

In Search of "Vertical Relief", Adventuring in the North Carolina Mountains

July 21st – 26th

Version 3 dated June 6th



Six-day event – Wednesday thru Monday, where Wednesday and Monday are basically travel days, or if you need to get back by Monday, you can cut a day off of your trip. In fact, if you wish, you can join in or leave any part of the adventure in the course of the 4 days. Currently, with the exception of the Appalachian Trail at Wayah Bald, we are in search of hosts for the other hiking trips. All bike and water events already have hosts.

We are anticipating 2 activity groups to join together in a single camping location, rafting and biking group and a hiking group; however, there is nothing that prevents people from joining in any adventure they wish. In fact, you can go off and do something entirely different. We will be camping at Big Nantahala Campground, up river from Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC), which is about 30 minutes west of Bryson City. Camping is just \$9.00 per night, it is on the Nantahala River, and the shower facilities are good. We already have reserved a number of spots. Maps are at the end of this document.

These lists of activities are not in any particular order. I have included additional information via web links for the specifics regarding location or event. I included fees based on available information, but group rates may apply if we get enough people interested.

RSVP! Clark Getz cagola1@aol.com or Rich Miller sailstcloud@gmail.com

Rafting down the Nantahala (Reservations are made for the afternoon of Thursday July 22nd) – this is a mild river yet exciting because it constantly rushes. There is a class 2.5 at the last 500 feet and there is a pullout ramp if you wish not to take it. Other than that it is Class I to II the entire length of the 8-mile run. If you have never done any rafting, I recommend a six-man raft, possibly with a guide. I myself have been down it numerous times and choose a ducky, which is a single person small raft shaped like a kayak or canoe (it comes as a tandem as well). It takes about 3 to 4 hours to do the whole event from filling out paperwork, watching a safety video, grabbing your gear, riding in a bus up to the drop off and floating down. This is something you don't want to rush, but take in the total awesome outdoor experience. <http://www.noc.com/>
Fees: Half day rentals from NOC - Guided raft \$46, Assisted raft \$37 (guide rides in someone else's raft next to yours), ducky \$29 to \$47. Second trip is ½ price.

Hiking Talullah Gorge (This event might be best suited for Sunday) – this is about an hour and a half drive from NOC and is south of Clayton Georgia. This is an interestingly huge crack in the mountains of Georgia that exists without one's perception, yet it is just over the tree line from the highway. It is a State Park with a fee, but it has an extraordinary natural history museum. But the kicker is the 600-foot walk down into the gorge with awesome views of the waterfall as well as a walk on a keenly built suspension footpath. You can even extend the trip by walking down stream and through the stream for a longer hike. Of course any amount of walking down, is met with a return walk up. 80% of the initial trail is wooded stairs. Beyond that, you must obtain a permit to walk the creek itself, which they hand out quite liberally. You can easily spend 3 to 4 hours on this event. There are additional "rim" trails to spend your time peering over this mini canyon. <http://www.gastateparks.org/Tallulah> Tallulah S.P. Fee: \$5.00 parking, lower gorge river walk by permit is free, but limited to 100 per day. There is no limit on the 600-foot stairs down to the bottom of the gorge. Because this is not a full day event, this event can be coupled with a visit to Standing Indian Campground which has a day-use area, hiking and is generally a beautiful campground worth visiting to whet your appetite for future camping. There is a day use fee for Standing Indian. The reason that the title states that this event might be best suited for Sunday is because it is the southern most event that is not a full day. This could be an opportunity for some folks to break camp on Sunday morning, spend the 4 hours on the hike, and by 1 PM you could hit the road back to Central Florida, making it a 9-hour drive back to Orlando (varies depending on where you live and how you drive); hence you could be back for Monday work if the above schedule prevents you from joining in all the activities (knowing a Monday return is an odd schedule).

Mountain Biking Tsali – for most southeasterners, this is the king of mountain biking. It is fairly close to NOC and is within the fingers of land that extend out into Lake Fontana. For flat-land bikers from Florida, it is best to approach Tsali with caution, but there is 40 miles of trail and various degrees of difficulty. Mountain Bikers Unite! And earn your badge of honor in the challenge of Tsali. This is a full day adventure. Located within 9.5 miles or about 15 minutes from camp. Bike rentals are available. I plan to bring my own. http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/tsali_brochure.pdf <http://www.main.nc.us/graham/hiking/tsali.html> Fee: \$2.00 parking. Rich Miller is very experienced at Tsali and can take us to the various levels that suit our desires.

Hike Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest – Hike the primeval forest in the remote Joyce Kilmer Forest, approximately 50 minutes from the campground. In addition, you could visit some of the trails at the Slickrock Wilderness. There are numerous opportunities for day hiking the area. Even a visit down to Cheoh Dam is a great drive, US 129 crosses the Tennessee River at the bottom of the dam. There are even trailheads to Slickrock near the river. <http://www.nantahala-river.net/joycekilmermap.htm> <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc/recreation/joycekilmer.pdf> Fee: does not say, National Forest fee range from free to \$7.00 for day use areas.

White Water Kayak Clinic on the Tuckasegee – This is a 2 part training session on the basics of white water kayaking. It is offered through NOC and is called their Discovery clinic. The first half of the day is very fundamental training, using rented equipment, on a lake. The second half of the day is moving out onto the Tuckasegee river (between Dillsboro and Bryson City) to put into practice and more training on a relatively easy river – Class I or less. I have canoed this

river, it flows good, but is very mild, unless rain negatively influences its demeanor. Rich Miller is still working on the details of this session and more information will be posted here when that comes.

Appalachian Trail hike from Wayah lookout to Siler Bald (Scheduled for Friday)- This would be a $\frac{3}{4}$ day hike. However, the 1-hour drive to the lookout is possibly one of the best car tours in the mountains. From the Nantahala River valley, up Wayah Road that follows the old original winding Nantahala River bed, followed by the drive along lake Aquone (Lk Nantahala) and finally on up to Wayah Gap from where you travel a couple of miles down a gravel road to the stone lookout tower at 5,300 ft. The hike along the AT takes you back to Wayah Rd, but cross over and another hour and a half, you will come to a rare occurrence along the AT, a vast open meadow that rises up to Siler Bald for a “top of the world” experience and a 360 degree view of mountain ranges forever. You even look “down” onto Lake Aquone. You could park some cars at Wayah Road so the return trip is shortened a bit. This is a place to take your time and soak in the mountain beauty. http://www.romanticasheville.com/wayah_bald.htm
http://www.google.com/images?rlz=1T4GGLR_enUS306US306&q=siler+bald&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=univ&ei=enxS5TpCcL58Aaa0bTDDg&sa=X&oi=image_result_group&ct=title&resnum=4&ved=0CDM QsAQwAw Fee: None

Chattooga Section IV or Section III Rafting (this has been scheduled for 8:30 Friday morning)- Section IV's awe-inspiring views and rapids will thrill adventurous families and active adults seeking the highest white-knuckle adventure on the water. You'll experience the river in self-bailing rafts designed to optimize the Chattooga experience at any water level. As the water rises with increased rainfall, so does the difficulty and the thrill factor of this truly amazing whitewater river. <http://www.noc.com/whitewater-rafting/chattooga-river/section-iv-info/> Fees: \$99

Section III's stunning waterway has abundant wildlife, including herons and nesting Canada geese. Rapids on Section III are family-friendly Class II and III, right up until Bull Sluice at the end. Bull Sluice is an exciting Class IV drop that is one of the highlights of this wilderness experience. <http://www.noc.com/whitewater-rafting/chattooga-river/section-iii-info/>
Fees: \$89

Deep Creek Hiking or Noland Creek Hiking – Both trails are within the boundary of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park GSMNP just outside of Bryson City (about 30 minutes from camp). I have backpacked the Deep Creek trail and the trail follows the small stream for a good distance in. This is the only time I saw a bear while backpacking (up a tree). Right outside the park, the stream is a haven for inner-tub riders. The first few miles are relatively easy, not much of a grade. Eventually the trail begins to rise up out of the valley on its way to Clingmans Dome road. The Deep Creek parking lot is in close proximity to 3 other trail options such as Indian Creek Trail, Sunkota Ridge Trail (probably early step climb out of the valley), and Noland divide (again, an early steep climb). Alternatively, there is the Noland Creek trail down the “Road to Nowhere”, a 6 mile, in park drive that dead-ends. You pass Noland Creek trailhead just short of the last mile of road. I have NOT walked this trail, but it follows the creek and is probably relatively easy since it stays in the valley. There are numerous other trails and loops at the very end of this road, which is actually named Lakeview Drive. The Drive is supposed to have great

vistas of Lake Fontana. Fee: Free although years ago when I did Deep Creek, it seemed I left a few dollars in one of the envelopes before heading out. GSMNP is free because private citizens paid for the land and gave it to the federal government. In making this transfer, Tennessee wanted to ensure that US 441 would never have a toll to impede commerce since the road was one of the few in the southern Appalachians. So free entrance on the road may not translate into free access to trails.

<http://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/upload/GSMNP%20Backcountry%20Map.pdf>

Please email cagola1@aol.com if you are interested. We would like to get a count of the number of folks to make reservations. The earlier you respond the greater your chances of being able to join us on specific trips. Please indicate which events you are interested in. Just note that the 3 water events and the bike event are not concurrent events (each happens on different days) and the hiking trips are not concurrent events (this means you can hike all 4 days). So when you indicate the events you are interested in, your combination might not be possible if a water event occurs the same day as a scheduled hiking event.

See map below.

