



Wonders never cease

TRAIL GUIDE

GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN®

NORTH CAROLINA

Grandfather Mountain®

Wonders never cease

US 221 & Blue Ridge Parkway  
Linville, NC 28646



From observing wildlife in its natural habitat, to relaxing among unparalleled scenery, to making the trip across the Mile High Swinging Bridge, a visit here is sure to leave an impression.

On the slopes and peaks of this ancient mountain, you can find 16 distinct ecological communities that house and protect at least 70 rare and endangered species, 29 of which are globally imperiled. As its unique features and natural diversity have led to worldwide recognition, the International Biosphere Reserve family, it's safe to say that Grandfather is like nowhere else on earth.

And with your help, we'll preserve the mountain in its awesome state for generations to come.



Wild, wonderful and waiting for you to explore. Welcome to Grandfather Mountain

Known for sweeping views and an impressive array of wildlife, Grandfather Mountain is one of the most wonder-filled places in the Southeast.

www.grandfather.com

**Backcountry hiking at Grandfather Mountain**  
Access the trails inside Grandfather Mountain State Park for free from trailheads outside of Grandfather Mountain nature park. Access to the trails from the Swinging Bridge requires the purchase of a ticket to the attraction.

**Enter Grandfather Mountain State Park from the Swinging Bridge area**

- Hiking is included in the price of admission. To access the start of the Grandfather Trail, please park at the Hiker's Parking Area, a quarter mile below the summit.
- Guests wishing to camp in the state park are not permitted to park in the attraction overnight.
- Please return to your vehicle at least one hour before closing time. If, in an emergency, you leave your car on the mountain, please call 733-2800 (Top Shop), 733-4337 (Gate) or 733-1059 (Nature Museum) as soon as possible to notify Grandfather Mountain staff. If you do not call, we will send out a search party.

**Enter Grandfather Mountain State Park for FREE**

- Guests wishing only to hike or camp can access Grandfather Mountain State Park from one of the two off-mountain trailheads located either on the Blue Ridge Parkway or NC 105. A trail map will be available when you register.
- Plan on hiking back to your car.
- If you plan to have someone pick you up at the Swinging Bridge, the driver of the pick-up vehicle will be charged regular gate admission to come inside the travel attraction to pick you up.
- Grandfather Mountain is not able to provide rides to or from trailheads.

Keeping Grandfather Mountain Green

Your support of the nonprofit Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation helps to maintain the network of trails and the rugged natural beauty of this park for future generations. Visit [grandfathermountain.org](http://grandfathermountain.org) to learn more or to make a donation.

**CREST TRAILS**  
**THE GRANDFATHER TRAIL** – An upper ridge trail of astonishing variety, with spruce and fir, rock walls and pinnacles, and open spaces with views of mountains in every direction. The route follows the crest of Grandfather Mountain from the Swinging Bridge Parking Area out 2.4 miles to Calloway Peak. It was along this trail two centuries ago that noted French explorer and botanist Andre Michaux broke into song thinking he had arrived at the highest point in North America.

Pace is often deliberate. There are chutes where progress is hand-over-hand and some extra steep sections where hikers use cables and ladders. An alternative to taking the ladders up MacRae Peak is to opt for the more sheltered Underwood Trail (see below).

**THE UNDERWOOD TRAIL** – Splitting off the Grandfather Trail near the half-mile marker, the Underwood Trail bypasses ladder climbs on MacRae Peak, rejoining the Grandfather Trail at MacRae Gap, about a mile out. The strenuous trail makes a long, steep, rocky turn around Raven Rock Cliffs by way of one long ladder. Going out along Grandfather and returning along Underwood makes an excellent loop hike from the Swinging Bridge.

**WEST SIDE TRAILS**  
**THE PROFILE TRAIL** – Beginning as a rolling pathway through seasonal wildflowers, this trail travels beside the Watauga

River through rhododendron thickets and under a hardwood canopy. Upper sections, beginning around Foscoe View, get steeper, and there are turnouts. Before the trail reaches a view of the Grandfather Profile, hundreds of large boulders were rearranged into a rock walkway called “Peregrine's Flight”. Shanty Spring, at 3.1 miles in, marks the beginning of a strenuous segment that makes the transition out of the hardwoods and into the Canadian fir Zone, climbing 0.3 miles before joining the Grandfather Trail. It is steep and rocky and calls for some careful footwork. Your reward is the view at the top.

**EAST SIDE TRAILS**  
There are two points for accessing East Side trails. Most hikers use the Boone Fork Parking Area at mile 299.9 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The alternative is the Asutsi Trail which begins 1.8 miles south of Holloway Mountain Road on 221 South—the only winter access when the Parkway is closed. From Boone Fork parking area, hikers can follow the Tanawha Trail south to the Nuwati and Daniel Boone Scout Trailheads. The Tanawha winds easily along the mountainside parallel to the Parkway. No fee is charged for its use and no camping is allowed in designated campsites.  
**DANIEL BOONE SCOUT TRAIL**– Ascending about 2,000 feet over 3 miles, this hike begins at the Tanawha Trail and climbs

to the summit of Calloway Peak (5,946 feet), the highest point on the Blue Ridge Escarpment. About halfway up, at Flat Rock View, hikers reach the junction of Cragway Trail. The upper half of the Boone Trail is rough going with views of Price Park. Just before Calloway Peak, in-place ladders and cables help hikers through steep sections.  
**NUWATI TRAIL** – Nu-wa-ti means “medicine” in the Cherokee language and this trail follows an old logging road 1.2 miles. It's an easy but rocky hike, ending at Storyteller's Rock and a view of the Boone Bowl. Along the way, there are stream crossings, and a stand of Bigtooth Aspens.  
**Cragway Trail**– A steep, demanding hike with lovely vistas. Boulders and crags jut out with views of the Boone Fork Bowl. This trail links Nuwati and Boone Trails, and makes a fine loop hike. A hiking option coming down the Boone Trail when returning to cars is to follow Cragway Trail to the Nuwati.  
**ASUTSI TRAIL**– (National Park Service Trail) A-su-tsi means “bridge” in the Cherokee language. This short, easy trail (0.4 miles) links to US 221 and the Tanawha Trail, providing alternative access to Nuwati and Boone Trails and winter access to the East Side Trails.

**PLEASE STAY ON THE TRAIL.** Cutting through switch-backs and exploring areas off the trail can cause erosion, impact rare plants, and generally damage sensitive habitats.

**The following policies will help us protect the mountain for future generations.**

**CAMPING** – Camp in designated areas only. Camping in the attraction is not allowed and guests wishing to camp in the state park are not permitted to park in the attraction overnight. A tepee on the map in this brochure pinpoints a campsite. A tepee symbol on a trail sign indicates a camping area close by. Please camp quietly after 10pm so others can enjoy the serenity. And leave trees as you find them—carving into a tree can eventually kill it. Permit and sign-in required.

## Mountain Regulations

**FIRE** – It's best to bring a gas backpacking stove for cooking. Campfires are permitted only on designated campsites in the state park but not on Grandfather Trail or at Hi-Balsam Shelter. If you decide to use a fire in a permitted area, keep it small, tend it at all times and only collect wood that is down on the ground. Drown fires before leaving camp. Campfires may be banned during dry periods. If you smoke, be especially careful during spring and fall dry spells. Crush cigarettes and carry out the filters.

**LITTER AND WASTE**– Please carry out everything you carry in, including used bathroom tissue. For public health and courtesy reasons, bury all human waste 12” deep, 100 feet from any water resources, campsites, and trails. And thanks for picking up litter left by others!

**DOGS**– Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet at all times. Please clean up after your pets.

**PROHIBITED MATERIALS & ACTIVITIES:**  
No Drugs or Alcoholic Beverages  
No Weapons  
No Removal Of Plants, Rocks, Animals, etc.  
No Rock Climbing  
No Hunting or Fishing  
No Mountain Bikes, Horses or Pack Animals  
No Geocaching

See [www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov) for full list of State Park Regulations

BACKCOUNTRY HIKING

Grandfather Mountain

CREST TRAILS

**GRANDFATHER TRAIL** - *Blue Blazed, 2.4 miles (3.8 km)*  
Alpine trail that crosses entire summit ridge from trailhead at Swinging Bridge to Calloway Peak. Very strenuous, at times requiring use of cables and ladders, but with spectacular rewards.

Grandfather Trail Extension	0.3 mi (.48 km)
Underwood Trail jct.	0.5 mi (0.8 km)
MacRae Peak (3 hrs. round trip)	0.9 mi (1.4 km)
Attic Window Peak (3.5 hrs. round trip)	1.2 mi (1.9 km)
Indian House Cave	1.3 mi (2.1 km)
Alpine Meadow	1.5 mi (2.4 km)
Profile Jct./Calloway Gap	1.9 mi (3.0 km)
Cliffside Campsite	2.0 mi (3.2 km)
Watauga View	2.3 mi (3.7 km)
Calloway Peak (5 hrs. round trip)	2.4 mi (3.8 km)

**UNDERWOOD TRAIL** - *Yellow Blazed, 0.5 mile (0.8 km)*  
A bypass trail around MacRae Peak that lets hikers avoid nine ladders and/or severe weather on MacRae Peak and Grandfather Trail. Strenuous and rocky. Includes one ladder.

WEST SIDE TRAILS

**PROFILE TRAIL** - *Orange Diamond, 3.6 miles (5.8 km)* in length from trailhead to Calloway Gap/Grandfather Trail Jct.  
The trailhead parking area is located north of the junction of 105 and 184. The lower part of the trail is an easy out-and-back stroll; upper section is gradual but fairly strenuous. Steep, strenuous, rocky trail between Shanty Spring and the Grandfather Trail at Calloway Gap.

Foscoe View	2.25 mi (2.7 km)
Profile Campsite	2.5 mi (4 km)
Shanty Spring (3 hrs. round trip)	3.1 mi (5 km)
Calloway Gap (3.5 hrs. round trip)	3.6 mi (5.8 km)

EAST SIDE TRAILS

**DANIEL BOONE SCOUT TRAIL** - *White Diamond, 3.0 miles (4.8 km)* from trailhead. Approx. hiking times noted.  
Recommended access is from Boone Fork Parking Area on the Parkway via the Tanawha Trail. Moderately strenuous trail to Calloway Peak.

Flatrock View and Cragway jct. (2 hrs. round trip)	1.3 mi (2.1 km)
Daniel Boone Campsite	1.4 mi (2.3 km)
Briar Patch Campsite	2.1 mi (3.4 km)
Hi-Balsam Shelter	2.7 mi (4.3 km)
Raven’s Roost Campsite	2.8 mi (4.5 km)
Calloway Peak (4.5 hrs. round trip)	3.0 mi (4.8 km)

**NUWATI TRAIL** - *Blue Circle - 1.2 miles (1.9 km)*  
Trail begins after 0.4 miles on Tanawha Trail from Boone Fork Parking Area. An easy, but rocky, hike.

Nuwati Spring	0.2 mi (0.3 km)
Nuwati-Cragway Trail Jct.	0.6 mi (1.0 km)
Streamside Campsite	0.7 mi (1.2 km)
Hermitage Campsite	0.8 mi (1.29 km)
Storyteller’s Rock Campsite and Boone Bowl View	1.2 mi (1.9 km)
Refuge Campsite	1.4 mi (2.3 km)

**CRAGWAY TRAIL** - *Orange Circle, 1.0 mile (1.6 km)*  
Rocky, strenuous trail that links Nuwati and Daniel Boone Scout Trails.

Top Crag	0.4 mi (0.6 km)
Flat Rock View and jct. with Boone Scout Trail	1.0 mi (1.6 km)

**ASUTSI TRAIL (PARK SERVICE TRAIL)** - *No Blaze, 0.4 mile (0.6 km)*  
Connecting trail from Hwy 221 at Serenity Farm to the Boone Fork Footbridge. Winter access to the East Side Trails. Easy hiking.

ATTRACTION SIDE TRAILS

**WOODS WALK** – Grandfather Mountain Picnic Area. *No Blaze (No painted trail markers), 0.4 mile (0.6 km). 15 to 20 min. walk. First picnic area on right from entrance.*  
The Woods Walk is a short, easy walk through a hardwood forest. This trail is excellent for small children and older folks.

**BRIDGE TRAIL** - *Starting at the Trails Parking Area. No Blaze, 0.4 mile (0.6 km). Allow 15 min. up, 10 min. down.*  
Easy winding trail through a mixed hardwood forest switching back and forth in a moderate climb to the Mile High Swinging Bridge. The top parking lot and Bridge area are also accessible by a short drive.

**BLACK ROCK NATURE TRAIL** - *Gold Circle, 1.0 mile (1.6 km). Allow 2 hr. round trip.*  
Trailhead near top of mountain, on the far side of the Trails Parking Area. Gradual, moderately rocky with several interpretive signs explaining features along the route. Trail ends in a loop with views of Grandmother Mountain, Beacon Heights, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**GRANDFATHER EXTENSION TRAIL**- *Starting at the Trails Parking Area. Red Diamond, 0.6 mile (0.96 km).*  
This trail extends the Grandfather Trail down to the Trails Parking Area and can be used with the Bridge Trail and Grandfather Trail to make a 1.6 mile loop hike. Ends below the Patio View of MacRae Peak.

