

Appalachian Trail Relocation Loop

4 Miles - Strenuous - Minor Elevation Change

Rocky Footpath - No Creek Crossings

Hiked March 23, 2009

Note: When the weather cooperates, this is one of the most beautiful hikes in East Tennessee.

Directions to Trailhead: Drive from the city limits of Greeneville toward Asheville, NC on SR70 locally called the Asheville Highway. After approximately 14 miles turn left just before crossing the state line, on the Camp Creek Bald Road also known as Viking Mountain Road. Follow this road for nine miles to the top of the mountain. The bottom half of the Camp Creek Bald Road is paved but the top half is gravel which was in very good condition at the time of this hike. When you reach the summit at Jones Meadow, you will again be on a paved road. The road immediately forks, with the right fork proceeding up the mountain to a series of towers. For this hike, take the left and drive about 200 yards until the road forks again.

It is best to park in the vicinity of this fork, but you can drive to the bottom of this hill if have a 4 wheel drive and don't mind rough pavement and possible mud. Look for blazes on the trees and follow them past a small pond in the middle of an old road and steeply up a small hill. At the top of the hill is a clearing, turn right through a path in the dense rhododendron to the intersection with the Appalachian Trail. You will have traveled a little over a third of a mile from the road junction where you parked.

Upon reaching the Appalachian Trail, turn left (north) and follow the white blazes through a rocky, muddy section. You will immediately go past a path to the Black Stack Cliffs, marked by a sign. It is a short, steep climb to this wonderful overlook of Greene County. The rocks on the Black Stacks are reputedly over a Half a Billion Years Old!! Continuing north on the AT, you will reach Bearwallow Gap along with the trailhead of the Jerry Miller Trail which leads down the North Carolina Side of the mountain to the Shelton Laurel Area. Just past Bearwallow Gap, you will reach the southern end of the new relocation of the AT, with the new section bearing off to the right and the old section, now used as a bad weather trail, leading to the left. Take the white blazed section to the right and follow a very rocky section of trail which climbs steeply up the face of Firescald Knob. The rock steps in this area were built in large by an all girl crew from Virginia known as the Konnarock Crew. This crew, along with volunteers from the Carolina Mountain Club and Greeneville Hiking Club built this relocated section of the Appalachian Trail over a span of seven years.

After covering a total distance of about a mile and a quarter, you will reach a narrow, rocky section with marvelous 360 degree views into Tennessee and North Carolina. This section, which continues for about three fourths of a mile is very rocky and hard to negotiate but the vistas attained are well worth the effort. This section is especially nice when the rhododendron are blooming around Memorial Day. You will finally leave the knife edge ridgetop and again enter a forested area just before reaching the northern end of the "relo." You will have hiked about two and a quarter miles. To complete the loop, turn left on the blue blazed, bad weather trail which was the original Appalachian Trail footpath. The blue blazed section has almost no elevation change but is very rocky in places. Continue for about a mile and a half until the other end of the relo split is reached and follow the original route back to the trailhead.

SYNOPSIS OF HIKE

Mile	Elevation	Description
0	4450	Trailhead. Park at road intersection.
.36	4448	JCT with Appalachian Trail
.64	4378	South AT Relocation Split
1.32	4533	Beginning of Rocky Ridgetop
2.24	4206	North AT Relocation Split
3.91	4450	Trailhead