

Big South Fork Hiking Trails



The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (BSFNRRRA) has a bounty of **hiking** trails with varying degrees of intensity. The Burckhard family has been blessed to have walked many a trail in the park and some of our favorites continue to be Twin Arches, Angel Falls Overlook and visiting the interesting and historic Blue Heron and Barthell Coal Mining Camps. Twin Arches is a great example of the geological wonders that have been formed over centuries. It is also one of the most visited features in the Big

South Fork. Dramatic cliffs, arches, rock shelters, chimneys and other interesting formations are carved into the sandstone of the plateau, offering visitors superb outdoor recreation opportunities. BSFNRRRA has been a national park since 1974, after it caught the attention of Congress in the early 70's. It allows families, outdoor adventurers and groups a variety of activities that are **low or no cost**. The Burckhard family loves to camp at the Bandy Creek Campground area or rent one of the luxury cabins that are offered surrounding the park. It's the perfect place to hang out for a day, weekend or week and enjoy the trails either by foot, by horse or by mountain bike. Another favorite hike is the Angel Falls Overlook which one can pick up at the Leatherwood Ford Trailhead. It meanders along the river and leads up to a majestic bluff overlook, 1,000 feet above the rambling river. This is an ideal hike in the winter, when many of us have cabin fever. A crisp, clear winter day is just right to hike the hard, solid trails, while patches of ice rest on the river and beautiful mountain vistas. It's also a stunning destination in the fall, especially when the colors are at their peak – acres and acres of patchwork beauty created by The Creator for

our viewing pleasure. Our family loves sitting atop the Angel Falls Overlook's gigantic rock bluff with our picnic lunch in hand. This is a wonderful day outing with friends and family. For several years, our church family has taken a camping/hiking trip to this exact spot. We have had many days of fun exploring the wild and enjoying the outdoors. When you come, don't forget to hike down to Charit Creek Lodge and this amazing area for a peek at the authentic log cabin structures that are used as a hostel by many outdoor adventurers. This is a great hike by foot or horseback, and Cowboy Larry McMillan from Southeast Pack Trips leads many a group down to this popular area. Another favorite in the area is Pickett State Park, just down the road from the Leatherwood Ford Trailhead. Pickett State Park has some amazing hikes, plus some interesting history about how it was built. This has been depicted in the new CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Museum and Interpretive Exhibit at the entrance to the park. The Blue Heron and Barthell Coal Mining Camps are also wonderful spots to visit. This area too is rich in local history with many fascinating stories. Step back in time to see where things were just a few short years ago in this rural Appalachian area. The Big South Fork Scenic Railway has regular train departures through the gorge April – October. For more information about the hikes in the BSFNRRRA and Pickett State Park, visit the park websites below or give them a call. For those that aren't able to hike or enjoy the trails as easily as others or just don't have the time to immerse yourself in the full experience – the roads through the parks offer some pretty spectacular views by bike or by automobile. Remember – leave no trace. Pack out everything you pack in. The parks belong to all of us. Happy Trails!

Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area – www.nps.gov/biso - click Outdoor Recreation Pickett State Park – www.tn.gov/environment/parks/Pickett/ - click Hiking Trails

NEIGHBORS

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They don't criticize your choice of curtains.

They don't tell you the right way to plant your tomatoes.

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