



GATEWAY TO THE MOUNTAINS

THE SUMTER NATIONAL FOREST



Andrew Pickens
Ranger District



INTRODUCTION

The northwestern corner of South Carolina has always been a gateway to the mountains beyond. In the early days Cherokee warriors came through the area in their conquest of the Piedmont tribes. The high plateaus and mountains were the last strongholds of the Cherokees in South Carolina before they moved out in 1792 after signing a treaty with Andrew Pickens. Botanists Andrew Michaux and William Bartram came through the valleys searching for new and rare plants of the Appalachians in the 1700s.

Today, there is still a gateway to the mountains—the Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest. Now it is a gateway to mountain pleasures without rugged mountain driving. Visitors can leave the hustle and bustle of the industrial piedmont and reach the cool of the highland forest after a short drive. The abrupt change from rolling country to mountains has created numerous spectacular waterfalls, many of which can be viewed after a short hike from nearby roads or trails.

Visitors find a variety of activities on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District. You can picnic and camp in areas where environmental quality is the first consideration. You can wander through the forest along 46 miles of hiking trails or try your fishing skills in more than 80 miles of trout streams.

The resources of National Forests—timber, water, wildlife, forage, and recreation—are managed for the continuing benefit of the American people. This management provides for the immediate needs of the people and makes certain that future needs also can be met.

Quality environment... scenic beauty... recreation... a gateway to the mountains—the Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina.

THE CHATTOOGA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

This powerful river descends almost one-half mile in its 50-mile length, forming the boundary between South Carolina and Georgia.

In 1974, Congress designated the Chattooga as a Wild and Scenic River to protect its outstanding scenery while providing recreation and wildlife values. It offers challenging boating, fishing, and hiking experiences. Motorized vehicles and motorboats are prohibited within the corridor which is about one-fourth mile wide on either side of the river.



Boating is permitted on a 28-mile long section starting below Highway 28 and on the West Fork of the Chattooga, in Georgia. The river offers a variety of whitewater floating, beginning with fairly easy water on Sections I and II, difficult rapids on Section III and extremely difficult rapids on Section IV. Many lives have been lost on Sections III and IV as boaters challenged the river with poor equipment, insufficient skill, or a complete disregard for safety.

Persons who do not have the skill or equipment to safely float the river or who want instruction, can hire the services of competent boating companies operating under Forest Service permit. The District Ranger's office near Walhalla, SC, has information on commercial trips and sells a more complete map of the Chattooga.

WILDERNESS

Wilderness is defined by the 1964 National Wilderness Preservation Act as an area of undeveloped Federal land designated by Congress that is affected primarily by the forces of nature and where man is a visitor who does not remain.

Congress designated Ellicott Rock as South Carolina's first wilderness in 1975. This area, which covers 3,300 acres, extends into North Carolina and Georgia. The Wilderness includes some of the more rugged mountains of South Carolina. Most people stay close to the trail system, but some people, seeking solitude, strike out cross-country on their own. If you plan to leave the trails, be prepared with a topographic map, compass, tough clothing, first aid kit, and snake bite kit.

HIKING

Over 46 miles of hiking trail make the network on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District the most extensive in South Carolina. These trails provide many opportunities for the hiker to leave civilization behind and seek secluded spots with scenic forest vistas.

Hikers may enjoy slow, leisurely hikes between campsites or longer, faster hikes depending on the experience they are seeking. The average backpacking hiker plans a trip from 5 to 7 miles a day allowing time for nature observation.

A variety of hiking conditions are present on this trail system. The trails east of Highway 107 and along Medlin Ridge are near the mountain tops while the other trails follow streams or the Chattooga River. Since more people hike the trails north of the Burrells Ford road than any other part of the network,

individuals seeking solitude are encouraged to use the trails outside the Ellicott Rock area.

Signs mark trail crossings at major roads. Since the trails are designed and constructed for hikers, motorized vehicles and horses are not allowed. During deer hunting season, for extra safety, wear brightly colored clothing while hiking.

Maps showing the trail system in greater detail than is possible on this map are available at the Ranger Station on SC 28, 6 miles north of Walhalla, SC, or at the Forest Supervisor's office, P.O. Box 2227, Columbia, SC 29202.

DEVELOPED RECREATION AREAS

Camping on the Andrew Pickens is designed for families who enjoy a forest-type atmosphere. All sites are on a first-come-first-served basis and reservations are not taken. Cherry Hill is the principal campground providing space for trailers and tents. A fireplace and table are provided at each unit and water, garbage, sanitary facilities, and trailer dump station are within a reasonable distance. A fee is charged for the use of Cherry Hill.

Burrells Ford is a secondary recreation area for persons interested in primitive camping in a more secluded site along the Chattooga River. All visitors must carry their gear about 350 yards to the camping units, which include tables and fire rings. Water and toilet facilities are also available.

Hunt camps are primitive sites, open during the big game season, with limited facilities for persons wanting to camp while hunting.

Many people enjoy the pleasant picnicking conditions at the Chattooga picnic area adjacent to the National Fish Hatchery and Yellow Branch just south of Stumphouse Ranger Station on South Carolina Highway 107. These areas have both picnic shelters and individual tables. In addition there are numerous small picnic areas along Highway 107 for your use.

The Cedar Creek Rifle Range attracts many visitors who sight in rifles or enjoy target practice. South Carolina regulations prohibit firing weapons in places other than rifle ranges except during a legal hunting season. They also require weapons carried in vehicles to be unloaded and in a case.

Most Forest Service developed recreation areas are closed during the winter months because the facilities are not designed for freezing weather. Persons interested in using campgrounds after November can use Oconee State Park or the Stumphouse Tunnel Park, which remain open year round.



PACK-IT-IN, PACK-IT-OUT PROGRAM

The pack-it-in, pack-it-out program is used to reduce trash. When using areas where there are no trash cans, please safely burn all refuse that you can and pack out the remainder. Help the Forest Service by carrying out someone else's trash also. Burying trash does not work since animals may dig it up. This program helps to keep your Forest clean and reduces government spending.

CAMPING POLICY

Camping is permitted at developed recreation areas, at hunt camps and at campsites designated with signs. In addition hikers may camp anywhere in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness or Chattooga River corridor that is more than 1/4 mile from a road and at least 50 feet from a trail, stream, or river. Individuals wanting to camp outside of these areas may apply for a permit from the District Ranger. Campfires are permitted at all designated sites and users are urged to be careful.

ATTRACTIONS TO SEE

Chattooga River Information Site (C-1). This unmanaged exhibit area, with restrooms, provides information on the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River at the Highway 76 Bridge parking lot.

National Fish Hatchery (B-3). The Fish and Wildlife Service, USDI, operates a large trout hatchery which is open to the public from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Adjacent to the hatchery is a scenic Forest Service picnic area containing the largest white pine and hemlock trees in South Carolina.

King Creek Falls (B-3). These attractive 70-foot-high falls are at the end of a well-marked 0.7-mile trail.

Fire Towers (B-3) and (C-2). These 60-foot towers, manned during the spring and fall to detect damaging wildfires, provide panoramic views of the rugged mountains and rolling farmlands.

Oconee State Park (C-3). This attractive park provides camping sites with electric hookups, rental cabins, picnic shelters and swimming. Call 803-638-5353 for information.

Stumphouse Tunnel Park (C-3). A dead-end tunnel was built by the railroad in the 1850s when an attempt was made to cross the mountains. Camping and picnic facilities are provided. To the east of the campgrounds is Isaqueena Falls which drops to the rocks far below.



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