



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service Southern Region



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THE VIRGINIA CREEPER TRAIL

Total Length: 33.4 miles

The Virginia Creeper is a shared-use trail connecting Abingdon, Va., with the Virginia-North Carolina border, 1.1 miles east of Whitetop Station, Va. Hiking, bicycling and horseback riding are allowed.

From Abingdon to Damascus, the trail right-of-way belongs to the two towns, but most of the actual land is private. While visitors have the right to use the trail when it crosses private property, please respect landowners. The trail between Damascus and the North Carolina border is owned and administered by the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. However, some sections go through private land as well.

Trail History

The trail began as a Native American footpath. Later, it was used by European pioneers including Daniel Boone. By the very early 1900s, W. B. Mingea had constructed the Virginia-Carolina Railroad from Abingdon to Damascus. In 1905 the line was extended by Hassinger Lumber Co. to Konnarock and Elkland, N.C. It hauled lumber, iron ore, supplies and passengers. The nickname "Virginia Creeper" came from the early steam locomotives as they slowly struggled up the mountains.

With about 50 trestles and bridges, sharp curves and steep grades, the Virginia Creeper was the quintessential mountain railroad. Crews faced wash-outs, rock slides and other hazards, but it was economics that sounded the line's death whistle. Having failed to turn a profit since before the Great Depression, the Creeper ran its last train on March 31, 1977.

Trail Log

Miles are measured from the Virginia-North Carolina state line to the town of Abingdon

- 0.0 VA-NC state line
- 1.1 Whitetop Station Visitor Center
- 4.1 Green Cove Station Visitor Center
- 8.4 High Trestle, 550 ft. long, 100 ft. tall
- 9.4 Creek Junction, trail access, parking, fishing, restrooms
- 12.4 Taylor's Valley
- 13.9 Straight Branch Trailhead
- 15.9 Iron Bridge, leaving the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area
- 17.9 Town of Damascus
- 24.9 Alvarado
- 26.2 South Holston Trestle, scenic trestle over the conjunction of South and Middle Forks of the Holston River, lowest point on trail at 1900 feet
- 29.7 Dry Branch Trestle
- 30.5 Highway 677, parking
- 33.4 Abingdon Trailhead, restrooms, parking, locomotive display

Thanks to the Virginia Creeper Trail Club
for printing this publication.


Creeper Keeper
www.creeperkeeper.com