

# Hiking in Floyd County, Virginia

## BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

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### **Rocky Knob/Rock Castle Gorge Trail**

Length: 10.8 miles

Rating: Strenuous

Directions: Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 169.

A visitors center is located north of the parking lot near Rocky Knob picnic area. Check in at the visitors center and ask for a trail map. This trail starts easy at the entrance to the Rocky Knob campground around milepost 167. Then the trail descends over three miles into the backcountry camping area in the bottom of the gorge. The strenuous and rugged nature of the trail reveal part of the reason this pathway was given National Recreational Trail status. Also, in the springtime to early summer, nearly 200 varieties of wildflowers are visible along the trail area. The rest of the trail is a 7.3-mi ascent back out of the gorge on the return trail. You'll see tunnels of rhododendron and other thick mountain foliage, a splashing stream, and high open meadows. The entire loop is 10.8 miles and the elevations range from 1,700 to 3,572 ft. A few small historic structures are visible along the trail, including a Civilian Conservation Corps camp.

### **Picnic Loop Trail**

Length: 1.0 miles

Rating: Easy

Directions: Blue Ridge Parkway mile post 169.0

This loop trail takes you on a scenic walk around the picnic area.

### **Black Ridge Trail**

Length: 3.1 miles

Rating: Moderate

Directions: Blue Ridge Parkway mile post 169.0.

You will find the head of The Black Ridge Trail at The Rocky Knob Visitor Center. It will lead you to Grassy Knoll and back to Visitor Center. You will see beautiful views and walk deep into the Blue Ridge forest.

### **Hardwood Cove Nature Trail**

Length: 0.8 miles

Rating: Moderate

Directions: Blue Ridge Parkway mile post 167.1.

This trail is part of the Rock Castle Gorge Trail. There are self guided brochures that can be picked up at a wooden box at the foot of the trail. The brochure points out and identifies over 25 trees and a few vines along the trail.

### **Mabry Mill Trail**

Length : 0.5 miles

Rating: Easy

Directions: Blue Ridge Parkway mile post 176.2.

This is a paved and boardwalk trail. The Mabry Mill Trail takes hikers to the gristmill, sawmill, moonshine display and blacksmith shop. Rustic skills are demonstrated in the summer during the weekends.

### **Smart View Loop Trail**

Length: 2.6 miles

Rating: Moderate

Directions: Blue Ridge Parkway mile post 154.5

The Smart View Trail has some spectacular views, it goes into the Blue Ridge back country, crosses over a few primitive bridges, has a mild rock climb. On a clear day you can see Philpott Lake 1000 feet below from a 100+ year old cabin.

## GENERAL AROUND FLOYD COUNTY

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### **Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve**

Trail length: 1 mile

Rating: moderate/strenuous

Directions: At Floyd, go south on **US 221**, and follow it about 6 miles. Turn left (south) on **727 (Union School Road)** and go about 4.5 miles to **Conner Grove Road (VA 799)**. Turn right onto **799**, go about 100 feet and turn left onto **Moles Road (VA 727)**. Go about 1 mile, and turn right to stay on **VA 727**. Go 1 mile to a 3-way fork. Bear to the right and follow the gravel access road to the summit parking area.

Note: From the "End of State Maintenance" sign, it is approximately 1.1 miles to the parking area and trail head. Past the "end of State maintenance" sign, there is a 200' section of road requiring high clearance, all wheel drive vehicles.

Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve encircles Buffalo Mountain, a knob within the Smith Mountains whose shape resembles the head of a Buffalo. A steep but moderately graded one-mile trail leads explorers to a peak of 3971 feet. This area is unique in that it offers sub-alpine vegetation, magnesium-rich soils, and windswept balds along the summit.

### **Chantilly Farms Trail**

Length: 0.8 miles

Rating: Moderate

Directions: From the stoplight in Floyd take 221 North for about one mile and go right at Franklin Pike. Follow Franklin Pike for about 5 miles and look for Chantilly Farm on the left.

Woodland trail starts at the rear of the natural amphitheater. It features educational signage that identifies a variety of plants and trees. Self guided trail brochures are available at the Farm Office.

### **Riverstone Organic Farm**

Length: 1 mile

Rating: Moderate

Directions: From the stoplight in Floyd take 221 North for about one mile and go right at Franklin Pike. Follow Franklin Pike for about 6 miles and turn left on Thompson Rd. Farm entrance is on the left. Follow signs to the trail.

This scenic loop trail takes you through a wooded area and along the Little River.

### **Thunderstruck Road**

Length: 3 miles

Rating: Easy

Directions: From Floyd go north on Rt. 8 for 4.5 miles. Turn right on Slusher Store Rd. and go until road ends at Thunderstruck Rd. Turn left or right on Thunderstruck and park along the Little River.

Thunderstruck road is a very scenic, unpaved road that follows along beside the Little River. This is also a good place to go fishing.

### **Warren G. Lineberry Memorial Park Trail**

Length: 0.5 miles

Rating: Moderate

Directions: From stop light in Floyd go south on Locust St.(Rt. 8) to 284 S. Locust St. The park is on the right next to the Winter Sun building.

This new trail starts at the park and winds through the woods. It ends at the Jesse Peterman Memorial Library parking lot on W. Main St.

## **Hiking outside of Floyd County**

### **Fairy Stone State Park**

Directions: From Floyd go south on Rt. 8 for 18.5 miles, turn left on Fairystone Park Hwy(VA-57) for 7.8 miles, turn left on Fairystone Lake Dr.(VA-346) to park.

Located about 25 miles southeast of Floyd in Patrick County, Fairy Stone State Park offers a number of hiking trails, divided into two trail systems. The Stuarts Knob trail system, which is designated for hikers only, includes about five miles of trails ranging from moderate to strenuous. The longer Little Mountain system includes about 13 miles of multiuse trails for hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders.