

## Camp Sam/Kinchen Trail:

**Trail Features: Historical, Quiet Forest Hike**

**Trail Location: 0.8 miles South of Norris Dam**

**One Direction Length: 1.08 miles**

**Lowest Elevation: 984 Feet**

**Highest Elevation: 1285 Feet**

**Total Elevation Gain: 301 Feet**

**Traffic Allowance: Foot, Bicycle, Horseback**

**Trail Blaze Color: Blue**

**Difficulty Rating: Easy to CCC Camp, Difficult to High Point**

### **Directions to Trailhead:**

From the South side of Norris Dam, drive 0.8 miles south on Highway 441 to the first driveway, parking lot, and trailhead access on the left. This driveway is across Hwy. 441 from Powerhouse Road. Camp Sam/Kinchen Trail starts behind white gate.

### **Trail Description:**

As you begin this trail at the white gate, take moment to study the history of the camp on the kiosk on the left. This trail is shared by hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders, so be courteous and watch for other patrons.

The trial is easy entering and exploring the CCC Camp. If you wish to complete the trail in its entirety, the backside becomes relatively difficult as you steeply traverse up to the first junction and kiosk on High Point Trail at this trails highest point. Take a map from the map station on the right.

As you pass the white gate at 984 feet, begin waking down the old roadbed and take a step back in time to the era of President Roosevelt and his New Deal Projects: The TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps.).

Travel the wide roadbed 0.4 miles to a CCC Camp that once stood in this hollow from 1933-1942. During these years, 200 men per year worked at this camp providing conservation projects around the area.

These projects consisted of building the facilities and trails of three state parks in the area: Norris Dam, Big Ridge and Cove Lake State Parks, planting thousands of trees, stocking thousands of fish, building erosion check dams, trout rearing ponds, fences and the list goes on and on.

You'll come to the continuation of the Camp Sam/Kinchen Trail up to High Point on right adjacent to the stone grease pits on the left To complete the loop through the camp before traversing the steep hill, continue straight.

The stone grease pits on the left at 1015 feet in 0.4 miles are where the young men in the camp serviced their vehicles. This stone fortress was used to work on CCC vehicles by driving on top and then the vehicle could be accessed from underneath to change oil, brakes, etc.

Just before you enter the loop, notice the t=sign on the right marking the location of the Recreation Hall, Amphitheater and Volleyball Field. The end of the loop meets back here on right at 1020 feet. The park allows for backcountry outings by Boy Scout groups that request to reserve it. Campsite on left here.

As you enter the loop of CCC Camp 494/TVA-45 you will encounter a series of signed stations where remnants of the old camp are still visible. There's a rock bridge over the creek on the right that carries water under wet conditions.

At approximately 0.50 miles at 1050 feet, come to where the Supervisory Offices rested above the sign on the left hillside. You can see remnants of an old stone chimney still standing under the old hemlocks.

Start to see the flagpole, 12-man picnic table, benches and fire pit coming into view in the center of the loop on right. There's a beautiful moss covered stone stacked wall on left just before you reach the Mess Hall and Kitchen once located on the left at 1096 feet.

You'll see several stone steps that lead down from the buildings that once stood around the hillsides and dropping into the center of the loop at the flagpole where the young men would gather in the camp.

Ahead on the left at 1100 feet, you'll come to the area of the barracks where the men were housed. A red brick wall capped nicely with plush, green moss and a cistern still remain at this location. Across the road on

the right, there is a single bench on a stone bed overlooking the loop's center.

Just past the barracks, there is a path up the hill that connects to the trail leading up the steep hill to High Point. Some horseback riders like to access the backside of the trail from here. It would be preferred that everyone wanting to ascend to High Point access that part of the trail via the defined trail back at the split and across from the grease pit area.

Take a moment at the next sign to read about a man that participated in the incredible works of this CCC Camp 494. Also notice the stone ditch running parallel to the roadbed on the left channeling run-off toward the natural creek. These men learned valuable skills that gave rise to a career for some after they left the CCC experience.

Behind the sign dedicated to Claude Jenkins is where the TVA Office and Headquarters was located. You can see the leveled off, rectangular areas where buildings once stood overlooking the camp.

The Camp road now ends and loop back into itself just ahead near the 1020 feet. If you wanted an easy hike, you may return approximately 0.4 miles to the white gate. If you'd like to continue the Camp Sam/Kinchen Trail to High Point, then turn left, continue on roadbed a few yards back until you come to the designated trail on the left leading up to High Point.

Continuing left toward High Point, you will ascend over 200 feet up a difficult hill to traverse, passing Yellow Poplars, Northern Red Oaks, Eastern Redbuds, American Beech, Hickory, Paw Paw, Christmas fern, Raspberries and patches of plush, green moss along the way.

You'll reach this trails end when it meets the High Point Trail at 1285 feet in 1.1 miles. Turn left to come out 0.10 miles down the hill at the white gate beside Rustic Cabin #8 on the East side of the park; or continue right onto High Point Trail. A third option is take the trail diagonally across and to the right of the kiosk to Lakeview Trail at Kerry's Revenge.