

**OUTDOOR ADVENTURE:
 AREA HIKING TRAILS
 ACCESS POINTS**

1 Ocoee Whitewater Center Trails

Cohutta Wilderness Trailheads

- 2** Jacks River Falls
- 3** Jacks River Trail

Benton MacKaye Trail - - - - -

- 4** Hemp Top
- 5** Fall Branch Falls
- 7** Swinging Bridge
- 8** Long Creek Falls

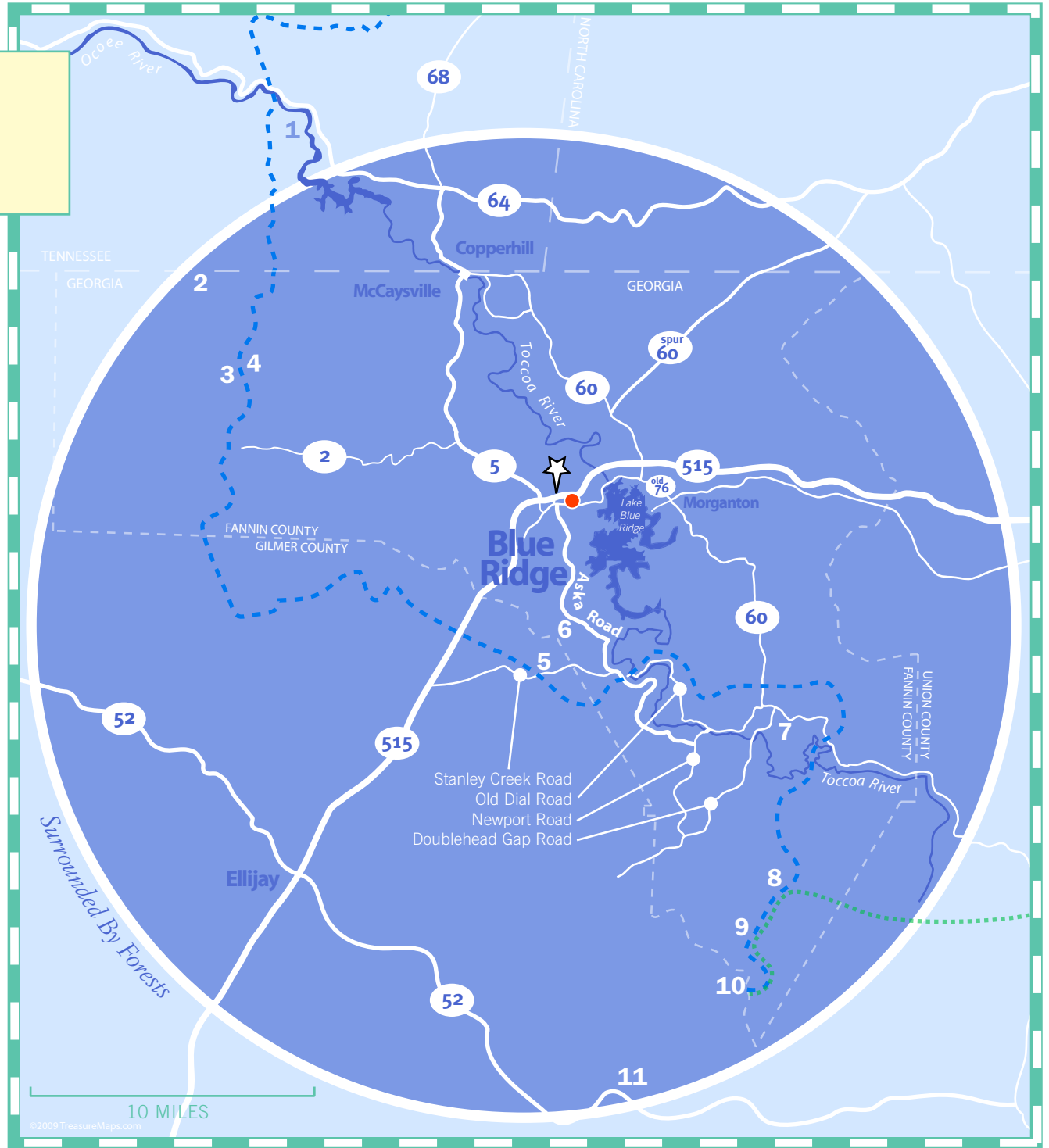
6 Aska Trails Area

Appalachian Trail - - - - -

- 9** Three Forks
- 10** Springer Mountain

11 Amicalola Falls & Trails

- **Welcome Center**
- ☆ **Windy Ridge Road** to Aska Road. Turn here off 515, go one block to 3 way stop, go left and a quick right onto Aska Road.



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Easiest More Difficult Most Difficult

The hiking trails of Fannin County include some of the most legendary in the USA. The famous Appalachian Trail begins here, the Benton MacKaye (pron. mack-eye) winds throughout the county and the Aska Trails area is great for novices and experts alike. For detailed info consult the US Forest Service web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. Also log on to the Benton MacKaye Trail Association web site at www.bmta.org. Trailhead numbers on the map match numbers below:

1 Ocoee Whitewater Center Trails. In addition to whitewater sports, the center has a one-mile hiking trail which crosses a 330 foot suspension bridge and circles the center. The trail is entirely accessible for those who are physically challenged. There are an additional 20 miles of trails for hikers and mountain bikers. From Blue Ridge take GA 5 north to McCaysville, then turn left on Tennessee Highway 68. In Ducktown, take U.S. 64 west to the Ocoee Whitewater Center on the left.

2 Jacks River Falls. Located in the Cohutta Wilderness Area on the Jacks River, this beautiful waterfall is the most visited site in the Cohutta and is reached by a 3.5 mile trail through rugged wilderness. It is highly recommended to get the USFS map of the Cohutta Wilderness and carry the 10 essentials. For the shortest hike in, approach from the northwest access point. Start in Ellijay and drive Hwy 52 west to Chatsworth. From Chatsworth, go north on US 411 for 13 miles to Cisco. Turn right on Old Hwy 2. Continue on this road 10 miles to FS 62 on the right. Turn right on FS 62 and go 4.4 miles to the Beech Bottom Trailhead. Hiking experience recommended.

3 Jacks River Trail. This 16.5 mile long trail shown starting at Dally Gap descends to Jacks River where there are a number of river crossings, depending on how far you hike. These can be dangerous at times of high, cold water. Better to stop at the first river crossing and turn back. From Blue Ridge travel 3.9 miles north on Hwy 5 to Hwy 2 and go west until the road turns into a gravel Forest Service road to Watson Gap. From the four-way intersection at Watson Gap turn right and uphill onto FS 22, then travel 3.4 miles to the trailhead at Dally Gap. The trail heads downhill past the bulletin board. Advanced hiking experience strongly recommended.

4 Hemp Top. A hike to one of the highest points in the Cohutta Wilderness. From Blue Ridge travel north on Hwy 5 3.9 miles to Hwy 2 and go west until the road turns into a gravel Forest Service road to Watson Gap. From the four-way intersection at Watson Gap turn right and uphill onto FS 22,

then travel 3.4 miles to the trailhead at Dally Gap. The trail heads uphill to the right. It is highly recommended to get the USFS map of the Cohutta Wilderness, carry the 10 essentials.

5 Fall Branch Falls. A double waterfall with mountain laurel and rhododendron growing along the trail and creek bank. The hike to the falls is about 30 minutes round trip. In Blue Ridge, follow Aska Road south for eight miles. Turn right on Stanley Creek Rd. (Toccoa Riverside Restaurant is on the left). The trailhead is about three miles on the right (.2 miles from where pavement ends). TIPS: never climb on a waterfall. It is very slippery and dangerous. There is a nice platform in front of the falls. Always stay on marked trails. Vegetation in the wilderness is fragile and stepping off the trail crushes small plants & causes impact that lasts for years.

6 Aska Trails – A hiking and biking trail system 17 miles in length and open year-round. From the start of Aska Road in Blue Ridge go 4.4 miles to the trailhead for the Deep Gap portion of the Aska Trails. Another trailhead is located .4 miles from Deep Gap on Shady Falls Road. Trails range from 1 to 5.5 miles and are open all year. Suitable for all levels of hikers but portions of the trails can be strenuous.

7 Swinging Bridge. A 260-foot suspension bridge crosses the Toccoa River on the Benton MacKaye Trail. From the McDonalds in Blue Ridge, take Hwy 515 east about 4 miles to Hwy 60 and turn right, follow to Morganton. There, turn right toward Dahlonega for 11.3 miles following Hwy 60 south

passing Skeenah Mill. Another .7 miles on the right is FS 816, turn right and follow gravel road about 3 miles to the parking area. Short hike down to the Toccoa River & Swinging Bridge.

8 Long Creek Falls. Go 13.5 miles south on Aska Road to its end. Turn right onto Newport Road, go 4.5 miles to end. Turn left onto Doublehead Gap Road, cross a concrete bridge and come to a dirt gravel road. Continue on this road .3 miles to the intersection with dirt-gravel FS Road 58, intersecting sharply from the right. Continue east into the forest and uphill 5.3 miles to Three Forks. Noontootla Creek is on the right as you ascend. The trail begins on the north side of the road and starts as a gradual hike alongside Long Creek. There are three short ascents before reaching the blue blazed side trail to the falls at 1.1 miles.

9 Three Forks. A junction of the Appalachian Trail and Benton MacKaye Trail. See directions above.

10 Springer Mountain. This is the starting point of the Appalachian Trail on its 2,200 mile journey north to Maine. You can start a 3.7 mile hike to Springer from Three Forks. From Blue Ridge, take Aska Rd., 13.5 miles until it dead ends into Newport Road. Turn right on Newport, go 4.5 miles until it dead ends into Doublehead Gap. Turn right on Doublehead Gap and go 2 miles to FS road 42 (on the left). Turn left and go approximately 6.5 to 7 miles to parking area on your left.

11 Amicalola Falls & Trails. About 21 miles from Ellijay on Hwy 52 is a spectacular 729-foot falls, the tallest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi River. An 8.5 mile approach trail leads from the park to Springer Mountain.

A Word to the Wise ... Be prepared for wilderness. See the USFS web site at www.fs.fed.us/conf/. The law of the forest is "leave no trace." See www.LNT.org for info. Please pack in all you will need and pack out all your trash. If you build a fire, never leave it unattended. Use good judgment when hiking, particularly around waterfalls where rocks are often wet, moss covered and slippery. If hiking during hunting season, wear a brightly colored vest. Unexpected encounters with animals can be pleasurable or problematic. A hawk or owl soaring silently above is a pleasure. Watch for woodpeckers, turkeys and mountain grouse near the forest edges. The flash of a white-tail deer is an every day occurrence. More rare is sighting a black bear or bobcat. Most animals will flee the presence of humans, but be on the lookout for copperheads, wasps, yellow jackets and other biting, stinging critters. For more information, gear and planned hikes, visit Blue Ridge Mountain Outfitters, 500 Main Street, Blue Ridge. Fannin County Chamber & Welcome Center is at 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513 1-800-899-MTNS

