

# Great Outdoor Provision Company's

## *Great hiking spots near Charlotte*

### *Volume 2*

#### Over 3 hours Away:

1. **Pisgah National Forest --Harmon Den and Hot Springs Area** (828) 622-3202 Over 50 miles of trails are available, and vary from easy to strenuous in difficulty. A wide variety of trails are available, from creek side trails to isolated trails that have long range views, including Max Patch, one of the state's most beautiful areas. The land is quite mountainous. Backpack camping is available. To get to the ranger station in Hot Springs (near the center of the large area), travel south on I-85 from Charlotte, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Asheville. Once past the city take US 25/70 (Exit 19) west to Hot Springs. Ranger station is located in the center of town on the left. A trail map for the area is available. (Source: USDA Forest Service, Appalachian Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest)
2. **Nantahala National Forest -- Ellicott Rock Wilderness** (828) 526-3765 Over 20 miles of trails are available, all are easy to moderate in difficulty. Land is fairly mountainous, and some of the trails have wonderful views of the Chattooga River. Backpack camping permitted in the wilderness. From Charlotte, travel south on I-85, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Hendersonville. Take exit 18 to US 64. Follow US 64 until Cashiers. Turn right to go south on NC 107 in Cashiers. Follow this road about 7 miles to Bull Pen Road, a gravel road on the right. Follow this road about 2.6 miles to a small parking lot on the left side of the road. A trail map for the area is available. (Sources: *North Carolina – A Guide to Backcountry Travel and Adventure; Hiking Trails of the Southern Nantahala Wilderness, Ellicott Rock Wilderness, and the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River*)
3. **Nantahala National Forest -- Panthertown Valley** (828) 526-3765 Over 25 miles of trails are available, with difficulty ranging from easy to strenuous. This area is sometimes called the Yosemite of the East, due to the large rock formations and valleys. Terrain is quite varied, from mountaintops to streams. Backpack camping is available. From Charlotte, travel south on I-85, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Hendersonville. Take exit 18 to US 64. Follow US 64 until reaching NC 281 at Lake Toxaway. Turn right and follow the road 0.8 miles to Cold Mountain Road (SR 1301), on the left. Follow this road for 6.1 miles to a forest service gate. Please note that trails are not marked in this area. Map and compass skills are suggested. A trail map is available, and highly recommended. (Sources: *A Guide to Panthertown Valley: Trail Map and Sketch of its Natural and Human History; North Carolina Hiking Trails*)
4. **Nantahala National Forest -- Standing Indian/Southern Nantahala Wilderness** (828) 524-6441 About 70 miles of trails are available, which difficulty ranging from easy to strenuous. Some wonderful views are available, particularly from the Appalachian Trail that passes through the area. Terrain is quite varied. Backpack camping, trail shelters, and a campground are available. Travel south on I-85 from Charlotte, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Asheville. In Asheville, take I-40 west. From I-40, follow US 23/74 toward Waynesville, Dillsboro and Sylva. In Dillsboro, take Exit 81 (US 23/441) South toward Franklin. In Franklin take US 64 West. Follow west for 14.6 miles to Deep Gap Road (FS 71) on left. Follow this road for 6 miles to the parking lot at Deep Gap. A trail map for the area is available. (Sources: *North Carolina – A Guide to Backcountry Travel and Adventure; Hiking Trails of the Southern Nantahala Wilderness, Ellicott Rock Wilderness, and the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River*)
5. **Nantahala National Forest -- Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness** (828) 479-6431 Over 60 miles of trails are available. Difficulty varies widely, from easy to strenuous. This is one of the most beautiful areas of the state, with stunning areas of virgin forest . Wonderful views are available along some of the trails. Backpack camping is available. Travel south on I-85 from Charlotte, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Asheville. In Asheville, take I-40 west. From I-40, follow US 23/74 toward Waynesville, Dillsboro, and Sylva. Stay on US 74 past Bryson City until you reach US 129. Turn right on US 129 toward Robbinsville. From Robbinsville,

take Highway 129 North for 1½ miles to the junction with Highway 143 West (Massey Branch Road). Turn left and proceed West on Highway 143 for approximately 5.0 miles to a stop sign. Turn right onto Kilmer Road. You will drive for about 7.3 miles and arrive at the top of Santeetlah Gap and the junction with the Cherohala Skyway. Bear to your right and continue on for another 2½ miles to the entrance of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Turn left into the entrance and it is about ½ mile to the parking area. A trail map of the area is available. (Sources: *North Carolina – A Guide to Backcountry Travel and Adventure*; *Hiking Trails of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock and Citico Creek Wildernesses*; <http://www.main.nc.us/graham/hiking/joycekil.html>)

6. **Nantahala National Forest -- Snowbird Mountain** (828) 479-6431 Over 35 miles of trails are available – difficulty ranges from easy to strenuous. The terrain is quite steep in places, with many beautiful streams and waterfalls. This was one of the last areas settled in the state, and even today, many of the trails in the area remain uncrowded. Backpack camping is available. Travel south on I-85 from Charlotte, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Asheville. In Asheville, take I-40 west. From I-40, take US 23/74 toward Waynesville, Dillsboro, and Sylva. Stay on US 74 past Bryson City until you reach US 129. Turn right on US 129 toward Robbinsville. From the junction of US 129 and Kilmer Road (SR 1127) in Robbinsville, go 3.3 miles on Kilmer Road to junction with Massey Branch Road (SR 1116), and bear left at the fork on SR 1127 for 2.2 miles to junction with Little Snowbird Road (SR 1115). Turn left and go another 1.0 miles to a pair of bridges over Snowbird Creek. Turn right onto SR 1120 and go 6 miles to the end of the road and parking area. A trail map for the area is available. (Source: *North Carolina – A Guide to Backcountry Travel and Adventure*;) )
7. **Nantahala National Forest -- Fires Creek/Chunky Gal Mountain** (828) 837-5152 Over 50 miles of trails are available. Difficulty ranges from easy to strenuous. Land is quite steep in places. Views from sections of the Rim Trail and Chunky Gal Trails are quite impressive. This is an isolated area, and trails are not typically crowded. Please note that water is scarce along some of the ridge trails, so plan ahead. Backpack camping is available. Travel south on I-85 from Charlotte, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Asheville. In Asheville, take I-40 west. From I-40, follow US 23/74 toward Waynesville, Dillsboro and Sylva. In Dillsboro, take Exit 81 (US 23/441) South toward Franklin. In Franklin take US 64 West, and continue to Hayesville. From the junction of US 64 and NC 69 in Hayesville, travel 4.8 miles west on US 64 to a service station and SR 1302. Turn right and go .9 miles and turn left at a forest service sign onto SR 1344, which becomes FR 340. Go 1.9 miles to the Leatherwood Falls Picnic Area and trailheads on the left. Trail maps are available for the area. (Source: *North Carolina – A Guide to Backcountry Travel and Adventure*)
8. **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** (865) 436-1200 Almost 900 miles of trails are available. Difficulty ranges from easy to strenuous. Land is quite varied. As the largest contiguous protected area in the Southern Appalachians, loops of almost any length are possible. Stunning views and picturesque streams are available. Campgrounds, trail shelters, and backpack camping are available. Camping regulations vary – please call the number listed for more information. To get to the main entrance on the North Carolina side of the park, travel south on I-85 from Charlotte, and west on NC 74 to I-26. Turn west on I-26, traveling toward Asheville. In Asheville, take I-40 west. From I-40, take U.S. Route 19 West through Maggie Valley. Proceed to U.S. 441 North at Cherokee. Follow 441 N into the Park. The Oconaluftee Visitors Center will be on your right after a short distance. Many trail guides and maps are available for the park. Please note that this park can be very crowded at times, but with a little effort crowds are easily avoided. Ask park officials for recommendations.

## **Long Trails in Western North Carolina**

### **Appalachian Trail (304) 535-6331**

This famous trail travels over 300 miles in North Carolina. Along its path in the state, the trail passes some of the most beautiful and varied terrain to be found along its journey from Georgia to Maine. From the Georgia state line near Franklin, the path travels over stunning mountains in the Nantahala National Forest before heading down to Fontana Dam, at the base of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After its journey through the park, the trail mostly stays along the Tennessee state line, before leaving the state around Elk Park, located southwest of Boone. Many spectacular views are available from the trail, and the trail reaches its highest point at Clingman's Dome, a peak located on the North Carolina-Tennessee state line in the heart of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Camping is available along the trail's entire path through the state, either in trail shelters or camping sites. Regulations vary depending on location, so you are encouraged to contact the Appalachian Trail Conference for more information. <http://www.appalachiantrail.org>

### **Mountains to Sea Trail**

When completed, this trail will travel over 900 miles from the western mountains to the Atlantic Ocean and will be the longest trail in North Carolina. Currently, the trail is under construction for much of its path through the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. However, most of the trail is open in the mountains, and it offers some wonderful scenery along its path. The trail begins at Clingman's Dome in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After leaving the park, the trail roughly parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway until it leaves the mountains north of Boone. Eventually, the park will cross the state and travel all the way to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. Backpack camping and campgrounds are currently available along the trail. For more information, please contact Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail at <http://www.ncmst.org>

### **Bartram Trail**

This trail, which connects with other sections in Georgia and South Carolina, travels over 70 miles in Nantahala National Forest, from just south of Highlands to Cheoah Bald, where it intersects with the Appalachian Trail. It roughly parallels the travels of the famous naturalist William Bartram, who was in the area during the 1700's. This trail has been called one of the top ten long trails in the United States, and is highlighted by stunning views, varied terrain, and uncrowded conditions. Backpack camping is available. Trail maps are available and highly recommended. For more information, please contact the North Carolina Bartram Trail Society at <http://www.ncbartramtrail.org>

### **Foothills Trail**

This trail is located mainly in South Carolina, but some segments of the trail are located in North Carolina. It runs about 80 miles from Oconee State Park to Table Rock State Park in South Carolina, with a side trail to Caesar's Head and Jones Gap State Parks. Along the way, beautiful views of mountains, streams and forests are available. A number of waterfalls are accessible from the trail. Difficulty is quite varied. Backpack camping is available. Trail maps and a guidebook are available for the trail. For more information, please contact the Foothills Trail Conference at <http://www.foothillstrail.org>

### **Sources:**

- *North Carolina – A Guide to Backcountry Travel and Adventure*
- *Hiking Trails of the Southern Nantahala Wilderness, Ellicott Rock Wilderness, and the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River*
- *A Guide to Panthertown Valley: Trail Map and Sketch of its Natural and Human History*
- *North Carolina Hiking Trials*
- *Hiking Trails of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock and Citico Creek Wildernesses*

### **Other Sources:**

- Appalachian Trail Conference <http://www.appalachiantrail.org>
- Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail <http://www.ncmst.org>
- North Carolina Bartram Trail Society <http://www.ncbartramtrail.org>
- Foothills Trail Conference <http://www.foothillstrail.org>