



Choose a Trail

Hiking Options for the Trout Adventure Trail

A proud partnership of Trout Unlimited, the US Forest Service, and Boy Scouts of America



GOLD ROUTE

The GOLD route has it all, but is also the most lengthy at about 12.2 miles. Still, the route can be hiked in one day by determined hikers, and the route allows the hikers to experience every inch of the Trout Adventure Trail with the advantage of all the highlights of the Blue, Red, and Green routes plus a bonus unobstructed vista view off the Benton-MacKaye Trail to the southeast. This view is arguably the best long-range view available on the Trout Adventure Trail.

Best of all, the GOLD route is largely a loop route with minimal back-tracking. The route can start from either Springer Mountain parking area or Three Forks:

- **Starting at Springer Mountain Parking Area:** From the Springer Mountain parking area, proceed downhill to Three Forks and proceed to Long Creek Falls. Return to Three Forks and, after crossing the creek on the wooden bridge, turn left on the Benton-MacKaye Trail. Continue hiking (crossing the Appalachian Trail twice) to where it ends at the Appalachian Trail on Springer Mountain. Do not miss the view seen just off the Benton-MacKaye Trail between FS Road 42 and the end of the trail. It is a short walk to the view and back. Once at the Appalachian Trail, turn left for a hike uphill to the top of Springer Mountain and return downhill on the Appalachian Trail to the Springer Mountain parking area.
- **Starting at Three Forks:** Hike the Appalachian Trail to Long Creek Falls and return to Three Forks. Cross Noontootla Creek on the wooden footbridge, turn left on the Benton-MacKaye Trail and continue, crossing the Appalachian Trail twice, to where the Benton MacKaye Trail ends in the Appalachian Trail at Springer Mountain. Do not overlook the view just off the Benton-MacKaye Trail between FS Road 42 and the end of the trail. It is a short walk to the view and back. Once reaching the Appalachian Trail, turn left and hike uphill to Springer Mountain. Return downhill and proceed all the way to Three Forks. This last leg proceeds almost exclusively downhill and passes through a mature stand of Eastern Hemlock trees.

Note: These two suggested routes are not the only way to complete the entire trail. Hikers may plan to hike the route segments in different order or on different days.

For more detailed planning information, driving directions to the parking areas and educational opportunities, see [\[insert hyperlinks\]](#).