

**FIVE-STAR TRAILS**

# **SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE**

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**SPECTACULAR HIKES**

**Near Greenville, Spartanburg,  
Oconee, and Pickens Counties**

**SHERRY JACKSON**



**FIVE-STAR TRAILS**

# **SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE**

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# **Five-Star Trails: South Carolina Upstate Spectacular Hikes Near Greenville, Spartanburg, Oconee, and Pickens Counties**

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For information about trail and other closures, check the "Contact" listings in the hike profiles.

**FIVE-STAR TRAILS**

# **SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE**

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## **SPECTACULAR HIKES**

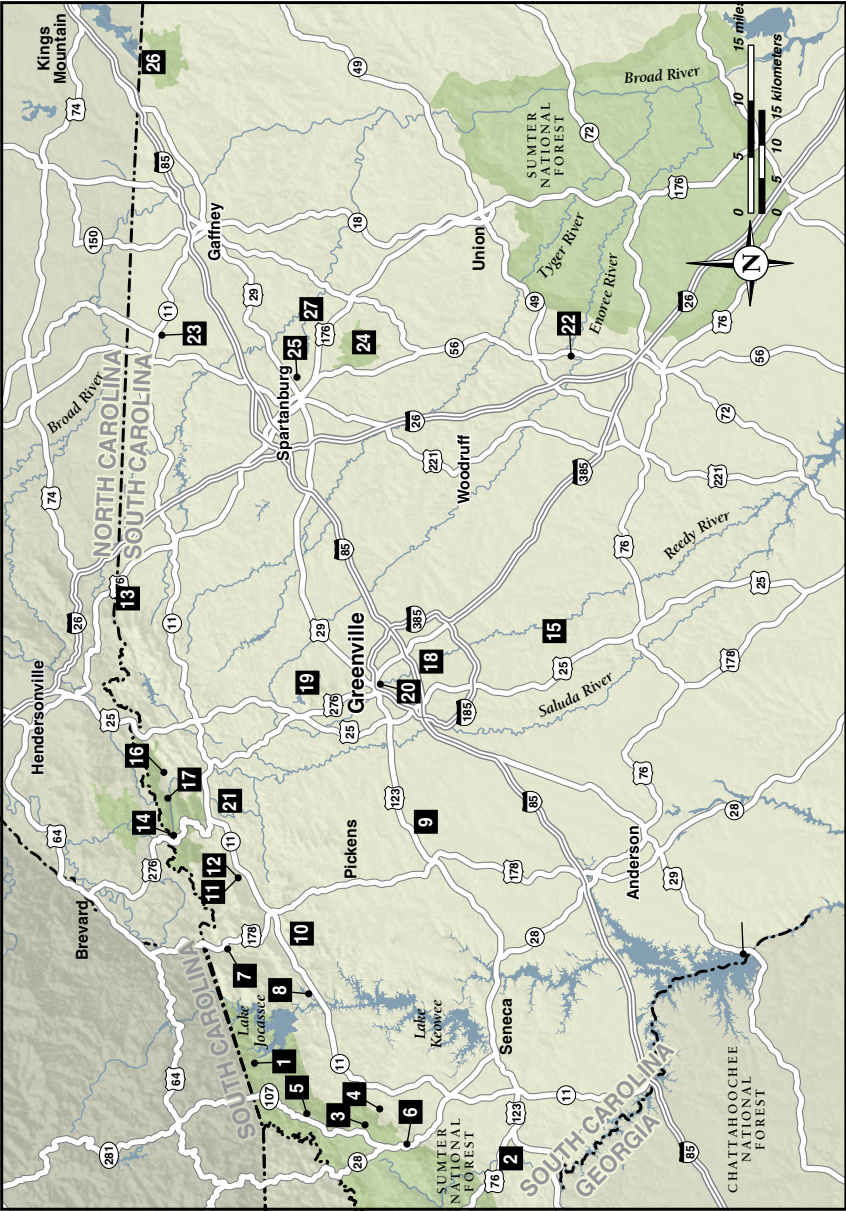
**Near Greenville, Spartanburg,  
Oconee, and Pickens Counties**

**SHERRY JACKSON**





# South Carolina Upstate Overview Map





# Contents

**SOUTH CAROLINA UPSTATE OVERVIEW MAP** opposite page

**DEDICATION** vii

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** vii

**PREFACE** viii

**RECOMMENDED HIKES** ix

**INTRODUCTION** 1

**MAP LEGEND** 2

## **Anderson and Oconee Counties 16**

- 1 Bad Creek: Lower Whitewater Falls Trail . . . . . 18
- 2 Chau Ram County Park . . . . . 23
- 3 Oconee State Park: Old Waterwheel Trail . . . . . 27
- 4 Oconee Station: Interpretive Nature Trail and  
Station Cove Trail . . . . . 31
- 5 Winding Stairs Trail . . . . . 35
- 6 Yellow Branch Falls . . . . . 40
- Bonus Hikes in Oconee County** . . . . . 44

## **Pickens County 46**

- 7 Eastatoe Creek Heritage Preserve Trail . . . . . 48
- 8 Keowee-Toxaway State Park: Raven Rock Trail. . . . . 52
- 9 Nalley Brown Nature Park: Nalley Trail . . . . . 58
- 10 Nine Times Preserve . . . . . 62
- 11 Table Rock State Park: Carrick Creek Trail . . . . . 66
- 12 Table Rock State Park: Table Rock Trail . . . . . 71

## **Greenville County 76**

- 13 Blue Wall Passage of the Palmetto Trail and  
Waterfall Loop . . . . . 78
- 14 Caesars Head State Park: Raven Cliff Falls . . . . . 82
- 15 Cedar Falls Park Trail. . . . . 86
- 16 Jones Gap State Park: Falls Trail. . . . . 90
- 17 Jones Gap State Park: Rainbow Falls Trail . . . . . 94
- 18 Lake Conestee Nature Preserve . . . . . 98
- 19 Paris Mountain State Park: Brissy Ridge Trail . . . . . 102

FIVE-STAR TRAILS

20 Swamp Rabbit Trail: Cleveland Park to  
Linky Stone Park . . . . . 107

21 Wildcat Branch Falls Trail . . . . . 112

**Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties 116**

22 Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site:  
British Camp and Battlefield Trails . . . . . 118

23 Cowpens Battlefield Trail . . . . . 122

24 Croft State Park Nature Trail . . . . . 126

25 Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve . . . . . 130

26 Kings Mountain . . . . . 135

27 Pacolet River Heritage Trust Preserve:  
Lawson’s Fork Trail . . . . . 140

**Appendixes and Index 144**

APPENDIX A: OUTDOOR RETAILERS 144

APPENDIX B: HIKING CLUBS 145

INDEX 147

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 158



## Dedication

*This book is for everyone who enjoys hiking the gorgeous and varied landscape in the Upstate of South Carolina.*



## Acknowledgments

**SPECIAL THANKS GO TO MY HUSBAND, PHIL**, who trekked every single mile with me, again; my son, Justin; and my family and friends who kept encouraging me. A special shout-out to the park rangers who helped me along the way and the volunteers and outdoor enthusiasts who keep our beautiful trails in the Upstate maintained so everyone can enjoy them.

—*Sherry Jackson*



# Preface

**WHEN MY PUBLISHER CONTACTED ME TO DO AN UPDATE TO THIS HIKING GUIDE**, I had just returned to South Carolina after a three-year stint in Arizona. I had desperately missed the people, mountains, trails, and lakes of the Upstate. Coming back was a true homecoming. This is where I'm meant to be.

The trail system in the Upstate is quite extensive, and hikes range from day hikes, covered in the following pages, to multiday hikes along the Foothills and Appalachian Trails. Our trails are diverse, ranging from easy paths just minutes away from metropolitan areas to strenuous trails where you feel more like you are climbing mountains. And the views—well, they're downright incredible. We have some of the best mountains and parks in the South, and our many breathtaking waterfalls lure hikers to the trails.

In this second edition, I've included some new trails I've discovered and discarded some that weren't quite up to par. As before, I tried to include a good variety of easy, moderate, and strenuous hikes in all areas of the Upstate's six counties. All of the trips I've chosen can be done by any able-bodied person. I love to hike, but I've never been athletic—so if I can do it, *you* can do it. Get outside and hit the trails!

—S. J.



# Recommended Hikes

## Best for Dogs

- 13 Blue Wall Passage of the Palmetto Trail and Waterfall Loop (p. 78)
- 25 Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve (p. 130)
- 27 Pacolet River Heritage Trust Preserve: Lawson's Fork Trail (p. 140)

## Best for Fall Color

- 2 Chau Ram County Park (p. 23)
- 10 Nine Times Preserve (p. 62)
- 19 Paris Mountain State Park: Brissy Ridge Trail (p. 102)

## Best for History

- 22 Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site: British Camp and Battlefield Trails (p. 118)
- 23 Cowpens Battlefield Trail (p. 122)
- 26 Kings Mountain (p. 135)

## Best for Kids

- 4 Oconee Station: Interpretive Nature Trail and Station Cove Trail (p. 31)
- 9 Nalley Brown Nature Park: Nalley Trail (p. 58)
- 20 Swamp Rabbit Trail: Cleveland Park to Linky Stone Park (p. 107)
- 24 Croft State Park Nature Trail (p. 126)

## Best for Nature

- 3 Oconee State Park: Old Waterwheel Trail (p. 27)

- 7 Eastatoe Creek Heritage Preserve Trail (p. 48)
- 11 Table Rock State Park: Carrick Creek Trail (p. 66)
- 16 Jones Gap State Park: Falls Trail (p. 90)
- 18 Lake Conestee Nature Preserve (p. 98)

## Best for Scenery

- 8 Keowee-Toxaway State Park: Raven Rock Trail (p. 52)
- 12 Table Rock State Park: Table Rock Trail (p. 71)
- 14 Caesars Head State Park: Raven Cliff Falls (p. 82)

## Best for Seclusion

- 1 Bad Creek: Lower Whitewater Falls Trail (p. 18)
- 7 Eastatoe Creek Heritage Preserve Trail (p. 48)

## Best for Waterfalls

- 1 Bad Creek: Lower Whitewater Falls Trail (p. 18)
- 6 Yellow Branch Falls (p. 40)
- 11 Table Rock State Park: Carrick Creek Trail (p. 66)
- 15 Cedar Falls Park Trail (p. 86)
- 17 Jones Gap State Park: Rainbow Falls Trail (p. 94)
- 21 Wildcat Branch Falls Trail (p. 112)





**RAINBOW FALLS AT JONES GAP STATE PARK** *(See Hike 17, page 94.)*





# Introduction

## About This Book

*Five Star Trails: South Carolina Upstate* features 27 spectacular hikes near Greenville, Spartanburg, Oconee, and Pickens Counties. Thank you for picking up the second edition of this book, which features several new hikes, along with some updates to popular trails that have changed course.

While the criteria vary regarding which counties are officially part of the Upstate, I've focused on the six main counties, grouping them into four sections as you would travel: from Anderson and Oconee Counties in the state's western terrain northward to Pickens County, then arcing eastward to Greenville and, finally, swooping northeastward to Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties. Together, these locations create a broad semicircle from the Georgia border up and around just south of the North Carolina line.

- ★ **Anderson County** includes the city of Anderson. **Oconee County** sits at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Often referred to as the Mountain Lakes region, the area is home to world-class lakes, rivers, parks, and waterfalls.
- ★ **Pickens County**, the gateway to the mountainous region of the Upstate, contains perhaps some of the greatest scenery and hiking adventures, with Table Rock State Park, Lake Keowee, and Lake Jocassee.
- ★ **Greenville County** ranks largest in the Upstate and includes the cities of Greenville, Mauldin, Simpsonville, and Travelers Rest. A major portion of Upstate residents can easily reach trails in this area for an after-work or quick weekend jaunt.
- ★ **Spartanburg County** is the second largest in the Upstate in terms of population. "Born from the revolution," this county is home to Musgrove Mill, a significant Revolutionary War site. Its companion in this book, **Cherokee County**, encompasses anything north of Spartanburg and includes Cowpens and Kings Mountain, both significant historical sites.








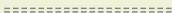
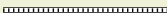


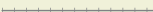

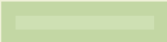
































## How to Use This Guidebook

### Overview Map, Regional Maps, and Map Legend

The overview map on page iv depicts the location of the primary trailhead for all of the hikes described in this book. The numbers shown on the overview map pair with the table of contents on the facing page. Each hike's number is also listed in the corresponding regional chapter's table of contents and overview

map, as well as on the opening page of each hike profile. The four regional overview maps provide more detail than the main overview map, bringing you closer to the hikes in their respective chapters. A legend explaining the map symbols used throughout the book appears below.

Trail Maps

			
Featured trail	Alternate trail	Directional arrows	Off-map pointer
<hr/>			
			
Interstate	Major road	Minor road	
<hr/>			
			
Unpaved road	Boardwalk	Stairs	
<hr/>			
			
Power line	Railroad	Borderline	
<hr/>			
			
Park/forest	Water body	River/creek/ intermittent stream	
<hr/>			
 Baseball field	 Horse trail	 Playground	
 Bench	 Information	 Primitive campsite	
 Bicycle trail	 Monument	 Restroom	
 Bridge	 Overlook	 Ruins	
 Cabin	 Paddleboard access	 Scenic view	
 Camping	 Parking	 Shelter	
 Canoe access	 Park office	 Stable	
 Fishing	 Peak	 Trailhead	
 Gate	 Picnic area	 Viewing platform	
 General point of interest	 Picnic shelter	 Waterfall	

In addition to the overview and regional maps, a detailed map of each hike's route appears with its profile. On this map, symbols indicate the trailhead, the complete route, significant features, facilities, and topographic landmarks such as creeks, overlooks, and peaks.

To produce the highly accurate maps in this book, I used a handheld GPS unit to gather data while hiking each route, then sent that data to the publisher's cartographers. However, your GPS is not a substitute for sound, sensible navigation that considers the conditions you observe while hiking.

Further, despite the high quality of the maps in this guidebook, the publisher and I strongly recommend you always carry an additional map, such as the ones noted in each profile opener's "Maps" listing.

## **Elevation Profile**

This diagram represents the rises and falls of the trail as viewed from the side, over the complete distance (in miles) of that trail. On the diagram's vertical axis, or height scale, the number of feet indicated between each tick mark lets you visualize the climb. To avoid making flat hikes look steep and steep hikes appear flat, varying height scales provide an accurate image of each hike's climbing challenge. For example, one hike's scale might rise from 1,145 feet to 3,134 feet, as on the Table Rock Trail (see Hike 12, page 71), while the Musgrove Mill trails (Hike 22, page 118) start at 396 and 433 feet and go only to 524 and 529 feet. Not all hikes include an elevation profile, especially relatively flat greenways and lake loops.

## **The Hike Profile**

Each profile opens with the hike's star ratings, trailhead GPS coordinates, and other key information—from the trail's distance and configuration to contacts for local information. Each profile also includes a map (see "Trail Maps," above). The main text for each profile includes four sections: Overview, Route Details, Nearby Attractions, and Directions (for driving to the trailhead area). See page 6 for more information.

## Star Ratings

Following is the explanation for the rating system of one to five stars in each of the five categories for each hike.

### FOR SCENERY:

- ★★★★★ Unique, picturesque panoramas
- ★★★★ Diverse vistas
- ★★★ Pleasant views
- ★★ Unchanging landscape
- ★ Not selected for scenery

### FOR TRAIL CONDITION:

- ★★★★★ Consistently well maintained
- ★★★★ Stable, with no surprises
- ★★★ Average terrain to negotiate
- ★★ Inconsistent, with good and poor areas
- ★ Rocky, overgrown, or often muddy

### FOR CHILDREN:

- ★★★★★ Babes in strollers are welcome
- ★★★★ Fun for any kid past the toddler stage
- ★★★ Good for young hikers with proven stamina
- ★★ Not enjoyable for children
- ★ Not advisable for children

### FOR DIFFICULTY:

- ★★★★★ Grueling
- ★★★★ Strenuous
- ★★★ Moderate—won't beat you up, but you'll know you've been hiking
- ★★ Easy, with patches of moderate
- ★ Good for a relaxing stroll

### FOR SOLITUDE:

- ★★★★★ Positively tranquil
- ★★★★ Spurs of isolation
- ★★★ Moderately secluded
- ★★ Crowded on weekends and holidays
- ★ Steady stream of individuals and/or groups

## TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES

As noted in “Trail Maps,” on the previous page, I used a handheld GPS unit to obtain geographic data and sent the information to the publisher’s cartographers. In the opener for each hike profile, the coordinates—the intersection of

latitude (north) and longitude (west)—will orient you from the trailhead. In some cases, you can drive within viewing distance of a trailhead. Other hiking routes require a short walk to the trailhead from a parking area.

This guidebook uses the degree–decimal minute format for presenting the GPS coordinates. The latitude and longitude grid system is likely quite familiar to you, but here is a refresher, pertinent to visualizing the GPS coordinates: Imaginary lines of latitude—called *parallels* and approximately 69 miles apart from each other—run horizontally around the globe. Each parallel is indicated by degrees from the equator (established to be 0°): up to 90°N at the North Pole and down to 90°S at the South Pole.

Imaginary lines of longitude—called *meridians*—run perpendicular to latitude lines. Longitude lines are likewise indicated by degrees: starting from 0° at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, England, they continue to the east and west until they meet 180° later at the International Date Line in the Pacific Ocean. At the equator, longitude lines are also approximately 69 miles apart, but that distance narrows as the meridians converge toward the North and South Poles.

To convert GPS coordinates given in degrees, minutes, and seconds to the format shown above in degrees–decimal minutes, divide the seconds by 60. For more on GPS technology, visit [usgs.gov](http://usgs.gov).

## **DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION**

Distance indicates the length of the hike from start to finish, either round-trip or one-way depending on the trail configuration. If the hike description includes options to shorten or extend the hike, those distances will also be factored here. Configuration defines the type of route—for example, an out-and-back (which takes you in and out the same way), a figure eight, a loop, or a balloon.

## **HIKING TIME**

I'm not the fastest hiker, and that was especially true while I was updating this book. I had to stop and take notes—a lot. Thus, the average of 1.3 miles per hour for the hikes in this guidebook might be slower than what you're used to. That pace allows time for taking photos, for dawdling and admiring views, and for alternating stretches of hills and descents. When deciding whether to follow a particular trail in this guidebook, consider the weather, your own pace, your general physical condition, and your energy level that day. Remember that daylight hours during late fall through early spring are limited, so plan accordingly to make sure you don't end up on the trail after dark.

## FIVE-STAR TRAILS

### HIGHLIGHTS

Waterfalls, historic sites, and other features that draw hikers to the trail are emphasized here.

### ELEVATION

Here you will see the elevation (in feet) at the trailhead and another figure for the peak height on that route. For routes that involve significant ascents and descents, the hike profile also includes an elevation diagram (see page 3).

### ACCESS

Fees or permits required to hike the trail are detailed here—and noted if there are none. Trail access hours are also shown here.

### MAPS

Resources for maps, in addition to those in this guidebook, are listed here. (As previously noted, the publisher and author recommend that you carry more than one map—and that you consult those maps before heading out on the trail to resolve any confusion or discrepancy.)

### FACILITIES

Restrooms, phones, water, picnic tables, and other basics at or near the trailhead are mentioned here.

### WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Notes paved sections or other areas where one can safely use a wheelchair.

### COMMENTS

Here you'll find assorted nuggets of information, such as whether dogs are allowed on the trails.

### CONTACTS

Listed here are phone numbers and website addresses for checking trail conditions and gleaning other day-to-day information.

## Overview, Route Details, Nearby Attractions, and Directions

These four elements provide the main text about the hike. **Overview** gives you a quick summary of what to expect on that trail; the **Route Details** guide you on the hike, start to finish; **Nearby Attractions** suggests appealing area sites, such as restaurants, museums, and other trails; **Directions** will get you to the trailhead from a well-known road or highway.

## Weather

The Upstate of South Carolina has four distinctive seasons. It can be cold in the winter and hot in the summer. You can enjoy hiking trails any time of the year, but a good rule of thumb is to hit the mountains and waterfalls in the warmer months and the urban trails during the cooler ones. Also keep in mind that temperatures can vary significantly: if it's 50°F in Greenville, it could be freezing in Oconee or Pickens County, so always check the weather before you head out.

To give you an idea of what weather to expect, the chart below details the monthly averages for South Carolina's Upstate region.

**MONTHLY WEATHER AVERAGES FOR SC UPSTATE**

MONTH	HI TEMP	LO TEMP	RAIN OR SNOW
January	50.2°F	31.4°F	4.41"
February	54.8°F	33.9°F	4.24"
March	62.7°F	40.5°F	5.31"
April	71.0°F	47.0°F	3.54"
May	78.2°F	56.2°F	4.59"
June	85.1°F	64.3°F	3.92"
July	88.8°F	68.7°F	4.65"
August	87.1°F	67.9°F	4.08"
September	81.1°F	61.7°F	3.97"
October	71.4°F	49.7°F	3.88"
November	61.3°F	41.0°F	3.79"
December	52.7°F	34.3°F	3.86"

*Source: usclimatedata.com*

## Water

How much is enough? One simple physiological fact should convince you to err on the side of excess when deciding how much water to pack: you can sweat nearly 2 quarts of fluid each hour you walk in the heat, more if you hike uphill in direct sunlight and during the hottest time of the day. A good rule of thumb is to hydrate prior to your hike, carry (and drink) 16 ounces of water for every mile you plan to hike, and hydrate again after the hike. For most people, the pleasures



of hiking make carrying water a relatively minor price to pay to remain safe and healthy. So pack more water than you anticipate needing, even for short hikes.

If you are tempted to drink “found” water, do so with extreme caution. Many ponds and lakes you’ll encounter are fairly stagnant, and the water tastes terrible. Drinking such water presents inherent risks for thirsty trekkers. Giardia parasites contaminate many water sources and cause the dreaded intestinal ailment giardiasis, which can last for weeks after ingestion. For information, visit the Centers for Disease Control website: [cdc.gov/parasites/giardia](http://cdc.gov/parasites/giardia).

In any case, effective treatment is essential before you drink from any water source found along the trail. Boiling water for 2–3 minutes is always a safe measure for camping, but day hikers can consider iodine tablets, approved chemical mixes, filtration units rated for giardia, and UV filtration. Some of these methods (for example, filtration with an added carbon filter) remove bad tastes typical in stagnant water, while others add their own taste. Carry a means of purification to help in a pinch and if you realize you have underestimated your consumption needs.

## Clothing

Weather, unexpected trail conditions, fatigue, extended hiking duration, and wrong turns can individually or collectively turn a great outing into a very uncomfortable one at best—and a life-threatening one at worst. Thus, proper attire plays a key role in staying comfortable and, sometimes, in staying alive. Here are some helpful guidelines:

- ★ *Choose silk, wool, or synthetics for maximum comfort in all of your hiking attire—from hats to socks and in between. Cotton is fine if the weather remains dry and stable, but you won’t be happy if it gets wet.*
- ★ *Always wear a hat, or at least tuck one into your day pack or hitch it to your belt. Hats offer all-weather sun and wind protection as well as warmth if it turns cold.*
- ★ *Be ready to layer up or down as the day progresses and the mercury rises or falls. Today’s outdoor wear makes layering easy, with such designs as jackets that convert to vests and zip-off or button-up pant legs.*
- ★ *Wear hiking boots/shoes or sturdy hiking sandals with toe protection. Flip-flopping on a paved path in an urban botanical garden is one thing, but never hike a trail in open sandals or casual sneakers. Your bones and arches need support, and your skin needs protection.*
- ★ *Pair that footwear with good socks! If you prefer not to sheathe your feet when wearing hiking sandals, tuck the socks into your day pack; you may need them if the*

weather plummets or if you hit rocky turf and pebbles begin to irritate your feet. And, in an emergency, if you have lost your gloves, you can use the socks as mittens.

- ★ *Don't leave rainwear behind*, even if the day dawns clear and sunny. Tuck into your day pack, or tie around your waist, a jacket that is breathable and either water-resistant or waterproof. Investigate different choices at your local outdoor retailer. If you are a frequent hiker, ideally you'll have more than one rainwear weight, material, and style in your closet to protect you in all seasons in your regional climate and hiking microclimates.

## Essential Gear

Today you can buy outdoor vests that have up to 20 pockets shaped and sized to carry everything from toothpicks to binoculars. Or, if you don't aspire to feel like a burro, you can neatly stow all these items in your day pack or backpack. The following list showcases never-hike-without-them items—in alphabetical order, as all are important:

- ★ *Extra clothes*: Raingear, a change of socks and shirt, and depending on the season, a warm hat and gloves
- ★ *Extra food*: Trail mix, granola bars, or other high-energy foods
- ★ *Flashlight or headlamp* with an extra bulb and batteries
- ★ *Insect repellent*: For some areas and seasons, this is extremely vital.
- ★ *Maps and a high-quality compass*: Even if you know the terrain from previous hikes, don't leave home without these tools. And, as previously noted, bring maps in addition to those in this guidebook, and consult your maps prior to the hike. If you're GPS-savvy, bring that device, too—along with extra batteries—but don't rely on it as your sole navigational tool, as batteries can die. Be sure to compare the guidance of your GPS with that of your maps and compass.
- ★ *A pocketknife and/or multitool*
- ★ *Sun protection*: Sunglasses with UV tinting, a hat with a wide brim, and sunscreen (be sure to check the expiration date on the tube or bottle)
- ★ *Today's handheld devices* have not only a phone that may help you contact help, but also built-in GPS that can help with orientation. However, do not call for help unless you are truly in need, and remember that smartphone batteries can die, though a cell battery pack helps. Additionally, you can use your smartphone to download park maps for reference. However, download maps at home rather than taking chances with reception in the hinterlands. And be sure your device is fully charged before your hike, so you'll have access to your maps for the duration of your hike.
- ★ *Water*: Again, bring more than you think you'll drink. Depending on your destination, you may want to bring a water bottle and iodine or a filter for purifying water in the wilderness in case you run out.

- ★ *Whistle:* This little gadget could be your best friend in an emergency.
- ★ *Windproof matches and/or a lighter,* as well as a fire starter, for real emergencies. Please don't start a forest fire.

## First Aid Kit

Combined with the items above, those below may appear overwhelming for a day hike. But any paramedic will tell you that the items listed here (again, in alphabetical order, because all are important) are just the basics. The reality of hiking is that you can be out for a week of backpacking and acquire only a mosquito bite—or you can hike for an hour, slip, and suffer a bleeding abrasion or broken bone. Fortunately, these items will collapse into a very small space, and convenient prepackaged kits are widely available.

Consider your intended terrain and the number of hikers in your party before you exclude any item listed below. A botanical garden stroll may not inspire you to carry a complete kit, but anything beyond that warrants precaution. When hiking alone, you should always be prepared for a medical need. And if you are a twosome or a group, one or more people in your party should be equipped with first aid supplies.

- ★ *Adhesive bandages (such as Band-Aids)*
- ★ *Antibiotic ointment (such as Neosporin)*
- ★ *Athletic tape*
- ★ *Blister kit (such as Moleskin or Spenco 2nd Skin)*
- ★ *Butterfly-closure bandages*
- ★ *Diphenhydramine (Benadryl or the generic equivalent),* in case of mild allergic reactions
- ★ *Elastic bandages (such as Ace) or joint wraps (such as Spenco)*
- ★ *Epinephrine in a prefilled syringe (EpiPen),* usually by prescription only, for people known to have severe allergic reactions to hiking mishaps such as bee stings
- ★ *Gauze (one roll and a half dozen 4-by-4-inch pads)*
- ★ *Hydrogen peroxide or iodine*
- ★ *Ibuprofen or acetaminophen*

## General Safety

- ★ *Always let someone know where you will be hiking and how long you expect to be gone.* It's a good idea to give that person a copy of your route, particularly if you are headed into any isolated area. Let that person know when you return.

- ★ *Always sign in and out of any trail registers provided.* Don't hesitate to comment on the trail condition if space is provided; that's your opportunity to alert others to any problems you encounter.
- ★ *Do not count on a smartphone for your safety.* Reception may be spotty or nonexistent on the trail, even on an urban walk—especially if it's embraced by towering trees or buildings.
- ★ *Always carry food and water, even for a short hike.* And bring more water than you think you will need. (We can't emphasize this enough!)
- ★ *Stay on designated trails.* Even on the most clearly marked trails, there is usually a point where you must stop and consider in which direction to head. If you become disoriented, don't panic. As soon as you think you may be off track, stop, assess your current direction, and then retrace your steps to the point where you went astray. Using a map, a compass, a GPS, and this book, and keeping in mind what you have passed thus far, reorient yourself and trust your judgment on which way to continue. Also, see if your smartphone or handheld device has map capability and use it for orientation. If you become unsure of how to continue, return to your vehicle the way you came in. Should you become completely lost and have no idea how to return to the trailhead, remaining in place along the trail and waiting for help is most often the best option for adults and always the best option for children.
- ★ *Always carry a whistle,* another precaution that we can't overemphasize. It may be a lifesaver if you get lost or hurt.
- ★ *Be especially careful when crossing streams.* Whether you are fording the stream or crossing on a log, make every step count. If you have any doubt about maintaining your balance on a log, ford the stream instead: use a trekking pole or stout stick for balance and face upstream as you cross. If a stream seems too deep to ford, turn back. Whatever is on the other side is not worth risking your life for.
- ★ *Be careful at overlooks.* While these areas may provide spectacular views, they are potentially hazardous. Stay back from the edge of outcrops and be absolutely sure of your footing; a misstep can mean a nasty and possibly fatal fall.
- ★ *Standing dead trees and storm-damaged living trees pose a significant hazard to hikers.* These trees may have loose or broken limbs that could fall at any time. While walking beneath trees, and when choosing a spot to rest or enjoy your snack, **look up!**
- ★ *Know the symptoms of subnormal body temperature (hypothermia).* Shivering and forgetfulness are the two most common indicators of this stealthy killer. Hypothermia can occur at any elevation, even in the summer, especially when the hiker is wearing lightweight cotton clothing. If symptoms present themselves, get to shelter, hot liquids, and dry clothes as soon as possible.
- ★ *Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion (hyperthermia).* Lightheadedness and loss of energy are the first two indicators. If you feel these symptoms, find some shade, drink your water, remove as many layers of clothing as practical, and stay put until you cool down. Marching through heat exhaustion leads to heatstroke—which can be fatal. If you should be sweating and you're not, that's the signature warning sign.

Your hike is over at that point—heatstroke is a life-threatening condition that can cause seizures, convulsions, and eventually death. If you or a companion reaches that point, do whatever you can to cool down and find help.

- ★ *Ask questions.* Public-land employees are there to help. It's a lot easier to ask advice beforehand, and it will help you avoid a mishap away from civilization when it's too late to amend an error.
- ★ *Most important of all, take along your brain.* A cool, calculating mind is the single-most important asset on the trail. Think before you act. Watch your step. Plan ahead. Avoiding accidents before they happen is the best way to ensure a rewarding and relaxing hike.

## Watchwords for Flora and Fauna

Hikers should remain aware of the following concerns regarding plant life and wildlife, described in alphabetical order.

**BLACK BEARS** Though attacks by black bears are uncommon, the sight or approach of a bear can give anyone a start. If you encounter a bear while hiking, remain calm and avoid running in any direction. Make loud noises to scare off the bear, and back away slowly. In primitive and remote areas, assume bears are present; in more developed sites, check on the current bear situation prior to hiking. Most encounters are food related, as bears have an exceptional sense of smell and not particularly discriminating tastes. While this is of greater concern to backpackers and campers, on a day hike, you may plan a lunchtime picnic or munch an energy bar or other snack from time to time so remain aware and alert.

**MOSQUITOES** Ward off these pests with insect repellent and/or repellent-impregnated clothing. In some areas, mosquitoes are known to carry the West Nile virus, so all caution should be taken to avoid their bites.



**POISON IVY** *Tom Watson*

**POISON IVY, OAK, AND SUMAC** Recognizing and avoiding poison ivy, oak, and sumac is the most effective way to prevent the painful, itchy rashes associated with these plants. Poison ivy occurs as a vine or ground cover, three leaflets to a leaf; poison oak occurs as either a vine or shrub, also with three leaflets; and poison sumac flourishes in swampland, each leaf having 7–13 leaflets. Urushiol, the oil in

the sap of these plants, is responsible for the rash. Within 14 hours of exposure, raised lines and/or blisters will appear on the affected area, accompanied by a terrible itch. Refrain from scratching because bacteria under your fingernails can cause an infection. Wash and dry the affected area thoroughly, applying a calamine lotion to help dry out the rash. If itching or blistering is severe, seek medical attention. If you do encounter one of these plants, remember that oil-contaminated clothes, hiking gear, and pets can easily cause an irritating rash on you or someone else, so wash not only any exposed parts of your body but also any exposed clothes, gear, and pets.

**SNAKES** Rattlesnakes, cottonmouths, copperheads, and corals are among the most common venomous snakes in the United States, and hibernation season is typically October–April. Rattlesnakes like to bask in the sun and won’t bite unless threatened. In the Upstate, copperheads, rattlesnakes, and cottonmouths are all indigenous, and while they’re not frequently seen on area trails, you still need to keep an eye out for them.

However, the snakes you will most likely see while hiking will be non-venomous species and subspecies. The best rule is to leave all snakes alone, give them a wide berth as you hike past, and make sure any hiking companions (including dogs) do the same.

When hiking, stick to well-used trails and wear over-the-ankle boots and loose-fitting long pants. Do not step or put your hands beyond your range of detailed visibility and avoid wandering around in the dark. Step *onto* logs and rocks, never *over* them, and be especially careful when climbing rocks. Always avoid walking through dense brush or willow thickets.

**TICKS** Ticks are often found on brush and tall grass, where they seem to be waiting to hitch a ride on a warm-blooded passerby. Adult ticks are most active April into May and again October into November. Among the varieties of ticks, the black-legged tick,



**COPPERHEAD**

*Creeping Things/Shutterstock*



**DEER TICK**

*Jim Gathany/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (public domain)*

commonly called the deer tick, is the primary carrier of Lyme disease. Wear light-colored clothing, making it easier for you to spot ticks before they migrate to your skin. At the end of the hike, visually check your hair, back of neck, armpits, and socks. During your posthike shower, take a moment to do a more complete body check. For ticks that are already embedded, removal with tweezers is best. Use disinfectant solution on the wound.

## Hunting

Several rules, regulations, and licenses govern various hunting types and related seasons. Though there are generally no problems, hikers may wish to forgo their trips during the big-game seasons, when the woods suddenly seem filled with orange and camouflage. Hunting is popular in the Upstate, so be sure to check with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for specific dates for deer, dove, bear, and turkey hunting; visit [dnr.sc.gov](http://dnr.sc.gov).

## Regulations

Trail regulations in the Upstate of South Carolina vary depending on where the trail is located. In state parks, always follow posted rules and regulations. For other areas where regulations are not apparent, always use proper trail etiquette and never remove plants or threaten or harass wildlife.

## Trail Etiquette

Always treat the trail, wildlife, and fellow hikers with respect. Here are some reminders.

- ★ *Plan ahead to be self-sufficient at all times.* For example, carry necessary supplies for changes in weather or other conditions. A well-planned trip brings satisfaction to you and to others.
- ★ *Hike on open trails only.*
- ★ *Respect trail and road closures.* In seasons or construction areas where road or trail closures may be a possibility, use the website addresses or phone numbers shown in the “Contacts” line for each of this guidebook’s hikes to check conditions prior to heading out for your hike. Do not attempt to circumvent such closures.
- ★ *Avoid trespassing on private land, and obtain all permits and authorization as required.* Also, leave gates as you found them or as directed by signage.

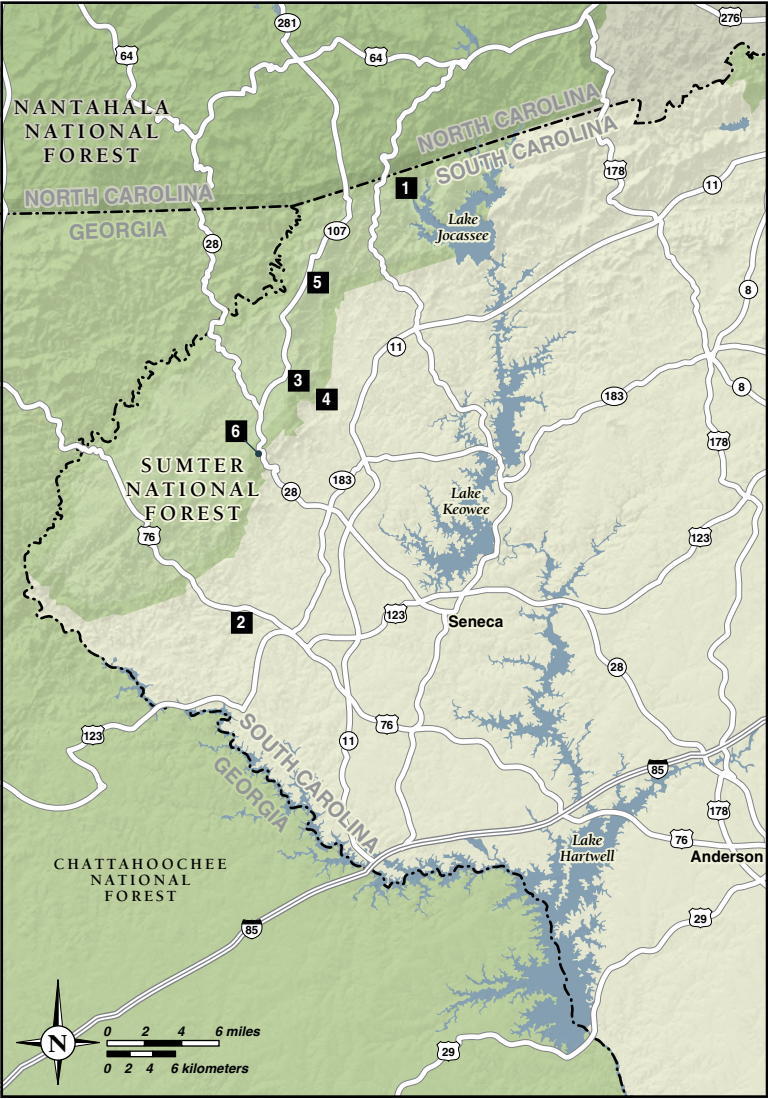


- ★ *Be courteous to other hikers, cyclists, equestrians, and others you encounter on the trails.*
- ★ *Never spook wild animals or pets.* An unannounced approach, a sudden movement, or a loud noise startles most animals. A surprised animal can be dangerous to you, to others, and to itself. Give animals plenty of space.
- ★ *Observe the yield signs around the region's trailheads and backcountry.* Typically, they advise hikers to yield to horses, and bikers to yield to both horses and hikers. On hills, by common courtesy, hikers and bikers yield to any uphill traffic. When encountering mounted riders or horse packers, hikers can courteously step off the trail, on the downhill side if possible. If the horse can see and hear you, calmly greet the riders before they reach you and do not dart behind trees. Also resist the urge to pet horses unless you are invited to do so.
- ★ *Stay on the existing trail and do not blaze any new trails.*
- ★ *Be sure to pack out what you pack in, leaving only your footprints.* No one likes to see the trash someone else has left behind.

## **Tips on Enjoying Hiking in the Upstate**

The Upstate of South Carolina is a diverse geographical wonderland. But before embarking on your adventure for any hike in this book, be sure to read the entire entry carefully. Make sure to allow for sufficient driving times and daylight hours, especially in the winter. It is very important during our hot southern days to bring *lots* of water, sunscreen, and bug repellent. Really, don't leave home without these things—I can't stress this enough. Most of all, take your time and enjoy your surroundings instead of hurrying through the hike just to say, "I did it." While the feeling of a completed hike does signify accomplishment, it's also important to enjoy the trees, flowers, waterfalls, mountains, and creeks that make up our great region.

Anderson and Oconee Counties (Hikes 1–6)





# Anderson and Oconee Counties



**PICNIC SHELTER AT YELLOW BRANCH FALLS** *(See Hike 6, page 40.)*

- 1 BAD CREEK: LOWER WHITEWATER FALLS TRAIL** (p. 18)
- 2 CHAU RAM COUNTY PARK** (p. 23)
- 3 OCONEE STATE PARK: OLD WATERWHEEL TRAIL** (p. 27)
- 4 OCONEE STATION: INTERPRETIVE NATURE TRAIL AND STATION COVE TRAIL** (p. 31)
- 5 WINDING STAIRS TRAIL** (p. 35)
- 6 YELLOW BRANCH FALLS** (p. 40)
- BONUS HIKES IN OCONEE COUNTY** (p. 44)





# Bad Creek: Lower Whitewater Falls Trail

SCENERY: ★★★★★  
TRAIL CONDITION: ★★★  
CHILDREN: ★★★  
DIFFICULTY: ★★★  
SOLITUDE: ★★★



## LAKE JOCASSEE

**TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES:** N35° 00.744' W82° 59.950'

**DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:** 5.4-mile out-and-back

**HIKING TIME:** 4 hours

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Spectacular waterfall, great views of Lake Jocassee and mountains

**ELEVATION:** 1,959' at trailhead to 2,159' at the top of the hill after the dirt road

**ACCESS:** Daily, sunrise–sunset; free

**MAPS:** South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

**FACILITIES:** Portable restrooms at trailhead

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** None

**COMMENTS:** Be sure to drive up to the visitors' overlook for great views of Lake Jocassee and the surrounding mountains.

**CONTACT:** Duke Energy, 800-443-5193, [duke-energy.com/Energy-Education/Energy-Centers-and-Programs/Outdoor-Classroom-at-Bad-Creek-Hydro-Station](http://duke-energy.com/Energy-Education/Energy-Centers-and-Programs/Outdoor-Classroom-at-Bad-Creek-Hydro-Station)

## Overview

As you enter through the electric-fenced gate, you get the feeling that you're trespassing into some top-secret facility. That's somewhat true. Duke Energy owns this site, and it's home to the company's largest hydroelectric station. That installation includes Lake Jocassee's 7,500 acres, another 375-acre upper reservoir, and an underground tunnel system and powerhouse. Thus, security is warranted, but they also keep the grounds free and open to the public year-round. Bad Creek also serves as a trailhead for the 80-mile-long Foothills Trail and provides access to the Whitewater River, one of South Carolina's best trout streams.

## Route Details

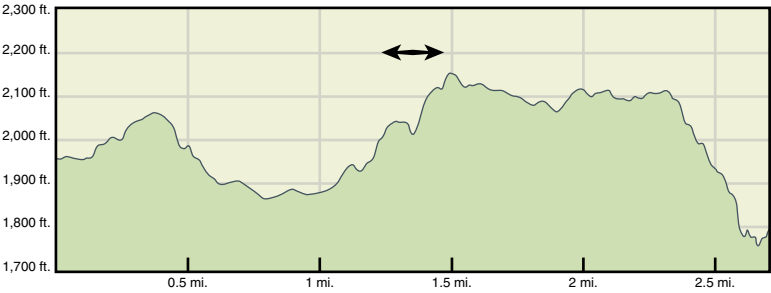
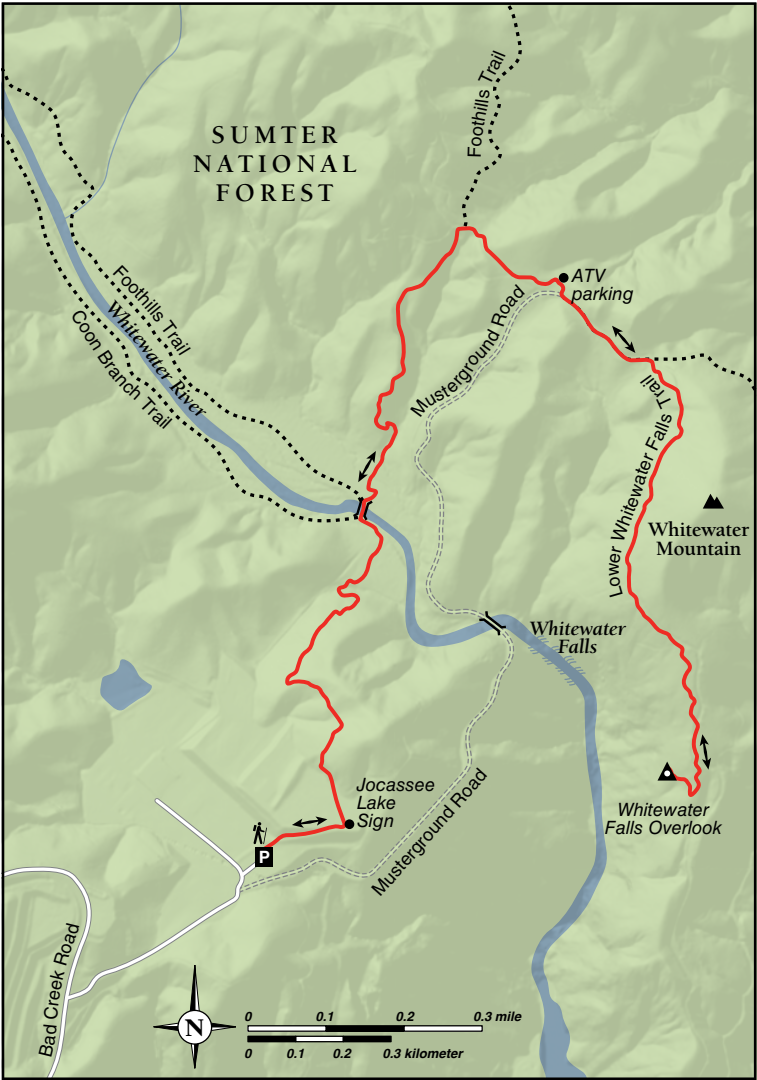
Start at the Bad Creek Foothills Trail Access at the parking lot and follow the blue trail blazes toward the Lower Whitewater Falls Overlook. Whitewater Falls is a series of six cascades in North and South Carolina, making up the highest cluster of falls in the eastern United States. Upper Whitewater Falls in North Carolina is the most popular, but South Carolina's Lower Whitewater Falls is just as spectacular and a great hike.

As you start on the trail, you'll immediately begin uphill, to the right, following alongside a concrete drainage ditch that is about a foot deep. The ditch ends at the top of the hill as the trail turns to the left and begins crossing through a flat meadow area. Old-growth timber trees, wildflowers (in spring), and tall grasses blow in the wind as you catch glimpses of Lake Jocassee to the right. When you come to the treeline, you enter the forest and immediately begin uphill again with wooden stairs to assist.

The trail curves before it begins to descend. The path is well marked and decent aside from tree roots encroaching upon it. Wild turkeys are a common sighting, and along the trail, pine needles drop from the many trees above. The trail continues to descend—but not too dramatically—as it winds around. Soon you will hear rushing water before you come to three more sets of wooden stairs and begin a steeper descent.

You move closer and closer to the sound of water as the path levels out and becomes a bit wider. Tall white pine and hemlock trees still surround you as you begin to follow alongside the Whitewater River. A set of double bridges cross the river. Once across you will see signs for Coon Branch Natural Area, 1.2 miles ahead, and the Upper Falls Parking Area, 1.7 miles farther. Follow the blue blazes across the bridges.

Bad Creek: Lower Whitewater Falls Trail



Across the double bridges is another set of signs, and this is where the Foothills Trail branches off. To the left, the trail leads to North Carolina and Oconee State Park (page 27). Follow the trail signs straight ahead, still following the blue blazes. The path is fairly wide and flat here as you cross over a small footbridge. You'll begin walking alongside a small stream as you start to ascend until the path turns toward the left and away from the stream.

The trail continues sharply uphill until you reach the crest of Round Mountain Gap. You've hiked about 1.5 miles so far. Here the trail levels out as you walk along the top of the ridge. The sound of the water becomes fainter as the forest gets quiet and you can only hear the wind in the trees. Grassy Knob and other mountains surround you. The trail narrows again as you begin uphill and reach another set of signs. To the left are both the Thompson and Toxaway Rivers. At 0.9 mile straight ahead and to the right is the Lower Whitewater Falls Overlook. Stay on the trail to the overlook, continuing to follow the blue blazes.

The trail leads you uphill for just a short distance until the path widens and you begin a gradual descent. You'll come to a gravel area and dirt road, which is the ATV parking area. Yes, ATVs are allowed here, as is hunting in the Wildlife Management Area lands at nearby Musterground Mountain. Walk through this area, still following the blue blazes, as you now begin walking on a dirt and gravel roadway.

After following the road for a short distance, you'll see the trail to the right and begin immediately uphill with some wooden stairs. You'll continue slightly uphill as you follow alongside a wooded ridge. Through the trees, you'll enjoy views of other mountains. The trail levels out somewhat as you begin to hear the waterfall. As the trail curves around, it begins to descend, starting gradually, then becoming a little steeper. When you reach a set of wooden stairs, you can see glimpses of Lake Jocassee through the trees. The trail continues a steep descent until it ends at the Whitewater Falls Overlook area. Its viewing deck provides a panorama of the majestic 200-foot waterfall in the distance. After resting and enjoying the view, turn around and return the same way.

## Nearby Attractions

Bad Creek also offers an outdoor classroom where students can learn about the environment and how Duke Energy generates electricity. The site is in a clearing with tables and benches and two nature trails for students and teachers to experience the region's ecosystems and wildlife. **Devils Fork State Park** is nearby,



## FIVE-STAR TRAILS

offering public access to the lake. Boating, swimming, fishing, and kayaking are all available.

### Directions

From downtown Easley, head north on US 178 to SC 11. Turn north onto Whitewater Falls Road (SC 130) for 5.8 miles, then turn right onto Bad Creek Road. Go through the gate entrance at Duke Power's Bad Creek Hydroelectric Station and follow signs to the Foothills Trail Parking Area.

### LOWER WHITEWATER FALLS FROM THE OVERLOOK



# Chau Ram County Park



**THE LARGEST SUSPENSION BRIDGE IN OCONEE COUNTY IS AT CHAU RAM COUNTY PARK.**

**TRAILHEAD GPS COORDINATES:** N34° 40.921' W83° 08.749'

**DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION:** 1.8-mile balloon

**HIKING TIME:** 2.25 hours

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Several waterfalls

**ELEVATION:** 504' at trailhead to 888' at peak, where the yellow and blue trails meet

**ACCESS:** Daily, 7 a.m.–sunset; park closes mid-November–February; \$3 parking fee per vehicle

**MAPS:** None

**FACILITIES:** Four picnic shelters (one with a large outdoor fireplace), restrooms, kayaking facilities, playground, 26 campsites

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:** Not on the trails, only at picnic areas

**COMMENTS:** No alcoholic beverages allowed in the park; no lifeguards, so swim at your own risk

**CONTACT:** Chau Ram County Park, 864-647-9286, [experienceoconee.com/parks/chau-ram-park](http://experienceoconee.com/parks/chau-ram-park)

# Chau Ram County Park







# Appendix A: Outdoor Retailers

## **APPALACHIAN OUTFITTERS**

191 Halton Road  
Greenville, SC 29607  
864-987-0618  
appoutfitters.com

## **CABELA'S**

1025 Woodruff Road  
Greenville, SC 29607  
864-516-8100  
cabelas.com

## **DICK'S SPORTING GOODS**

1125 Woodruff Road  
Greenville, SC 29607  
864-284-6199  
dickssportinggoods.com

## **THE LOCAL HIKER**

173 E. Main St.  
Spartanburg, SC 29306  
864-764-1651  
thelocalhiker.com

## **MAST GENERAL STORE**

111 N. Main St.  
Greenville, SC 29601  
864-235-1883  
mastgeneralstore.com

## **REI**

1140 Woodruff Road, Ste. 400  
Greenville, SC 29607  
864-297-0588  
rei.com

## **SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN OUTDOORS**

319 Gentry Memorial Highway  
Easley, SC 29640  
864-507-2195  
saopickens.com

## **SUNRIFT ADVENTURES**

1 Center St.  
Travelers Rest, SC 29690  
864-834-5439  
sunrift.com



## **Appendix B: Hiking Clubs**

The Upstate is home to several hiking clubs and groups that welcome you to contact them for specific hiking opportunities and other information.

### **GIRLS WHO HIKE SC**

[facebook.com/groups/GirlsWhoHikeSC](https://facebook.com/groups/GirlsWhoHikeSC)

### **GREENVILLE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION HIKING CLUB**

[greenvillehiking.com](https://greenvillehiking.com)

### **UPSTATE HIKING AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURES**

[meetup.com/upstate-hiking-and-outdoor-adventures](https://meetup.com/upstate-hiking-and-outdoor-adventures)

### **Y HIKING CLUB FOR YMCA OF EASLEY, PICKENS, AND POWERSVILLE**

[pcymca.net](https://pcymca.net)

### **Y HIKING CLUB FOR YMCA OF GREATER SPARTANBURG**

[spartanburgymca.org/hiking-club](https://spartanburgymca.org/hiking-club)









# Index

## A

- Access (hike profile), 6
- American Hiking Society, 156
- American Revolutionary War, 41, 123, 125, 137
- Anderson County
  - described, 1
  - hikes, 17–45
  - map, 16
- Andrew Pickens District, Sumter National Forest, 37, 45
- animals and plants, 12–14
- Appalachian Outfitters, 144
- Armstrong, Lance, 103
- Aunt Sue's Country Corner, 69, 75

## B

- Bad Creek: Lower Whitewater Falls Trail, 18–22
- Battle of Cowpens, 123
- Battle of Kings Mountain, 123, 137, 139
- Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, Battlefield Trail, 118–121
- bears, black, 12
- Belladina's Pizzeria, Easley, 61
- Berry, Hudson, 87
- bird-watching, 63, 101
- black bears, 12
- Blue Ridge Escarpment, 29, 79
- Blue Wall Passage of the Palmetto Trail and Waterfall Loop, 78–81

- book, about this, 1
- boots, hiking, 8–9
- Brissy Ridge Trail, Paris Mountain State Park, 102–106
- British Camp Trail, Battle of Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, 118–121

## C

- Cabela's (outdoor retailer), 144
- Caesars Head State Park, 97
- Caesars Head State Park:
  - Raven Cliff Falls, 77, 82–85
- Carrick Creek Trail, Table Rock State Park, 66–70
- Cedar Falls Park Trail, 86–89
- Chattooga River, 26, 39, 44
- Chau Ram County Park, 23–26
- Chauga River, 25, 26
- Cherokee County
  - described, 1
  - hikes, 117–143
  - map, 116
- Cherokee Indians, 33, 41, 53, 57, 73, 99
- Cherry Hill Recreation Area, 37, 39 children.
  - See kids
- Cleveland Fish Hatchery, 93, 97
- Cleveland Park to Linky Stone Park, Swamp Rabbit Trail (SRT), 107–111
- clothing for hiking, 8–9
- clubs, hiking, 145

## INDEX

### C (continued)

Comments (hike profile), 6  
Conestee Village, Conestee Dam,  
101  
Configuration (hike profile), 5  
Contacts (hike profile), 6  
copperhead, coral, cottonmouth  
snakes, 13  
*Cowpens: A Battle Remembered* (film),  
125  
Cowpens Battlefield Trail, 122–125  
Creek Indians, 33  
Croft State Park, 117, 134  
Croft State Park Nature Trail, 117,  
126–129

### D

deer ticks, 13–14  
Devils Fork State Park, 21–22  
Dick's Sporting Goods, 144  
difficulty, star ratings, 4  
Directions (hike profile), 6  
Distance & Configuration  
(hike profile), 5  
dogs, best hikes for, ix  
drinking water, 7–8, 9, 15

### E

Easley, 59  
Easley Silos, 61  
East Fork Trail, 44  
Eastatoe Creek Heritage Preserve Trail,  
48–51  
Eastern Continental Divide, 91  
Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve,  
130–134  
Elevation (hike profile), 6

elevation profile (diagram), 3  
Enoree River, 119  
epinephrine (EpiPen), 10  
essential gear, 9–10  
etiquette, trail, 14–15

### F

Facilities (hike profile), 6  
Fairforest Creek, Croft State Park,  
127  
fall color, best hikes for, ix  
Falls Park, Greenville, 109, 110  
Falls Trail, Jones Gap State Park,  
90–93  
fauna and flora, 12–14  
first aid kits, 10  
flora and fauna, 12–14  
food, 9  
Foothills Trail, 51, 91  
footwear for hiking, 8–9  
Fork Shoals Mill, 87

### G

gear, essential, 9–10  
Girls Who Hike SC, 145  
Governor's Rock, 73, 74  
GPS coordinates, trailhead, 4–5  
GPS devices, 3, 9, 11  
Greenville, 73, 111  
Greenville County  
described, 1  
hikes, 77–115  
map, 76  
Greenville County Park, 87  
Greenville Natural History Association  
Hiking Club, 145  
guidebook, how to use this, 1–6



## H

heat exhaustion, heatstroke, 11–12  
 Highlights (hike profile), 6  
 hike profiles, 3  
 hikes.  
     *See also specific trail*  
     Anderson County, 16–45  
     Greenville County, 76–115  
     Oconee County, 16–45  
     Pickens County, 46–75  
     recommended, ix  
     Spartanburg and Cherokee Counties,  
     116–143  
 hiking  
     clothing, 8–9  
     clubs, 145  
     regulations, trail, 14  
     tips for enjoying, 15  
     trail etiquette, 14–15  
 Hiking Time (hike profile), 5  
 Hincapie, George, 103  
 history, best hikes for, ix  
 Hogback Mountain, 79  
 Hones Gap State Park, 85  
 Horseshoe Falls, 119  
 how to use this guidebook, 1–6  
 hunting, 14  
 hypothermia, hyperthermia, 11

## I

Indigo Kitchen, Easley, 61  
 Inky's Authentic Cheesesteaks &  
     Hoagies, Easley, 61  
 insect repellent, 9, 15  
 Interpretative Nature Trail, Oconee  
     Station, 31–34  
 Issaqueena Falls, 43, 45

## J

Jackson, Sherry, 158  
 Jefferson, Thomas, 137  
 Jocassee Gorges, 49, 53, 57  
 Jocassee Visitor Center, 53, 57  
 Jones, Solomon, 91  
 Jones Gap State Park  
     Falls Trail, 90–93  
     Rainbow Falls Trail, 94–97

## K

Keowee-Toxaway State Park:  
     Raven Rock Trail, 52–57  
 kids  
     best hikes for, ix  
     star ratings, 4  
 Kings Mountain, 135–139  
 Kings Mountain National Military Park,  
     137  
 Kings Mountain State Park, 137

## L

Ladnier, Catherine Brown, 59  
 Lake Cheohee, 37  
 Lake Conestee Nature Preserve,  
     98–101  
 Lake Crawford, 139  
 Lake Hartwell, 59  
 Lake Jocassee, 19, 21  
 Lake Keowee, 53, 54, 55  
 Lake Placid, 106  
 Lake Tom Moore Craig, 127  
 latitude and longitude, 5  
 Laurel Fork Falls, 51  
 Lawson's Fork Creek, 131  
 Lawson's Fork Trail, Pacolet River  
     Heritage Trust Preserve, 140–143

## INDEX

### L *(continued)*

legend, map, 2  
Linky Stone Park, Swamp Rabbit Trail,  
107–111  
Local Hiker, The, 144  
longitude and latitude, 5  
Lyme disease, 14

### M

maps.

*See also specific trail*

Anderson County, 16  
Cherokee County, 116  
Greenville County, 76  
legend, 2  
Oconee County, 16  
overview, regional, 1–2  
Pickens County, 46  
regional, 1–2  
South Carolina upstate, iv  
Spartanburg County, 116  
trail, 3  
Maps (hike profile), 6  
Mary Musgrove Monument, 119  
Mast General Store, 144  
meridians and parallels, 5  
Middle Saluda River, 91, 95  
Miuka Falls, 39  
monthly temperature averages, 7  
Moore, Riley, 45  
Morgan, General Daniel, 123, 125  
mosquitoes, 12  
Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area,  
85, 95  
Mountain Bridge Wilderness trail  
system, 83  
Musgrove, Edward, 119  
Musgrove Mill, Battle of, 119, 121

### N

Nalley Brown Nature Park: Nalley Trail,  
58–61  
Natural Bridge Trail, 57  
nature, best hikes for, ix  
Nearby Attractions (hike profile), 6  
Nine Times Preserve, 62–65  
Ninja Warrior Coffee House, Easley, 61

### O

Oconee County  
described, 1  
hikes, 17–45  
map, 16  
Oconee State Park, 21, 34, 45, 51  
Old Waterwheel Trail, 27–30  
Oconee Station, Interpretative Nature  
and Station Cove Trails, 31–34  
Oconee Station State Historic Site, 33  
Old Waterwheel Trail, Oconee State  
Park, 27–30  
outdoor retailers, 144  
Overview (hike profile), 6  
overview map, 1–2, iv

### P

Pacolet Heritage Preserve, 134  
Pacolet River, 141, 143  
Pacolet River Heritage Trust Preserve:  
Lawson's Fork Trail, 140–143  
Palmetto Trail, 34, 79, 81  
Panther Gap, 75  
parallels and meridians, 5  
Paris Mountain State Park: Brissy Ridge  
Trail, 102–106  
phones, 9  
Pickens, Andrew, 41

Pickens County  
     described, 1  
     hikes, 47–75  
     map, 46  
 Pink Mama’s Ice Cream, Easley,  
     61  
 Pinnacle Lake, 69, 75  
 plants and animals, 12–14  
 Poinsett Reservoir Passage, 81  
 poison ivy, oak, sumac, 12–13  
 Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail,  
     101, 109

## R

rain, weather, 7  
 Rainbow Falls Trail, Jones Gap State  
     Park, 94–97  
 rainwear, 9  
 Ramsey Falls, 25  
 ratings, star, 4  
 rattlesnakes, 13  
 Raven Rock Trail, Keowee-Toxaway  
     State Park, 52–57  
 Reedy River, 87, 99, 109, 110, 111  
 Reedy River Falls, 109, 110  
 regional maps, 1–2  
 REI, 144  
 retailers, outdoor, 144  
 Riley Moore Falls Trail, 44–45  
 Ross Mountain Passage of the  
     Palmetto Trail, 45  
 Round Mountain Gap, 21  
 Route Details (hike profile), 6

## S

safety, general, 10–12  
 Saluda River, 91  
 Sassafras Mountain, 49

scenery  
     best hikes for, ix  
     star ratings, 4  
 Scruggs House, Cowpens National  
     Battlefield, 122, 125  
 seclusion  
     best hikes for, ix  
     star ratings, 4  
 Secret Falls, 39  
 shoes, hiking, 8–9  
 Silos Brewery, Easley, 61  
 smartphones, 9  
 snakes, 13  
 snow, weather, 7  
 solitude, star ratings, 4  
 South Carolina.  
     *See also specific county*  
     tips for enjoying hiking in upstate, 15  
     upstate map, iv  
     weather, 7  
 South Saluda River, 113  
 Southern Appalachian Outdoors, 144  
 Spartanburg, 127, 129, 134, 141, 143  
 Spartanburg Area Conservancy  
     (SPACE), 131  
 Spartanburg County  
     described, 1  
     hikes, 117–143  
     map, 116  
     star ratings, 4  
 Station Cove Falls, 33  
 Station Cove Trail, Oconee Station,  
     31–34  
 Stool Mountain, 73  
 Stumphouse Mountain Bike Path, 45  
 Stumphouse Passage, 45  
 Stumphouse Tunnel, 43, 45  
 Sumter National Forest, 37, 41, 44, 45

## INDEX

### **S** *(continued)*

- sun protection, 9, 15
- Sunrift Adventures, 144
- Swamp Rabbit Trail (SRT), 101
- Swamp Rabbit Trail (SRT), Cleveland  
Park to Linky Stone Park, 107–111

### **T**

- Table Rock State Park, 47
  - Carrick Creek Trail, 66–70
  - Table Rock Trail, 71–75
- temperatures, average monthly, 7
- Thompson River, 21
- ticks, 13–14
- Toxaway River, 21
- trail condition, star ratings, 4
- trail etiquette, 14–15
- trail maps, 3
- trail registers, 11
- trail regulations, 14
- trailhead GPS coordinates, 4–5
- Travelers Rest, 109, 111
- Treaty of Hopewell, 41
- Turnbridge Fern, 51

### **U**

- Unity Park, Greenville, 107–111
- Upper Whitewater Falls, 19
- Upstate Hiking & Outdoor Adventures,  
145

### **V**

- Vardry Mill, 110
- Vaughns Gap, 81

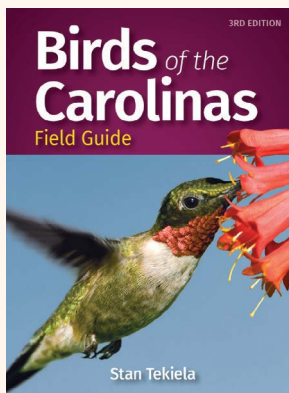
### **W**

- Walhalla Fish Hatchery, 44
- Washington Light Infantry Monument,  
1856, 125
- water, drinking, 7–8, 9, 15
- Waterfall Loop, 78–81
- waterfalls, best hikes for, ix
- weather, 7
- West Fork Crane Creek, 37
- West Nile virus, 12
- Wheelchair Access (hike profile), 6
- Whitewater Falls, 19
- Whitewater River, 19
- Wildcat Branch Falls Trail,  
112–115
- William Richards House, 33
- Winding Stairs Trail, 35–39

### **Y**

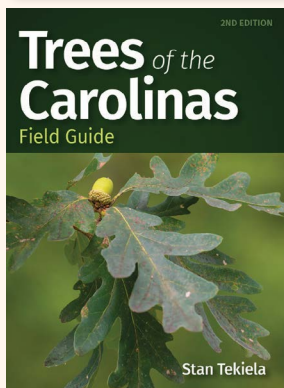
- Y Hiking Club for YMCA of  
Easley, Pickens, and Powdersville,  
145
- Y Hiking Club for YMCA of Greater  
Spartanburg, 145
- Yellow Branch Falls, 17, 40–43
- YMCA Camp Greenville, 95

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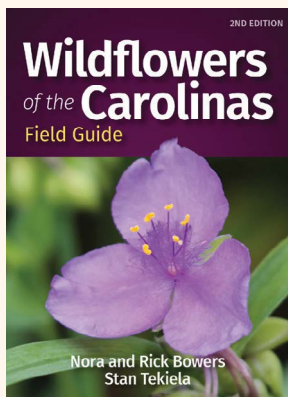
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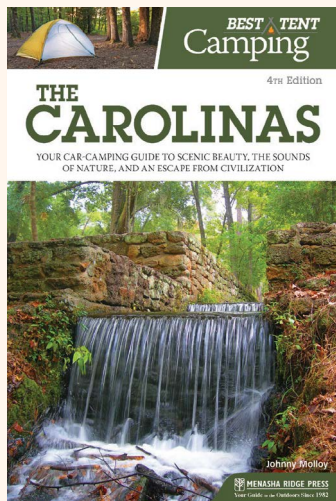


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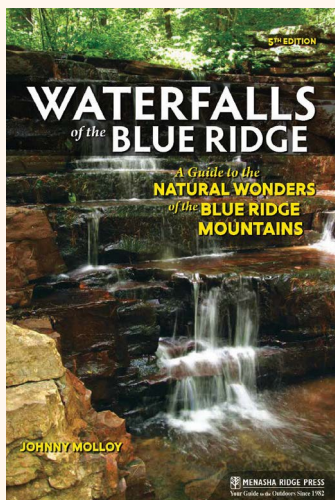
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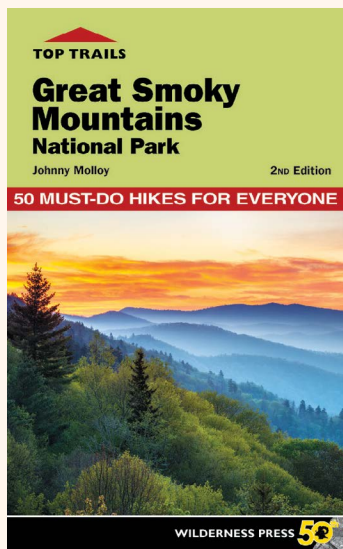


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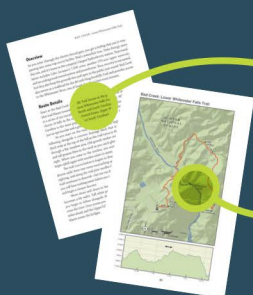
**SHERRY JACKSON** has a love of travel and exploration that began in childhood, when her family would load up the car on the weekend, pick a destination, and set off. Sherry has hiked through jungles, snorkeled the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, and wandered the streets of Paris, always searching for her next adventure. Growing up in Arizona, she joined her family on hikes into the Superstition Mountains and the Grand Canyon.

Sherry began writing for school newspapers and her own travel journals that portrayed her family's vacations. As an adult, she settled on a career in information technology—for a while. Today, she's vice president of content and digital for a local media company in Greenville, South Carolina. She has written hundreds of articles for national, regional, and local publications on topics such as business, travel, technology, and more.



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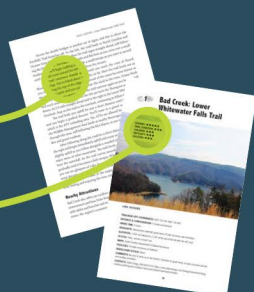


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