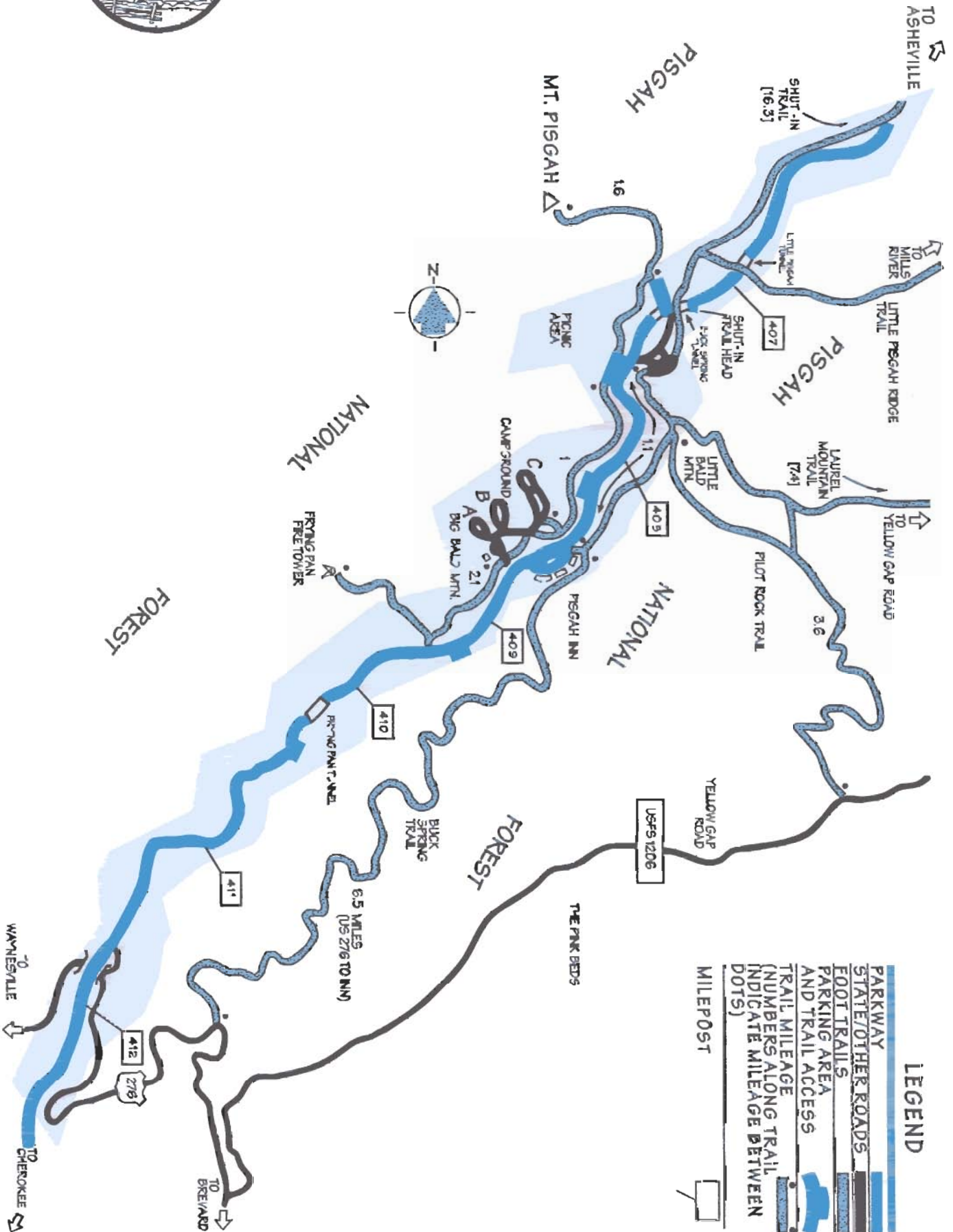




Mt. Pisgah Trails



Mt. Pisgah Area Trails

The natural beauty of the Mt. Pisgah area has drawn explorers for years. Early settlers, struck by the beauty and richness of the land surrounding the 5,721-foot peak, drew the parallel between it and the Biblical mountain from which Moses saw the Promised Land, and named the summit Mt. Pisgah. Since then, thousands more "explorers" have been drawn to the area, teeming with spectacular scenery, abundant flora and fauna, and recreational opportunities.

A rich variety of plants and animals fill the Mt. Pisgah area. Trees, flowering shrubs such as rhododendron, mountain laurel, and azalea, and a wealth of wildflowers keep the trails ablaze with color from spring to fall. Wildlife, such as the bobcat, black bear, white-tail deer, ground hog, red squirrel, and fox thrives in the lush vegetation.

The Mt. Pisgah region also has a rich cultural history. In the late 1890s, George W. Vanderbilt bought the entire area and built the Buck Spring Hunting Lodge. In 1919 George Weston, an engineer and superintendent of farms for Vanderbilt, built the Pisgah Inn within a mile of the lodge site. Today a more modern inn continues operation as a National Park

Service concession along with a 137-site campground.

Trails of various lengths and difficulty traverse this area full of natural and historical treasures. Take a leisurely stroll through the surrounding forests or enjoy the challenge of a full day's hike. Which ever you choose, the experience is certain to be rewarding.

Mt. Pisgah Trail, 1.6 miles to the summit, begins at the far end of the Mt. Pisgah Parking Area. With an ascent of 712 ft., the latter half of the moderate to strenuous hike is fairly steep and rocky. The trail passes through a Northern Red Oak forest to a deciduous heath bald at the summit, which offers a spectacular view including the French Broad River Valley and Shining Rock Wilderness.

Pilot Rock Trail (3.6 miles) and **Laurel Mountain Trail** (7.4 miles) are spurs off the Buck Spring Trail descending to USFS Rd. 1206, Yellow Gap Rd., about 1700 ft. below. Pilot Rock Trail crosses over part of Pilot Rock, a huge rock outcropping used by old-timers as a landmark to get their bearings. The junctions of these moderate trails with Buck Spring are marked with signs just south of the Buck Spring Lodge site.

Shut-In-Trail (16.3 miles), a moderate to strenuous hike, begins at the Mt. Pisgah parking area and descends 3,681 ft. to Bent Creek near NC 191.

Frying Pan Trail (2.1 miles to summit) begins at the entrance to Mt. Pisgah Campground and crosses through Northern Red Oak "orchards" where the trees are stunted by harsh weather. Groves of shrubby beaked hazelnut, hawthorn, azalea, and tall shady red spruce, make this trail a favorite among birdwatchers, especially for spring and fall warblers. A moderate to strenuous hike, the trail continues into Frying Pan gap, named for a communal frying pan hung in a tree by mountain herders who camped there. From the gap a gravel road leads to a USFS fire tower (closed to public) at the summit, which at 4,450 ft. is the trail's end.

Mt. Pisgah Campground Trail (1 mile) extends from the campground entrance through a shady spruce/hardwood forest to the picnic area. This easy walk crosses several small streams and provides a return loop for the Buck Spring Trail.

IMPORTANT ADVICE

- Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.
- Hiking shoes or boots are recommended for most trails, especially for the more strenuous ones. Steep and rocky areas and slippery stream crossings require extra attention and careful footing. Even for trails marked "easy," it is advisable to wear flat or rubber-soled shoes for comfort and good traction. Wearing sandals, "flip-flops," or high heels can result in accidents.
- Sudden changes in weather are common in these mountains. Even in mild seasons, rapid dips in temperature and unexpected thunderstorms frequently occur, and at higher elevations the wind and temperature can carry a surprising chill. Be prepared for weather changes by bringing along suitable clothing.
- For your safety and the protection of the resources, stay on established trails. Shortcutting at switchbacks causes soil erosion, disfigures the trail, and makes it difficult for other hikers to find their way. Take advantage of log walkways, steps, or other trail construction. They

are there to minimize human impact on the natural environment.

- Do not drink the water in streams or springs. Bacterial diseases can be contracted by drinking untreated "wild" waters.
- Lost and found articles should be reported to a Park Ranger.

REGULATIONS

- Parking is limited to designated parking areas or road shoulders. All four wheels must be off the pavement.
- Camping is permitted only in park campgrounds or designated back-country sites.
- Dogs and other pets must be on a leash or under physical restraint at all times while in the park. The territorial instinct of dogs can lead to fights with other dogs on the trail. Dogs also frighten hikers and chase wildlife.
- Deposit all litter in trash cans and recycling bins.
- Metal detectors are prohibited.
- Natural resources are protected by Federal law. Do not disturb animal and plant life in any way. Hunting, trapping, and car-

rying weapons are prohibited. Do not interfere with animals by feeding, touching, or frightening them. Do not cut, deface or damage trees. Leave wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural condition for other hikers to enjoy.

- Historic resources are protected by Federal law. Do not damage, deface, or remove any of these structures, furnishings, or exhibits.



Help protect and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway. Be alert for uncontrolled fire, safety hazards, accidents, and emergencies.

Please report such conditions by calling:
1-800-PARKWATCH

(1-800-727-5928)

For general Parkway information, call (828) 298-0398 or visit www.nps.gov/blri on the Internet.