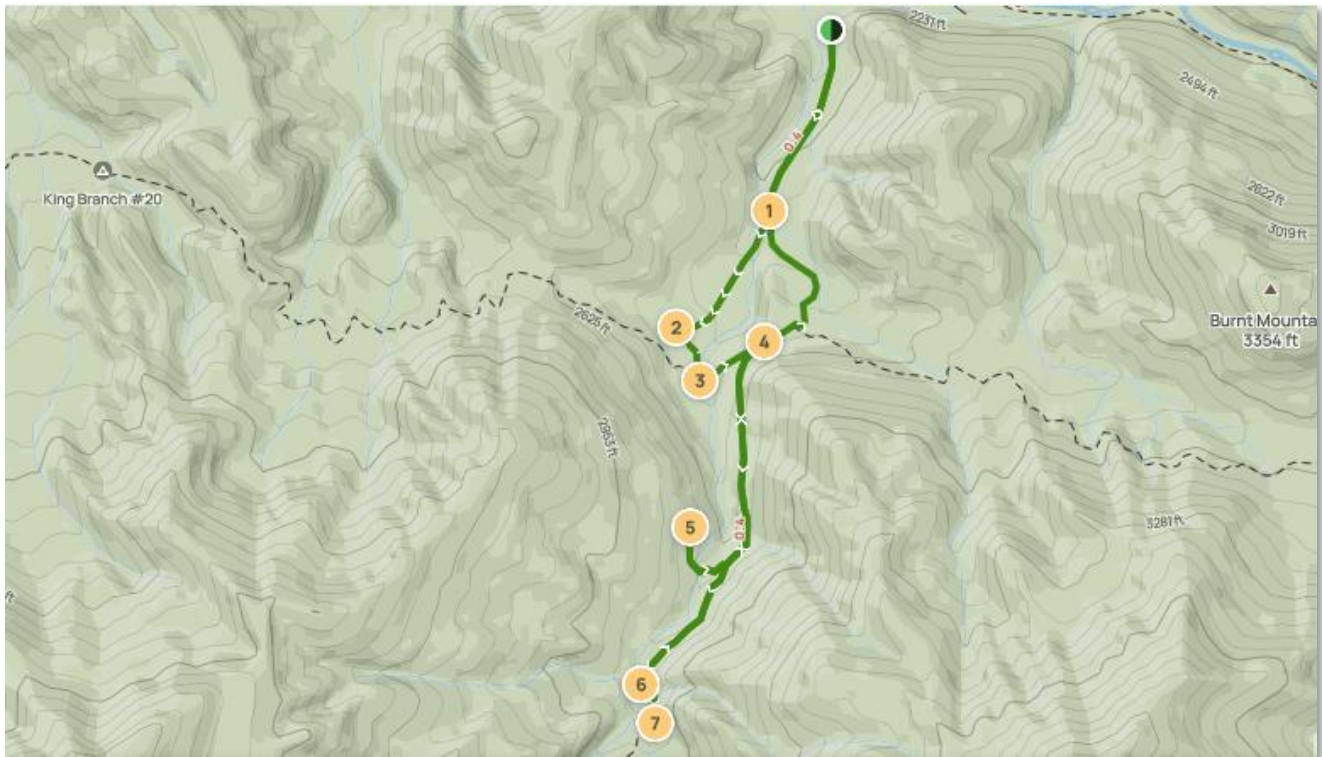


Avent Cabin

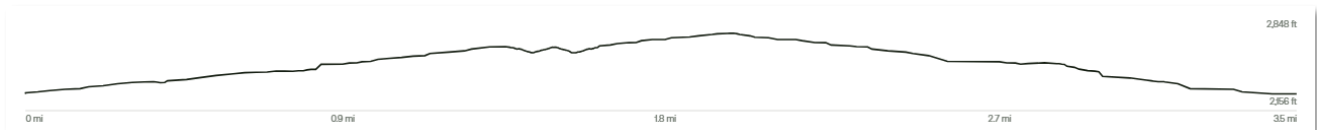
Out & Back

Jakes Creek, Stable, Meigs Mountain, Jakes Creek Trails

Trail Map



Elevation Profile



Trailhead

This hike begins at the gate on the old logging railroad grade out of the upper Elkmont parking lot, (also the parking lot for the restored cabins). The trail begins at the gate near where the road comes up from the lower parking lot.

Waypoints

- 1) Junction of Jakes Creek Trail and the "Stable Trail". Leave the Jakes Creek Trail and continue straight ahead on the "Stable Trail" (this is the name I have given this unofficial trail).
- 2) Stable where horses were kept when rangers actually patrolled the park on horses.
- 3) Junction with Meigs Mountain trail. Turn left.
- 4) Junction with Jakes Creek Trail. Turn Right.
- 5) Avent cabin (a.k.a. Artist's Cabin). This trail is easy to miss. See the Hike Description.
- 6) Small waterfall on Jakes Creek.
- 7) Bridge over Jakes Creek. End of hike.

Hike Description

This 3.5 mile Out & Back hike, with the exception of the unofficial side trail to the Avent Cabin, is over maintained trails that were formerly logging railroad grades. The hike starts at the upper parking lot in Elkmont, at the gate that marks the trailhead of the Jakes Creek Trail. Follow the old road uphill past former home sites where only chimneys and other assorted rockwork remain. In the process I would encourage you to leave the road and explore the old home sites, walking upstream along Jakes Creek. Imagine what it must have been like to live here, if only as a summer resident. You will encounter one home that is being restored.

As you approach the end of the cabin area, the Jakes Creek Trail will turn to the left (there is a trail sign marking this location). There is also an obvious road continuing straight ahead. I refer to this as the "Stable Trail". Leave the Jakes Creek Trail at this point and continue straight ahead. As you approach a bridge over Jakes Creek you will see evidence of a lane to a homesite (look for the rock wall). This was the home of "Uncle Lem Ownby" (Feb. 24, 1889 – Jan. 16, 1984). Marea (my wife) and I had the pleasure of a chance meeting with him at this vary spot on one of our visits here in the 70's. Uncle Lem was a legend in his time; I encourage you to go online and read more about him.

(In another of those decisions that I don't begin to understand, at Uncle Lem's death his lifetime home was almost immediately torn down. Yet, what were essentially small vacation properties, most of whose occupants were of no historical significance, those found beyond the parking lot, have been preserved.)

Continuing on, you will soon come to a stable and field. It was here that horses were kept for use by park rangers to patrol the backcountry. Again, in the 70's it was not unusual to encounter rangers on patrol in some of the most remote areas of the park.

At the stable you will notice that the old road you have been hiking becomes a loop. On the side of the loop furthest from the stable you will see a narrow manway leading east. Follow that manway and you will soon reach its junction with the Meigs Mountain Trail, straight ahead. Follow the Meigs Mountain Trail and cross Jakes Creek on a log bridge and then climb the hill. At the top you will come to another trail sign. Turn sharp right to rejoin the Jakes Creek Trail.

Note: From this point on I suggest that you hike the right side of the trail so you will be able to see the unofficial and unmaintained trail to the Avent Cabin. The trail you are looking for is about ½ mile from where you rejoined the Jakes Creek Trail. There are no trail signs. You are looking for a set of old step logs that drop steeply from the Jakes Creek Trail. If there are no log steps, this is not the trail you are looking for.

Use caution going down this unmaintained trail, especially when the path is wet. You will soon come to another log bridge. Again, be careful. On the other side the trail turns to your right and rises quickly to the old log cabin. The door to the cabin is at the back and will be held closed with a large rock. Once inside, you will see the door to the porch, also held closed with a rock. Finally, on the porch you will see the kitchen to your left. The cooks among you will love this kitchen; it had spring water run to the sink. Cooking was done in the fireplace, and the refrigerator was in the springhouse (no longer standing). On the kitchen counter is a notebook where you can record your visit and make comments. Enjoy your stay. It's a great place for lunch or a trail snack. When you leave be sure to lock all the doors just as you found them.

Take care as you return to the Jakes Creek Trail and then turn right. You are going to hike to the next bridge over Jakes Creek before turning back. Waypoint #6 on the map is a small cascade and waterfall on Jakes Creek. You may notice a steel cable on the ground at this point, evidence again of the logging history in the park. Continuing on you will come to an area that was once a logging

yard; a place where logs were brought in from the surrounding mountains to be loaded onto flatbed rail cars to be carried back down to Elkmont on the railroad grades you hiked up.

Finally, as you return to Elkmont, when you get to the Meigs Mountain Trail Junction, just continue on the Jakes Creek Trail. You will pass the Cucumber Gap Trail before you begin a steep decent to the point where you left the Jakes Creek Trail to take the Stable Trail at the beginning of your hike.

Comments

The Jakes Creek Trail is the approach trail for a number of hikes that I hope to explore going forward. Using the Jakes Creek Trail as an approach trail will open up hundreds of miles of backcountry adventures.