

Hike to the Swag



Overflowing with wildflowers in the Spring and Summer seasons and offering great views of Fall colors in October, this hiking area offers a variety of adventures in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Family friendly exploring can be done in the meadow around the Science Education Center that sits at 4840' with Purchase Knob just off to the southwest. The meadow gives views of Cold Mountain, Mt Pisgah, Crabtree Mountain, Newfound Mountain, and Mt Sterling. Though there is no trail to the top of Purchase Knob, other trails lead to the John Ferguson Cabin, Cataloochee Divide Trail , and The Swag. In winter the gates to the top of Purchase Road close but you can park at the gate and hike. **5 mile Loop** - Parked outside of the National Park gate walk up Purchase Road to follow signage for Ferguson Cabin and continue uphill. Take a right through the meadow (clear but unmarked) to lead you up to the Science Learning Center. Continue to the rear of the Center following signage for Cataloochee Divide Trail and follow it left. At the Swag Resort fork turn left on McKee Branch and take the the pathway "for hikers only" to Ferguson Cabin. Walking past Ferguson there will be a trail to the right leading back to the bottom of the meadow and a right on Purchase Road will return you to the start.

Directions:

From Waynesville take 276 N. Turn left onto US 19 towards Maggie Valley. Right on 276 N towards I 40. Left onto Hemphill Road which becomes Purchase Road.