visitor center of entry date and time, planned route, and planned departure from the area. Although the Visitor Center is not staffed 24 hours per day, after-hours registration is available at small shelter in parking area across the road from the Visitor's Center. The shelter includes a map of the area, information of local interest, and forms to register your itinerary. This registration shelter was the Eagle Project of Noah Gantt of Troop 241, Hudson, NC. The flagpole at the visitor center was the Eagle Project of Matthew Blazer, also of Troop 241.

Be aware that there is no cell phone service available in this area and so it is likely that emergency help will only be available by returning to the Visitor Center or Betsey's Ole Country Store in the community of Mortimer in the north end of the wilderness area to use a telephone.

Mortimer, NC is the location of Betsey's Ole Country Store and a US Forest Service Campground and Picnic Area. Now a ghost town, Mortimer was a booming lumber town in the early 1900s that included sawmills, company store, blacksmith's shop, a church, school, hotel, and numerous houses. The town was nearly destroyed in 1916 when a flood followed a disastrous fire that burned from Grandfather Mountain to Wilson Creek. With ground cover gone after the fire, there was very little to slow the rain water as it ran into the numerous stream that feed Wilson Creek. The resulting flood led to the lumber company's departure. An attempt to rebuild the town came in the early 1920s following the opening of a cotton mill. But in 1940 floods came again due to a hurricane from the Atlantic Ocean and the town has not returned to its previous level of development. Some 16 families still live in the area and numerous ruins of the previous town's mills, houses and railroad trestles remain for visitors to view.

This entire area is prone to flash flooding and a number of emergency warning sirens are noticeable throughout the valley. However, when deep in the woods, especially after winding along tributaries to Wilson Creek, the sirens may not be audible. Flooding can happen when storms occur many miles upstream, and so, campers and hikers should be well aware of weather forecasts for areas to the north and west and always have an escape plan in mind. When in doubt, get out!

Hiking:

One of the popular hiking trails, Harper Creek Trail, Number 260, is accessed approximately one mile north (upstream) of the Visitor Center. Limited parking is on the west side of the road. This trail is rated "most difficult" but once the first few hundred yards are accomplished the trail levels out to provide a relatively flat, pleasant walk for the next two miles. During the flat portion there are two crevasses to negotiate, but with patience and help from fellow hikers these are manageable challenges. Once the trail drops down to Harper Creek campsites seem to spring up every 5 or 10 minutes of walking. Some campsites will accommodate approximately 40 campers, others could literally camp hundreds. Given the easy access and popular water falls to view beyond these first campsites, they are often used on weekends. Although it will be difficult to find downed firewood, there are fire rings that have been used for years. The campsites are heavily used so care should be taken in choosing tent sites. Hammock camping may be preferable to help protect the local campsite environment.

A 20 to 30 minute hike along Harper Creek Trail 260 will provide spectacular views of the stream below and Harper Creek Falls. The trail to the Falls appears to be the main trail, but appears so only because it is so well used. Trail 260 actually branches off up the hill to the north (right) about mid-way from the intersection with Trails Number 440 & 277. If 260 is intact, one can continue along 260 & 440 to South Harper Creek Falls, approximately five miles further. Another route to South Harper Creek Falls is to follow 440 & 277 west, however Harper Creek can present a crossing challenge if water is high and swift. Just beyond the falls on trail 440 & 277, 260 rejoins this trail.

Wilson Creek offers many other hiking and camping opportunities including Pine Ridge Trail 255 which can be accessed behind the Visitor Center. Following a steep ascent the trail follows the ridge and connects with Trail Number 255A approximately one mile from the trail head. 255A is labeled "easy" and connects with Forest Service Road 198, a dirt road that if

taken west (right) will connect with Trail 440 and lead to South Harper Creek Falls mentioned above. This web of trails is not unlike most of the Wilson Creek area where trails merge, cross, and intersect not only with other trails but with old dirt and logging roads. It is imperative to carry a current map and compass and have good orienteering skills to safely enjoy this area.

BSA Troop 241, Hudson, NC, serves as trail keeper for White Rocks Trail, Number 264 which is accessed approximately three miles beyond the end of NC 90 at Edgemont from Forest Service Road 45. This trail is rated as "most difficult" and it descends from the ridge to a tributary to Wilson Creek, about three-quarters of a mile away. Following the trail downstream Trail 264 meets Wilson Creek Trail Number 258 (rated "most difficult") at Wilson Creek. A downstream hike to the left on 258 will cross Crusher Branch and depart Wilson Creek to climb back up hill to FS 45 after approximately one mile. The trail follows the stream so water is available. Camping areas are scattered along the creek.

Following Wilson Creek Trail 258 upstream from Trail 264 (right) leads to FS 192 in approximately four miles. At this point you are approximately three miles from Calloway Peak on Grandfather Mountain but there are no direct-route trails to Grandfather from this point. Hiking a circuitous route will eventually lead to US 221 in the Beacon Heights area just east of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Little Lost Cove Cliffs trail is a strenuous trail recommended only for the most experienced hikers but offers excellent view of Grandfather Mountain. This is a dry trail.

Where

Wilson Creek is located in western Caldwell County, NC, approximately 75 miles northwest of Gastonia, NC. To reach the Wilson Creek Visitor Center turn west off US 321 just south of Lenoir, NC or turn east off NC 181 north of Morganton, NC. A number of country roads are required from these numbered routes to reach the area however directions are clear and accurate via Google Maps (www.google.com/maps).

Fees

There are no fees for hiking and backcountry primitive camping in the Wilson Creek area however a North Carolina fishing license is required for fishing and there are several commercial campgrounds in addition to the Forest Service Campground at Mortimer that charge fees.

Camping & Lodging Details

Backpacking: Primitive camping is allowed throughout the forested areas of Wilson Creek at least 200 feet from any stream other than Wilson Creek. Camping must be at least 500 feet from Wilson Creek due to its designation as a Wild and Scenic River. Many frequently used camping areas in the backcountry, however, are well within the 200 foot boundary. Care should be taken to respect the rule and avoid dispersing liquids or using the latrine within 200 feet of those streams.

The Forest Service Campground at Mortimer: This well-maintained campground offers trailer and car-camping in eleven campsites with a fire ring, picnic table, lantern hook and tent pad from April 1 through October 31. Each campsite has a gravel parking spot. There picnic tables accessible for people using wheelchairs. Water taps and two hot water bath-houses with flush toilets are also available. The fee is \$17 per site but they fill up fast and it is recom-

mended to arrive on Thursday or early Friday. Some groups will send early birds on Wednesday or Thursday to set up and pay for sites before the weekend crowds arrive. This campground would serve well as a base camp for a variety of day-hikes throughout the area.

Betsey's Ole Country Store is managed by Mr. Bruce Gray, an Eagle Scout who enjoys hosting Boy Scout Troops free of charge, space permitting. Telephone Mr. Gray at (828) 758-5051 to discuss your plans to be sure that a festival is not occurring when you wish to go. Festivals often involve large number of paying campers.

In addition to camping with your own gear, the store has cabins and a teepee that is large enough to house a small unit to camp for a fee. The teepee has recently been covered with stucco to prevent water leakage and the covering can make it quite hot inside during the warmer months.

Additional campgrounds are listed here:

<http://explorecaledwell.com/camping>

Other Area Attractions

Betsey's Ole Country Store

8396 N Carolina 90

Collettsville, NC 28611

(828) 758-5051

Brown Mountain: The Wilson Creek area includes the mountain where observers along NC Highway 181 report occasionally seeing the eerie glow of the Brown Mountain Lights under the right conditions.

Additional Information

Friends of Wilson Creek is a non-profit organization that promotes and protects the Wilson Creek area. The organization has created a visitor and education center staffed by friendly volunteers, led by Ms. Gwinnis Jones, who will be happy to help you plan your outing.

Friends of Wilson Creek and the US Forest Service offer a trail adoption program wherein organizations agree to maintain a trail or section of a trail for a specific length of time. Troop 241 has adopted a trail and holds working patrol campouts to maintain their trail. Participation requires Forest Service training and provides the necessary tools as well as insurance for volunteers when working on the trails.

The US Forest Service map of Wilson Creek (ISBN 978159351667-3) includes topographic lines, and is available at the Wilson Creek Visitor Center.

Wilson Creek Visitor Center

7805 Brown Mountain Beach Rd

Collettsville, NC 28611

The US Forest Service Wilson Creek map (ISBN 978159351667-3) is also available from the following:

National Forest in North Carolina
160A Zillicoa Street
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 257-4200

Grandfather Ranger District
109 East Lawing Drive
Nebo, NC 28761
(828) 652-2144

Online Resources:

<http://www.friendsofwilsoncreek.org/aboutus.asp?id06=54%20=0>

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nfsnc/recreation/scenicdrivinginfo/recarea/?recid=49016&actid=104>

<http://www.explorenc.com/wilson-creek>

<http://www.hikewnc.info/trailheads/pisgah-national-forest/grandfather-ranger-district/wilson-creek/>

<http://www.appalachianhistory.net/2010/08/north-carolina-ghost-town.html>

References

Knight, K D, (unknown) *From Adako Bridge to Edgemont: A guide to Wilson Creek*, knightphotos@yahoo.com

United States Forest Service, Southern Regions (2013) *Wilson Creek national wild and scenic river trail guide* [map] (1:24,000) Atlanta: United States Department of Agriculture.



Wilson Creek Visitor Center and Harper Creek Trail 260 trail head





Rest stop at the top of the Harper Creek Trail climb.
This is the Eagle project completed by Noah Gantt, Troop 241.

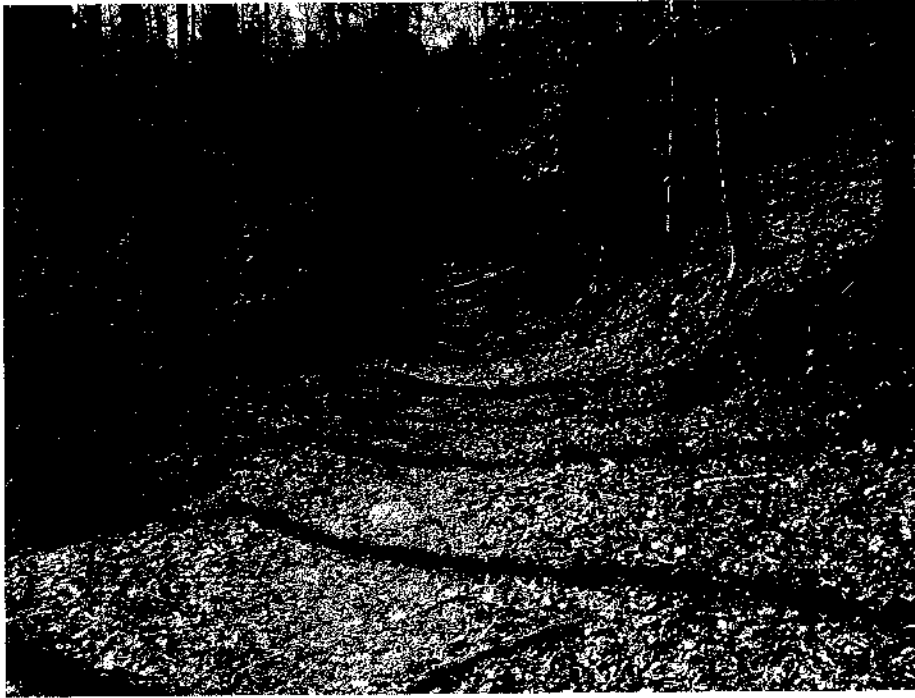


Typical camp site on Harper Creek Trail.

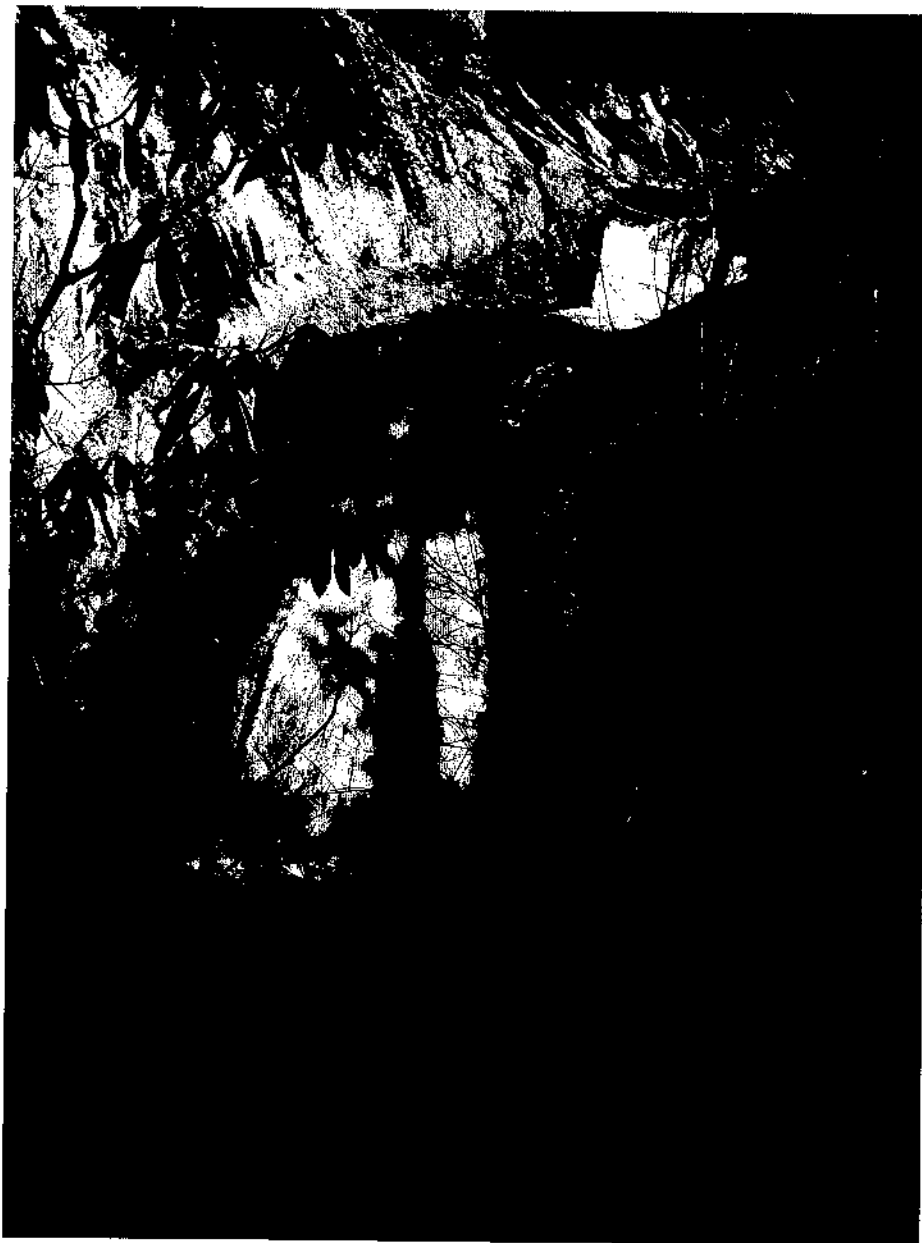


Typical camp sites on Harper Creek Trail.

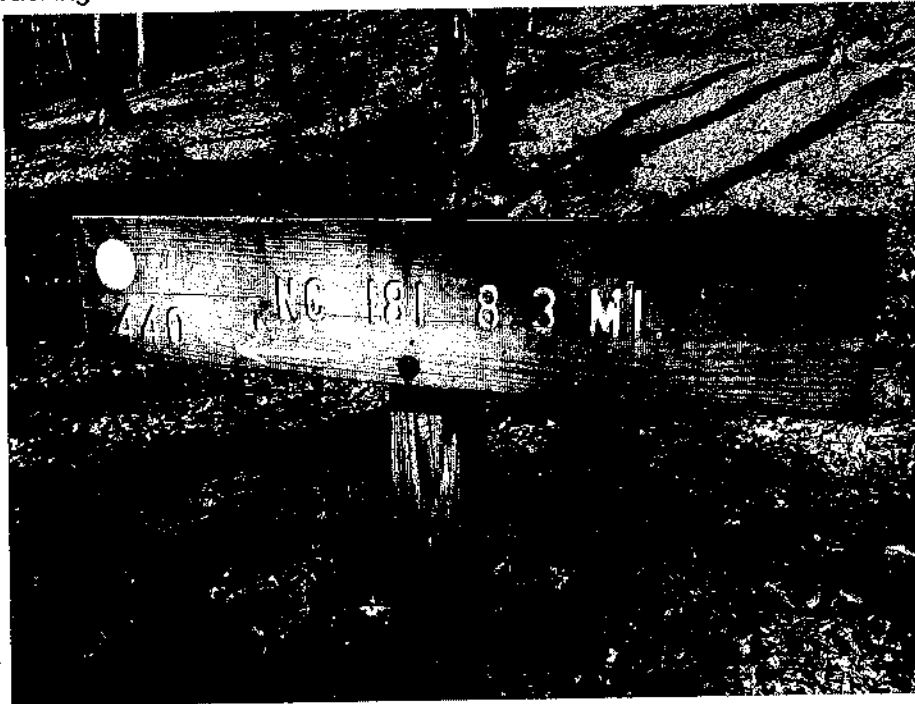




Typical passage on Harper Creek Trail



View of Harper Creek Falls from the trail



Trail marker indicating trail route in from NC 181 north of Morganton

Troop 250 Treks

David Hayes, Assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 250 in Hickory, was kind enough to share their file of backpacking and hiking resources. Troop 250 is known as a backpacking troop. Not only to they make a trek nearly every month, but they make frequent trips to Philmont Scout Reservation in New Mexico for treks. Many of their weekend trips are training treks for Philmont. A summary of their catalogue with additional comments is shared below. Many thanks to David!

Cataloochee Area, Caldwell Fork Trail, Great Smoky Mountains National Park

What

This area provides an easy hike into a camping area with many opportunities for day hikes from base camp. One popular area for a side trip includes large virgin poplar trees and spectacular views. Water is available via many streams in the area.

Where

Cataloochee area is located on the east side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park accessible from I-40 west of Asheville at exit 20. Take Cove Creek Road into the park.

Fees

Check with the Backcountry Information Office at (865) 436-1297 for details on fees and registration of your trip. Additional information is available here: <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/backcountry-camping.htm>

Camping

See above.

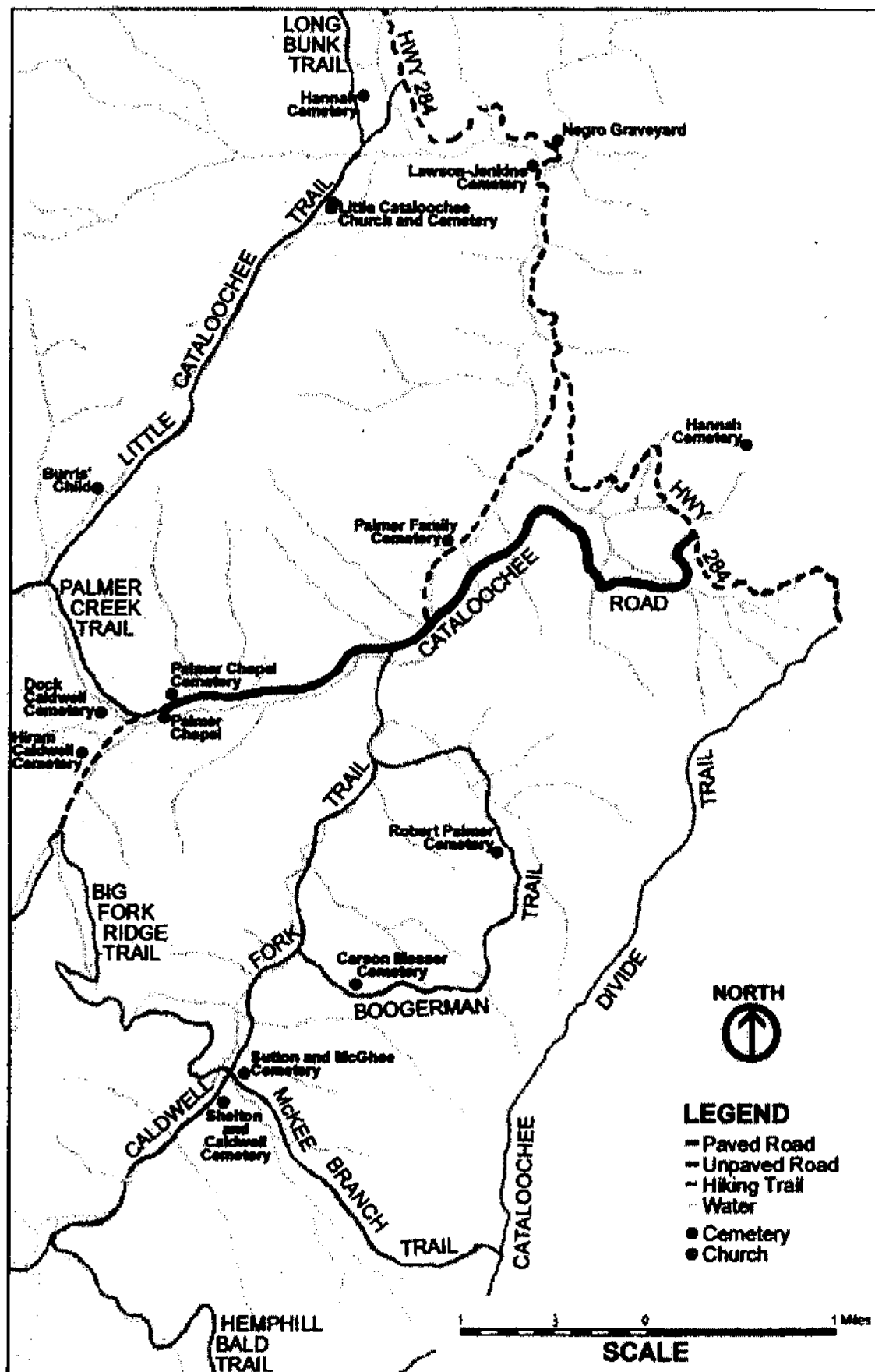
Other Area Attractions

- Clingman's Dome, the second highest peak east of the Mississippi River
- Appalachian Trail which passes through the park offering a strenuous multi-day trek
- Fontana Lake
- Great Smoky Mountain Railroad
- Rafting, multiple outfitters available via internet search

Additional Information:

- Description of many of the trails in the Cataloochee area: http://www.gorp.com/parks-guide/travel-ta-great-smoky-mountain-national-park-hiking-gatlinburg-tennessee-sidwcmdev_056115.html
- Great Smoky Mountain National Park maps: <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/maps.htm>
- Backcountry camping information: <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/backcountry-camping.htm>
- Group campgrounds: <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/groupcamps.htm>

Maps shared by Troop 250 are on pages 41 and 42





Rocky Bluff Recreation Area, French Broad River

What

Base camp at Rocky Bluff Campground for day hikes and rafting trips along the French Broad River. The Appalachian Trail passes through the area and additional trails include the Van Cliff Loop Trail, Spring Creek Nature Trail and Spencer's Overlook.

For additional information contact:

Appalachian Ranger District
30 East Hwy., 19 Bypass
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828) 682-6146

Where

Near Hot Springs, NC.

Directions taken from the Blue Ridge Heritage website, Rocky Bluff Recreation Area:

From Asheville (40 miles): Take US 19/23 N to US 25/70 NW toward Marshall and Hot Springs for about 30 miles. At junction of US 25/70 and NC 208, take a left and continue on US 25/70 to Hot Springs.

From Hot Springs: take NC 209 for 3 miles. Rocky Bluff Campground is on the left.

From Waynesville (40 miles): Take NC 23/74 NE for about 2 miles to NC 209 NW for 33 miles. Rocky Bluff Campground is on the right.

Fees

The camping fee is \$8 per campsite per night.

Camping

The United States Forest Service website indicates that each site has a parking spur, picnic table, tent pad, and fire grate. Water and flush toilets are also available.

Outfitters

The recommended rafting outfitter is French Broad Rafting and Zip Lines, (800) 570-7238:

<http://www.frenchbroadrafting.com/whitewater/>

Additional Information and References

- Blue Ridge Heritage, Rocky Bluff Recreation Area: <http://www.blueridgeheritage.com/attractions-destinations/rocky-bluff>
- United States Forest Service: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nfsnc/recreation/natureviewing/recarea/?recid=48602&actid=63>

Hanging Rock State Park

What

Hanging Rock State Park offers camping year-round with 73 drive-in and walk-in campsites including a tent pad, picnic table and grill at each campsite. The park offers 18 miles of wooded trails over a network of 12 trails. Trails feature waterfalls, cliffs, a cave and views of the Piedmont and mountains.

This park is reported to offer an excellent camping and hiking opportunity for new Scouts.

Where

Hanging Rock State Park is located north of Winston-Salem, NC near Danbury, NC and is approximately a two hour drive from Gastonia, NC.

Hanging Rock State Park
1790 Hanging Rock Park Road
Danbury, NC 27016-7417

Phone: (336) 593-8480

Fees

The drive-in and walk-in campsite rate is \$20 per day.

Primitive group camping is available at a minimum of \$13 per day.

Camping

Six campers per campsite are permitted. Water source, restrooms, and showers are available. Restrooms and showers are closed from December 1 to March 15 but pit toilets remain available. Reservations are strongly encouraged.

Five primitive group campsites are also available accommodating up to 10 campers per site. Pit toilets and a water source are close to the group camping. Reservations are required.

Other Area Attractions

Activities other than hiking available in the park include:

- Canoe and boat rentals
- Lake swimming. The park website does not clearly indicate whether lifeguards are on duty. Plan according to the *Guide To Safe Scouting*.

Additional Information

Hanging Rock State Park website: <http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/haro/main.php>

Hot Springs, NC

What

The town of Hot Springs in Madison County, NC offers a number of campgrounds to use as a base camp for hiking sections of the Appalachian Trail. Located in the Pisgah National Forest, both the Appalachian Trail and the French Broad River pass through town offering easy access to a variety of recreational opportunities for a Troop.

Where

Hot Springs, NC is located along US 70 northwest of Asheville, NC easily accessed by taking US 70 west at the Weaverville exit from I-40.

Fees

Check with campgrounds for group camping fees. Websites are listed below.

Camping

- Hot Springs Resort and Spa Campground: <http://nchotsprings.com/nc-hot-springs-resort-lodging.html>
- Meadow Fork Campground: Phone (828) 622-9505
- Creek Ridge Camping offers group camping: <http://campinghotsprings.com/mountain-view-tailgate-sites/>
- US Forestry Service – Rocky Bluff Campground, US Forestry Service: Phone (828) 622-3202

Outfitters:

- Sandy Bottom Trail Rides offers camping and horseback riding: <http://www.sandybottomtrailrides.net>
- Hot Springs Rafting Company: <http://hotspringsraftingco.com>
- Blue Heron Whitewater: <http://www.blueheronwhitewater.com>
- Nantahala Outdoor Center: <http://noc.com>
- USA Raft: <http://www.usaraft.com>
- French Broad Rafting & Ziplines is located west of Hot Springs near Marshall, NC: <http://www.frenchbroadrafting.com>

Additional Information:

<http://www.visitmadisoncounty.com/lodging/campgrounds/>

<http://hotspringsnc.org/business-directory/wpbdm-category/rafting/>

<http://www.appalachiantrail.org/what-we-do/community-engagement/appalachian-trail-communities/hot-springs-nc>

Shining Rock Wilderness Area

What

From the United States Forest Service Shining Rock Wilderness Area website:

"Designated as a Wilderness Area in September of 1963, Shining Rock encompasses over 18,000 acres. This area has elevations varying from 3300 to over 6,000 feet, lies on the north slope of the Pisgah Ledge, a northeasterly extension of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and gets its name from the white quartz outcropping near the crest of the Shining Rock Mountain."

Troop 250 suggests parking at the Black Balsam Road parking area. Hike Ivestor Gap Trail almost 2 miles to Ivestor Gap for camping. The summit of Shining Rock is another two mile hike through Shining Rock Gap. The only water source on this trail beyond the camping area is at Shining Rock Gap.

Where

Shining Rock Wilderness Area is located in the Pisgah National Forest between Waynesville and Brevard, NC, approximately a 2.5 hour drive from Gastonia, NC. Detailed directions are available at www.googlemaps.com.

Directions to the Black Balsam Road parking area provided by Troop 250:

- From Asheville go south on the Blue Ridge Parkway beyond the exit for US 276 for 8.5 miles to FS 816 (Black Balsam Rd) at milepost 420.2
- Turn right then proceed to end of road.

Fees

Check with the District Ranger (contact information below) regarding any fees that may apply.

Camping

NOTICE: This area has periodically been closed to backcountry camping. Always check with the District Ranger prior to planning trips to this area.

Other Area Attractions

- Sliding Rock Recreation Area
- Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education and Trout Hatchery
- Blue Ridge Parkway

Additional Information

- United States Forest Service Shining Rock Wilderness Area website: http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/lut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gDfxMDT8MwRyd-LA1cj72BTJw8jAwjQL8h2VAQAzHJMsQ!!/?ss=110811&ttype=recarea&recid=48260&actid=104&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&position=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&navid=1104000000000000&pnavid=1100000000000000&pname=Pisgah+Ranger+District+-+Shining+Rock+Wilderness
- Pisgah Ranger District
District Ranger, Derek Ibarguen
1600 Pisgah Highway
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
(828) 877-3265
- Map of area provided by Troop 250 on page 48



Uwharrie National Forest

What

Uwharrie National Forest is maintained by the United States National Forest Service and located east of Albemarle, NC. The forest offers a variety of hiking, backpacking and recreational activities. From the United States Forest Service website, Uwharrie National Forest section:

"There are approximately 51,000 acres of National Forest System lands in Montgomery, Randolph and Davidson Counties. The Uwharrie National Forest includes the Uwharrie Ranger District Office, located at 789 NC Highway 24/27 East, Troy, NC 27371.

At the district office you can obtain information about the area, get brochures, camping information, trail passes, and permits. You can also obtain a Senior pass, Disabled Pass. We also have USGS Topo maps for sale."

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/nfsnc/recreation/camping-cabins/?recid=48112&actid=34>

Where

Uwharrie National Forest is located east of Albemarle, NC approximately a two hour, 45 minute drive from Gastonia, NC. Detailed directions are available at www.googlemaps.com.

Fees

Check with the Uwharrie Ranger District office (see below) for information on any necessary fees and permits.

Camping

From the United States Forest Service website, Uwharrie National Forest section:

"Primitive dispersed camping is allowed throughout the Forest, except in those areas that are posted "No Camping". These sites can be found along most of Forest Service roads and trails. Please remember when using these sites to be careful with camp fires and carry out your trash and debris. Please leave your campsite in good clean condition so that others who follow you may also enjoy the Forest."

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/nfsnc/recreation/camping-cabins/?recid=48112&actid=34>

Other Area Attractions

Additional recreational opportunities in the forest and local area can be found here:

- http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3814678.pdf

Additional Information

Information on the Uwharrie National Forest, including a link to maps, can be found here:

- http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet!ut/p/c5/04_S-B8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gDfxMDT8MwRydLA1cj72BTJw8jAwgAykeexc-N4jhYG_h4eYX5hPgYwefy6w0H24dcPNgEHcDTQ9_Plz03VL8iNMMgycVQEAHcGOIk!/dl3/d3/L2d-JQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnZ3LzZlME80MEkxVkFCOTBFMktTNUJIMjAwMDAwMDA!/?ss=110811&navid=1100000000000000&pnavid=null&cid=FSE_003741&recid=48934&ttype=recarea&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&position=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&pname=National+Forests+in+North+Carolina+-+Uwharrie+National+Forest

Contact information:

Uwharrie Ranger District
District Ranger, Deborah Walker
789 NC 24/27 East
Troy, NC 27371
(910) 576-6391
uwharrie@fs.fed.us

Virginia

Damascus, VA

What

Damascus, VA, "Trail Town, USA" offers a number of outing options with perhaps the most popular among Scout Troops being the Virginia Creeper Trail. Other options in the area include the Appalachian Trail (AT) and Iron Mountain Trail. Also, The Transcontinental Bicycle Route passes through Damascus on VA 58 as it works its way across the country from Oregon to Virginia.

The Virginia Creeper Trail

The Virginia Creeper Trail is a 34 mile long multi-use trail on the railroad bed of the Virginia Carolina Railroad which earned the nickname "The Virginia Creeper" for its slow moving trains that carried timber from the mountains to mills in Abingdon, VA and Todd, NC. The narrow gauge gear driven Shay engines stopped creeping up and down the mountains in 1977 and planning for the road bed conversion into a hiking and biking trail began soon after. The trail was opened in 1984. Although 34 miles of the Trail are complete from Abingdon to the north through Damascus to White Top Mountain Station to the south, plans have been made to extend the Trail to Todd, NC in the future.

The Virginia Creeper Trail is quite wide and covered in a variety of materials including dirt and forest detritus, cinders, and gravel and crosses many trestles that are now covered in wood decking. The most popular way to ride the Creeper is to start at White Top Mountain Station and bike the 17 miles to Damascus. The trip is primarily downhill and can be completed in three to four hours including leisurely stops for water and snacks. This half of the Trail is relatively self-contained with few road crossings and at least two water and restroom stops. One of the stops features a commercial restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating, and affordable and tasty snacks, drinks, meals and desserts. The menu includes sandwiches, hamburgers, full dinner plates. Their desserts have been featured in Southern Living and are worth a try.

Views along the White Top side of the Trail feature the Whitetop Laurel River. Less experienced riders often park or, more accurately, abandon their bikes at the ends of, or on the trestles, to enjoy the spectacular views. Riders should approach trestles with extreme caution for such roadblocks and get off and walk bikes across crowded trestles.

A more challenging ride is from Abingdon to Damascus, also 17 miles. Although downhill as well, the Abingdon side is more flat with more long uphill but none of the ascents are terribly steep. From Damascus riders will cross more roads as well as gated farm fields. Always be sure to close gates because the fences enclose working pasture land. Views on the Damascus side feature broad expanses of the Virginia ridges, balds and pastures. Many fields of wild flowers may be seen as well as a few streams. This side of the Trail also features a smaller general store-type vendor which has a snack bar that also serves drinks, snacks, and hot and cold sandwiches.

Once in Damascus a variety of places to grab a sandwich, pizza, ice cream and other goodies are available and welcome riders and hikers. The town of Damascus offers entertainment in two parks, one along the river with access for wading and swimming, and the other at the south end of town featuring an old locomotive, caboose and other railroad equipment to explore.

Whether riding the Creeper from White Top Station or Abingdon there are a number of options for having an enjoyable outing. The most economical, but most vigorous is to ride from Damascus to one end and back, a total of 34 miles, roughly half of which will be uphill. If taking that option to White Top the climb can be quite challenging by bicycle. Many riders will arrange for bikes and riders to be transported by vehicle to White Top Station or Abingdon and then bike back to Damascus. Many outfitters are available with reasonably priced shuttle services for bikes and riders (see below).

The Iron Mountain Trail

From <http://www.damascus.org/hiking.html>:

North Trail:

The Iron Mountain Trail, now blazed yellow, was part of the Appalachian Trail until 1972 when the AT was relocated to the south. Along this path were the steps of the first AT hikers, like Myron Avery, Gene Espy and Grandma Gatewood, to name a few. This beautiful and historic 24 mile trail, from Damascus to VA16 at Iron Mountain Gap is now shared by many users, yet it has less users than the AT. Hikers, bikers and equestrians co-exist partly because of the vision of the Iron Mountain Trail Club. The trail passes through luxuriant forest, generally following the mountain crest with few steep, long ascents or descents. The views to the south are superb. Except for the parts along the ridgecrest, this trail has ample water. There are three shelters, a number of campsites and many combinations of circuit hikes using the Iron Mountain Trail.

South Trail:

From Damascus south, the Iron Mountain Trail is about 23 miles long ending near Tennessee Highway 91. This section is designated as a footpath only and traverses mostly roadless areas within the Cherokee National Forest. It is clearly blazed but is rugged and less maintained than the northern route. This section is a much better hike for those looking for a wilderness experience. There are no shelters but there are a number of campsites. The views are spectacular. This is an excellent circuit hike when combined with the Appalachian Trail at Highway 91 - a total loop of about 45 miles.

Additional information is available at Mount Rogers Outfitters or Sundog Outfitters where many of the staff are experts and can tell you of places not known to most visitors.

The Appalachian Trail also passes through this area and is easily accessible along the Virginia Creeper Trail near Damascus when heading toward White Top Station.

Where

Damascus is located on US 58 just across the VA-TN state line and easily access via US 321 from North Carolina and I-81 and I-77 in Virginia. Damascus is about a 2 1/2 hour drive from Gastonia, NC

Fees

There are no fees for using the Virginia Creeper Trail, Appalachian Trail or Iron Mountain Trails.

Camping & Lodging Details

The Town of Damascus permits camping in the City Park along the river, but a reservation is strongly encouraged. Reservations may be made by contacting the Damascus City Hall at (276) 475-3831. Upon arrival they appreciate a phone call to confirm campers' arrival. The site features a level camping area, fire ring, and restroom with shower. As noted above, the river is available for wading and swimming and the location is a great base camp for hiking and biking. The Park is in town and so appropriate precautions with personal belongings should be taken when leaving camp to hike, bike or explore.

The Damascus United Methodist Church (DUMC) offers camping in the yard of "The Place Hostel," a hostel that is just behind the church building. The Place is an older house that is well maintained and intended primarily for through-hikers of the Appalachian Trail. Contacting the DUMC at (276) 475-3441 or (276) 492-3983 prior to visiting is necessary so that the hosts will be aware of your needs. Although The Place features wooden sleeping racks it will be best to plan on camping in the yard during high-use months of the AT to allow hikers to have much deserved indoor shelter. Yard-campers will have use of the kitchen, picnic table dining room, restrooms, and showers. There are also picnic tables outside and a recent visit to The Place on Facebook revealed that a large picnic shelter has recently been added.

Camping at The Place is free but donations are greatly appreciated. "A Scout is Helpful" and so Troops are strongly encouraged to make a generous contribution to the upkeep of the facility. A donation box is hung on the wall of the dining room.

Grayson Highlands State Park is also relatively nearby and offers many camping options as well as miles of hiking trails.

Additional camping information can be found here: <http://www.vacreepertail.us/camping.html>

Outfitters

A number of bike rental and shuttle services are available in Damascus and Abingdon and many offer discounts for Scout units. Calling ahead for a bike rental and/or shuttle reservations are strongly encourage. Each time Troop 74 has used a bike shuttle service, visitors arriving without reservations have been observed learning with disappointment that they may have a long wait for a ride. However, the outfitters work hard to accommodate visitors without reservations quickly.

A list of outfitters is available here: <http://www.vacreepertail.com/bikerental.html>

Additional Online Information:<http://www.damascus.org/hiking.html><http://www.vacreepertrail.com><http://www.vacreepertrail.us><http://www.vacreepertrail.us/history.html><http://www.vacreepertrail.us/camping.html>

Grayson Highland State Park / Mount Rogers National Recreation Area / Whitetop Mountain, VA

What

Well known to many Boy Scout Troops, Grayson Highland State Park, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA) and Whitetop Mountain, Virginia offer multitudes of hiking and backpacking options. Mount Rogers and Whitetop Mountain are Virginia's two highest peaks and these recreation areas and parks offer miles of trails ranging in elevation from 2000 to over 5000 feet.

Grayson Highlands State Park offers group tent campsites for up to 35 campers with bath house nearby. Additional primitive camping is available and hiking trails ranging from 0.5 miles to over 3 miles are within the park. The Appalachian Trail (AT) which passes through the park offering hikers access to the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area as well.

Mount Rogers National Recreation Area encompasses 150,000 acres in the Jefferson National Forest and offers over 300 miles of hiking trails. According to Sherpa Guides, the visitor center located at the entrance to the NRA on VA 16 is 7 miles south of Marion and offers exhibits and a helpful staff. Two additional U.S. Forest Service facilities provide information, brochures, and maps—one is located in a red caboose in a City Park at the west end of Damascus, Va. at the junction of the AT and Virginia Creeper Trail. The other is at the old Green Cove Depot along the Virginia Creeper Trail. Green Cove is on VA 600 off US 58, about 15 miles east of Damascus.

While Mount Rogers (5729 feet) is the highest peak in Virginia its peak is forested and so offers no view. However, Whitetop Mountain (5,540 feet), the second highest peak in Virginia is said to offer spectacular views given that it is an exposed bald.

The AT passes through the park allowing for many treks including the opportunity to camp younger, less experienced Scouts in a base camp while older, more experienced Scouts hike into the campsite along the AT

Other area hikes suggested by contributors to this project include:

- Elk Park to Roane Mountain including Little Hump and Big Hump
- Yellow Gap Road - Over Mountain Victory Trail

Where

Grayson Highland State Park, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and Whitetop Mountain are located in southern Virginia midway between Independence and Damascus Va. along US 58.

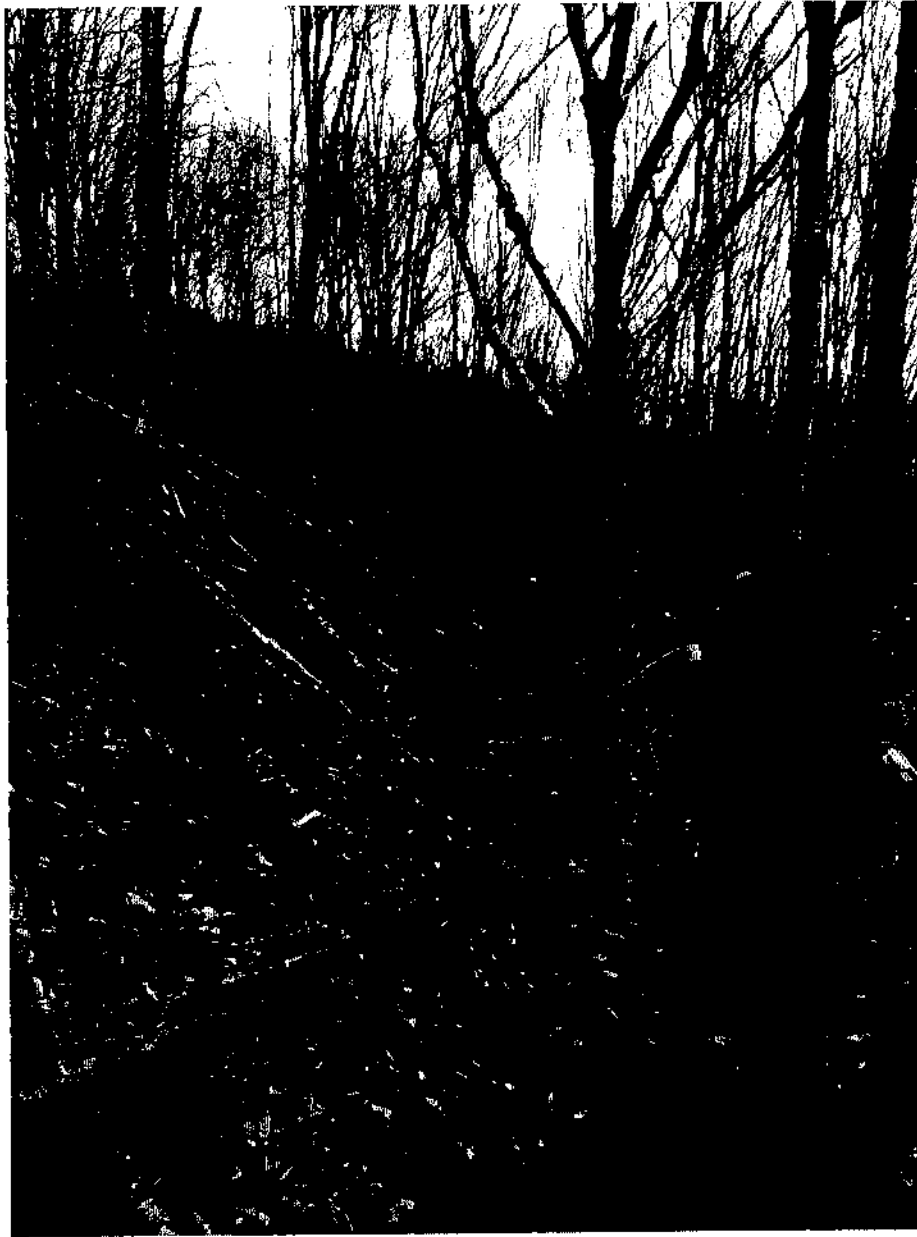
Fees

Various fees for camping may apply in Grayson Highland State Park and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Check with park and recreation area offices for details.

Additional Information

- Hostel near Roan Mountain at Carver's Gap allows secure parking of vehicles for a small fee. Parking along US 19E at other locations has resulted in vandalism of unattended vehicles.
- <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gwj/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5302337>
- http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/grayson-highlands.shtml#general_information
- Grayson Highlands State Park: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/grayson-highlands.shtml#cabins_camping
- Grayson Highlands State Park trail map: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/documents/data/trail-guide-graysonhighlands.pdf>
- Sherpa Guides provide detailed information on the area in *Highroad Guide to the Virginia Mountains*, By Deane and Garvey Winegar here: http://www.sherpaguides.com/virginia/mountains/blue_ridge/mount_rogers_nra.html
- Sherpa Guides provides a general map of the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area here: http://www.sherpaguides.com/virginia/mountains/maps/mt_rogers.html
- Numerous online blogs provide rich information about the various hikes in this area. An example including photos and maps is here: <http://www.midatlantichikes.com/mountrogers-bp.htm>

Photos of Grayson Highlands area provided by
Andrew Dauber, Assistant Scout Master, Troop 707











West Virginia

Greenbrier River Trail, WV

What

The Greenbrier River Trail (GRT) is a rail trail suitable for hiking, backpacking and bicycling. A number of group campsites are located along the trail that includes tent pads, potable water sources, and pit toilets. The group camp site near mile post 13 includes a shelter with three sleeping platforms. Camping is on a first come-first served basis. Water is also available from the Greenbrier River, along which the trail runs and crosses via a number of trestles. The trail also passes through an old rail road tunnel. The trail is the road bed of a former logging rail-road and runs along the Greenbrier River which has no dams along its entire length, making it the longest untamed river in the eastern United States.

Area outfitters (see below) will transport your troop to any point along the trail so that you can bike or hike back to your vehicles. They also will pick you up along the trail if you wish to section hike or bike. Another option is to hike or bike from a drop off point to a group campsite and have an outfitter meet your troop at the campsite with your camping gear.

Where

The GRT runs from Slab Town near Cass, WV to Caldwell near Lewisburg, WV. The southern terminus at Caldwell is accessible via Interstate 64, exit 169 in Lewisburg, approximately a 4 ½ hour drive from Gastonia, NC. The northern terminus near Cass is accessible via WV 66 and is a 5 ½ hour drive from Gastonia, NC.

Fees

There are no fees for hiking, biking or camping the Trail.

Camping

Additional details on lodging and camping on and adjacent to the trail are available at this website: <http://www.greenbrierrailtrailstatepark.com/overnights.htm>

Maps

GRT maps are available at primary access points in Caldwell (south end) and Cass (north)

http://www.greenbrierrailtrailstatepark.com/GBRT_map_web.pdf

<http://www.wvstateparks.com/Brochures/GreenbrierRiverTrail.pdf>

Pocahontas County Information Center

Outfitters

White Sulphur Springs:

- Outdoor Adventures – 1-888-752-9982 Bike Rentals, shuttles

- Caldwell
Free Spirit Adventures – 1-800-877-4749 US Route 60 at Caldwell Bike rentals, shuttles, tours, repairs, accessories

Seebert:

- Jack Horner's Corner - (304) 653-4515 Adjacent to Greenbrier River Trail
- Watoga State Park
bike sales, rentals, shuttles, accessories, minor repairs

Marlinton:

- Dirtbean Hale - bike sales, rentals, repairs, accessories
17 8th Street, (304) 799-4038,
- Appalachian Sport Lodge - bike sales, rentals, shuttles, bike accessories
3 Seneca Trail, (304) 799-4050

Slatyfork:

- Elk River Touring Center - Bike sales, rentals, repairs, accessories, shuttles
S Route 219, (866) 572-3771

Cass:

- Route 66 Outpost - (304) 456-4288
bike rentals, accessories, shuttles

More information on outfitters is available at <http://www.greenbrierrailtrailstatepark.com/shuttles.htm>

Other Area Attractions

- Cass Scenic Railroad, Cass, WV
- Organ Cave near Lewisburg, WV
- US National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Greenbank, WV

Additional Information

From <http://www.greenbrierrailtrailstatepark.com/>

The Greenbrier River Trail is a 78-mile long rail trail operated by West Virginia State Park system. Trail uses include bicycling, backpacking, cross-country skiing and horse-back riding. A packed, crusher run surface coupled with a mere one per cent grade creates an ease of riding that allows cyclists, young and old, to enjoy the many breathtaking views. The trail closely mirrors its namesake, the Greenbrier River, for most of its length offering trail users countless opportunities for swimming and fishing.

The Greenbrier River Trail traverses one of the most remote areas in the state and lies adjacent to the Monongahela National Forest, Seneca State Forest and Watoga State Park. A trip along the trail is truly a "Wild and Wonderful" experience. Trail users are encouraged to wear blaze orange or brightly colored outerwear when on the Greenbrier River Trail during hunting seasons in West Virginia.



South trailhead, Caldwell, WV, just east of Lewisburg, WV



Campsites along the trail





Greenbrier River from just off the trail





Greenbrier River from just off the trail



Greenbrier River Trail with milepost

Greenbrier State Forest, WV

What

The Greenbrier State Forest is a multi-use forest managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. It includes a group primitive camping area, an RV camping area, many miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, cabins, picnic shelters, and a swimming pool.

Hiking

Many hiking trails are found throughout the Forest varying in challenge from easy to strenuous in nature. The Kates Mountain Loop Trail provides the most comprehensive tour of the Forest and is a 7.8 mile hike and climb starting at the Forest Office area. However, the Loop Trail can also be accessed by joining the Young's Nature Trail portion of the Loop at the Forest Picnic Area after a hike of 1.5 miles on the Old Field Road & Trail to the Picnic Area from the primitive group camping area.

Hiking time for the Kates Mountain Loop is estimated at 5 hours, but add an additional hour if accessing the Loop via Old Field Road and Trail. The trails comprising the Loop cross or parallel many small streams so water may be available during wetter times of the year. However, being prepared with adequate water and is recommended. The Loop includes elevation changes that require some trail climbing so appropriate footwear and fitness levels are necessary for a safe, enjoyable hike.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is permitted on all trails, however Rocky Ridge Trail requires high technical skills and is not recommended for biking by Scout units with riders of all ability levels. Many of the other trails in the Forest are old logging roads and much more suitable for riding. Being old logging roads, however, mountain bikes are likely to be the only bicycle style suitable for use on these trails.

Swimming

The Forest offers swimming in a large, modern, in-ground swimming pool with lifeguards on duty.

Disc Golf

Adjacent to the primitive group camping area you will find a Disc Golf course available for play at no charge. You should plan to bring your own discs however discs may also be available at the forest office and store.

Where:

The Greenbrier State Forest is located approximately 2 miles south of I-64 at exit 175 near Caldwell, W.Va. on Kates Mountain Road. The drive takes approximately 4 1/2 hours from Gastonia, NC with no stops. In the last mile a small tunnel with only 9 feet of clearance must

be passed through so care should be taken about the height of vehicles and trailers taken on the trip.

Addresses & phone numbers

Greenbrier State Forest
HC 30 Box 154
Caldwell, WV 24925
(304) 536-1944

Fees

Camping is \$2.00 per Scout and No Charge for Adult Leaders
Swimming Pool is \$2.00 for youth and \$3.00 for adults

The State Forest allows adult Scout leaders to camp free of charge to encourage adult leader participation in outings and supervision on site.

Camping & Lodging Details

The primitive group camping area is an expansive, flat field bounded by hardwoods with a pines in the center. The camping area includes many picnic tables, fire rings and port-a-johns. Water is available for treatment from a stream that borders the camping area or potable water can be transported a short distance from the nearby RV campground. Also, the Ranger will provide a water buffalo in the primitive group camping area if requested ahead of time. Shower facilities are available in the nearby RV campground. The camping area is large enough to accommodate a game of Ultimate Frisbee or Capture the Flag.

The campsite is accessible to private vehicles with plenty of room to park Troop equipment trailers and vehicles. The Forest Office should be consulted regarding bus parking.

Camping is not permitted along any of the hiking trails. Although no reservations are necessary, Troops should call the Forest Office prior to visiting to discuss plans and camping in the primitive group camping area.

Outfitters

See entry on the Greenbrier River Trail

Other Area Attractions:

Organ Cave, near Lewisburg, WV, <http://www.organcave.com>

West Virginia State Fair, Lewisburg, WV held annually the second week of August, <http://state-fair-of-wv.com>

Additional Information

The Forest Office houses a small gift shop featuring a wide variety of items including apparel, arts & crafts made in West Virginia, snacks, and drinks.

The Bechtel Summit near Beckley, WV is just a 90 minute drive west on I-64 from the Greenbrier State Forest. Many Troops use the Greenbrier State Forest camping area as base camp for Jamborees and other events held at the Summit. The Forest also can serve as base camp for trips to hike southern sections of The Greenbrier River Trail. The southern terminus of The Greenbrier River Trail is approximately five miles west, near Caldwell, WV near US Route 60.

Appalachian Trail

What

There are many books and guides have been published over the years to assist in planning a trek along the Appalachian Trail (AT) and so any attempt to discuss the trail here would be quite redundant to available publications. However some Scouters provided their Troop favorites, which are listed below.

Where

Fontana Dam to Clingman's Dome or Newfound Gap in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park provides a strenuous 32.8 mile uphill climb. This hike can also be taken downhill to Fontana from Newfound Gap, however it will still be strenuous, given the elevation change.

Elk Park to Roan Mountain is another trek that was suggested for addition to this guide.

Carver's Gap in Roan Mountain State Park, TN over Little Hump and Big Hump Mountain, which comprise Hump Mountain was also suggested.

Yellow Mountain to Over Mountain Victory Trail was also suggested.

Additional Online Information

- <http://www.bsa224.us/location/appalachian-trail-big-hump>
- <http://tnstateparks.com/parks/about/roan-mountain>
- <http://www.hikewnc.info/trails/mills-river/>
- http://www.carolinamountainclub.org/hiking/maps/0396_profile.pdf
- http://www.hikingbill.com/2007_logs/2007-11-04/overmountain_victory_to_litte_hump.htm
- <http://www.summitpost.org/big-yellow-mountain/219074>

Fees

There are no fees for use of the AT.

Camping

Camping on the AT is encouraged in the designated shelter areas along the trail. Trail etiquette suggests that Scout troops and other large groups pitch tents near the shelters, leaving the shelters for use by through hikers. The shelter areas often provide pit toilets and perhaps picnic tables and fire rings.

A Word of Caution

Before undertaking any hiking or backpacking trip, proper adult leader and Scout preparation must be undertaken. Many troops will use part of weekly troop meetings to prepare Scouts for this experience. It is critical that adult leaders make time to become well trained in a number of areas to ensure a safe, enjoyable trip for their unit. You will find a list of some of the training that is provided by BSA and affiliated organizations to help you and your unit have a great trip.

In interviewing many adult leaders for this project, a repeated theme became evident - "do your backpacking in the mountains in the fall, winter and spring, NOT SUMMER!" Initially this may seem counter-intuitive. After all, the mountains of our area are prone to cold temperatures, heavy snows and occasional ice storms in the winter. However, summer brings other hazards and nuisances too. Summer weather brings heat, humidity, water scarcity, wind, and lightning. Nuisances include biting insects, warm, and even hot temperatures at night.

The advantages of backpacking from October through March include increased likelihood of available water, better views with leaves gone from trees, no mosquitoes, reduced likelihood of encountering yellow jackets and other stinging insects, cool temperatures for hiking, cool to cold temperatures for sleeping, and little chance of lightning. The winter months also provide more dark hours for sleep, which is necessary to maintain energy levels and the necessary alertness for safe backpacking.

The most useful word of caution, however, may be to trust National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts, local park rangers, and public safety departments local to your trek area. Also, be willing to postpone a trip if safety dictates doing so.

In discussing weather forecast trends with local media meteorologists, it is apparent that their forecasts of weekend weather tend to trend toward a higher likelihood of precipitation than those of NWS meteorologists. The logic that was shared is that local stations would rather lean toward forecasts of precipitation to reduce the likelihood of people planning for outdoor events that are then rained on. They believe that people would rather be pleasantly surprised by sunny or dry weather after a rainy forecast than have their weekend plans ruined by "surprise" wet weather. This "hedging their bets" toward wetter forecasts prevents viewers from being dissatisfied with their product - their weather forecast. Since NWS meteorologists have no commercial product to protect, their forecasts are less pessimistic and can be more accurate.

Studies have been undertaken to analyze the accuracy of local TV meteorologists, The Weather Channel and National Weather Service. A thorough discussion can be found in Nate Silver's *The Signal and the Noise*. A chart depicting results of these studies can be found at <http://www.randalolson.com/wp-content/uploads/weather-forecast-accuracy-flipped.png>

Parents should be made aware of BSA and troop policies regarding outings and weather forecasts. This could be accomplished in your parents's welcome session after crossover and then repeated annually at a Court of Honor or in writing.

Below is a message to parents regarding weather concerns about a kayaking outing sent by Troop 74. Feel free to modify this for use in any way appropriate. Mark, referenced in the message below, is Mark Johnson, one of Troop 74's Assistant Scout Masters.

Greetings:

Mark and I have been discussing tomorrow's kayak event and some parents' concerns expressed about the weather. We thought it might be helpful to share the way that we manage when the forecast is for storms.

BSA publishes a "Guide to Safe Scouting" which we follow. BSA also provides specific hazardous weather training that leaders are required to take. Hazardous weather training provides excellent guidance on managing events when weather can be an issue. We will watch the forecast and conditions wherever we are and be very careful regarding potential weather danger. We do all that we can to avoid canceling events, but safety is always our first concern on Scout outings.

For tomorrow's event, two adult leaders who are going are BSA lifeguards and one is an American Red Cross trained lifeguard. The other leaders who are going have been trained in "Safety Afloat," specific BSA training in safety for watercraft outings.

We plan to meet at the church as planned at 8:30 to clean the bus for the church before leaving for Tailrace Marina. As always, we will follow BSA Guide to Safe Scouting and hazardous weather policies. Should lightening or wind become a concern we will take appropriate precautions, which could include postponing kayaking. The marina also has hazardous weather policies that we will follow.

We hope for good weather but will be prepared to change plans as necessary. Rain isn't much of a concern, since Boy Scouts have a way of getting soaked when near water, even in a kayak! But, lightening and high wind are a different story! We'll keep an eye on the sky with special concern for safety.

Let's hope for an unexpected sunny sky in the morning!

See you then.

*Brian Hissom
Troop 74*

References

Silver, N (2012). The signal and the noise: Why so many predictions fail - but some don't, Penguin Press.

Training & Resources

In addition to general and position-specific training required to serve as an adult Boy Scout leader, specialized training should be completed by a number of your adult leaders in order for your unit to have a safe, enjoyable trip.

Training

General list of training for all unit types <http://www.scouting.org/Training/adult.aspx>

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/iols_33640.pdf

Guide To Safe Scouting <http://www.scouting.org/jamboree/sitecore/content/Home/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx>

Sweet 16 of BSA Safety <http://www.scouting.org/jamboree/sitecore/content/Home/HealthandSafety/Sweet16.aspx>

Leave No Trace <http://www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/Resources/LeaveNoTrace.aspx>

Trek Safely <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-125.pdf>

BSA Hazardous Weather Training, "Are You Weather Smart?" <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Alerts/WeatherCD.aspx>

American Red Cross Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Training <http://www.cprdude.com>

Managing Risk, from the BSA Fieldbook <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Resources.aspx>

Wilderness First Aid http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/healthandsafety/training/wilderness_fa.aspx

Resources

Scouting magazine, archived articles on hiking and backpacking <http://scoutingmagazine.org/category/boy-scouts/boy-scout-activities/backpacking-and-hiking/>

Camp Scout! by Boys' Life, an application for IOS devices available at the iTunes Store <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/camp-scout/id831047810>

BSA Handbook <http://www.scoutstuff.org/bsa/literature-media/handbooks.html>

BSA Field Book <http://www.scoutstuff.org/bsa/4th-edition-fieldbook.html>

Eswau Huppeday Order of the Arrow Lodge, *Where To Go Camping*, 2011 Edition: <http://eswau.net/where-to-go-camping-guide/>

To Be Added

North Carolina

- Crowders Mountain to Kings Mountain Trail
- Julian Price Park, Blue Ridge Parkway
- New River State Park, NC

South Carolina

- BSA Camp Old Indian
- Foothills Trail
- Jones Gap State Park