

Laurel River Trail

Hot Springs Area

Trail # 310



Characteristics

Laurel River Trail begins on a gravel road through private property. Hikers and bikers should stay on the trail to ensure the privacy of landowners along the route. After one mile, the trail enters the national forest and continues at a fairly level grade to the French Broad River. The trail is especially scenic in early spring when there are many wildflowers blooming along the path and riverbanks. Bikers will find the Laurel River Trail an easy ride, however, some short sections of the trail are a bit rocky and care should be taken when passing through these areas.

Highlights

- Follows Big Laurel Creek on an old railroad bed that used to carry logs to the Runion sawmill. The sawmill operated in the 1920s.
- The logging town of Runion once thrived where the Laurel River joins the French Broad River. In its heyday, Runion had a steam-powered sawmill, school, railroad, commissary and more than 1,000 people. Brick chimneys and crumbling foundations remain.

Statistics

Total Length: 3.6 miles

Total Elevation Change: 220 feet

Degree of Difficulty: Easy

Beginning Point: U.S. 25/70

Ending Point: French Broad River

Average Hiking Time: 1.5 hours (one way)

Amount of Use: Moderate

Blaze Color: Yellow

Area Trail Maps: Harmon Den/Hot Springs Trail Map

USGS Quad Map: Hot Springs

Access

From Burnsville, travel west on NC-19E and merge onto I-26E. Take Exit 11 toward Mars Hill/Marshall. Turn Left onto NC-213/Carl Eller Road, which leads into Marshall. Take the US-25 Bypass/US-70 Ramp, merging onto US-25/US-70 heading toward Hot Springs. Trail parking is located at the intersection of SR 208 and US-25/US-70. The trail begins past the gate at the south end of the parking area.



Pisgah National Forest

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