

“MAKING A DIFFERENCE” A RESPONSIBLE VISIT

- The best diet for all animals is a natural one. Human food can make any wild animal sick. The digestive system of a white tail deer, common around campgrounds and picnic areas, is equipped with micro-organisms that only break down natural food sources including twigs, bark, leaves, grasses and acorns. Wild animals like the taste of human food, but for their safety and health, do not feed them.
- Staying on designated trails protects fragile plant and animal habitat. The Parkway has unique habitats that support rare and endangered plants and animals. Many of these plants are being threatened by foot traffic. This significant problem can be alleviated by the simple practice of staying on the Parkway's trails. High elevation trails, those located at 4500 feet and above, are particularly sensitive areas. Whether you suspect the presence of rare plants or not, it is a good practice to stay on the trail – if for no other reason than to protect all plants and to prevent erosion.
- Rabies can be transmitted by most wild animals. Animals in the park should not be treated as pets or lured close enough to feed or touch. If a raccoon, chipmunk, or other animal comes close without your encouragement, it could be a sign of serious illness. If you see an animal acting strangely, please tell a ranger.
- Many of our native wildflowers in the Blue Ridge are threatened by illegal harvesting. Galax is especially vulnerable. The large, round, shiny evergreen leaves have been gathered commercially in the southern Appalachian mountains for generations for decorative uses in floral arrangements. Now harvested on a much larger scale, they are being shipped to flower shops around the world. Remember, all plants on the Parkway are protected.
- Be a good guest in bear country. Seeing them is exciting and can be the highlight of any visit to a national park. However, while visitors to the Parkway come and go, bears and other wildlife live here. Your actions can have a direct and lasting impact on the behavior and health of these magnificent animals. Bears are creatures of habit. Once a bear receives human food, it learns that if it approaches people, it will get fed. Bears quickly lose their natural fear of people when crowded or observed too closely.



The Blue Ridge Parkway follows the Appalachian mountain ridgetops much of its route, providing seemingly endless views of the parallel ranges, connecting cross ranges, and scattered hills that make up one of the world's oldest ranges. It was also designed to dip into valleys and lower elevations, crossing rivers and giving a different perspective from the ridgetop experience.

From Shenandoah National Park, the Parkway follows the Blue Ridge, eastern rampart of the Appalachians, for

355 miles to a point near the entrance to Mount Mitchell State Park in North Carolina. Then it skirts the southern end of the massive Black Mountains, weaves through the Craggies, the Pisgahs, and the Balsams, before entering the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Cherokee.

Wildlife is a delight to see anywhere or anytime along the Parkway. When the sun is high, chipmunks and squirrels chatter among the trees and groundhogs sit still and erect along the road shoulders. The scene is quite different when the sun goes down. Watch out for skunks, foxes, opossums, and raccoons roaming around in the dark, or scampering across the roadway. White-tailed deer, black bear, and flocks of turkey may appear in the early morning or evening. Less conspicuous, but just as important in this complex ecosystem, are salamanders. More than one hundred species have been observed during the spring migration season.

Trees thrive in this rich, moist part of the world. In spring, tulip trees and serviceberry produce showy blooms, followed by dogwood and redbud. Around mid-October, leaves burst into color and visitors come from far and wide to view the scene. Tulip tree and birch turn yellow, sassafras a vivid orange, and red maples add a multi-colored brilliance. Interspersed among the color are Virginia pine, white pine, hemlock, and, at the highest elevations, spruce and fir.

Wildflowers and flowering shrubs can be found from the earliest days of spring until the first frosts of autumn. Flame azalea, a variety of rhododendron, and mountain laurel light up the roadside from May into early summer. Hundreds of varieties of wildflowers from bloodroot and firepink in the spring to fields of black-eyed susan and coreopsis in the early fall.

The cultural history of the Blue Ridge is just as diverse and just as interesting, preserved at scores of locations along the Parkway. From the establishment of an early nineteenth century resort hotel at the Peaks of Otter to the musical heritage of the mountains preserved at the Blue Ridge Music Center, there is something of interest for the history buff at every turn in the Parkway. Small cabins, grist mills that served the needs of mountain communities, and mid-sized farms stand in stark contrast to the summer resort home of Moses Cone at Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Stories of the Overmountain Men heading for Kings Mountain in the last years of the American Revolution are preserved along with Civil War earthworks.

Plan your Parkway trip carefully, take your time, and absorb the rich culture of this special part of the country.



While most visitors travel the Parkway in an automobile, ever increasing numbers visit the park on two-wheels, via bicycle or motorcycle. Remember, spectacular views are best enjoyed at one of the Parkway's many overlooks. Be aware of rapidly changing road character and environmental conditions, particularly when the roadway curves and descends at the same time. Please enjoy the views, but watch the curves.



General Driving Safety

Because of its unique design, the Parkway drive is different than most and this can mean taking some extra care to ensure a safe visit. "Enjoy the view, but watch the road!" is our way of reminding visitors to pay extra attention along the Parkway. A few specific pointers and facts may help even more.



Watch out for...

STEEP GRADES – In some places, the Parkway has steeper grades than normally found on highways. Without paying close attention, your speed can increase far more than you expect.

UNFORGIVING ROAD SHOULDERS – The Parkway's road shoulders are narrow in places so that the meadows or forest edges grow close to the pavement. This is, of course, part of the beauty of the drive, but may require some extra attention.

BUILT-IN DISTRACTIONS – Wildlife, wildflowers, bicyclists, and extraordinary views... all of these contribute to the Parkway experience and every traveler should be aware of these while enjoying the drive.

LIMITED SIGHT DISTANCES – There aren't many straight lines in the natural world and the Parkway was designed with gentle curves and not many straight sections. This is part of what makes the road seem to lie gently on the land and it also requires some extra attention while driving.

UNMARKED SPEED CHANGES – The Parkway speed limit is mostly 45 mph, but occasionally you will find yourself in developed areas where the driving speed drops to 25 mph.

SPIRAL CURVES - Some of the tight curves on this mountain road do not have a consistent radius so that extra care needs to be taken, especially on motorcycles.

Other Important Safety Advice

■ Hiking shoes or boots are recommended for most trails, especially 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.

■ Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.

■ 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.

■ Do not drink the water from streams or springs.

Lodging & Dining

Concession operated lodges are located at Peaks of Otter, Doughton Park and Mount Pisgah. Housekeeping cabins are available at Rocky Knob. Restaurants and other facilities and services are also available at a number of locations. Most concessions open in mid- or late April and a few are open year-round. Nearby communities offer additional accommodations and services.

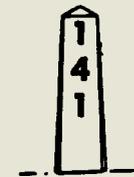
Special Information:

THE LONG RIFLE:



The long rifle and powder horn are symbolic of early European settlement in the region and along the Parkway, indicating places of particular interest for visitors.

MILEPOSTS:



Along the Parkway, you will see numbered mileposts. The zero milepost marker is at Rockfish Gap immediately south of Shenandoah National Park. Each mile is numbered progressively southward on the Parkway to its southernmost entrance at Cherokee.

Gas Availability

No gasoline is available on the parkway. Gas is available not far off the Parkway at any of these US or State Highway Intersections:

Virginia

US 250 — MP 0
 US 60 — MP 45.6
 VA 130 — MP 61.6
 US 501 — MP 63.9
 US 460 — MP 106
 VA 24 — MP 112.2
 US 220 — MP 121.4
 US 58 — MP 177.7
 US 52 — MP 199.4
 VA 89 — MP 215.8

North Carolina

US 21 — MP 229.7
 NC 18 — MP 248.1
 NC 16 — MP 261.2
 US 321 — MP 291.9
 NC 181 — MP 312
 US 221 — MP 317.5
 NC 226 — MP 330.9
 NC 226A — MP 334
 US 70 — MP 382.4
 US 74A — MP 384.7
 US 25 — MP 388.1
 NC 191 — MP 393.6
 US 276 — MP 411.9
 US 74/23 — MP 443.1
 US 19 — MP 455.7



Regulations By Recreational Activity

To help protect and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway, yourself, and others, observe all park regulations. Be alert for uncontrolled fire, safety hazards, accidents and emergencies. Please report such conditions by calling 1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928).

ROADSIDE PARKING - Parking is allowed on road shoulders, but please avoid wet areas and make sure that all four wheels are off the pavement.

TRAILS - Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not permitted on Parkway trails.

CAMPING - Camping is permitted only in park campgrounds or designated back-country sites.

PETS - All 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. If a pet cannot be kept under control, it should be left at home.

PARKWAY LAKES AND PONDS - These are for fishing and scenic beauty only, with no swimming allowed. Nearby U.S. Forest Service recreation areas, state parks, and mountain resorts often have swimming facilities.

PREVENT FOREST FIRES - Fires are permitted in the provided grills or fire pits in campgrounds and picnic areas only.

BOATS - Only on Price Lake, boats without motors or sails are permitted.

LITTER - Deposit all litter in the trash cans provided at trail heads, parking overlooks, and picnic areas.

ALL NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PROTECTED - Leave wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural condition for others to enjoy. Do not disturb animal and plant life in any way. Hunting and trapping are prohibited. Do not interfere with animals by feeding, touching, or frightening them. Do not cut, deface, or damage trees.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES - Possession of open containers of alcohol in vehicles is prohibited. Alcohol is permitted in campgrounds by registered campers and in picnic areas until 9:00 PM.

Access:

Most Parkway facilities are marked wheelchair usable. Some facilities have minor slope and/or structural barriers. For more information about access, please contact the Park Access Coordinator, Blue Ridge Parkway, 199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville, NC 28803. Phone: (828) 271-4779

Facilities

	Milepost	Visitor Center	Information	Exhibits	Programs	Restrooms	Picnic Area
Humpback Rocks	5.8	H	H	H	HP	H	X
Otter Creek	60.9				H	HP	
James River	63.8	HP	HP	H		HP	X
Peaks of Otter*	86	H	H	H	H	H	HP
BRP Visitor Center	115	H	H	H	H	H	
Roanoke Mt.	120.4				X	HP	
Smart View	154.5					HP	H
Rocky Knob Δ	169	H	H	H	H	X	HP
Mabry Mill **	176.1		HP	HP	HP	HP	
Ground Hog Mt.	189					HP	H
Blue Ridge Music Ctr	213	H	H	H	H	H	
Cumberland Knob	217.5		H			H	H
Brinegar Cabin	238.5		X				
Doughton Park*	241.1		H		X	HP	HP
Jeffress Park	272					HP	H
Cone Park	294.1	H	H	H	H	H	
Price Park	297.1		HP		H	HP	H
NW Trading Post	258.6		H			H	
Linn Cove Viaduct	304.4	H	H	H	H		
Linville Falls	316.4	H	H		X	H	H
Minerals Museum	331	H	H	H	H	H	
Crabtree Meadows **	339.5		H		HP	H	H
Craggy Gardens	364.6	H	H	H		HPA	H
Folk Art Center	382	H	H	H	H	H	
Destination Center	384	H	H	H		H	
Mt. Pisgah*	408.6		X		HP	H	HP
Waterrock Knob	451.2	H	H	H		H	

H=Wheelchair Accessible HP=Accessible with Assistance
 X=Not Accessible to the Handicapped HPA=Located in picnic area
 HPA = Located in picnic area. * Lodging and Dining Available
 ** Dining Available Δ Lodging Available

To inquire about specific facilities please contact Park Headquarters at (828) 271-4779



Camping

Camping is the optimal experience for many visitors to national parks. The Parkway's nine campgrounds were built for the motorist of the 1930s – 1950s and do not offer hookups.

Most have at least some sites that will accommodate sizeable recreational vehicles,

and all offer restrooms, drinking water, picnic tables and grills. The settings are tranquil and scenic, and most offer ready access to miles of hiking trails for those who want to explore on foot. Be sure to ask about Ranger talks and campfire programs that are given most weekends and occasionally during the week. Most campgrounds are at elevations of more than 2,500 feet, which means that temperatures are usually cooler than in the surrounding area. Even in summer a sweater can come in handy.

Campgrounds are open early May through October, with a per night charge of \$16. Reservations may be made for some sites at the Price Park, Linville Falls and Mt. Pisgah campgrounds. All other campgrounds and sites are "first come, first served." To make a reservation, visit www.recreation.gov on the Internet or call toll-free (877) 444-6777. Reserved sites are \$19 per night. As a general rule, demand is higher on weekends and holidays.

Group camping is available only at Linville Falls Campground. Call (828) 765-6082 for more information. In addition, limited backcountry camping is available via permit at Basin Cove in Doughton Park (336-372-8568) and Rock Castle Gorge (540/ 745-9661). Camping outside of designated campgrounds (or without a permit at backcountry sites) is prohibited.

FOOD STORAGE IN CAMPGROUNDS

Store all food, coolers, utensils or anything that may smell like food in locked vehicles. Place litter in garbage cans as soon as possible. This is for your own protection and for the protection of all park wildlife.

www.recreation.gov



Fishing

The Parkway lies along the headwaters of many regional watersheds. Thirteen lakes were constructed for aesthetic beauty and recreational opportunities. Streams, ponds, and rivers give anglers ample opportunity to test their skills for trout, bass, and panfish. A state license from either North Carolina or Virginia is valid for fishing in all park waters. Creel limits and other regulations vary

and are posted at streamside. Remember that swimming is not allowed in park waters.

Programs

Rangers and volunteers present a variety of interpretive programs June through October. These are given on weekends and occasionally on weekdays. Activities include campfire talks, music and history demonstrations, nature walks and slide presentations.. Program types and subject matter vary from area to area and week to week. Schedules are posted at visitor centers, campground entrances and Parkway concessions.

Bicycling

Helmets are always a recommended safety item when bicycling the Blue Ridge Parkway. In North Carolina, helmets are required for all bicyclists under sixteen years of age. In Virginia, the regulations vary by county. High visibility clothing is recommended. Be sure to ride single file, well to the right-hand side of the road and obey the same traffic rules that apply to motor vehicles. Bicycles are not permitted on trails or walkways. Plan ahead, and be sure to take into consideration elevation changes that will require more time and, of course, more exertion.

Rest rooms

Rest rooms are available at visitor centers, picnic areas and restaurants along the Parkway.

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAMS & "PARKS-AS-CLASSROOMS"



A "Junior Ranger" is someone like you! Any child between the ages of 7-12 can complete activities in the Parkway Junior Ranger book while promising to help care for and learn about America's National Parks so that others in the future may enjoy them. It is an important job! As you travel down the Blue Ridge Parkway with your family or friends, you can learn more about this National Parkway, what makes it special, and earning your own certificate and a Junior Ranger badge.

Since the Blue Ridge Parkway was constructed, rangers have provided programs for the public to teach the natural and cultural history of the Appalachian Mountains. Understanding the relationship between humans and the environment is vital for the preservation of both. Two volumes of "An Appalachian Curriculum" are available for teachers. These educational activities are geared to the North Carolina and Virginia learning standards and provide educational activities for visits to various Parkway locations. Contact the closest Parkway office for details on the programs available.

The Blue Ridge Parkway staff offers programs for students in their classrooms through the fall and winter. The rangers conducting these programs have years of experience with children of a variety of ages. They know the state curriculum and will work with the teacher in our "Parks As Classrooms" program. The goal is to bring students in touch with the natural world and the cultural heritage of our region in a way that is real and meaningful, working in conjunction with the state school curriculum.

In the spring, Parkway staff offer programs at most locations along the Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina in an attempt to make environmental education more accessible to all students. Teachers should contact the closest district office as soon as possible to schedule a field trip for their class. Keep in mind that the number of classes is limited. They will be filled on a first come, first served basis, so make your reservations early to ensure your class will be able to participate. The Blue Ridge Parkway staff feels very strongly that our best hope for the future lies in educating our children today, and we will do everything possible to accommodate your group.



PARKWATCH:



The Blue Ridge Parkway's Parkwatch program encourages visitors and park neighbors to actively protect and preserve this special place. Please be alert and report any uncontrolled fires, emergencies, accidents, safety hazards, vandalism, or crime to a park employee or call 1-800-PARK-WATCH. For general Parkway information, call (828) 298 0398.



A Bird's Eye View

Many Parkway visitors would choose spring as their favorite time of the year in the Blue Ridge. When the first truly warm days come, we can shake off the chill of winter and enjoy watching our part of the world green up. The first wildflowers sometimes poke up through lingering patches of snow. Within weeks, the trout will be moving more freely in streams and wobbly legged fawns will be exploring their mountain home for

the first time.

The long, linear nature of the Blue Ridge corridor lends itself, especially in the spring of the year, to tremendous numbers of migratory birds returning here after wintering in warmer climates. They ride strong, warm air currents coming out of the Gulf of Mexico, arriving sporadically in large groups. Concentrations of a variety of species may sometimes be seen in one location.

Migration also happens on the other end of the calendar as well, with the most spectacular movement of animals being the annual hawk migration. A variety of species will pour southward down the mountains especially during September, heading for wintering grounds in Central and South America. The long, thin spine of the Blue Ridge is an ideal avenue for their long-distance travel. The abrupt rise of the mountains creates several factors that help the fall migration of hawks. Warm air on the lower slopes and in the valleys rises up the side of the mountains. Sunshine on rocky hillsides creates an uplifting of warm air as well. These factors all combine perfectly in the early fall to create "thermals" that aid the hawks heading south.

As the birds catch these thermals rising from below, they will soar upward, spiraling gracefully on fixed wings. After climbing thousands of feet, the air cools and the birds lose their "lift." From these heights, hawks can then turn south and glide miles until they pick up another thermal. In this manner, the birds conserve energy for their long trip south.

Hawk watchers along the Parkway can observe three basic types of these large birds. Buteos are broad-winged birds with wide, rounded tails. Examples include Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks. Accipiters have short, rounded wings and include such familiar species as Coopers Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Falcons are occasionally spotted migrating down the Blue Ridge as well. Long tails and long, pointed wings characterize these birds. Visitors may also report the occasional sighting of a bald eagle. Thousands of hawks per day are often observed by the Audubon Society or local bird enthusiasts, giving the Blue Ridge a well-deserved reputation as one of the best hawk migration routes in the United States.

Every season is special, and brings a fresh perspective on these mountains. The protected corridor of this national park area is a vital factor in the migration of many species. Have a few extra mornings, a comfortable lawn chair, and a good pair of binoculars this fall? Hawk watching could be the beginning of a new hobby!





Highlights Of Spring & Summer

Diversity is a hallmark of the Parkway and the keen observer will take notice and marvel at the variations in the southern mountains. One reason for the variation is, quite simply, the change in altitude. The Parkway ranges from a mere 650 feet above sea level at Virginia's James River, to over 6,000 feet south of Asheville in the rugged Pisgah range. For each thousand feet gained in elevation the temperature decreases several degrees.

This means that a trip along the Parkway, in search of spring wildflowers, is ever changing. If you miss the early blooms at lower elevations, rest assured that you will get more opportunities in the higher elevations where the blooming is a bit later.

A variety of wildflowers decorate the Blue Ridge most of the year, beginning in late February or early March as may apple, spring beauty, and a variety of violets come into view. Buttercups and bloodroot are common along the roadsides in April. Without a doubt, May is the best overall month for all elevations along the Parkway as trillium, fire pink, and Bowman's root cover the ground under the purple and white blossoms of redbud and dogwood. Rhododendron, mountain laurel, and a variety of azaleas put on their big show from May through late June. Catawba rhododendron is the purple variety that blooms from early June around the Peaks of Otter in Virginia to the third week of June at Craggy Gardens in North Carolina. Any time between those dates, there are spots of this variety blooming. Rosebay rhododendron is the larger white variety that begins in mid to late June and blooms into July, primarily through the area of Rocky Knob in Virginia. Flame azalea, pink azalea or pinxter flower bloom early to late May in many Parkway areas. Mountain laurel blooms mid to late May and into June in higher elevations. Don't think for a minute that wildflower season is over when the calendar turns to summer because you won't want to miss the fields of black-eyed susan, ox eye daisy, tall coneflower, and coreopsis that blanket fields from late summer into autumn.

BLOOM CALENDAR

Shrubs



Catawba Rhododendron

(*Rhododendron catawbiense*): A medium shrub with pink to purple flowers growing above 3000 feet on exposed ridges. **June — Early July**



Rosebay Rhododendron

(*Rhododendron maximum*): also called White Rhododendron: A large shrub with white to pink flowers, over a wide range of elevations. **June — July**



Flame Azalea

(*Rhododendron calendulaceum*): A medium shrub with bright orange to red flowers. Azaleas are in the rhododendron family. **June — July**



Wild Hydrangea

(*Hydrangea arborescens*): A medium shrub with large clusters of white flowers. **May — August**



Mountain Laurel

(*Kalmia latifolia*): A medium shrub with pink flowers. **June — July**



Pinxter Flower

(*Rhododendron nudiflorum*): A medium shrub with pink honeysuckle-like flowers, common at lower elevations. **April — May**

Flowers



Fire Pink

(*Silene virginica*): This 6-20 inch plant has bright red flowers up to 1-1/2 inches wide. **April — June**



Goat's Beard

(*Aranuncus dioicus*): 3-5 feet tall with flower plumes 3-5 inches wide and 6-10 inches long. **May — June**



Bluets

(*Houstonia* species): 3-6 inches tall with many small 4-petal flowers, light to dark blue. Bluets sometimes grow in large beds. **May-August**



Turks-Cap Lily

(*Lilium superbum*): 6 to 10 feet tall with flowers 2-4 inches wide with a green star at center. The Carolina Lily (*L. michauxii*) is similar but lacks the green star and bears fewer flowers. **July-August**



Large-Flowered Trillium

(*Trillium grandiflorum*): The largest of several trilliums found along the parkway, grows to about 15 inches. Trilliums have 3 leaves and a single 3-petal flower. **April — May**



Bee Balm

(*Monarda didyma*), also called Oswego Tea: 2-5 feet tall with bright red 2-inch flowers. Wild Bergamot is similar but pink. **July — August**

OTHER COMMON FLOWERS

Birdfoot Violet - (*Viola pedata*) 4-10 inches tall, bluish-purple flower. March — June
 Columbine - (*Aquilegia canadensis*) about 2 feet tall, nodding red and yellow flower. June — July
 Sun Drops - (*Oenothera fruticosa*) 1-2 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
 Evening Primrose - (*Oenothera biennis*) 3-5 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
 Phlox - (*Phlox* species) 2-6 feet tall, magenta-pink flowers. July — October
 Touch-me-not - (*Impatiens* species.) 3-6 feet tall, nodding yellow or orange flower. July — August
 Tall Bellflower - (*Campanula americana*) 2-6 feet tall, blue, 5-petal flower. July — August
 White Snakeroot- (*Eupatorium rugosum*) 3-5 feet tall, bright white flower heads. July — Sept

Dense Blazing Star - (*Liatris spicata*) 2-4 feet tall, rose-purple flowered spike. August — Sept
 Goldenrod - (*Solidago* species) about 3 feet tall, golden-yellow spikes or plumes. August — Sept
 Ox Eye Daisy - (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) 1-3 feet tall; white petals, yellow center.
 Black-Eyed Susan - (*Rudbeckia hirta*) 3-6 feet tall, yellow petals, black center.
 Tall Coneflower - (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) 2-3 feet tall, drooping yellow petals, green center.
 Coreopsis - (*Coreopsis major*) 2-3 feet tall, golden-yellow petals, green center.
 Jerusalem Artichoke - (*Helianthus tuberosus*) 5-10 feet tall, yellow petals, yellow center.
 Aster - (*Aster* species) 2-5 feet tall; many small flowers; blue, purple, or white petals.



Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail parallels the first 100 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway to a point just north of Roanoke VA. There are many trail access points along this section of the Parkway. For more information please refer to Appalachian Trail publications.



Mount Mitchell State Park

Mount Mitchell is the highest point in eastern North America, rising to 6,684 feet. A Mount Mitchell State Park map with trail information is available at the state park headquarters, two miles up NC State Highway 128 from the park entrance at Milepost 355.4. Write to Mount Mitchell State Park, 2388 State Highway 128, Burnsville, NC 28714 or call (828) 675 4611.

Popular Hiking Trails of the Blue Ridge Parkway

Hiking maps are available at Visitor Center closest to the trail or can be downloaded at www.nps.gov/blri.

Virginia Trails

Milepost	Trail - Miles - Difficulty
5.9	Farm Museum Trail 0.25 <i>easy</i> *
34.4	Yankee Horse (logging RR) 0.2 <i>moderate</i>
60.8	Otter Creek 3.5 <i>moderate</i> *
63.	Otter Lake Loop 0.8 <i>moderate</i> *
63.6	James River (canal locks) 0.2 <i>easy</i> *
63.6	Trail of Trees Loop 0.5 <i>moderate</i> *
78.4	Apple Orchard Falls 1.2 <i>strenuous</i> **
83.1	Fallingwater Cascades 1.6 <i>moderate</i> **
83.5	Flat Top 4.4 <i>strenuous</i> *
85.7	Abbott Lake Loop 1.0 <i>easy</i> *
85.9	Elk Run Loop 0.8 <i>easy</i> *
85.9	Johnson Farm Loop 2.1 <i>moderate</i> *
85.9	Harkening Hill 3.3 <i>moderate</i> *
86.0	Sharp Top 1.6 <i>strenuous</i> *
110.6	Stewart Knob 1.2 <i>moderate</i> *
114.9	Roanoke River Loop 0.35 <i>easy</i> *
120.4	Roanoke Mountain Summit 0.11 <i>moderate</i> *
154.5	Smart View Loop 2.6 <i>moderate</i>
167.1	Rock Castle Gorge Loop 10.8 <i>strenuous</i> *
176.2	Mabry Mill 0.5 <i>easy</i>
213.0	Fisher's Peak Loop 2.25 <i>moderate</i> *

North Carolina Trails

Milepost	Trail - Miles - Difficulty
217.5	Cumberland Knob 0.5 <i>easy</i> *
230.1	Little Glade Millpond Loop 0.4 <i>easy</i>
241.0	Fodder Stack 1.0 <i>moderate</i> *
271.9	Cascades Loop 0.5 <i>moderate</i>
294.0	Flat Top Mountain 3.0 <i>moderate</i> *
294.1	Figure 8 Loop 0.7 <i>easy</i> *
296.5	Boone Fork Loop 5.5 <i>moderate-strenuous</i> *
297.0	Price Lake Loop 2.7 <i>moderate</i> *
304.4	Linn Cove Viaduct Access 0.16 <i>easy</i> *
305.2	Beacon Heights 0.2 <i>moderate</i> *
305.5	Tanawha (MP 297 - 305) 13.5 <i>moderate-strenuous</i> * D
316.4	Linville Falls, Erwins View 0.8 <i>moderate</i> *
316.4	Linville Falls, Plunge Basin 0.5 <i>strenuous</i> *
339.5	Crabtree Falls .9 <i>strenuous</i> *
364.2	Craggy Pinnacle 0.7 <i>moderate</i> *
407.6	Mt. Pisgah Summit 1.3 <i>moderate-strenuous</i> *
407.6	Buck Springs (lodge to view) 1.06 <i>easy-moderate</i> *
408.5	Frying Pan Mountain 1.06 <i>moderate-strenuous</i> *
418.8	Graveyard Fields Stream Loop 2.3 <i>moderate</i>
431.0	Richland Balsam 1.5 <i>moderate</i>
451.2	Waterrock Knob Summit 0.6 <i>moderate-strenuous</i>

Distances are one way except for loop trails. See trail maps for distances, features, walking conditions and important advice. * Hiking map is available. ** Designated National Recreation Trail. D Tanawha has nine Parkway access points, several in the Grandfather Mountain area.



Highlights Of Fall Color Season

Crisp winter days, delicate spring flowers and cool summer temperatures attract millions of visitors to the Blue Ridge Parkway each year. But for many, the preferred season is autumn. The visual bonfire created by hardwood leaves changing from summer green to autumn gold, red and orange is a sight few fail to appreciate.

Typically, the Blue Ridge Parkway experiences the much anticipated change in fall foliage around the middle of October. Many factors, however, contribute to variations in when and where colors

will peak. The Parkway stretches almost five hundred miles north to south, meanders from the east to west facing slopes, and, most importantly, varies in elevation from just under 650 feet at James River in Virginia, to over 6,000 feet south of Mt. Pisgah in North Carolina. Many visitors have been frustrated trying to go to one spot on one day in October, hoping to find the leaves in full color. A far better plan is to drive some distance on the Parkway, changing elevations and north-south orientation. Any one who does this around mid to late October will catch at least some of the pretty color that we're famous for.

Mountains-to-Sea Trail

The Mountains to Sea Trail (MTS), when complete, will extend over 930 miles from Clingman's Dome, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Jockey's Ridge on the North Carolina Outer Banks. Much of the MTS parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway and there are many trail access points along the Parkway. The Carolina Mountain Club maintains much of the trail between mileposts 355 and 455. For More Information, contact:

Friends Of The Mountains To Sea Trail, P.O. Box 165, 143 Wendell Lane, Advance, NC 27006
Or Carolina Mountain Club
PO Box 68
Asheville, NC • 28802
www.carolinamtclub.com



LABORS OF SUMMER ARE OVER

Tents in the Trees?

Whether you visit in spring or fall, you may notice silky tents in trees along the Parkway. They belong to some very small inhabitants of the region that eventually become moths. In the spring, eastern tent caterpillars (*Malacosoma americanum*) feed on the leaf buds of trees, preferring wild cherry and crab apple. They collectively build their tents in the crotches of tree branches and feast on the new buds. When numerous, they can nearly defoliate a tree, however the tree usually puts out new leaves and is not permanently damaged. As the caterpillars grow larger so does the tent until they leave to spin their cocoons.

In late summer and early fall, the aptly named fall webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*) begins to feed on a wide variety of Parkway tree species with walnut, American elm, hickory and maple being favorite choices. Unlike the tent caterpillars, webworms enclose the ends of branches, including the leaves within their webs. The caterpillars remain inside the web, and if food runs short, new foliage is encased. Since they appear late in the growing season, little real damage is done to most trees.

So while you may think their homes unsightly, both insects are native to North America and are simply part of the natural order in the Blue Ridge.

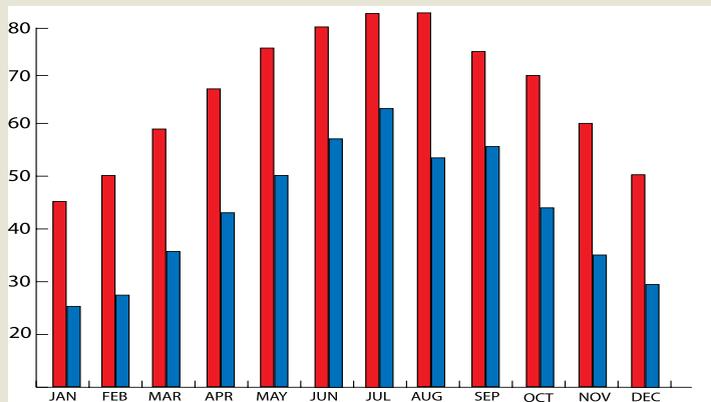
Normal Daily Maximum & Minimum Temperatures

Average Elevation of 2100'

For weather info call (828) 298-0398.

Parts of the Parkway may close to vehicles due to weather.

For updated information, call (828) 298-0398 for list of closings. Always be prepared for rapidly changing weather and the difference that elevation change can make in temperature



Autumn along the Blue Ridge Parkway arrives brisk and clear, and the signs of the season are predictable. The days get progressively shorter and the nights are cool. The harvest moon rises fiery orange and full above the ancient ridge tops, illuminating the night sky.

The most prominent and noticeable sign of the season is the foliage – crimson and gold it turns – announcing the change. Most visitors to this national parkway in October are here for a single purpose – that blaze of color that paints the coves, hollows, and mountaintops of the Blue Ridge. But there is an opportunity this special time of the year to experience even more than the spectacular fall foliage scene. The signs of the season, rooted deeply in the heritage of the region, are available for the observant visitor as well. Enjoy the view and the unfolding color display, but watch the harvest, listen to the conversations at the corner store, and you will find yourself reflecting on a time gone by.

To those whose roots go deep into the heritage of these mountains, there are more subtle signs of autumn. Voices from their ancestral past have always said that winter is close at hand when the juncos feed in the trees or the crows gather in large numbers. The katydid's first call three months back in the summer, according to some, is a sure indication of winter's approach. A tough winter is in store for certain when the sweet potato skins are especially tough or the tree bark grows thick. "Dig root crops for seed in the third quarter of the moon," we are told, "they'll keep longer."

Bales of hay and occasional shocks of corn intermingle with the brilliant foliage, becoming a prominent feature along the Parkway each autumn. Many farm houses, along with the accompanying barns and other buildings, are very similar to the Parkway views of fifty years ago. Look very carefully and you may even see neighbors gathered to butcher a hog, stir a batch of apple butter over an open fire all day, or boil sorghum juice into molasses.

Because many residents of the Blue Ridge continue to stay in touch with their heritage and traditions, the agricultural scenes today and those of generations ago sometimes look similar. Particularly along the high plateau south of Roanoke and extending to Boone and Blowing Rock, where the mountain crest flattens out into farmland, visitors are able to catch a glimpse of the farming heritage that is part of the Parkway story. But while today's practices are often simply a matter of teaching the children ways of the past, or continuing a family tradition, the farming in these mountains two generations ago was born out of necessity. If crops needed harvesting, the children stayed home from school to assist in the process. It was a matter of survival. Farming, particularly using traditional practices and methods, is becoming less common and less profitable. The scenes we encounter along these remote mountain crests should be savored and treasured. They are part of the Southern Appalachian culture and history that the Blue Ridge Parkway is legislated to preserve.

There is an opportunity this special time of the year to experience even more than the fall foliage scene. Enjoy the view, watch the harvest, and reflect on a time gone by.