



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



## Point Lookout Trail

*North Carolina*



# Point Lookout Trail

North Carolina

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## Overview

Located approximately 25 miles east of the vibrant city of Asheville, the Point Lookout Trail offers visitors the opportunity to be enveloped by nature as they travel through the dense woods of the Pisgah National Forest. The more than 500,000 acres of national forest are home to waterfalls, the country's first school of forestry, a variety of wildlife, and the highest peak of the Appalachian Mountains: Mount Mitchell.

Visitors seeking a more physically strenuous journey can begin at the trail's eastern terminus in Old Fort, as the trail ascends more than 900 feet in elevation over its 3.6 miles. Those who are more interested in experiencing the trail with the assistance of gravity, however, should start

uphill at the western terminus in Ridgecrest.

## About the Route

At the Ridgecrest terminus, a gate blocks unauthorized motor vehicles, but hikers, walkers, runners, and bicyclists can go around it. From there, the trail descends through a lush hardwood forest, punctuated with breaks in the trees that grant glimpses of sweeping vistas of the surrounding verdant slopes.

After approximately three-quarters of a mile, the trail encounters a Norfolk Southern railroad corridor, which stretches a mile below the trail, providing an over-the-shoulder view of rail tracks approaching a tunnel. Soon after, the trail opens up to its most noteworthy stop: Point Lookout. In addition to the dazzling overlook, trail users will find benches to rest and informational signs detailing the point's history as a tourist destination.

The remainder of the trail continues to wind downhill, treating trail users to more views of the Royal Gorge and the natural beauty of the mountains.

## Trail History

The Point Lookout Trail follows part of the route of the Old NC 10 (Central Highway)/Old US 70 West, which served as a main link between the Asheville area and the rest of the state before the road was closed to vehicular traffic in 1982. Years later, the North Carolina Department of Transportation funded converting the road into a paved greenway. Although most of the trail falls within the domain of the U.S. Forest Service, a small portion is clearly marked as private property; please respect these boundaries and do not stray from the trail in this area.



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**States:** North Carolina

**Counties:** McDowell

Length: 3.6miles

**Trail end points:** Mill Creek Rd. (Old Fort) to  
Old US 70 W (Old Fort)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt

**Trail category:** Greenway/Non-RT

**Trail activities:** Bike, Walking

## Parking & Trail Access

The Point Lookout Trail runs between Mill Creek Rd. (Old Fort) and Old US 70 W (Old Fort), where parking is available.

Parking is also available at:

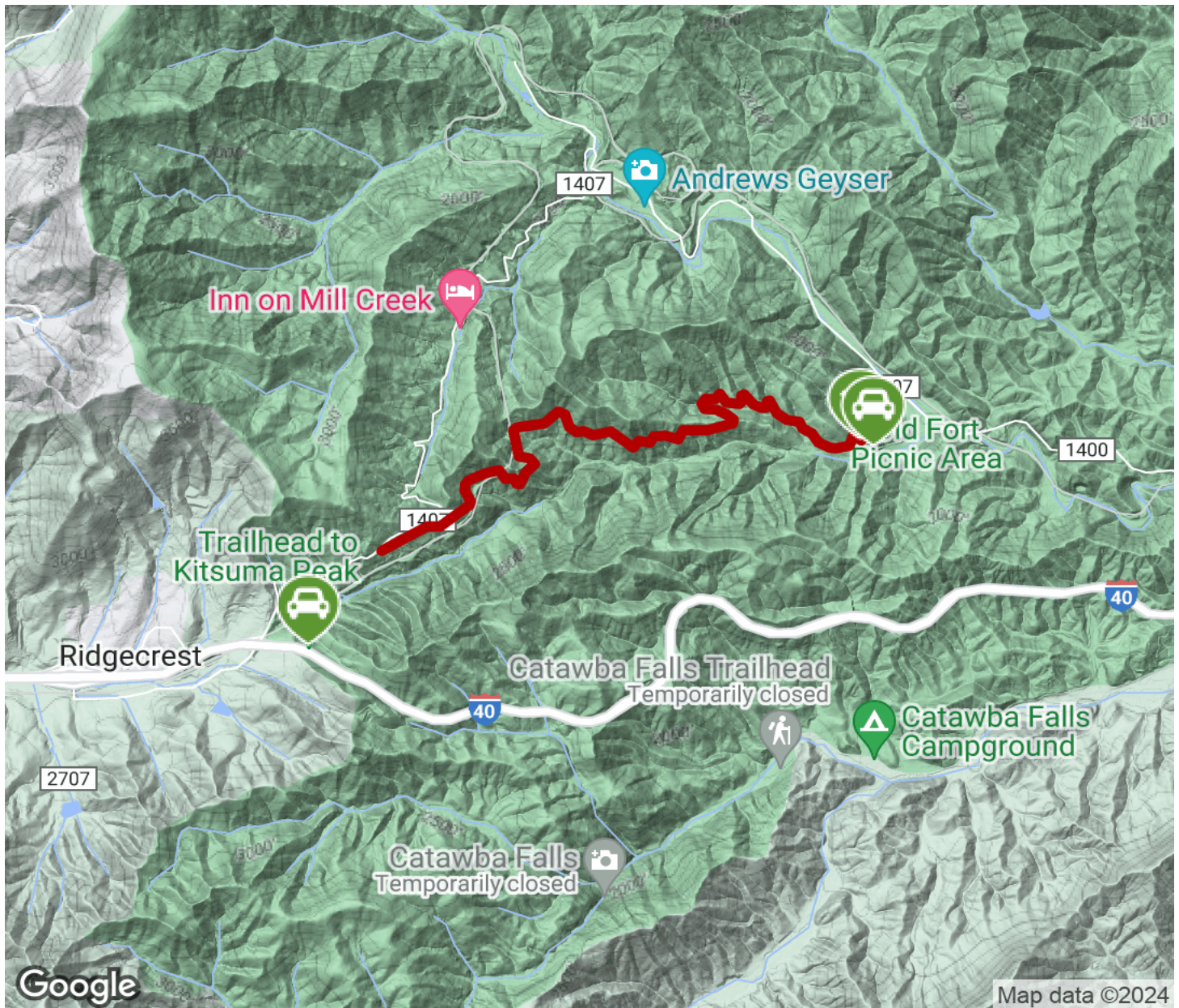
- 209 Royal Gorge Road
- Old Fort Picnic Grounds, 2415 CR 1400

See [TrailLink Map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



# Point Lookout Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



**TrailLink**  
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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