

PINK BEDS LOOP (Trail #118)

Mileage: 5.0 miles

Difficulty: Easy

Blaze: Orange

Approximate Elevation Change: 100 feet



Trailhead Location

From Pisgah District Ranger Station/Visitor Center parking lot, turn right (north) onto US 276. Drive approximately 10 miles, to Pink Beds Picnic Area (just beyond the Cradle of Forestry in America and its Forest Discovery Center). Trail begins at far corner of Pink Beds parking area.

Trail Description

Pink Beds Loop has only minor elevation changes, so it is popular for family hikes. The trail passes through a portion of the Pink Beds Valley, named by the settlers who first cleared the area when the abundant blooms of local plants were visible from the surrounding mountainsides; now that the area has been reforested, the name is more historical than descriptive. The trail is well marked, but it is still important to follow the orange blazes. The north side, somewhat higher and drier than the south side, follows an old road much of the way and has a series of wildlife fields at its near (western) end. These wildlife fields afford views of the nearby mountain ridges if one hikes the trail in a clockwise direction. Camping is not permitted in the wildlife fields. ***The north side is closed to bikes from April 16 through October 14.** At the far (eastern) end of the loop, a spur trail of 0.8 miles goes to the Wolf Ford gauging station, which is on the South Fork of the Mills River near the end of FS 476 (Wolf Ford Road). The south side of the loop, open to foot traffic only, generally follows the South Fork of the Mills River, deviating upslope on its eastern half to avoid conflict with recurrent beaver activity. The trail crosses the river several times via foot bridges. Low areas have bog bridges, though your feet may still get wet during rainy periods.

An intersecting trail, Barnett Branch (#618), crosses this trail near its middle, and offers additional loop hike opportunities. **Bikes are not allowed on Barnett Branch Trail.**



Pisgah National Forest

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