

Pisgah National Forest

District Ranger
USDA Forest Service
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Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
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www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc

The Pisgah Ranger District office is located southwest of Asheville and north of Brevard and is easily accessible from several main roads including the Blue Ridge Parkway. The district ranger station is located on US 276 near Brevard and is open to the public 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. They are also open on the weekends and holidays during the summer from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The district covers over 150,000 acres and has hundreds of miles of trails with different degrees of difficulty for any level of experience. These trails offer a vast array of outdoor activities, such as hiking, cycling, backpacking, horseback riding, rock climbing, fishing, wildlife observation, photography and more. The diversity of terrain offered in the area is amazing. Pisgah contains mountain peaks that brush the clouds at an elevation of over 6000 ft., rock faces, open balds and cascading waterfalls.



Cold Mountain in the winter

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Pisgah National Forest Campgrounds & Group Sites

Black Mountain

Elevation: 3,000 feet.

From Busick, NC, take State Rt. 80 north 0.7 miles to campground sign at South Toe River Rd.(Forest Rt. 472 and State Rt. 1205). Bear left onto South Toe Rd. and go 2.5 miles to campground. Sitting in the shadow of Mt. Mitchell, the highest peak in the East, and bordering the South Toe River, Black Mountain and Briar Bottom Group Campgrounds are meccas for people who enjoy the outdoors and recreation, such as hiking and fishing. Black Mountain Campground offers 48 camping sites (none with hookups). Briar Bottom Group Campground has six sites for 50 people at each site. For those camping at these sites, a ball field and volleyball net are available nearby. All campsites have picnic tables, fire rings with cooking grills, and lantern posts. Nearby are flush toilets, drinking water, and trash cans. A sewage disposal is 1 mile from the campgrounds. No showers are available. Great views of the Black Mountains and several trails.

Black Mountain Recreation Area (543 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/black_mountain.pdf

Boone Fork

Elevation: 1,300 feet.

From Lenoir, NC, take State Rt. 90 west 4 miles to Boone Fork Recreation Area sign (Mulberry Creek Dr.). Turn right at sign and go 4.5 miles to a Boone Fork sign (Boone Fork Rd.). Turn right onto Boone Fork Rd. (dirt, single lane) and go 2 miles to campground. The campground has two loops, one of which is for group camping. The campground has two loops, one of which is for group camping. The understory is manicured grass with a variety of deciduous trees, i.e., Dogwood, maple, poplar, etc. and hemlock. Lantern poles are located at each campsite.

Cove Creek Group Camp

From Brevard take US 276 N for 8.4 miles; go to Forest Service Rd. 475; turn W and go 3.4 miles to area. The area offers camping, drinking water, fishing, hiking and a sanitation facility. Reservations are required.

Davidson River

Elevation: 2,200 feet.

In Brevard, NC, at intersection of US Rts. 64 and 276 and State Rt. 280, take Rt. 276 north 1.1 miles to campground sign. Turn left at sign into campground. The campground, stretching out along Davidson River, has eight loops - Sycamore, Apple Tree, Dogwood, Hemlock, Riverbend, Poplar, Laurel, and White Oak (and a connection spur). Some campsite, designated as premium, back up onto Davidson River. Although it has large hemlock trees, Sycamore Loop is the most open. Hemlock and Poplar Loops have the best privacy and thick canopies. Riverbend Loop features huge Rhododendrons and an informal river swim area. A large level field exists between Hemlock and Dogwood Loops. Shade is provided by a pleasant mixture of hardwoods and conifers giving campground a spectacular color display during Fall season. Rhododendron and Dogwood enhance Spring foliage. Firewood is available for a fee.

Kuykendall Group Camp

This is a single group site. Restrooms are provided. Popular activities include waterplay, hiking, biking and sight-seeing. You must drive through the stream to get to the campground. Please have confirmation number available at this time. Fires are allowed in Forest Service provided fire rings only. Reservations are required.

Lake Powhatan

Elevation: 2,200 feet.

In Asheville, NC, at intersection of I-26 and I-40, take I-26 east 1.8 miles to State Rt. 191 (Exit 33). Take exit to traffic light (State Rt. 191). Turn left onto State Rt. 191 South and go 1.9 miles to Lake Powhatan sign. Turn right at sign and go 2.5 miles to campground. The campground, adjacent to Lake Powhatan, has four loops - Hardtimes, Big John, Bent Creek, and Lakeside. The campsites are tucked in among a mixed forest of deciduous and conifer trees. Well spaced campsites with a thick middlestory make for good privacy. Although Lakeside is closest loop to the lake, the campsites have no view of it. Convenient to Blue Ridge Parkway and mile upon mile of trails, this campground is good for transient campers, long weekend and vacation campers. Possible day trips are Asheville, Blue Ridge Parkway and Cradle of Forestry Visitor Center. Check the fee board for interpretive programs held during the summer season. Firewood and ice are available for a fee.

Mortimer (Elevation: 1,500 ft)

From Lenoir, NC, take State Rt. 90 west 21 miles to a "Y" intersection. Bear right and go 3.1 miles to campground on right. The campground, stretching up a hill, has a split personality. The campsites at the rear of campground have only the most basic amenities, i.e., level area, table, and lantern pole, in an open grass field. Campsites in the front end are tucked in among towering hemlock, maple, and oak trees with a scattering of rhododendrons. These sites have the "basic" plus grilles and tent pads. Thorps Creek, which can be heard throughout, runs through the campground where some campsites overlook it. A third section, located on the other side of creek, is comprised of all walk-in tent sites snuggled in among huge rhododendrons.

North Mills River (Elevation: 2,200 feet)

In Asheville, NC, at intersection of I-40 and I-26, take I-26 east 1.8 miles to Exit 33 (State Rt. 191). Take exit ramp to traffic light. Turn left onto Rt. 191 South and go 9.8 miles to N. Mills River Rd (State Rt. 1345). Turn right onto N. Mills Rd and go 4.7 miles to campground. The campground, with two unnamed loops, is located on either side of North Mills River in a thick forest of deciduous trees. Some campsites have good privacy provided mainly by rhododendron. Tubing is a popular sport on the river. The loop on east side of campground is more wooded, has campground's only double sites, paved parking aprons, and couple of riverside campsites. The loop on west side is level, slightly more sunny with gravel parking aprons.

Rocky Bluff

Rocky Bluff Campground is the perfect mountain getaway for visitors who seek quiet and solitude amid nature's picturesque surroundings. Tucked away off NC 209 near Hot Springs, the campground is one of the best-kept secrets in the national forests in North Carolina. Dates Open: May 1 to October 31. Fee: \$8 a night per site, on a first-come, first-served basis, 30 sites, 14-day limit for visit. What sites offer: Parking spur, picnic table, tent pad, and fire grate. Other amenities: Running water and flush toilets in center of campground's lower loop; nearby is a picnic area with 10 tables (no fee for day-use.); amphitheatre.

From Asheville (40 miles): Take U.S. 19/23 N to U.S. 25/70 NW toward Marshall and Hot Springs for about 30 miles. At junction of U.S. 25/70 and NC 208, take a left and continue on U.S. 25/70 to Hot Springs. From Hot Springs, take NC 209 for 3 miles. Rocky Bluff Campground is on the left. For more information, call (828) 622-3202.

Landscaping for the lower loop is very attractive with manicured grass understory and sculptured miniature hemlock trees. These trees seem to grow no more than 20 feet in height and are clumped at the top like palm trees. Most of the sites in the campground are terraced and built with stone walls. The predominant deciduous trees are maple, oak, and Dogwood. A cemetery is accessed via site 29 and is a reminder of the former residents - the Robert Brooks family.

Rocky Bluff Campground (209 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/RockyBluff.pdf

Silvermine

Silvermine Group Campground is nestled under a canopy of hemlocks and tall poplars. A rushing creek meanders 50 feet from the group campsite, which provides room for up to 50 people to set up tents. Pump Gap 4.2-mile loop trail can be accessed directly from the campground. The trail follows a stream and then forks. This is the beginning and ending point of the loop section, so either fork can be taken. If you take the right fork, the trail climbs to a ridge, crosses the Appalachian Trail, and descends along a creek. Along the creek, a side trail to the right follows an old road to Big Laurel Creek.

DATES OPEN: May 1 to October 31, fees apply. FOR RESERVATIONS: Appalachian Ranger District, French Broad Station, at (828) 622-3202. WHAT SITES OFFER: two large tent pads (15 by 30 feet); two grills. OTHER AMENITIES: One picnic shelter with two tables; water pump; chemical toilets.

Silvermine Group Campground (507 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/silvermine.pdf

Sunburst

From Canton, NC, take State Rt. 215 south 16 miles to campground. An alternative is to take State Rt. 215 (milepost 423) from the Blue Ridge Parkway north 8.6 miles to campground. This campground is located right on State Rt. 215 (National Scenic Byway); there will be some road noise. There is a stream across Rt. 215.

Private Campgrounds in Pisgah Area

Brevard

Black Forest Family Camping Resort

90 sites – 21 full hook-ups – cabins – Fees: 2 persons \$16 tents - \$20-\$22 RV's - \$30-\$40 cabins – Open March 15-December 1.

Phone Number: (828) 884-2267

Showers, restrooms, firewood, fire rings, and laundry available.

Activities: Swimming pool, playground, horseshoes, hiking trails, badminton.

Asheville

The French Broad River Campground

44 sites – 10 full hook-ups – Fees: 4 persons \$15-\$20 - open year round

Phone Number: (828) 658-0772

Showers, restrooms, firewood, laundry, phones.

Activities: Canoeing, fishing, horseshoes, volleyball, kayak and tube rentals

Balsam

Moonshine Creek Campground

92 sites – 50 full hook-ups – cabins – Fees: 2 persons \$19-\$24 – cabins vary – Open April 1-November 1.

Phone Number (828) 586-6666

Showers, restrooms, firewood, laundry, phones.

Activities: Fishing, horseshoes, hiking, volleyball.

Canton

Big Cove Campground

63 sites – 21 full hook-ups – cabins – Fees: 2 persons \$10 tents - \$15-\$18 RV's - \$15 cabins - Open year round.

Phone Number: (828) 667-9376

Showers, restrooms, firewood, laundry, phones.

Activities: Swimming pool, horseback riding, playground horseshoes, hiking trails.

Hendersonville

Red Gates RV Park

18 sites – 14 full hook-up – cabins – Fees: 2 persons \$10 – Open April 1-November 1.

Phone Number: (828) 685-8787

Showers, restrooms, laundry.

Activities: Swimming, boating, boat rentals, fishing, basketball, shuffle board.

Blue Ridge Parkway

The Pisgah Inn and Campground

137 sites – no hook-ups – Fees: campground 2 persons \$12, Inn \$70, \$78, \$110 - Open April-November.

Phone Number (828) 235-8228

For camping there are bathrooms but no showers. Centrally located in the Pisgah Ranger District.

Pisgah National Forest Hiking and Backpacking Trails



Art Loeb Trail

The Art Loeb Trail is a linking of outstanding trails in Pisgah National Forest, which memorializes the late Arthur J. Loeb, who was an officer of the Carolina Mountain Club and executive of Olin Industries who was held in high esteem by associates in hiking, conservation, and industry. The trail offers an ideal venture for Boy Scouts or anyone seeking to extend hiking experience. The entire trail is marked with direction signs. Most of the Art Loeb Trail is overlapped by the Mountains-to-Sea Trail which is blazed with 3-inch white dots. Section 1 begins at the Davidson River and climbs steeply to Shut-in Ridge. Once up, don't expect that the hard part is over. This trail will take you up and down knobs, along ridges and down into several gaps. Blaze: White

Section 1 (12.3 mi- Strenuous) starts on US 276. Go 0.2 mile south of Pisgah District Ranger Station on U.S. Highway 276, and turn onto the road to Davidson River Campground. Park in the Art Loeb Trailhead parking lot. The trail climbs to Neil Gap behind Davidson River Campground, west to Chestnut Knob, south of Cedar Rock, to Gloucester Gap on FS Rd. 471, where overnight parking is not recommended.

Section 2 (7.2 mi- Strenuous) From Gloucester Gap the trail climbs to Pilot Mountain, a former fire tower site with a 360-degree view. In mid-May the north side of Pilot Mountain is abloom with pinkshell azalea. The trail continues through Farlow Gap, across Blue Ridge Parkway at Shuck Ridge, then across Silvermine Bald to Black Balsam trailhead. Near Silvermine Bald the Mountains-to-Sea Trail splits to the west while the Art Loeb Trail follows the ridge northeast to FS Road 816.

Section 3 (6.8 mi- Strenuous) The first half of this portion of the Art Loeb Trail is perhaps the most spectacular. Black Balsam and Tennant Mountains both exceed 6,000 feet in elevation. The trail climbs to Black Balsam Knob, across Tennant Mountain, entering Shining Rock Wilderness at Ivestor Gap. A beautiful 5-mile loop may be made by combining the Art Loeb Trail with the Ivestor Gap Road. At Ivestor Gap the Art Loeb crosses in Shining Rock Wilderness. Be prepared to practice map reading skills because there are no blazes or signs in the Wilderness. Wood fires are not permitted in Shining Rock and a group limit of 10 is enforced. Wilderness is managed for solitude and a primitive landscape; please help foster this by being quiet, choosing rest stops out of view, and using existing campsites. This section of the Art Loeb Trail ends at Deep Gap.

Section 4 (3.8 mi- Strenuous if starting from Camp Daniel Boone) drops down from Deep Gap, below Cold Mountain, to Daniel Boone Scout Camp off NC 215. Please notify camp staff if you will be leaving a vehicle at the camp.

Bennett Gap

Trailhead: Bennett Gap Parking Area

Trail Finish: Bennett Gap Parking Area

Blaze Color: Red

Hiking Distance: 4.3 miles

Difficulty: Difficult

Time Allowance: 3 hours 30 minutes

Elevation Change: 1290 ft

USGS Map: Shining Rock, Pisgah Forest

Highlights: open vistas of Looking Glass Rock, high fields with views, hardwood forest, rhododendron tunnels, creeks and streams.

Trail Description:

Parking area located near the top of forest road 477.

Trail starts across the road from the parking area and is marked.

.8 mile Perry Cove connects to the left, stay right.

1.0 mile Coontree Loop connects to the right, stay straight.

1.4 miles Coontree loop separates from Bennett Gap on the right, stay straight.

1.9 miles Bennett Gap ends on forest road 477, turn left. Caution: motor vehicle traffic.

Go past the horse stables on right, cross bridge and turn left at next gated road.

2.3 miles Perry Cove Trail, on right, orange blazes.

3.5 miles turn right on Bennett Gap.

Follow Bennett Gap back to parking area.

Big East Fork of the Pigeon River

USGS Map: Shining Rock

Take 276 NW past junction of Blue Ridge Parkway toward Canton and Waynesville. Continue down steep grade 1 ¼ miles. Off to the left of a sharp curve is the trail head and a small parking area. The trail descends in the direction of the river. There is a heavily used campsite in the hollow near the river shortly after the trail head. Continuing in a generally southern direction along the river, the trails pull away from and then back to the river at several points. There are several good camping spots along the trail on a ridge to your left. I would particularly recommend those adjacent to two brooks that flow into the river. At the first really large creek on your left there is a trail leading up to Bennett Gap parking area off the Blue Ridge Parkway. If you continue on the Big East Fork Trail It joins the Greasy Cove Prong Trail to you right to Ivestor Gap or continue to Parkway near Bridges Camp Gap.

Black Mountain Trail (9.8 miles- Strenuous)

Black Mountain Trail begins at the end of the parking lot next to the Pisgah District Work Center on U.S.

Highway 276. The work center is 0.1 mile south of the ranger station.

The first mile of Black Mountain Trail is fairly easy, but after leaving Thrift Cove, it climbs up and over Little Hickory Knob, an 800-foot elevation gain in less than a mile. From here, the trail becomes more moderate as you drop down to Pressley Gap then up the shoulder of Black Mountain. Shortly after crossing the gravel road at Buckhorn Gap, you will come to Buckhorn Gap shelter, where there is a spring. From here, the trail climbs Soapstone Ridge, which offers nice views in the winter. The trail ends at Club Gap. Other outstanding alternate trips after reaching Buckhorn Gap - follow the blue triangle markers west to Avery Creek: then orange markers southwest to White Pines Campground on US 276. Numerous trails intersect Black Mountain; check a topo map for loop opportunities.

Buck Spring

Trail Head: Buck Spring Parking Area

Trail Finish: Pisgah Inn

Blaze Color: White

Hiking Distance: 5.3 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Time Allowance: 3 hours 30 minutes.

Elevation Change: 1300ft

USGS Map: Cruso and Shining Rock

Trail Description:

Suggestion: When dropping off your car at the Pisgah Inn, please ask at the front desk where you should leave your car.

With the exception of the first half mile, which is moderately steep, Buck Springs Trail is a gradual, sloping grade. The trail has 13 easy stream crossings while winding around 10 ridges.

The trail starts on the upper end of US 276 near the Blue Ridge Parkway at the Buck Spring parking area.

.5 mile intersection of the Mountains To The Sea Trail on your left, keep straight.

.8 mile the Mountain To The Sea Alternative Route on the right, stay straight.

Some steep sections near the end. Continue on the trail back to the Pisgah Inn.

Cold Mountain

Trailhead (& finish) Art Loeb Parking Area at Camp Daniel Boone

Blaze Color: None

Hiking Distance: 10.4 miles

Difficulty: Difficult

Time Allowance: 6 hours 45 minutes

Elevation Change: 2850 ft.

USGS Map: Cruso and Waynesville

Trail Description:

The Cold Mountain Trail is a strenuous 10.6 mile roundtrip in the beautiful Shining Rock Wilderness Area of the Pisgah National Forest. The best months to hike are May through October. Snow covers the top of the peak for much of the other months. Take plenty of water. Experienced hikers will enjoy the challenging climb. The trail is not marked, but it is well-worn and easy to follow. The trailhead for the hiking trail (Art Loeb Trail) is located at the Daniel Boone Scout Camp.

Drive through Camp Daniel Boone to a small parking area on the right.

The Art Loeb Trail starts next to a large information board on the left side of the road.

After 3.8 miles of steady climbing is Deep Gap, turn left & continue climbing! Follow the well-defined Cold Mountain Trail, up the mountain. At the ridge of the mountain there is a small campsite, turn right. Follow this on up to the top. Return back the same way you came up.

Coontree Loop

Trailhead: Coontree Picnic Area
Trail Finish: Coontree Picnic Area
Blaze Color: Blue
Hiking Distance: 3.7 miles
Difficulty: Moderate
Time Allowance: 2 hours
Elevation Change: 970 ft
USGS Map: Shining Rock

Trail Description:

Coontree picnic area is located on US 276 and is well marked.
The trail starts on the other side of US 276 from the parking area, blue blazes. Caution; heavy traffic on US 276.
.2 mile the trail forks, take the trail to the right.
At the ridge Coontree Loop joins with the Bennett Gap Trail, red blazes. Turn left onto this trail.
In approximately .5 mile Coontree Loop breaks off Bennett Gap to the left. Follow Coontree Loop to the bottom of the mountain. The trail meets back at the fork; follow it to the picnic area.

Courthouse Falls

Trailhead: Courthouse Falls Parking
Trail Finish: Courthouse Falls Parking
Blaze Color: Orange
Hiking Distance: 0.7 mile
Difficulty: Easy
Time Allowance: 45minutes
Elevation Change: 80 ft
USGS Map: Sam Knob

Trail Description:

Courthouse Falls parking area is located almost at the end of forest road 140 on the far side of a small bridge.
From the Blue Ridge Parkway take 215 toward Rosman and 140 will be the first left.
Trail begins across the road from the parking area. Marked Courthouse Falls and Summey Cove.
.3 mile sharp turn to the left marked Courthouse Falls. Caution; Waterfalls can be dangerous.
Follow trail back to the parking area.

Crabtree Bald

(5,320ft) From the summit all 49 mountains in Western Carolina can be viewed from 6,000 feet. To get there, take NC 209 for 6 miles north from US 19 at Junaluska. Turn right onto SR 1503 near Crabtree-Ironduff School. Go 2 miles, and turn left onto Bald Creek Road SR 1505. Go 3 miles, park where Indian Branch crosses under the road. Cross the pasture gate on the left, walk up paths and jeep trail to the ridgeline. Go southwest on crest to Crabtree Bald, identified by antenna on the top. NC 209 is also accessible from Fines Creek exit on I-40 if coming from the west. A moderate roundtrip of 7 miles on private property is offered. Contact owner in advance before hiking.

Daniel Ridge Loop

Trail Head: Daniel Ridge Parking Area
Trail Finish: Daniel Ridge Parking Area
Blaze Color: Red
Hiking Distance: 4 miles
Difficulty: Moderate
Time Allowance: 2 hours 45 minutes
Elevation Change: 800 ft
USGS Map: Shining Rock

Trail Description:

The parking area is located on forest road 475 and is next to the Cove Creek Group Camping area. The trail starts at the back of the parking area on a gravel road, follow this for .2 mile. Turn left at the sign for Daniel Ridge Loop Trail, an old access road. Several unknown side trails intersect on the way to the top of the mountain. Follow the red blazes. Farlow Gap Trail Intersects on the left. Follow the red blazes to the right. Approximately two-thirds of the way down is an intersection with a new logging road, not on map. Straight across continue on the trail. Intersection with the access road, turn right, follow this back to the parking area.

Graveyard Fields

Trailhead: Graveyard Fields Parking
Trail Finish: Graveyard Fields Parking
Blaze Color: Blue
Hiking Distance: 3 miles
Difficulty: Easy
Time Allowance: 2 hours
Elevation Change: 150 ft
USGS Map: Shining Rock

Trail Description:

Suggestion: Graveyard Fields can be very congested on the weekends; try this trail out sometime during the week.
Parking area is between US276 and Hwy. 215 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.
Trail starts directly in back of Graveyard Fields parking area.
Almost immediately, the other end of Graveyard Fields trail intersects on the left, go straight.
.2 mile cross a bridge and turn to the left.
.8 mile trail intersects to the left, go straight.
1.6 miles trail ends at the upper falls. Caution: Waterfalls can be dangerous.
Turn back the way you came until reaching the intersection of the trail on the right.
Follow this trail back to the parking area.

John Rock

Trailhead: Fish Hatchery Parking

Trail Finish: Fish Hatchery Parking

Blaze Color: Yellow

Hiking Distance: 5 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Time Allowance: 2 hours 45 minutes

Elevation Change: 1200 ft.

USGS Map: Shining Rock

Trail Description:

The Fish Hatchery is located at the end of the pavement on 475 coming from the 276 side.

Cat Gap Loop trail is located at the end of the parking area, orange blazes.

Follow the blazes up the mountain.

John Rock on the right, yellow blazes, turn here.

At the top, the trail runs out on the face of John Rock. Caution: Rock cliffs can be dangerous.

Take a right back on the trail, very steep sections.

Turn right on Cat Gap Bypass, follow this trail.

Turn right onto Cat Gap Loop, down the mountain.

Butter Gap on left; continue straight on Cat Gap Loop.

Turn left on service road and follow this to parking area.

Linville Gorge

Formed by Linville Mountain on the west and Jonas Ridge on the east, the gorge sits east of Mount Mitchell.

Linville Gorge's odd assortment of rock formations on Jonas Ridge include Sitting Bear, Hawksbill, Table Rock, and the Chimneys. These features are ideal for hiking, backpacking, and rock climbing. The area includes 39 miles of trails, offering experienced hikers a wonderful excursion.

Free permits are required for camping only on weekends and holidays from May 1-October 31. Permits are not required November 1-April 30 or for visitors who do not stay overnight. Reservations are taken on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning the first working day of each previous month. For example, reservations for wilderness camping permits for June are accepted starting the first working day of May.

ACCESS TO EASTERN SECTION: From Marion, take U.S. 221 north to the intersection of NC 183 at Linville Falls. Turn right on 183 and continue to NC 181. Turn right (south) on NC 181 and go 3 miles to Forest Service Road (FR) 210 (Gingercake Road). Turn right onto FR 210. At the first fork, turn left and continue through Gingercake Acres subdivision.

The first parking area is for Devil's Hole Trail (Sitting Bear), 2 miles from Gingercake Acres. The second parking area is for Hawksbill (parking area on left and trail on right) 1 mile from Devil's Hole. The third parking area is for Spence Ridge and North Table Rock Trails, 1 mile from Hawksbill.

Continue 1 mile to the first intersection and turn right (You will pass the Outward Bound School sign). Stay on this road, bearing to the right through several switchbacks, and you will arrive at Table Rock Picnic Area.

ACCESS TO WESTERN SECTION: From Marion, take U.S. 221 north to the intersection of NC 183 at Linville Falls. Turn right on NC 183 and go 1 mile to NC 1238, Kistler Memorial Highway. Trailhead and parking lots accessing the western section of the gorge lead off Kistler Memorial Highway. Kistler Memorial Highway via NC 126 can be reached from Marion by travel down U.S. 70 east to Nebo. At Nebo, take NC 126 across Lake James and continue 8 miles and turn left on NC 1238, Kistler Memorial Highway. Kistler highway is a gravel road and very rough in places, especially for 2-wheel-drive vehicles.

Linville Gorge Wilderness Area (54 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/linville.pdf

Little Sam Knob

Trailhead: Black Balsam Parking Area
Trail Finish: Black Balsam Parking Area
Blaze Color: Yellow
Hiking Distance: 4 miles
Difficulty: Easy
Time Allowance: 2 hours 45 minutes
Elevation Change: 600 ft
USGS Map: Sam Knob

Trail Description:

The trail head starts at Black Balsam parking area on Black Balsam road off the Blue Ridge Parkway. At the far end of the parking area you will find the trail marked Flat Laurel Creek; it's an old road bed. .9mile follow Little Sam to the left.
1.2 miles a confusing right turn with a sign for Little Sam. Turn right. A few tricky sections.
2.0 miles Little Sam ends on the Mountains To Sea Trail, white blazes. Turn left.
2.7 miles Art Loeb is on your right. Go straight.
3.5 miles intersect with the Black Balsam road, turn left. Caution: Motor vehicle traffic.
Follow the road back to the parking area.

Looking Glass Rock

Trailhead: Looking Glass Rock Parking Area
Trail Finish: Looking Glass Rock Parking Area
Blaze Color: Yellow
Hiking Distance: 6.2 miles
Difficulty: Moderate
Time Allowance: 3 hours 30 minutes
Elevation Change: 1600 ft.
USGS Map: Shining Rock

Trail Description:

The trail begins in a well-marked parking area beside forest road 475. Heading toward the Fish Hatchery from US 276 it will be on your right.
Follow the well marked trail to the summit. Some areas with very steep hiking.
3.1 miles the summit. Caution: Sheer cliffs are very dangerous.
Return to the parking area back down the same trail you came up.

Mountains to Sea Trail

See Section VI

Pilot Cove Loop

Trailhead: Pilot Cove Loop and Slate Rock
Trail Finish: Pilot Cove Loop and Slate Rock
Blaze Color: Yellow
Hiking Distance: 3.6 miles
Difficulty: Moderate
Time Allowance: 2 hours 30 minutes
Elevation Change: 990 ft
USGS Map: Dunsmore Mountain

Trail Description:

The small parking area is located off forest road 1206 and is marked with a sign for Slate Rock and Pilot Cove Loop.

.2 mile Pilot Cove Loop, yellow blazes, on the right go straight on Slate Rock and Pilot Loop, blue blazes.

1 mile is the ridge line and Pilot Cove Loop is on your right, turn onto this trail.

The trail runs on top of a rock. Caution: Rock cliffs can be dangerous or even fatal.

At the bottom turn left back on Slate Rock and Pilot Cove Loop.

Pilot Mountain

(5,151ft) In mid-May, the slopes of the mountains are covered with Fullbloom Pinkshell Azalea. Views from the summit in all directions reveal the majesty and wildness of the Pisgah National Forest. From US 276, turn west onto Davidson River Road (Forest Service Road 475) 9.8 miles south of Wagon Road Gap on mile 411 .9 on the Blue Ridge Parkway for 5.25 miles north of junction NC 280 and US 64; go 6.2 miles to Gloucester Gap, keep left at junctions; park 5 feet stone slab standing at the junction with Cathy's Creek Road. Climb northwest, right on Art Loeb Trail following the yellow blazes and silhouettes of hikers. Frequent switchbacks make the ascent moderate. It takes 1.5 hours to reach the summit. For a different return route, continue north from the summit, descending on the opposite side of the mountain on Jeep Road. The trail offers a moderate roundtrip of 6 miles and campsites.

Pink Beds Loop

Trailhead: Pink Beds Parking Area
Trail Finish: Pink Beds Parking Area
Blaze Color: Orange
Hiking Distance: 2.2 miles
Difficulty: Easy
Time Allowance: 1 hour 30 minutes
Elevation Change: 100 ft.
USGS Map: Shining Rock

Trail Descriptions:

Pink Beds parking area is just above the Cradle of Forestry in America Forest Discovery Center on US 276.

After the first creek crossing the trail splits, take the left fork.

1.0 mile the Mountains to the Sea Trail crosses. Take this trail to the right.

1.2 miles the other side of the Pink Beds Loop crosses the trail. Take this trail to the right.

Trail meets back at the split, left turn.

Pressley Cove

Trailhead: Pressley Cove Parking Area

Trail Finish: Pressley Cove Parking Area

Blaze Color: Orange

Hiking Distance: 3.5 miles

Time Allowance: 2 hours 30 minutes

Elevation Change: 950 ft.

USGS Map: Pisgah Forest

Trail Description:

The parking area is located immediately after the third bridge on forest road 477 if you are coming from the end near the ranger station.

Across the road from the parking area the trail starts- marked Pressley Cove. Do not take the trail that starts up the mountain immediately. Hike in the flat area parallel to the road until you reach the trees on the far side, that is where Pressley Cove turns up the mountain.

1.1 miles turn left on the logging road. Several old roads intersect; continue downhill and to the left at these intersections.

When you reach the bottom on 477 turn left and follow this back to the parking area.

Shut-In National Trail

USGS Map: Dunsmore Mtn.

The Shut-In Trail follows the historical route built by George Vanderbilt from the French Broad River to his Buck Spring hunting lodge. It was probably named for the many rhododendron thickets through which it passes. Turn off the Blue Ridge Parkway ramp at the junction of NC 191 and immediately turn left onto a dirt road (Forest Service Road 479) go .3 mile and take the first road to the left and continue for .1 mile to a parking lot. Here there should be a trail head sign for the Mountain to Sea Trail. The Shut-In Trail follows the Mtn. To Sea Trail. This hike is a strenuous climb from 2000 ft to 5000 ft with a length of 16.3 miles to the top near Mount Pisgah.

Sycamore Cove – Grassy Road – Starens Branch Loop

USGS Map: Pisgah Forest

Take Hwy. 276 west from Hwy. 64 past Sycamore Flats Picnic area and watch for trail head sign on right. Park past it on the left.

The trail climbs gradually along a brook, crossing it seven times, and is blazed Blue. It descends through a grove of pine and holly to the junction with Grassy Road and Starens Branch. Turn left onto Grassy Road to a point just before it crosses a flowing brook (You may need a guide to find this site); turn into the woods here. You'll pass through what was once a campsite and climb a knoll a little to your left. You are located between two brooks and surrounded by level tent spots.

For the return trip you have two alternatives. Take Grassy Road back to where you entered it and take Starens Branch (blue blazes) trail back down to 276 about 200 yards west of the Sycamore Cove entrance. Be careful on this trail since at one point it makes a sharp, almost reverse left where a white blazed trail goes straight ahead. Stay on the blue trail. Another alternative is to follow the Grassy Road further until you come to an old culvert. Take this white blazed trail to your left until it meets Starens Branch. Take the right, blue blazed fork and you have joined the first trail.

Turkey Pen – South Fork of Mills River

USGS Map: Pisgah Forest

From Hwy. 280 at Henderson-Transylvania County line take dirt road (Turkey Pen Road) NW 1 ¾ miles to parking area at its end. Several trails leave from here.

South Mills River Trail

Take either the trail or old logging road down to the swinging bridge. Immediately after the bridge the trail bears right in a switch-back up to an old logging road. Turn left on this road and follow it past the Mullinax Trail. At an open space on the left there is a trail which branches off almost backwards that leads to a number of camping spots along the river. You can also continue straight for about two miles to other less used areas on the left near the river, or continue for a mile or so further to the Cantrell Creek Lodge area for other campsites.

Wagon Road Gap

Trailhead: Turkeypen Trail Head

Trail Finish: Turkeypen Trail Head

Blaze Color: Orange

Hiking Distance: 5 miles

Difficulty: Difficult

Time Allowance: 3 hours 30 minutes

Elevation Change: 1330 ft.

USGS Map: Pisgah Forest

Trail Description:

The trail head is located on Turkeypen Road off Hwy 280 near the Henderson County and Transylvania County line. Follow the gravel road to the parking area.

Start on Turkey Pen Gap Trail, located between the horse trailer parking area and the car parking area.

Steep climb over Sharpy Mtn. And through several saddles is Wagon Road Gap, trail on the right. Not marked but there is trail definition that runs down from the saddle.

At the bottom of the mountain turn right on S. Mills River.

Go across the river on the swinging bridge, right turn after crossing.

Hard right off the access road to cross another swinging bridge.

Turn right after the swinging bridge.

Follow this up the mountain and back to the parking area.

Pisgah National Forest Recreational Areas

Pisgah National Forest

Pisgah NF Day Use Areas (262 kb pdf) -

www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/connections/2005_connections/pisgah_day_use.pdf

Bent Creek Experimental Forest Trails - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/bent_creek_trails.htm

Cradle of forestry (676 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/discovery_center.pdf

Forest Heritage Scenic Byway (335 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/heritage_byway.pdf

Grandfather District Outdoor Update (200 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/press/gf_update.pdf

Pisgah District Map (High Resolution) (1.4 mb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/maps/pisgah_rd.pdf

Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River (260 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/wilson_creek.pdf

Bald Mountain

Toecane: Take US 19e. West from Burnsville for 6 miles to US 19W, then turn right (north) for 17 miles.

Drinking water, hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Barkhouse

Grandfather: Go north on US 221 from Marion for 16 miles to Linville Falls, then take NC 183 east for 4 miles, take NC 181 southeast for 5.5 miles. Drinking water, fishing, sanitation facility, picnicking, and hiking are all provided.

Harmon Den

Harmon Den offers 54.5 miles of trails with 14.2 miles of trails designated for horseback riding and 40.3 miles for hiking. In addition, miles of gated, dirt forest roads are open to horses. Other gated roads are not designated for horses. Horses may also be ridden on open roads, but watch for traffic.

Hot Springs

Hot Springs area features 44 miles of trails with 13.4 miles designated for mountain biking. The Laurel River Bike Trail is blazed with yellow rectangles, while other bike trails are only signed. All other Hot Springs area trails are for hiking only.

Silvermine Group Camp is located on Silvermine Creek not far from the French Broad River at Hot Springs. The camp is open by reservation from May 1-October 31 and provides space for up to 50 people. When you rent the site, you're given a combination

to the camp's gate, so you're the only campers. The camp provides a nice picnic shelter, two large tent pads, two grills, drinking water, and vault toilets. Lovers Leap, Pump Gap, and the Appalachian Trails are nearby. For reservations, call the Hot Springs office at 828-622-3202.

Rocky Bluff Campground, 3 miles south of Hot Springs, is open April 30-October 31 for family camping. This wooded 30-site campground offers tables, grills, lantern posts, tent pads, flush toilets, a picnic area, and solitude. The 1.2-mile Spring Creek Nature Trail circles the campground and meanders beside the creek, an excellent trout stream.

Hot Springs and Harmon Den Trails Map (BIG file - 3.4 mb pdf) -

www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/hot_springs_trails.pdf

Middle Prong Wilderness

Middle Prong Wilderness lies west of Shining Rock in the Pisgah National Forest. The wilderness is made up of steep and rugged high elevation ridges. Elevations range from 3,200 feet at the west fork of the Pigeon River to 6,400 feet near Richland Balsam. The west fork and middle prong of the Pigeon River are born amid the high valleys of this wilderness and are fed by numerous streams. The 1984 North Carolina Wilderness Act created the 7,460-acre Middle Prong Wilderness.

Middle Prong Wilderness (773 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/shining_rock.pdf

Shining Rock Wilderness

Shining Rock Wilderness in Pisgah National Forest is made up of a series of high elevation ridges on the north slopes of Pisgah ridge. The terrain is extremely steep and rugged, with elevations ranging from 3,200 feet on the West Fork Pigeon River to 6,030 feet on Cold Mountain.

Shining Rock Ledge, which forms the area's backbone, is over 5,000 feet high, with five peaks at 6,000 feet. Streams and drainages abound to form the east and west forks of Pigeon River, a major tributary of the Tennessee River. Shining Rock was designated a wild area on May 7, 1964. With the signing of the Wilderness Act in 1964 by Congress, Shining Rock became one of the original areas of the National Wilderness System. The 1984 North Carolina Wilderness Act increased the original 13,600 acres to the present 18,483 acres.

Shining Rock Wilderness (773 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/shining_rock.pdf

Sliding Rock

Pisgah: On US 276, 12 miles north of Brevard. Drinking water, sanitation facility, and swimming are all provided.

Stony Fork

Pisgah: From Asheville, go west on I-40 20 miles to Candler, then go 7.5 miles south on NC 151 to area. Drinking water, fishing, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are all provided.

Sycamore Flats

Pisgah: On US 276, 4 miles north of Brevard. Drinking water, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are all provided.

Table Rock

Grandfather: From Linville Falls go east on NC 183 for 4 miles to NC 181, go south for 2 miles and turn right on Forest Service Road 210, go 4.9 miles to Forest Service Road 210B turn right and go 1.6 miles to areas. Hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

White Pines

Pisgah: From Brevard go north on US 276 for 6 miles to area. Camping, drinking water, fishing, hiking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Wiseman's View

Grandfather: From Linville Falls go east on NC 183 for 1/2 mile, turn right (south) on NC 1560 and go 4 miles to area. Hiking and a sanitation facility are provided.

Lost Cove

Toecane: From Bumsville go east 5 miles on US 19, turn right, on NC 80 and go south for 12 miles, turn right on Forest Road 472 and go 1 mile to campground. Fishing, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Mulberry

Grandfather: From Lenoir take NC 90 northeast for 7 miles to Forest Service 101 and go 5 miles northeast. Picnicking and a sanitation facility are provided.

Murray Branch

French Broad: From Hot springs go 1/2 miles west on US 25-70, turn left on NC 1304 and go 4 miles to area. Boating, fishing, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Old Fort

Grandfather: Take US 70 west from Old Fort for 2.5 miles. Drinking water, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Pink Beds

Pisgah: On US 276, 16 miles north of Brevard (4 miles south of intersection with Blue Ridge Parkway). Drinking water, hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Carolina Hemlocks Recreation Area

Carolina Hemlocks Recreation Area offers two paved loops that are lined with 36 campsites. Split by NC 80, the loops have camping sites for tents, cars, and recreational vehicles. Each site includes a table, fire ring with cooking grill, and lantern post. No hookups are available. Drinking water and flush toilets are in each loop. Besides camping at Carolina Hemlocks Recreation Area, people can fish, swim, and tube on the South Toe River or hike adjacent trails. A large picnic pavilion can be reserved. DATES OPEN: April 14 to October 31. Campground & day-use fees apply

Carolina Hemlocks Recreation Area (516 kb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/carolina_hemlocks.pdf

Coontree Creek

Pisgah: Take US 276 north from Brevard 9 miles. Drinking water, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Corner Rock

Toecane: From Asheville go north 10 miles on US 19-23, exit on NC 197 and go east 5 miles To Barnardsville, turn right on Forest Road 231 and go 4 miles to area. Picnicking is available.

Cradle of Forestry in America

Pisgah: On US 276, 15 miles north of Brevard, 4 miles south of intersection with Blue Ridge Parkway. Drinking water, hiking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Cradle of Forestry in America - www.cradleofforestry.com/

Cradle of Forestry Trail Guide (BIG file- 7.6 mb pdf) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/cradle_trails.pdf

Curtis Creek

Grandfather: Take US 70 east from Old Fort 1 .7 miles; turn north on Forest Service Road 482. Camping, drinking water, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and a sanitation facility are provided.

Davidson River

Pisgah: From Brevard take US 276 north for 5 miles. Camping, drinking water, fishing, hiking, sanitation facility, trailer dump station, and trailer space are provided.

Roan Mountain

Famous for its spectacular natural gardens of Catawba rhododendrons, Roan Mountain shelters a rich diversity of life, from spruce-fir forests to vast grassy balds. Roan Mountain is actually not one mountain, but a high ridge about 5 miles long. It ranges from a height of 6,286 feet at Roan High Knob to a low of 5,500 feet at Carver's Gap.

TRAILS: An easy, paved trail starts at the information cabin and winds through rhododendrons to an overlook. You can choose between a short, 0.3-mile loop or continue on a longer, figure-eight loop. The **Cloudland Trail** is a moderate, 1.2-mile hike from the end of the Cloudland parking area to Roan High Bluff Overlook. The **Appalachian Trail** crosses Roan Mountain on its trek from Maine to Georgia.

Take NC 261 north from Bakersville, NC, or follow TN 143 south from Roan Mountain, TN. The highway crosses Roan Mountain at Carver's Gap. The 2-mile road from Carver's Gap to the gardens is open from May until late October. Even after the road is gated, cross-country skiers and hikers are welcome to explore the winter beauty of Roan Mountain.

Roan Mountain (127 kb PDF) - www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/roanmtn.pdf

Bob Allison Picnic Area; Take US 19-129 east from Andrews for one mile until the junction of Junaluska Road (NC 1505) turn right onto Junaluska Road for about five miles. Then turn south onto Forest Service Road #440 and go six miles to the picnic area. This picnic area offers water, facilities, hiking, camping and picnicking.

Lake Powhatan; located at the heart of the Bent Creek Experimental Forest, is administered by the Pisgah Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest. The campground and swimming areas are maintained by the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association.