

#5

Outdoor Adventure: Area Hiking Trails Access Points

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- 3 Jacks River Trail

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Appalachian Trail

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60 Highway number

V Main Visitor Center

V Downtown Visitor Center

V McCaysville Visitor Center

▽ Getting to Aska Road: From Highway 515, turn onto Collins Ave., go one block to the 3 way stop intersection, then turn left and make a quick right onto Aska Road.

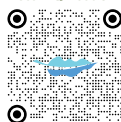
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#5 Outdoor Adventure: Area Hiking Trails Access Points

Easiest More Difficult Most Difficult GPS Fix

The hiking trails of Fannin County include some of the most legendary in the USA. The famous Appalachian Trail begins here, the Benton MacKaye (pron. mack-eye) winds throughout the county and the Aska Trails area is great for novices and experts alike. For detailed info consult the US Forest Service web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. Also log on to the Benton MacKaye Trail Association web site at www.bmta.org. Trailhead numbers on the map match numbers below:

1 Ocoee Whitewater Center Trails. In addition to whitewater sports, the center has a one-mile hiking trail which crosses a 330 foot suspension bridge and circles the center. The trail is entirely accessible for those who are physically challenged. There are an additional 30 miles of trails for hikers and mountain bikers. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. In Ducktown, take U.S. 64 west for approximately 6 miles to the Ocoee Whitewater Center on the left. **N 35°03.961' W084°27.678'**

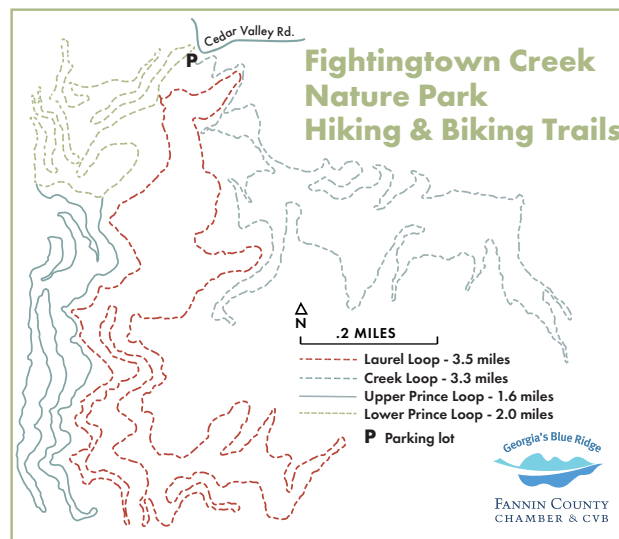
2 Jacks River Falls. Located in the Cohutta Wilderness Area on the Jacks River, this beautiful waterfall is the most visited site in the Cohutta and is reached by a 4.5 mile trail through rugged wilderness. It is highly recommended to get the USFS map of the Cohutta Wilderness and carry the 10 Essentials. For the shortest hike in, approach from the northwest access point. Start in Ellijay and drive Hwy 52 west to Chatsworth. From Chatsworth, go north on US 411 for 13 miles to Cisco. Turn right on Old Hwy 2. Continue on this road 10 miles to FS 62 on the right. Turn right on FS 62 and go 4.4 miles to the Beech Bottom Trailhead **N34° 59.44'; W84° 35.28'**. Advanced hiking experience highly recommended.

3 Jacks River Trail. This 16.5 mile long trail shown starting at Dally Gap descends to Jacks River where there are a number of river crossings, depending on how far you hike. These can be dangerous at times of high, cold water. Better to stop at the first river crossing and turn back. From Blue Ridge travel 3.9 miles north on Hwy 5 to Hwy 2 and go west until the road turns into a gravel Forest Service road to Watson Gap. From the four-way intersection at Watson Gap turn right and go uphill onto FS 22, then travel 3.4 miles to the trailhead at Dally Gap **N34° 56.00'; W84° 31.07'**. Trail goes downhill past the bulletin board. Advanced hiking experience recommended.

4 Mineral Springs Nature Trail & Park. An easy .58 mile long walking trail with interpretive nature signs identifying plants and trees along the way. The upper parking area (about .2 miles from the park entrance) has a nice picnic table and informational plaques about this historic area. Suitable for all ages with plenty of benches to stop for a shady rest along Mineral Springs Creek. From downtown Blue Ridge take Church St. until it dead ends into Industrial Blvd.

5 Fall Branch Falls. A double waterfall with mountain laurel and rhododendron growing along the trail and creek bank. The hike to the falls is about 30 minutes round trip. In Blue Ridge, follow Aska Road south for eight miles. Turn right on Stanley Creek Rd. (Toccoa Riverside Restaurant is on the left). The trailhead is about three miles on the right (.2 miles from where pavement ends). Parking lot - **N 34°47.017' W084° 18.166'** Waterfall - **N 34°47.198' W084° 18.370'**

6 Aska Trails (also reference our Aska Trails MapGuide #7) A hiking and biking trail system 17 miles in length and open year-round. From the start of Aska Road in Blue Ridge go 4.4 miles to the trailhead for the Deep Gap portion of the Aska Trails. Another trailhead is located 1.5 miles from Deep Gap on Shady Falls Road. Trails range from 1 to 5.5 miles and are open all year. Suitable for all levels of hikers but portions of the trails can be very strenuous. Parking lot - **N 34°48.995' W084° 17.989'**



7 Fightingtown Creek Nature Park. 190 acres of natural land available for public use for hiking, mountain biking, birdwatching, and other low impact recreation. 4 loops and beautiful seasonal views from the top of Prince Mountain and along Fightingtown Creek. Beginner/intermediate level trails. Owned and managed by Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land in cooperation with the Friends of Fightingtown Creek Nature Park. Look for signs and a red gate on the right, just past 1126 Cedar Valley Rd. Get more info at facebook.com/fightingtowncreeknaturepark.

8 Project Chimp Hiking Trails. 2031 Lowery Rd., Morganton, 706-374-3675. Hike one of the 4 trails at this 236 acre chimpanzee sanctuary. Trails are easy to moderate, one including an overlook into their compound, be sure to bring binoculars! Projectchimps.org/hiking-trails/

9 Swinging Bridge. A 260-foot suspension bridge crosses the Toccoa River on the Benton MacKaye Trail. From the intersection of Hwy 515 and Hwy 5 (McDonalds) in Blue Ridge, follow Hwy 515 East approximately 4 miles to the traffic light at Hwy 60. Turn right

and go to the stop sign; then turn left on Hwy 60. Go 1.5 miles into Morganton, then turn right on Hwy 60 South toward Dahlonega for 11.3 miles passing Skeenah Mill. Another .7 miles on the right is FS 816, turn right there and follow ROUGH gravel road about 3 miles to the parking area. Short hike down to the Toccoa River & Swinging Bridge. Parking lot - **N 34°44.350' W084° 10.213'**

10 Long Creek Falls. Go 13.5 miles south on Aska Road to its end. Turn right onto Newport Road, go 4.5 miles to its end. Turn left onto Doublehead Gap Road, cross a concrete bridge where the road will become dirt/gravel. Continue .3 miles and turn right onto dirt/gravel Forest Service Road 58 (just past the cemetery and church). Drive 5.3 miles on FS 58 to Three Forks area (Hikers Crossing Sign). Noontootla Creek is on the right as you drive. The trail begins on the north side of the road (on the left) and starts as a gradual hike alongside Long Creek. There are three short ascents before reaching the blue blazed side trail to the falls at 1.1 miles. **N 34°39.815' W084° 11.053'** is the trailhead fix.

11 Three Forks. A junction of the Appalachian Trail and Benton MacKaye Trail. You can start a 3.7 mile hike to Springer Mountain, the start of the AT, from Three Forks. Parking lot - **N 34°39.815' W084° 11.053'**

12 Springer Mountain. This is the starting point of the Appalachian Trail on its 2,200 mile journey north to Maine. From Blue Ridge, take Aska Rd., 13.5 miles until it dead ends into Newport Road. Turn right on Newport Road, go 4.5 miles until it dead ends into Doublehead Gap. Turn right on Doublehead Gap and go 2 miles to FS road 42 (on the left). Turn left and go approximately 6.5 to 7 miles to parking area on your left. From the parking lot, take the trail back across the road for a short .9 mile hike to the summit. Parking lot - **N 34°38.262' W084° 11.712'**

13 Amicalola Falls & Trails. About 21 miles from Ellijay on Hwy 52 is a spectacular 729-foot falls, the tallest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi River. An 8.5 mile AT approach trail leads from the park to Springer Mountain. There is an optional trail that provides stroller and wheelchair access to this trail. Inquire at gate. **N 34°33.839' W084° 14.378'**

A Word to the Wise ... GPS and cellphones do not work reliably here, please don't rely upon them. Be prepared for wilderness and carry the 10 Essentials (wiki or Google it). See the USFS web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. The law of the forest is "leave no trace". See www.LNT.org for info. Please pack in all you will need and pack out all your trash. If you build a fire, never leave it unattended. Use good judgment when hiking, particularly around waterfalls where rocks are often wet, moss covered and slippery. If hiking during hunting season, wear a brightly colored vest. Carry a copy of Trails Illustrated Map #777, available at the Visitor Centers.

Main Visitor Center: 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513
1-800-899-MTNS **Downtown Visitor Center:** 282 W. Main St.

McCaysville Visitor Center: 53 East Market St.
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