

Big East Fork Trail Pisgah



Pam and I decided to try a trail we've driven by many times but each time we were on route to a different hike. Needless to say, we'd never tried it until today.

It's called the Big East Fork Trail and it's an 8 mile out and back trail located near Canton, North Carolina that hikes along a river and is rated as moderate - on a 0-12 scale I'd give it a 6.



The trail runs along a former railroad and is a popular start to the Shining Rock Wilderness. The Shining Rock Wilderness was designated in 1964, it's an 18,479-acre backcountry area that was one of the original tracts protected by the Wilderness Act.

We set off towards Waynesville and took US 276 toward Pisgah forest. We were very surprised to see the small parking area completely full and hugged the guardrail on the edge of the road and started our hike.

From the start we noticed the roar of the stream crashing towards us, the clarity was amazing as we could see the bottom rocks in large deep pools as if they were 12 inches down. The trail is a gradual up and down footpath sometimes rocky and rooty that follows the stream closely for most of the hike and wanders of many times throughout.

There were many, many opportunities to stop and set-up camp along the river, we saw more than 10 large sites complete with firepits and logs to sit on. Each had room for 2 or more tents some could hold 5 or 6 tents. we plan to return and walk in to a site I've identified, early one morning, to setup day camp to cook lunch. I'll fish, while Pam relaxes and reads a good book.

What we now know is that the Big East Fork trail climbs toward Shining Rock ledge deep in the wilderness. Following along the stream for about 4 miles to a fork in the path, where the Greasy Cove Prong meets Bridges Camp Gap. From here, we could have gone right into the wilderness on the Greasy Cove Trail to Investor Gap toward Tenent Mountain or left along the Bridges Camp Gap Trail towards Graveyards Fields. Of course, the final option we chose was to return back the way we hiked in before dark - but not before enjoying a wonderful lunch on the stream!

Directions: Take US 276 from Waynesville towards Canton. Going approximately 13 miles on a windy road thru Caruso to a small, marked parking lot on the right. The trailhead is marked the trail is not.























