

FALLS CREEK AND HOSPITAL ROCK JGSP Falls Creek and Hospital Rock Trails in Jones Gap State Park

DESCRIPTION: Falls Creek Trail (1.2 mi, 826 ft elevation gain) and the Hospital Rock Trail (4.9 mi, 1,700 ft elevation gain) are located in the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area at Jones Gap State Park. Both trails are very strenuous and jammed with delights. There is the 125-ft Falls Creek Falls, large boulders, including the house-sized boulder named Hospital Rock, the sheer granite walls of Cleveland Cliffs and views from the ridge. We begin at the Falls Creek trailhead (purple-blazed trail) with a steady uphill climb gaining 600 ft in elevation for the first 0.35 mi. At 0.75 mi, cross Little Falls Creek and continue climbing steadily gaining another 400 feet in elevation over the next 1/4 mi into the hike. The trail descends to the lower section of the falls. To see the upper section, climb the steep section to your right. To continue the hike, cross the creek at the base of the falls and begin the Hospital Rock Trail (orange blazes). The trail continues to climb steeply, eventually reaching the ridge. Along the way cross Headforemost Creek, pass by the Cleveland Connector Trail (to your right), and enjoy views of the Cleveland Cliffs and the valley below. After approximately 3.3 miles along HRT, you will reach Hospital Rock. Upon your descent, also steep, look for a short spur trail upstream (to your right) to Buckeye Falls before crossing Rocky Branch Creek. Continue back to the HRT. At this point, there remains about 1.1 mi to reach Jones Gap State Park. (Total mileage recorded: 8 miles.)

Special Note: Pets are allowed in most outdoor areas provided they are kept under physical restraint or on a leash not longer than six feet.

DIRECTIONS: This hike requires a car shuttle.

Gather at Holly Springs (SC11 & US178) for a 9:15A departure. This requires leaving KKEPA by 8:30A. Some go directly to Holly Springs. From Holly, head east on Rte 11, 14.8 miles to River Falls Rd (F Mart on corner). Turn left onto River Falls Rd and go 4 miles following the Palmetto Bible Camp signs. Turn right onto Duckworth Road. Travel 0.7 mi, turn right on Falls Creek Falls Road. Drop off hikers at the kiosk and trailhead located beyond the PBC. All drivers will return to River Falls Rd, turning right and head to the parking lot at JGSP. Park fee is \$5 per adult, \$3.50/senior over 65; free for car and passengers with a SC Park Pass. Facilities near the park Learning Center. Shuttle drivers back to the Falls Creek Falls trailhead.

Expect to return about 5 PM.