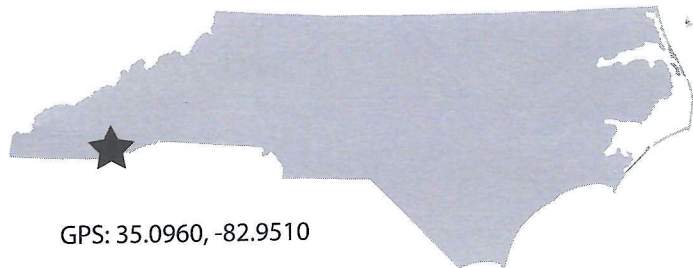


GORGES STATE PARK



GPS: 35.0960, -82.9510

Park Hours:

North Carolina state parks are open every day, except on Christmas Day. Park hours vary by season. Please visit ncparks.gov/gorg or contact the park for the most current information about seasonal hours, activities, alerts, camping fees, programs, rules, and weather.

Contact Information:

Gorges State Park
976 Grassy Ridge Road, Sapphire, NC 28774
(828) 556-6056 ■ gorges@ncparks.gov
www.ncparks.gov/gorg

Rules and Regulations

- Do not remove or harm any plants, ferns, rocks, artifacts, or other minerals.
- State parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting or trapping is prohibited.
- N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission boating and fishing regulations are enforced. A state inland fishing license is required.
- Fireworks are not permitted.
- Firearms and other weapons are prohibited, except that those with a proper permit may possess a concealed handgun. All firearms and weapons are prohibited in visitor centers and park offices.
- Camping is allowed only in designated areas and with a permit.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited, except in designated areas.
- Swimming is permitted only in designated areas.
- Pets must be on an attended leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Horses and bicycles are allowed only on designated trails. Hikers are allowed on all trails but must yield to equestrians. Bicyclists must yield to hikers and equestrians.
- Please stay on designated trails. Many rare plants live on thin soils and wet rocks and are vulnerable to damage from climbing, trampling and scraping.
- Venomous snakes, ticks and poisonous plants may be encountered in some areas. Be watchful and use caution. Remember that all plants and animals in the park are protected by law.

Trails

Hiking: Gorges State Park offers rugged terrain that will challenge any outdoors enthusiast. Visitors who traverse the steep, backwoods trails here will be rewarded with views of dazzling waterfalls or perhaps an encounter with one of the numerous rare species in the park. Secluded and remote areas of the park are not recommended for novice hikers.

Mountain biking and horseback riding: Horses and mountain bikes are permitted only on the Auger Hole Trail from the Frozen Creek access area to Turkey Pen Gap on the western park boundary. Horses and mountain bikes are not permitted beyond Turkey Pen Gap.

Camping

Gorges State Park offers camping to accommodate campers at all skill levels. Frozen Creek Access offers primitive tent camping at multiple sites. Sites are all first-come, first-served and free of charge. A favorite for backpackers who are looking to get away from the beaten trail, campers will find solitude after a strenuous hike. There are 6 designated backpack sites along the Foothills Trail near the southern boundary of Gorges State Park. These sites are free of charge and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. They are not available for reservation. Access the Foothills Trail from the Frozen Creek parking lot.

Grassy Ridge Access offers a year-round developed campground. The developed family campground has pull up tent/trailer camper sites with a centralized shower house and primitive camper cabins. These sites are available by reservation only, for a fee.

Disbursed primitive tent camping is available in Pisgah National Forest along the Rainbow Falls Trail. Access the Rainbow Falls trailhead from the Grassy Ridge Entrance of the park. These sites are first-come, first-served and are free of charge. Please ensure that you register your vehicle for all campsites at the visitor center or at the trailhead.

For additional information on the Foothills Trail, contact the Foothills Trail Conservancy at www.foothills.org

For additional information about camping in the park, go to <https://www.ncparks.gov/gorges-state-park/camping>

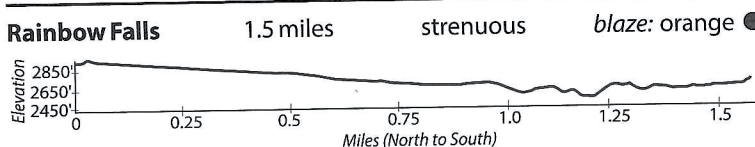
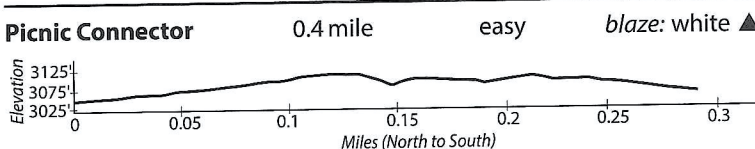
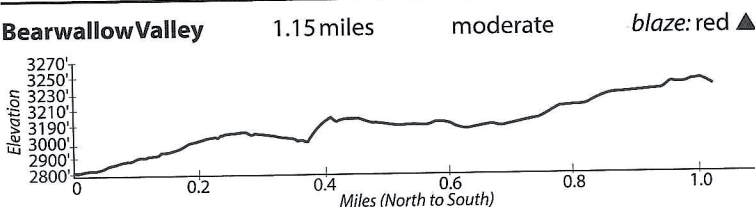
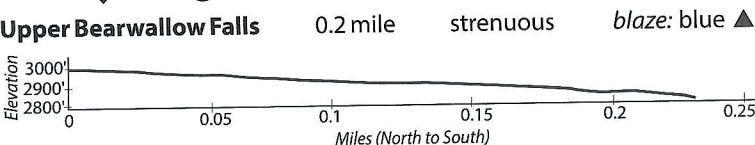


MAKE A RESERVATION
www.ncparks.gov/gorg/reservations
1-877-722-6762

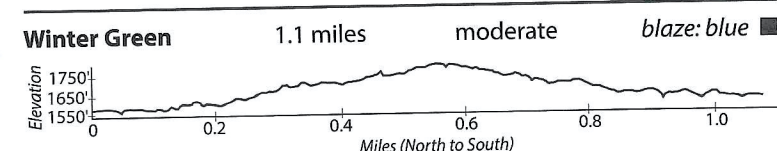
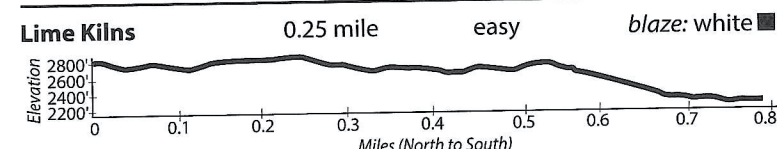
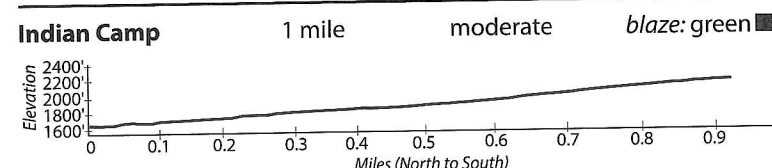
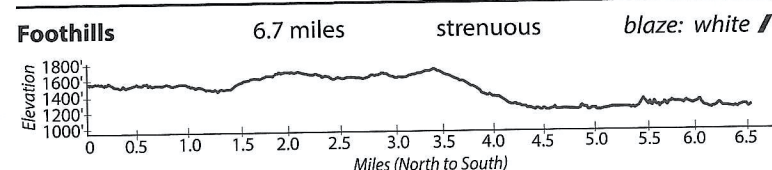
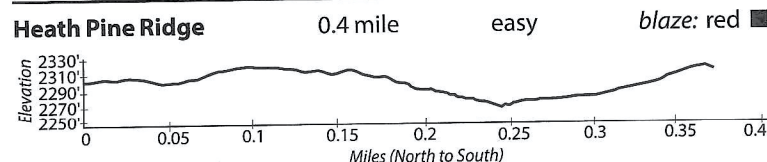
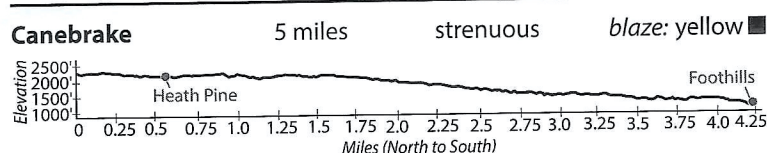
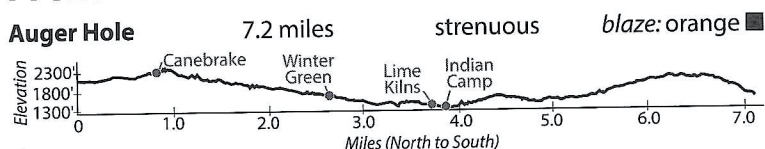
Fishing and Boating

Rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout, and smallmouth bass can be found in the waters of Gorges State Park. Anglers who are up to the challenge of fishing in remote locations are welcome to try their luck. All streams and rivers in the park are designated Wild Trout Waters. Regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission apply. Anglers should exercise caution and stay away from waterfalls. Due to the rugged nature of the park and swift water currents, no swimming is allowed in rivers, creeks or ponds. Lake Jocassee, a deep lake straddling the North Carolina and South Carolina border, is a haven for trout and bass fishermen. Boat access is available at Devils Fork State Park in South Carolina.

Grassy Ridge Access Area



Frozen Creek Access Area



Flora and Fauna

Gorges State Park, an ecologically rich area, has been designated as a site of national ecological significance by North Carolina's Natural Heritage Program. The park includes 21 of the 44 natural community types known in the mountain regions of North Carolina. Nearly 125 rare plant and animal species, including 12 endangered or threatened species, are found in the park.

Several plant species more typical of the tropics thrive in the steady spray from the park's numerous waterfalls. Scientists are unsure how these species came to grow so far from the tropics. One theory is that spores were carried by the wind or perhaps the species remained in the region from tens of thousands of years ago when a warmer climate existed in North America.

While few large plants can establish a hold on the steep, slick rocks surrounding the spray cliffs of the gorges, a rich community of ferns, mosses and liverworts grow in the moist, moderate temperatures of the region. Examples include rare species including the Carolina star-moss, solely found in the Blue Ridge Escarpment region. Gorge filmy fern, Appalachian filmy fern and dwarf filmy fern — plants with leaves that are only a single cell thick — are also found in the gorges. The gorge filmy fern grows only in the southern Appalachian gorge region.

Also found in Gorges State Park are oak and pine communities typical of dry mountainous regions. The area's high rainfall, averaging 85 inches a year, enables the environment to support both common and rare species. Abundant species include rhododendron and mountain laurel along with white pine, hickory and red oak. Oconee bells, also known as shortia, a rare flowering plant, is most abundant in the gorges region of North Carolina. Oconee bells are an endangered species. The plant has single-stalked white flowers, which stand above the evergreen leaves that form low patches along escarpment streams.

Common animal species of the region include black bear, wild turkey, fox, coyote and deer, as well as a variety of squirrels. North Carolina's largest known population of green salamanders, an endangered amphibian, is found in the gorges.

The forests of Gorges State Park also provide abundant habitat for neotropical migratory birds, including the largest North Carolina mountain populations of Swainson's warbler.

Three fish species—turquoise darter, redeye bass and rosyface chub—have their only North Carolina populations in the park's rivers, which are part of the Savannah River drainage. The nearby Horsepasture River is designated as both a National Wild and Scenic River and State Natural and Scenic River.

Picnicking

Picnic tables in the midst of the forest make Gorges State Park a pleasant spot for lunch or dinner after an exhilarating hike. Some picnic tables are wheelchair accessible. Trash and recycling cans are available throughout the park.



N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation

Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources
1615 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1615
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