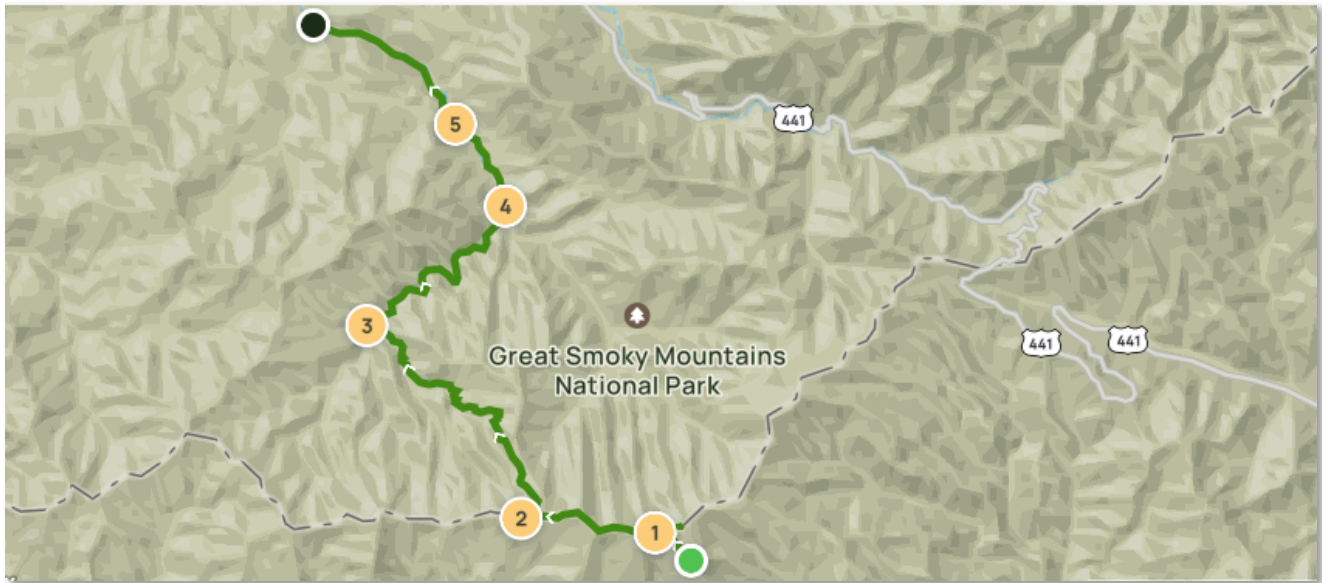


Kuwohi to Elkmont via The Goshen Prong Trail
Approach Trail, Appalachian Trail
Point-To-Point
Kuwohi Bypass, A.T., Goshen Prong, & Little River Trails
Trail Map



Elevation Profile



Trailhead

The trailhead is at the west end of the Kuwohi parking lot, at the bottom of the paved trail leading to the Kuwohi Observation Tower. To reach this trailhead drive US-441 from Gatlinburg to Newfound Gap. Just beyond the Newfound gap parking lot the road to Kuwohi turns to the right and proceeds 7.7 miles to the Kuwohi parking lot.

Waypoints

- 1) Kuwohi Bypass Trail joins the Appalachian Trail. Angle left (West).
- 2) Junction, Goshen Prong Trail.
- 3) Backcountry Campsite #23, Camp Creek.
- 4) Junction, Little River Trail.
- 5) Junction, Cucumber Gap Trail.

Hike Description

This Point-to-Point hike uses the Appalachian Trail south from Kuwohi as the approach trail. The A.T. is the logical approach to the Goshen Prong Trail since it is both shortest and easiest trail to our destination trail. Further, by using the A.T. as the approach trail, this 13.7 mile hike to the Elkmont Lower Parking Lot is virtually all downhill (see the map above).

The hike begins on the Kuwohi Bypass Trail and in about ½ mile it joins the Appalachian Trail. At this point you are less than 4/10 of a mile from the tower on the peak of Kuwohi. Given how short and downhill this hike is, you may want to make that detour so you can say officially that you hiked from the highest point in the park. Actually, the highest point on the entire Appalachian Trail. I have taken the liberty of adding that distance to your hike, bringing your total distance to 14.8 miles.

Now, that little detour behind you, head south on the A.T. in 1.9 miles, you will reach the junction with the Goshen Prong Trail. Your hike on the A.T. has ended. Turn right (north) and follow the Goshen Prong Trail downhill 4.4 miles to Backcountry Campsite #23; Camp Creek. The first mile of the hike down from the A.T. will probably be the most challenging due to the somewhat rocky trail and steep grade. Below that, the rest of the distance to Campsite #23 will not be quite as steep and the trail is generally stable and well maintained. Do be prepared for a couple of rock hops over small streams and some muddy sections in wet weather. In spring and following wet weather the stream crossings may be more challenging.

Campsite #23 is a short distance off the trail on a spur trail to your right. From the campsite to the Little River Trail junction is 3.3 miles. As you approach the campsite the Goshen Prong and a couple of small branches will combine with Fish Camp Prong. It will be the stream that you follow all the way to the Little River Crossing on the bridge just before the junction with the Little River Trail. About 1 mile after you leave the campsite look for War Branch Cascade on your right. A bit further downstream Fish Camp Cascade will be on your left. At the junction with the Little River Trail, you are about 3.5 miles from the lower parking lot at Elkmont.

In that section of your hike, you will pass the Huskey Gap Trail junction after which you will again cross the little river on a bridge. A bit further on you will pass the junction with the Cucumber Gap Trail and then the Huskey Branch Falls. The hike along the Little River through here is most enjoyable.

Comments

With a length of 14.8 miles and, with the exception of a short, easy climb to reach the peak of Kuwohi, the downhill trajectory of this hike makes it a moderate day hike, total distance certainly to be considered. Nonetheless, you may not want to dismiss the idea of spending the night at Campsite #23; Camp Creek. My recollection of this small campsite is that the sound of the stream is relaxing and the opportunity to relax and enjoy God's creation should not be set aside.

As you approach the end of your hike you may also want to consider turning left at the Cucumber Gap Trail Junction, hiking to the Jakes Creek Trail and then on into the Upper Parking Lot at Elkmont. If you undertake that option, I sincerely offer the following suggestion.

When you reach the junction of the Cucumber Gap Trail with the Jakes Creek Trail, trail signage will direct you to turn right on continue on the Jakes Creek Trail. Please don't! Instead turn left and follow the Jakes Creek Trail a short distance to its junction with the Megs Mountain Trail; to the right, leading downhill toward Jakes Creek. At the creek cross the log footbridge and continue gently up a short distance to a rock wall. The Megs Mountain crosses over the wall and continues to the left. You will hike straight ahead on an old, well used manway a short distance until coming out of the woods and onto a gravel road with an old horse stable straight ahead. When rangers patrolled the park on horseback (how I enjoyed those days) this was one of the stables where the horses were kept.

Turn right and follow the road through new growth forest, past old cabin locations (and one cabin being preserved) to the upper Elkmont parking lot.