

TRIP DESCRIPTION

Countless waterfalls and massive stands of old-growth yellow poplar and hemlock surround you as you descend into the Wilson Creek Area. Once empowered with the knowledge to navigate using a map & compass, you'll learn to collaborate with your teammates as you find your way through a maze of ridges and valleys. The terrain gets steep in a hurry here and the dense old growth of NC's temperate rainforest will test your limits and force your group to develop quickly. Your perseverance and teamwork will soon pay off with triumphant mountaintop celebrations and feelings of camaraderie. You will emerge from the forest with a great confidence in your ability to take on your next challenge, UNC!

Exertion level:

On a typical day of backpacking in the Wilson Creek area you will hike 3-6 miles on rocky and sometimes steep terrain with frequent elevation changes. Speed of travel is approximately 2 mph, but with breaks, lunch, time spent consulting the map, etc. it is likely we will spend 4-6 hours on trail per day, possibly more or less depending on the group's skill level and desired pace.

Weather:

Mountain weather changes quickly and can be unpredictable. Some days it will be hot, sunny, and clear. Other days there might be strong winds and rain that bring an added environmental challenge to your experience. Temperatures and wind can feel very cold at night even during the summer.

Course Area:

The Wilson Creek area is part of Pisgah National Forest, south of Boone, NC. The area has a rich and vibrant history – it was once used for a summer hunting grounds by the Cherokee Indians, was then settled by pioneers and used for logging, and then as a site of one of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps, which operated across the United States. The creek begins on Calloway Peak (5920 ft) on Grandfather Mountain and flows southerly for 23.3 miles where it joins Johns River in Caldwell County. In 2000, the area was designated a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

BASIC ITINERARY

Day 1:

Arrive at the Outdoor Education Center (OEC) by 5pm
Prepare for trip (meet each other, pack food, load gear, etc.)
Sleep at OEC

Day 2:

Drive to Wilson Creek Area (approx. 4 hours)
Leave the van behind and backpack to first campsite

Days 3-6:

Explore the mountains on foot during the day
Find and set up camp somewhere new each night
As you develop skills such as campsite selection, cooking, and navigation your instructors will take more of a back seat and let you run your own trip!

Day 7:

Hike from final campsite back to van
Drive back to OEC –End of trip logistics (clean gear, evaluate the trip)
Shower time
Ready to be picked up from OEC by 8 pm (time subject to change)

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Footwear:

Appropriate footwear is very important. You will need two pairs of shoes – a pair for hiking and a pair to wear around camp. Sturdy, thick-soled shoes are appropriate for hiking. A hiking boot with ankle support is necessary for this trip. You should bring a second pair of sneakers or other closed-toed shoes to wear around camp. We may have some extra boots at the Outdoor Education Center to borrow. Contact David Yeargan if interested, as we have very few pairs and sizes.

Cash:

We recommend having around \$20 cash for food on the way back to Chapel Hill and/or if you've acquired any missing/damaged gear fees.