

Lower Falls Trail

Length: 1.7 miles from lake to Lower Falls

Difficulty: Moderate —Most of the trail is easy but there are some uphill

Features: Follows the course of Disharoon Creek with a wide variety of flora and fauna. In the spring, wild flowers, shrubs, and trees are in bloom, and deer are plentiful. Summer brings cool water to wade in, and fall shows her abundant color. Even winter can be beautiful with icicles where water cascades over the rocks.

The Grand Finale of this trail is the Lower Falls. Bring your camera as it is a great place for family pictures. One caution, moss makes the rocks slippery, so be very careful.

Getting There: From the Fitness Center: Follow the trail to the left of the building. Cross the bridge and follow along the lake until it intersects with the Lower Falls Trail.

From Wilderness Parkway: Parking is available between the intersections with Wild Ginger and Valley View Dr. Look for signs. Access the trail right as the road enters the parking lot. Go to the right toward the Lower Falls.

Parking lot at Yellow Root: Use the access trail from the parking lot to reach the Jeep Trail. Turn right on the Jeep Trail until it crosses / intersects with the Lower Falls Trail.

Upper Falls Trail

Length: 0.8 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Features: Walk along a very secluded area surrounded by a plethora of native evergreens. You will follow a small stream and enjoy the ferns growing in the moist areas under the towering hardwoods.

This trail culminates in the beautiful Upper Falls with the stream cascading over a steep rock. Carry your lunch and picnic on the tables at the Upper Falls and listen to the Falls during your meal.

Getting there: There are two ways to reach the Upper Falls Trail:

Mountain Mint: Park at the end of Mountain Mint and follow the Jeep Trail to the access point for the Upper Falls. Join the trail there
From the Lower Falls Trail: Follow the Lower Falls Trail to the Lower Falls, you join the Upper Falls Trail across the road from the Lower Falls.

Cabin Loop Trail

Length: 0.2 miles

Difficulty: Easy

Features: The Cabin Loop joins the Jeep Trail and the Lower Falls Trail. This is a great trail to take your time and explore. One arm of the trail follows alongside a small stream. Not only can you enjoy the sounds of running water, but along stream banks are one the best places to see the native flowers in season. You can explore the pioneer cabin and imagine living with a family of 10 or 12 in a home the size of some of today's living rooms. On the other hand, sit on the porch and imagine the tranquility they had that we have lost so much of today.

Getting there: The Cabin Loop Trail can be accessed at the cabin on the Jeep Trail. By parking on Yellow Root and walking down the access path, you will emerge at the cabin. You can also access this trail off the Lower Falls Trail between the Lower Falls and Wilderness Parkway (see the map).

Nancy Womack Trail

Length: 0.8 miles

Difficulty: Downstream of Valley View this trail is easy. Be careful of stream crossings and slippery rocks. Upstream of Valley View the trail is steeper and requires more effort.

Caution: Poison ivy is dense approaching the falls. Suggest long pants.

Features: This trail is one of the most beautiful in Big Canoe. The upper end of the trail follows a small, rapidly moving stream up a valley with steep hills on either side. There are multiple stream crossings with rocks and mini waterfalls. The grand finale is a bench overlooking Nancy Womack Falls, a 50ft. cascade.

Below Valley View, you walk across a "stone field" before winding along the creek to the end at the Jeep Trail. Follow the Jeep Trail to the right and enjoy the Upper Falls while you are there.

Getting There: From Valley View: The stream trail crosses Valley View at the lowest point between Huckleberry and Columbine Dr. Parking available for 3 or 4 cars there.

From the Jeep Trail near the tipper Falls: Near the picnic tables at the Upper Falls, there is a sign that says "hiker return". Follow the path behind the sign and turn left on the Jeep Trail. Follow this until you see the sign for the Nancy Womack Trail on your left — about 75 yds.

Jeep Trail

Length: 2 miles

Difficulty: Easy — unpaved road

Features: Walk, jog, or bike on an unpaved road that parallels Disharoon Creek through a broad, flat valley. Wade in the clear waters of the creek at the crossings and look for animal tracks in the mud.

Disharoon Cabin typifies early mountain homes on the Big Canoe property. It was dismantled, moved, and rebuilt in Nature Valley. The mud chinking came from the creek near the existing site.

On the left of the Jeep Trail, where the Lower Falls trail crosses, are rock mounds built by either pioneers or Native Americans. The purpose or origin of these mounds is not known. Also along the trail are the "Diggings". These are probably the result of back-breaking labor —by some long ago prospector or maybe Cherokee Indians, who were native to the area. Just before you reach the Lower Falls on the left is a replica of a moonshine still. These stills were the source of the original 'Mountain Dew'.

You will not have any trouble finding the Lower Falls, one of the most photographed sites in Big Canoe. Between the Lower and Upper Falls is a large area of ferns. The Upper Falls, higher and narrower, has carved its own path through solid rock.

Getting There: Mountain Mint: Park at the end of the road. Yellow Root: Park at the end. Follow the path to the Jeep Trail

Wilderness Pkwy: Parking available between intersections of Wild Ginger and Valley View Dr. Look for signs.



Covered Bridge Trail / John Williams Trail / Blackwell Creek Trail

Length: 2 miles round trip loop

Difficulty: Moderate. There is one steep hilt with several steps

Features: Trails feature hemlocks, rhododendron and mountain laurel. Blackwell Creek flows over a rock ledge and around huge boulders. A rock in the middle of the creek is a great place to dangle your feet or have a picnic. Along the creek below the covered bridge are stacked stone columns, remnants of a bridge over 100 yrs. old. Wild flowers grace parts of the trail in spring and summer. A rare Mountain Camellia blooms in late June. Please do not pick the flower. Evergreens on this trail make it green all seasons of the year.

The John Williams Trail leaves Trotters Ln. and follows a gentle slope to Blackwell Creek. Continue along the left stream bank all the way to the covered bridge. (Hikers may extend their walk by crossing under the bridge and joining the Blackwell Creek Trail.) Return to your car by following the trail back along the other side of the creek. Continue to the end of the trail near the big rock in the creek and then loop back to the wooden bridge. Cross the bridge and go left to your car.

Getting there: To John Williams Trail follow Wilderness Pkwy to Equestrian Neighborhood. Stay left onto Hunters Trace and Trotters Ln. Park in small lot on right just before road ends. Trailhead is across the street.

To Blackwell Creek Trail follow Wilderness Pkwy to Blackwell Creek Neighborhood. At dead end turn right then immediately turn left onto Blackwell Creek Way. Shortly, you will see parking on the left with the trailhead across the street.

Indian Rocks Park Trail

Length: Total length 0.8 miles; divided into three (3) trails.

Indian Mounds Trail is 0.3 miles,

Indian Mounds Loop Trail is 0.2 miles and the

Lake Petit Trail is 0.3 miles

Difficulty: Easy

Features: You do not want to miss the "Indian Rocks". Multiple round, stone stacks built by native Americans cover the hillside near the start of Indian Rocks Park Trail. Stop to read the signs and speculate on why and when the structures were built. You can then follow the small stream down to Lake Petit. Along the way, contemplate how this small stream has carved crevices into solid rock over the eons. Before heading back to your car, take a few minutes and look for the ducks that nest along this inlet of Lake Petit.

Indian Mounds Trail begins at the parking area on Woodland Trace and ends at Quail Cove.

Indian Mounds Loop Trail has a blue blaze and forks to the left from the Indian Mounds Trail when you cross the stream eventually rejoining the Indian Mounds Trail. The Lake Petit Trail is the continuation of the Indian Mounds Trail across Quail Cove to Lake Petit. It also has a blue blaze.

Getting There: The easiest way to find this trail is to cross the Petit Lake Dam, stay right at the fork onto Petit Ridge, turn right on Quail Cove, then left onto Woodland Trace. Parking is available on Woodland Trace across from the intersection with Little Beaver.



McDaniels Meadows

Length: 2.5 miles

Difficulty: Easy - reasonably flat with crushed stone paths. If you approach from the parking lot in the Wildcat Recreation Area, there is one steep hill to climb.

Features: Wander alongside a perfusion of wild flowers whose colors change with the bloom pattern of the season. Don't forget to linger on the small bridge near the parking lot to appreciate the plants, amphibians and fish along and in the stream. A don't miss part of McDaniel Meadows is where it crosses Yanegwa Path. This is a heavily shaded, moist area, with lots of ferns. Take time to observe how the stream has eroded the soil away from the roots of the trees leaving them standing on "fingers" along the stream edge. If your dog comes with you, they will enjoy a romp without a leash in the dog park. Bicycles are allowed on the paths in McDaniel Meadows.

Getting There: The parking for McDaniel Meadows is along Wilderness Parkway near the North Gate. You can also park in the Wildcat Recreation Area lot on Wildcat Parkway, walk the trails around the ball field and follow the paved trail down the valley over to McDaniel Meadows.

Waterford Lakes Trail

Length: 1.2 miles

Difficulty: Easy - moving from the lower lake to the upper lake is a little steep.

Features: The Waterford Lakes Trail loops around two small lakes featuring nesting waterfowl on small islands in the lower lake. If you look closely, you can see bream, crappie and bass floating among the tree tops remaining along the lake edges. In the Fall, the dam is covered with wild flowers.

Getting there: Exit Wilderness Parkway onto Wedgewood Drive, turn left onto Waterford Way into Waterford Estates. Continue on Waterford Way and park on either side of the dam. The trail is a loop and can be entered on either side of the dam.

Disharoon Lake Trail

Length: 0.6 miles

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

Features: Hike along the edge of Disharoon Lake and watch the fish and people in the lake. In the summer, you may see turtles sunning on logs or floating with just their heads out of the water. This trail, like most in Big Canoe, is blessed with large Rhododendron and Mountain Laurel whose bloom you can enjoy in late spring or early summer. Hike in the early morning or near sundown and you may see deer grazing on the golf course as you pass by. This trail links up with the Wild Flower Trail, Lower Falls Trails and the Jeep Trail.

Getting There: Park at the Fitness Center. Look for the sign where the trail begins to the left of the Indoor Tennis Court between the Tennis Court and Wolf Scratch Drive.

See the map for Wildcat and Village trails.