

Long Branch Loop Hiking Trail



TRAIL SUMMARY **Location:** Western Blue Ridge, Rich Mountains, Aska Trails Area; **Features:** Stream; **Distance:** 2.3 miles; **Difficulty Rating:** Easy to moderate; **County:** Fannin; **Nearest City:** Blue Ridge; **Maps:** Blue Ridge Quad (GA); Aska Trails Area pamphlet available from ranger district; **Blazes:** Green and white circles; **Ranger District:** Toccoa

Much of this logging-road loop winds through a recent shelterwood cut. Many of the tall trees that were left standing, however, were blown down by Hurricane Opal in 1995. A year later, the area was just beginning its regeneration process. In a few years stump sprouts and saplings will create a shrubby habitat preferred by many songbirds. A sapling thicket will form in five to ten years. If the trail is not well maintained, briars will be a problem until the saplings shade them out.

The trail reaches its signed loop at 0.2 mile. The following mileages follow the loop down and to the right in a counterclockwise direction. At 0.9 mile a signed connector leads 0.5 mile to the Green Mountain Trail. This blazed path rises through forest and affords winter views of Blue Ridge Lake.

One-tenth mile beyond the connector, the route crosses Long Branch—a long [step](#) wide—and ascends easily to the upper hill slope of the cut. The remainder of the loop winds through the regenerating area.

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. Travel Aska Road for approximately 6.0 miles before turning left onto paved Shady Falls Road. (If the road sign is missing, look for Flat Creek Road, the next left past Shady Falls Road.) Continue slightly less than 0.2 mile on Shady Falls

Road, then turn left onto the first road to the left. The road's left fork quickly ends at the trailhead parking area.