

Andrews Ridge Trail (West side):

Trail Features: Historical, Quiet Forest Hike, Seasonal views

Trail Location: West Campground Dump Station/Old Ranger Station

One Direction Length: 1.75 miles

Lowest Elevation: 1320 Feet

Highest Elevation: 1450 Feet

Total Elevation Gain: 82 Feet

Trail Blaze Color: Blue

Difficulty Rating: Easy-Moderate

Directions to Trailhead:

Enter West entrance of park off Highway 441. Take the first road on left (at white gate) and follow road up toward the West campground. About 1 mile up the hill, park on the right in front of the old ranger station across from the dump station. Trailhead is just behind the wooden kiosk at the top corner of the dump station driveway.

Trail Description:

The Andrews Ridge Trail is located atop the park's highest point near the rim of the West campground. This trail is relatively level with only minor elevation changes as it meanders through the remnants of the old homesites that once inhabited this ridge prior to Norris Dam.

Trail bed is dirt, twigs and decaying leaves typical of a shady hardwood forest. This ridge-top trail is typical of the dry, upland slopes of an oak-hickory forest.

At the trailhead, you'll begin at 1414 feet. Trail gradually climbs at 0.10 miles in at 1425 feet. The trail parallel's the campground for a little while before it gradual descends to 1370 at 0.37 miles where you'll be at the Hootin Hollow Trailhead on right. Trail then drops when you reach a covered bench at 1368 feet at 0.38 miles.

Immediately after the bench is the Rock Creek Trailhead on left. Ahead just a few more yards on the right is the Sinkhole Trailhead and the end of Rock Creek Trail directly across on left.

Trail bed turns from a rocky, clay surface to a carpet of grass thriving in the canopy openings from some fallen trees. Christmas ferns shade the banks. Some species of hardwoods that you may see on this trail are: Oaks, Hickory, Yellow Poplar, Persimmon, Sassafras, Dogwood, Eastern Redbuds and Beech.

A second bench will be available at 0.68 miles and 1450 feet. Keep your eyes open for the square, concrete block covering the old cistern (well) of the first homestead on the left at 0.72 miles and 1420 feet. The homesite is a ground depression and a square concrete pad.

The exit from the Sinkhole Trail will appear on the right at 0.84 miles and 1397 feet. At approximately 1 mile, you'll come to a path on the right where the end of the Andrews Ridge Trail loop's back into itself. This is where remnants of the second homesite can be seen on the right consisting of the same ground depression, concrete pad and covered cistern.

Continue the trail straight to complete the loop at the end of the ridge. Take note of all the varieties of fungus that can be found on this trail. Just past the 1 mile mark and around 1420 feet, observe the Andrews Cemetery on the left containing the 2 graves of the family members who inhabited the land on the left just past where you see their graves today.

Another bench will be on right at 1.28 miles at 1380 feet. Trail drops to its lowest point as you round the end of the peninsula at 1320 feet in 1.43 miles. Come to traces of an old road bed on right at 1382 feet in 1.62 miles and another covered bench on right at 1396 feet in 1.68 miles. The park's only backcountry campsite will be on left in the curve. Trail ends at 1388 feet in 1.75 miles.