

EASTATOE in EASTATOE CREEK HERITAGE PRESERVE



DESCRIPTION: This 5.5 mile trail, averaging easy to moderate, leads to a pristine mountain gorge, falls, and bold stream that supports native Rainbow Trout. Beginning from the Laurel Fork FT access, the trail heads west along Horsepasture Rd for a quarter mile, then heads south 1.9 miles on an old logging road (which continues on to Laurel Falls). The trail then drops precipitously (about 900ft) into the gorge...at one point bordering a 100-foot cliff. Formerly difficult, the descent is now moderated by multiple stairways and switchbacks. Near the gorge bottom, a 0.2 mile spur to the right leads to an overlook and scenic falls. The gorge teems with large beech and hemlocks as well as spring wild flowers and rare tropical ferns. From where the trail first encounters the creek, explore less developed paths upstream (best) and down (overgrown/limited) This adds another scenic half mile or so. We usually lunch on the rocks at the rapids.

DIRECTIONS: (GPS: 35.049189, -82.813975)

Gather at Holly Springs (US11 & SC178) for a 915AM departure. This requires leaving KKEPA by 845 OR Walhalla by 830. From Holly go 8 miles north on US178 through Rocky Bottom. Then, just over the bridge across Eastatoe Creek, turn sharp left/south onto Laurel Valley Rd. Immediately bear right following the graveled Horsepasture Rd uphill another quarter mile to the FT parking area and kiosk. There are no fees and no facilities after Holly. Expect to return by 230P.



UPDATED Jul 2017