




#7

Outdoor Adventure: Aska Trail System Hiking & Mountain Biking

The Aska Trail System provides 16.5 miles of recreational trails for bicyclists and hikers. Located near Deep Gap on Aska Road, about five miles from downtown Blue Ridge. Trails range in length from 1.0 mile to 5.1 miles and are open to the public year round.

--- Aska Trails

- (P)** Parking Lot
- 1** Stanley Gap Trail
- 2** Flat Creek Loop Trail
- 3** Flat Creek Connector
- 4** Benton MacKaye Trail
- 5** Green Mountain Trail
- 6** Long Branch Connector
- 7** Long Branch Loop Trail
- 8** Fall Branch Falls
-  Main Welcome Center
-  Caboose Visitor Center
- (515)** Road or Highway

 to Aska Road, turn here off 515 onto Collins Ave.



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#7 Outdoor Adventure: Aska Trail System Hiking & Mountain Biking

Easiest More Difficult Most Difficult GPS Fix

A favorite destination among many Georgia hikers and mountain bikers, Aska Adventure Trail Area offers 17 miles of interconnected trails winding through Chattahoochee National Forest. Open year round, this Blue Ridge trail system boasts a range of difficulty levels from easy-moderate to very strenuous along trails that vary in distance from one to six miles. Trails in the system ascend to over 3,000 ft, some offering creek crossings and a portion of trail runs along the shores of Lake Blue Ridge.

Trail Markings (trail blaze colors)

The Aska Trail System is blazed with lime green rectangles for hiking and yellow diamonds for mountain bicycles. The Benton MacKaye Trail is blazed with white diamonds.

Use Restrictions

No motorized vehicles or pack stock, including horses, are allowed on the trail system. Mountain bikes are not permitted on the Benton MacKaye Trail (foot travel only).

Directions to Trailheads/Parking Areas

P Deep Gap - The main trailhead location is at Deep Gap, a short 15-minute drive from the Welcome Center. From Blue Ridge, GA, go south on Aska Road 4.4 miles to Deep Gap parking area below gap and on right side of road. Parking Lot - **N34°48.995' W084°17.989'**

P Stanley Gap - Go south on Aska Road 8 miles. Turn right on Stanley Creek Road (Toccoa Riverside Restaurant on left). Parking area for trail is 4.1 miles on right.

P Shady Falls - Follow Aska Road south 5.9 miles to Shady Falls Road. Turn left, go 0.2 miles, parking area on left.

Hiking and Bicycling Times

Times can range from as short as 15-20 minutes to a 3-5 hour round trip hike or ride from one end of the system to the other. It is the various combinations of trails that provide the diversity of cycling and hiking experiences. See individual trail descriptions on trailhead boards for details of mileage, challenge, general layout and other unique features.

Additional Trail Information

Blue Ridge Ranger District Office, 2042 Highway 515 West Blairsville, GA 30512, (706)745-6928, For detailed info consult the US Forest Service website at www.fs.fed.us/conf/ & Benton MacKaye Trail Association web site www.bmta.org.

1 Stanley Gap Trail #165

Length: 4.8 miles Difficulty: Strenuous
Single track through mixed hardwood forest with strenuous climbs. The trail intersects with the Benton MacKaye Trail and continues north for hikers, or hikers and bikers can take the trail to the south to Stanley Gap and Fall Branch Falls.

2 Flat Creek Loop #165B

Length: 5.1 miles Difficulty: Moderate
The trail starts approximately 100 yards from the Deep Gap parking lot. Left fork is Flat Creek Loop trail, and the right fork is Stanley Gap trail. At about 0.4 miles, the trail will fork to begin the loop.

3 Flat Creek Connector #165A

Length: 0.2 miles Difficulty: Moderate
Short trail that connects the Stanley Gap trail with the Flat Creek trail.

4 Benton MacKaye Trail

The Benton MacKaye Trail (BMT) is a footpath of nearly 300 miles (480 km) through the Appalachian mountains of the southeastern United States. It is designed for foot travel in the tradition of the Appalachian Trail (AT). For detailed info consult the excellent Benton MacKaye Trail Association website at www.bmta.org for maps, mileages and important information.

5 Green Mountain #165D

Length: 3.7 miles Difficulty: Moderate
The trail begins across Aska Road from the Deep Gap Parking Lot. It is a gradual climb to the summit of Green Mountain. On the trail there are five short, relatively steep ascents but they are not strenuous. The trail then descends for 2.4 miles to its terminus on Forest Road 711.

6 Long Branch Connector #165F

Length: 0.5 miles Difficulty: Moderate

7 Long Branch Loop Trail #165G

Length: 2.1 Miles Difficulty: Easy
The trail begins at corner of the Shady Falls parking lot. Trail leaves parking area and enters onto the old logging road. Within 300 yards, the trail forks to make the loop. The right fork goes gradually downhill on the roadbed, crosses the creek, and ascends gently on a grassy road. At 0.75 miles the Long Branch Connector trail leads off to the right. The left fork, continues the Long Branch Loop, which descends to the branch, crosses the creek and ascends on an old road back, to the parking lot.

8 Fall Branch Falls

A double waterfall with mountain laurel and rhododendron

growing along the trail and creek bank. From Stanley Creek Road the hike to the falls is about 30 minutes round trip. In Blue Ridge, follow Aska Road south for eight miles. Turn right on Stanley Creek Rd. (Toccoa Riverside Restaurant is on the left). The trailhead is about three miles on the right (.2 miles from where pavement ends). TIPS: never climb on a waterfall. It is very slippery and dangerous. There is a nice platform in front of the falls. **N34°47.017' W084°18.166'**

A Word to the Wise ... Be prepared for wilderness and carry the 10 Essentials. The emergency telephone number is 911. Hunting is allowed on National Forest Lands. This includes the Aska Trail System. See the US Forest Service (USFS) website at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. The law of the forest is "leave no trace". See www.LNT.org for info. Please pack in all you will need and pack out all your trash. If you build a fire, never leave it unattended. Use good judgment when hiking and biking, particularly around waterfalls where rocks are often wet, moss covered and slippery. If hiking or biking during hunting season, wear a brightly colored vest. Pick up a copy of the detailed Trails Illustrated Map #777.

Hiking & Biking Checklist 10 Essentials (safety systems)

- ☐ Navigation (detailed map and compass)
- ☐ Sun protection (sunglasses and sunscreen)
- ☐ Insulation (extra clothing)
- ☐ Illumination (headlamp/flashlight)
- ☐ First-aid supplies
- ☐ Fire (waterproof matches/lighter/candles)
- ☐ Repair kit and tools
- ☐ Nutrition (extra food)
- ☐ Hydration (extra water)
- ☐ Emergency shelter



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Main Welcome Center: 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513 1-800-899-MTNS

Caboose Visitor Center: 230 Roberts Way, Blue Ridge

Downtown McCaysville Visitor Center: 53 East Market St.

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