The Clear Fork River near the Gentleman’s Swimming Hole

The Big South Fork River from the Honey Creek Overlook

Cutting deeply into the Cumberland Plateau, the Clear Fork and New Rivers come together at the Confluence to form the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. Their main channels descend approximately eleven feet per mile. The swiftness of free-flowing water through the boulder-filled river beds have created a paddler’s paradise. Although the rugged terrain limits access, there are several popular hiking trails in the south end of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area.

**Rugby**

Thomas Huges, author of *Tom Brown’s School Days* and a renowned social reformer from England, established the experimental community of Rugby in 1880. One result of his progressive thinking was his creation of public park land along the Clear Fork River for the residents of Rugby to enjoy. Several trails were developed leading to the river.

The **moderate 0.4 mile** hike to the Gentlemens Swimming Hole passes a small waterfall in the creek and Witches’ Cave as the trail descends to the river.

**Meeting of the Waters**

The Meeting of the Waters, where White Oak Creek joins the Clear Fork River, is 0.7 mile farther down the trail. The

**Burnt Mill**

Burnt Mill Bridge is a primary access to the Clear Fork River where rafters and paddlers often begin their trips.

The Burnt Mill Loop is a **moderate 4.3 mile** trail. Much of the trail follows the river and is well known for its variety of wildflowers.

**Burnt Mill Loop**

The Burnt Mill Loop and the Honey Creek Loop have a **4.3 mile connector** trail which is part of the John Muir Trail. Begin hiking the Burnt Mill Loop counter clockwise (downstream) and you will reach the beginning of the connector trail in 1.3 miles. At the intersection with the Honey Creek Loop, you can turn left and walk 500 feet to reach the trailhead parking area.

**John Muir Trail (Burnt Mill / Honey Creek Connector)**

The Big South Fork General Management Plan includes proposed trails which would complete the John Muir Trail from Peter’s Ford to Burnt Mill Loop and Honey Creek Loop to Devil’s Den near the O & W Bridge.

From Oneida, TN take U.S. 27 south to Elgin. Turn right on Tenn. 52 and drive 7 miles to Rugby. Across from the commissary, turn right and drive to the Laurel Dale Cemetery. The trailhead and parking is on the left of the circular drive.

From Jamestown, TN and U.S. 127, take Tenn. 52 east to Rugby.

The Big South Fork Ge...
| Honey Creek | The 5.9 mile Honey Creek Loop, originally a “pocket wilderness” set aside by the Bowater Company, is the most strenuous trail in the Big South Fork. Hikers should allow five daylight hours to enjoy the beautiful rugged terrain. The trail features waterfalls, high bluffs, rock shelters and “in-the-creek” hiking. | The trail literally goes up Honey Creek, so check on rainfall and trail conditions before you begin this hike. |
| Honey Creek Loop | From Jamestown, TN follow Tenn. 52 to Allardt. Remain left on Tenn. 52 for 5.4 miles. Turn left on the Mt. Helen Road and follow the signs toward Burnt Mill Bridge for 10 miles. Turn left to reach the trailhead. Continue past the trailhead for 0.8 mile to reach the overlook. |  |
| Honey Creek Overlook | The Honey Creek Overlook is a 0.2 mile paved ADA trail. |  |