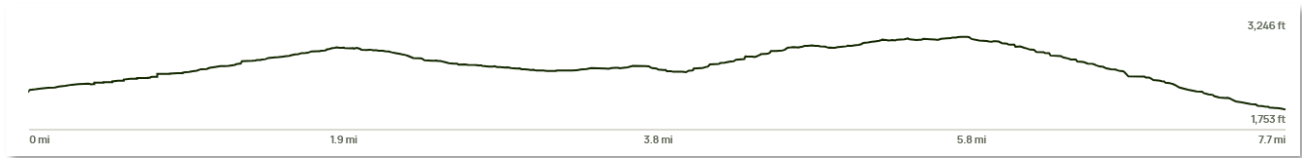


Elkmont to Huskey Gap Trailhead on US 441
Point-2-Point
Jakes Gap, Stable, Cucumber Gap, Little River, Huskey Gap Trails

Trail Map



Elevation Profile



Trailhead

Drive the Little River Road to the Elkmont Campground Road. Follow the campground road to the entrance to the campground. Just before the campground check-in station take the road to the left and follow it over the Little River, through the lower parking lot and up the hill to the upper parking lot and the restored cabins. Park here and look for the gated gravel road, the Jakes Creek Trail, heading south.

Waypoints

- 1) DO NOT follow the Jakes Creek Trail to the left at this point. Continue straight ahead on the road leading downhill and across a bridge. At the stable loop, follow the manway to the left. The Meigs Mountain Trail will come in on your right at a rock wall. Continue across the log bridge. At the trail junction at the top of a short climb you rejoin the Jakes Creek Trail. Continue straight ahead...
- 2) ...to the junction with the Cucumber Gap Trail on your right. Take it...
- 3) Stream crossing over Huskey Branch. Use caution.
- 4) Join the Little River Trail at the junction, turn right.
- 5) Cross the Little River on a bridge to the Junction with the Huskey Gap Trail, turn left.
- 6) Trail to Mile 53 Backcountry Campsite 21.
- 7) Intersection with Sugarland Mountain Trail, continue straight ahead.
- 8) Huskey Gap Trailhead on US 441.

Hike Description

This hike leaves the upper Elkmont parking lot where some of the remaining Elkmont Community Cabins have been preserved. Follow the Jakes Creek Trail through the gate on the old road heading south.

Note my instructions for Waypoints 1 & 2. Following the official Jakes Creek Trail at this point will result in a steep climb with absolutely no benefit. The only reason I see for this pointless detour is to keep park visitors from coming into contact with the stable where rangers horses were kept. Today, there are no horses, nor are there any horse patrols by rangers. Only another example of deteriorating maintenance of this national park.

Once you rejoin the Jakes Creek Trail it is a short walk to the junction with the Cucumber Gap Trail on your right. Turn right on the Cucumber Gap Trail. (The Jakes Creek Trail and its options are covered in other hikes.) Once on the Cucumber Gap Trail you will begin a gentle but steady climb to Cucumber Gap. Along the way, you will notice that this area

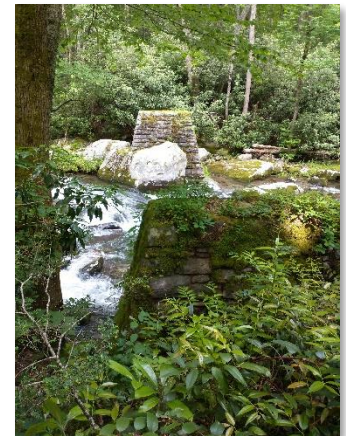
was heavily logged. The disturbed ground in the gap itself reveals a significant log loading area on a rail grade that descended to the main line along the Little River. Watch for signs of this activity as you head down the other side of the gap toward your junction with the Little River Trail.



The crossing of Huskey Branch will be a wet one unless you are there in a dry season. (Take an extra pair of socks and just get on with it.) But be careful! This would not be a good place to end your hike. Hiking sticks are always appropriate gear, even for young hikers who don't think they need them.

When you reach the junction with the Little River Trail, turn right. In about 0.3 miles you will cross the Little River on what was once a logging railroad bridge. Just across the bridge turn left on the Husky Gap Trail.

You will soon come to a somewhat open area on your left with access to the river. Take a little time here to explore the history of logging in the area before (and even for a few years after) the formation of the national park. In the logging days there was a significant railroad bridge here that allowed the Little River Lumber Company to move logs from the slopes of Sugarland Mountain to the mill in the Elkmont area. The rail line that crossed the Little River here joined the rail line near the junction of the Little River Trail and the Cucumber Gap Trail, which you passed earlier in your hike.



The trail will then pass a side trail to Backcountry Campsite #21 ("Mile 53" campsite). Here again, there is considerable evidence of farm activity. Once the area was logged, in many ways it made farming easier, both in terms of cleared ground and in moving produce to market.



The trail will now begin to climb toward the intersection with the Sugarland Mountain Trail. In the spring of the year the wildflowers are incredible, especially from mid-May through mid-June when the Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron are in bloom. Late fall through early spring, when the leaves are off the trees, opens wonderful views of the surrounding mountains.

The intersection with the Sugarland Mountain Trail is an excellent place to pause, enjoy your lunch, or perhaps just a snack. From here on the hike is gently downhill to the trailhead parking area on US 441.

Comments

When you get to the end of your hike, after you load up for your return home, I would encourage you to take some time on the "Quiet Walkway" trail leading downhill out of the parking lot. Don't stop where it stops. You are headed for the West Prong of the Little River. Everywhere I have explored on either side of this river through this area I have been amazed by what I have encountered. Enjoy!

Some more photos

