

Benton MacKaye Hiking Trail Section 7

TRAIL SUMMARY Location: Georgia Piedmont, Boardtown Creek, Weaver Creek Road to Bushy Head Gap; **Features:** Streams, lakes, Indian Rock; **Distance:** 8.7 miles; **Difficulty Rating:** Easy to moderate; **County:** Fannin and Gilmer; **Nearest City:** Blue Ridge; **Maps:** Blue Ridge and Cashes Valley Quads (GA); **Blazes:** [White diamonds](#); **Campsites:** Mile 4.3: shelter on Sisson property; **Water Sources:** Private property streams at frequent intervals

Section 7 of the Benton MacKaye is unlike any other long trail section in North Georgia. Section 7 traverses a narrow band of Piedmont-the Hightower-Jasper Ridges District-that fingers into North Carolina. With the exception of a very short distance at the Weaver Creek Road end, the entire section winds through private property. Section 7 is primarily a road walk rather than a forest path. While other long trail sections are harder to walk and easier to follow, this section, with its many turns and easy grades, is harder to follow but easier to walk. There are no climbs until the route gains 350 feet in the final mile. One final difference: this section passes beside four lakes.

This section of the Benton MacKaye was rerouted when two private landowners-David Higdon and Joe Sisson-allowed the trail to cross through their land, taking some of the trail off the roadsides and moving it into the forest.

From the trailhead (1,920 feet), Section 7 follows unpaved Weaver Creek Road to the west 2.5 miles to US 76. The southwestern end of Long Mountain is to the right. The road crosses Laurel Creek and its tributaries frequently.

Cross US 76 at its intersection with county road 158. Once across, turn left, continue along the shoulder for 0.1 mile, then turn right at the drive and follow the path on the outside of the fence. Next, turn right through the opening in the fence and ascend over a low ridge. On the other side of the ridge, the route descends to a covered bridge over Cherry Log Creek (1,540 feet) at mile 2.9, the lowest point on the BMT in Georgia.

Across Cherry Log Creek, the trail turns left along an old railroad, turns right from the railroad at mile 3.0, crosses a stream, passes a small waterfall, and recrosses the stream before reaching a road at mile 3.3. After turning sharply left at mile 3.4 (staying on the road), turn right onto a narrow woods road at mile 3.6. Here the BMT rises to Cherry Lake and follows a boardwalk back to the road again at 3.9 miles. It then turns left and leaves the road at a gap at mile 4.1. The trail descends through a cove to the north, crosses a stream, and passes Indian Rock Shelter at 4.3 miles.

Beyond the shelter and the dam on Indian Rock Lake, turn right onto a road and take the left fork beyond the covered bridge. Next, turn left and cross a stream at mile 4.7 before ascending to Cohutta Mountain Road at mile 4.9. Turn right onto Cherry Lake Road (level, not uphill),

then turn right onto the trail at mile 5.0. The route descends through a cove to the next lake at mile 5.4. Beyond the lake, cross a road and follow a woods road that descends sharply along the property line to another road at mile 5.7. Turn left and follow this road to paved Lucius Road at mile 6.0.

After turning right onto Lucius Road, Section 7 turns right onto Boardtown Road at mile 6.6. It then follows paved Boardtown Road to its three-way intersection with paved Bushy Head Gap Road at mile 7.0. Turn left onto Bushy Head Gap Road. The remainder of this section follows Bushy Head Gap Road to the north to the parking area at Bushy Head Gap (2,090 feet).

Highlights

Miles 2.6-6.0: Four small lakes-Moon, Indian Rock Creek, Cherry, and Bear.

Mile 4.5: Indian Rock, a huge rock turned on end at the headwaters of Indian Rock Creek Lake.

Directions

From the GA 5-US 76 junction in Blue Ridge (where GA 5 heads north to McCaysville at the McDonald's) travel US 76 East for 0.7 mile to Windy Ridge Road (the first right past the Wendy's). Turn right onto Windy Ridge Road and continue a short distance to a three-way intersection. Turn left at this intersection and continue 0.1 mile before turning right onto signed Aska Road across from Harmony Baptist Church. Proceed for 1.0 mile on Aska Road, then turn right onto Weaver Creek Road. Travel 3.7 miles to the intersection where Weaver Creek Road ends. To the left is Griffith Parkway. The trail begins straight ahead at the Benton MacKaye Trail sign.

From Blairsville travel US 76 West just over 19.0 miles toward Blue Ridge. Turn left (south) onto Windy Ridge Road.