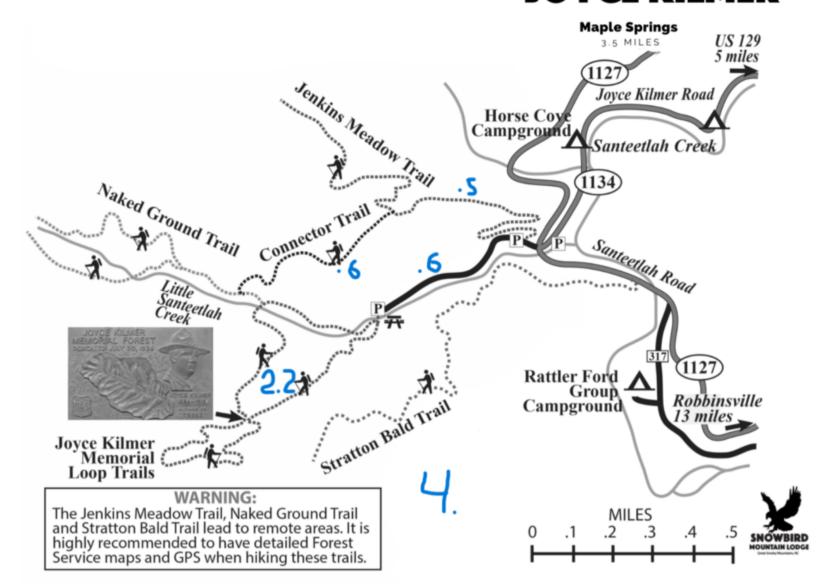# Hiking in Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest

This 2.5 mile figure-8 loop trail travels through a spectacular, virgin forest, one of the largest contiguous tracts of old-growth forest in the Eastern United States. The forest around this trail is designated as the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, a part of the larger Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness. This is a fitting, living monument dedicated to an individual who is best know for his poem, "Trees". We could connect thru the Jenkins Meadow trail for a total of 4 miles or do the Haoe Lead to the Naked Ground trails and the figure 8 for a 10 mile hike.

The lower loop ascends the ridge above Litttle Santeetlah Creek, crossing some tributary streams and seeps on wood bridges. It passes through a former Eastern Hemlock grove. Most of those are now dead due to Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestation, although inexplicably, one medium-sized hemlock survives as of September 2017. The rest were felled for safety with dynamite, leaving ragged, more natural-looking stumps than would have been created by sawing.
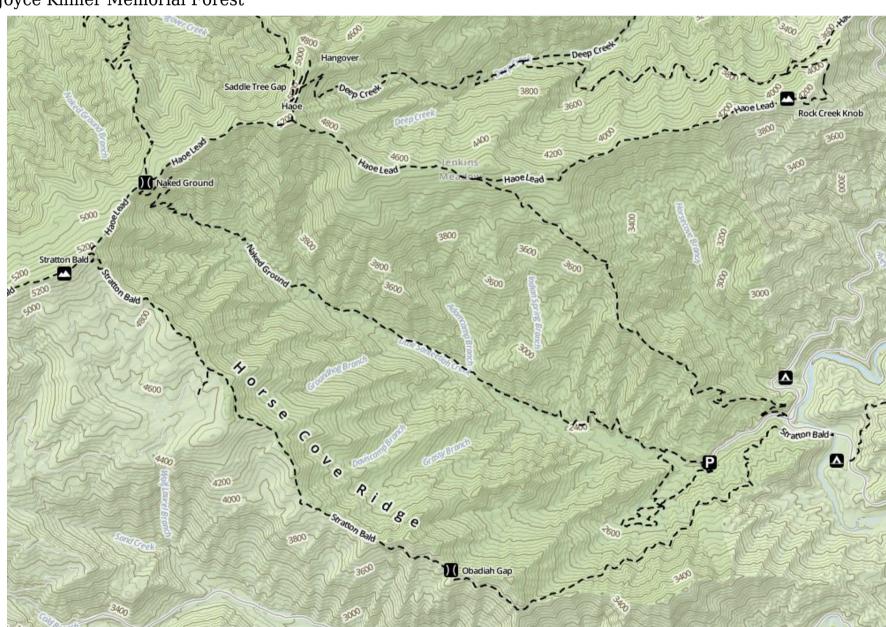
It then descends back to Little Santeetlah Creek and follows it downstream for a ways. A monument inscribed with the poem lies at the mid-point of the hike, where the figure-8 trail's two smaller loops cross. The upper loop, where most of the big trees are located, climbs gently through a small stream valley before wrapping onto the side of the cove where it dries out a bit. Some enormous trees (mostly tuliptrees, but some other species) are located right beside this portion of the trail while some others are visible just above and below it.

The trail curves around a few more times before arriving back at the figure-8 junction. Excellent representation of original, native cove hardwood forest with enormous trees. Well-designed trail with creek crossings on bridges. Connects with trails in the larger, wilder Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Area.

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest

The larger, wilder Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Area.