

PANTHER CREEK FALLS LOOP

Length: 16.9 miles round trip

This is a moderate to strenuous trail that traverses some of the most unique topography in the area. This loop description starts from the Hickory Creek Trailhead that is best accessed from Cisco, Ga, on Hwy 411. The Hickory Creek Trail is 8.7 miles. It will intersect with the Conasauga River Trail. After fording the river and continuing south on the Conasauga River Trail for a short distance, it will intersect with the Panther Creek Trail. After turning East (left) on to the Panther Creek Trail, you will encounter beautiful Panther Creek, an old growth forest, an amazing climb up a huge boulder field to the top of Panther Creek falls with a stunning view. The falls are about halfway through the 3.4 mile trail that will intersect with the East Cowpen Trail. Turn North (left again) on the East Cowpen Trail and the last approximately 4.7 miles is a fairly easy hike back to the beginning of the loop.

Hickory Creek Portion

Distance: 8.6 miles

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Elevation: 2300 feet

USGS Quad: Hemp Top,
Tenna

Region: North Central

Subregion: Cohutta

County: Fannin

Nearest City: Chatsworth

Trail Type: Point to point

Camping: Primitive

Campsites

Water Availability: Frequent

along trail

Blaze: White

Management: Cohutta

Description

Hickory Creek is the third longest trail in the Cohutta Wilderness. Follow East Cowpen Trail. The Hickory Creek Trail junction is 140 yards down East Cowpen Trail to the right. At mile 4.5 the trail crosses Thomas Creek and turns left at a campsite. At Bray Field (5.7 miles) turn left onto the Conasauga River Trail and hike about 1/3 of a mile (past the Tearbitches trail) to get to the Panther Creek Trail. Turn left onto the Panther Creek Trail.

Highlights

6.2 mi - Conasauga River; 6.2 mi - beaver ponds

Directions

To the northern trailhead: From the intersection of GA 52 and US 411 in Chatsworth, continue north on US 411 for approximately 13.4 miles to Cisco. Turn right on the paved road that is just before the Cisco Baptist Church. This is Old GA 2, also known as FS 16. Continue on FS 16 past where the pavement ends, bearing right at the fork for 7.9 miles. Then turn right on FS 51. Go 4.8 miles to the Rice Camp trailhead and parking area on the left. As you approach the trail, Rice Camp Trail is to the left and East Cowpen Trail is straight ahead. The Hickory Creek Trail junction is 140 yards down East Cowpen Trail to the right.

PANTHER CREEK FALLS LOOP

Panther Creek Trail (Cohutta)

Distance: 3.4 miles

Difficulty: Strenuous

Elevation: 1940 feet

USGS Quad: Hemp Top

Region: North Central

Subregion: Cohutta

County: Fannin

Nearest City: Chatsworth

Trail Type: Point to point

Camping: Primitive

Campsites

Water Availability: plentiful

beyond 2.0 miles

Blaze: Blue

Management: Cohutta

Description

Panther Creek Trail is an interior trail that has its trailheads on the Conasauga River Trail and East Cowpen Trail. For the first 1.1 miles, the trail gently climbs parallel to Panther Creek, then crosses a brook to the left. Here the trail changes significantly. It becomes much rockier and steeper, eventually reaching Panther Creek Falls at mile 1.4. From the falls it is uphill to its eastern terminus. At mile 1.9, the trail climbs sharply and then begins a pattern of steep ascents between short stretches of uphill grades.

Highlights

0.0 mi - Conasauga River ; 3.0 mi - Bald Mountain summit

PANTHER CREEK FALLS LOOP

East Cowpen Trail Portion

Distance: ~4.7 miles

Difficulty: Strenuous

Elevation: 3500 feet

USGS Quad: Hemp Top

Region: North Central

Subregion: Cohutta

County: Fannin

Nearest City: Ellijay

Trail Type: Point to point

Camping: Primitive

Campsites

Water Availability: scarce

seasonal springs

Blaze: None

Management: Cohutta

Description

This portion of the trail is primarily gentle slopes and respectable descents. At mile 4.4, the trail emerges from the wilderness and follows an old road the Rice Camp Trail parking area

Highlights

The ridgeline views through the leafless winter trees make it worth it. There's no water on this trail, so pack plenty with you.

