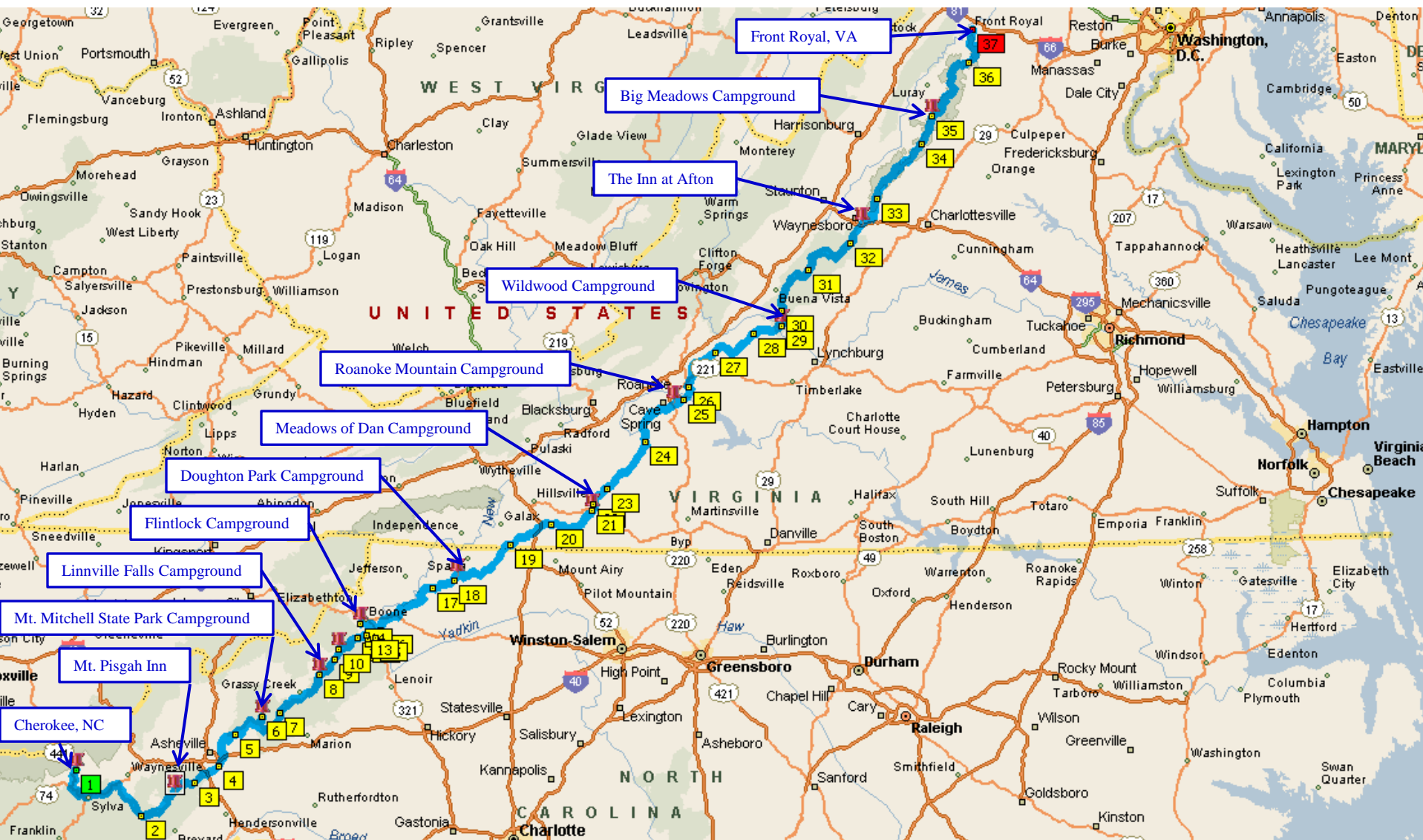


Experience the Blue Ridge Parkway





(There is no significance to the numbered boxes.)



Blue Ridge Parkway/Skyline Drive Tour

Cherokee, NC to Front Royal, VA

Wednesday, May 11 – Saturday, May 21, 2011



Tentative Schedule:

More details to be added as the trips gets closer.

Trip Day	Day of Week	Date	Starting Location	Starting MP	Ending Location	Ending MP	Miles	# feet climbing	Extra miles not on BRP
1	Wed	5/11	Cherokee, NC (motel)	469	Mt. Pisgah Inn	409	62	9305	2
2	Thu	5/12	Mt. Pisgah Inn	409	Mt. Mitchell State Park Campground	355	58	5345+	4
3	Fri	5/13	Mt. Mitchell State Park Campgr	355	Linnville Falls Campgr	316	43	4043+	4
4	Sat	5/14	Linnville Falls Campgr	316	Flintlock Campgr (Boone)	294.6	40.4	2344+	19
5	Sun	5/15	Flintlock Campgr (Boone)	291.9	Doughton Park	239	53.3	6485	3.5
6	Mon	5/16	Doughton Park	239	Meadows of Dan Campgr	180	61	5248	2
7	Tue	5/17	Meadows of Dan Campgr	180	Roanoke Mountain Campgr	120	62	4834	2
8	We	5/18	Roanoke Mountain Campgr	120	Wildwood Campgr	60	62	5545	2
9	Thu	5/19	Wildwood Campgr	60	The Inn at Afton (motel)	0/105	61	5990	1
10	Fri	5/20	The Inn at Afton	0/105	Big Meadows Campgr	51	56	5000 ?	2
11	Sat	5/21	Big Meadows Campgr	51	Front Royal, VA (motel)	0	55	4000 ?	4

Total Miles: 613.7



Day 1 – Wednesday, May 11

Start: Cherokee, NC (MP 469)

End: Mt. Pisgah Inn (MP 409)

62 miles, 9305 ft climbing



Breakfast: Cherokee restaurant

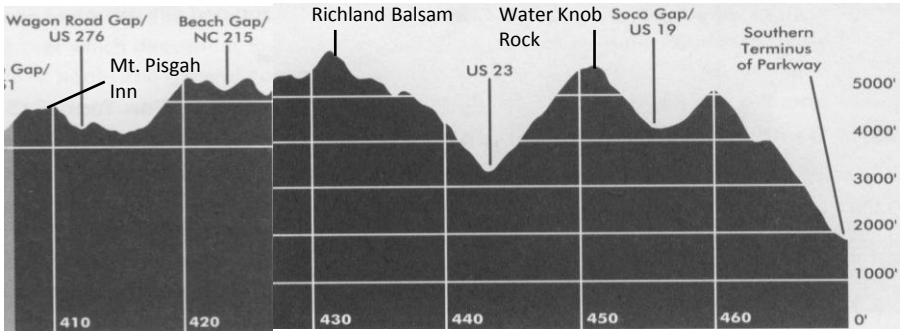
Lunch: Pack lunch

Dinner: Mt. Pisgah Inn

Lodging: Mt. Pisgah Inn (laundry, store, reservations needed!)

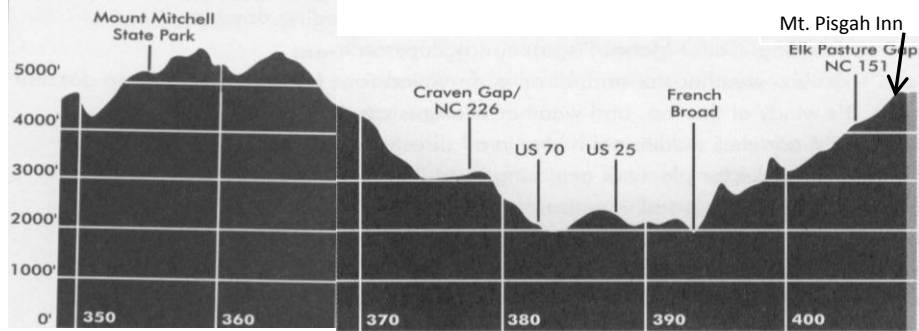


Day 1 promises to be the most difficult of the trip with 9305 ft of vertical climbs. This part of the BRP is beautiful, but the terrain is rugged and desolate. We will cycle through 7 tunnels and will only have one spot to get water: Water Knob Rock at MP 451. We will hit the highest point on the BRP at Richland Balsam (6053 ft) and it is fascinating to watch the forests change from deciduous trees at lower elevations to Fraser fir, red spruce, and other evergreens at higher elevations. We will pass beautiful places like Devil’s Courthouse, Looking Glass Rock, and Graveyard Fields and we’ll wish that we had time for some hikes. After cycling all day without hardly a trace of civilization, we will arrive at the Mt. Pisgah Inn, like an oasis in the desert! Not only does the inn offer spectacular views, it has an excellent restaurant. The parkway campgrounds open notoriously late each year (early to mid-May) so the Mt. Pisgah Campground will not be open for a few more days. This will be a great night to stay in a hotel!



Day 2 – Thursday, May 12

Start: Mt. Pisgah Inn (MP 409)
End: Mt. Mitchell State Park (MP 355 + 5 miles into the park)
62 miles, 5345 ft climbing on BRP then steep climb into park



Breakfast: Mt. Pisgah Inn
Lunch: Pack lunch
Dinner: Restaurant in Mt. Mitchell State Park
Lodging: Mt. Mitchell St. Park (no showers or laundry)



Day 2 starts off with a wonderful 15-mile downhill that includes 9 tunnels, including the Pine Mountain Tunnel, which is the longest on the BRP at 1434 ft (0.27 mi). Mornings can be chilly, so dress warmly for this descent. We will have 10 relatively easy miles going around Asheville and may stop briefly in Asheville at Liberty Bikes and Harris Teeter grocery store (only 0.3 mi off the BRP at MP 388). After leaving Asheville we will begin a tough climb up Mt. Mitchell and will climb 4265 ft by the time we get to the entrance of Mt. Mitchell State Park. Mt. Mitchell is the tallest mountain east of the Mississippi at 6684 ft. The road to the summit in Mt. Mitchell State Park is 5 miles long and steep (8% for first two miles). There is a snack bar, observation tower, and natural history museum at the top. There is also a restaurant and a campground (1 mile before the summit). Beware of bears in the campground and store food appropriately.



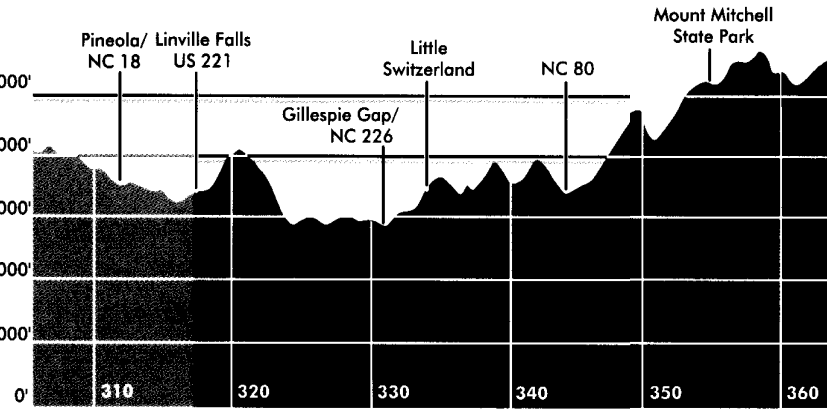
Observation Tower at the summit of Mt. Mitchell

Day 3 – Friday, May 13

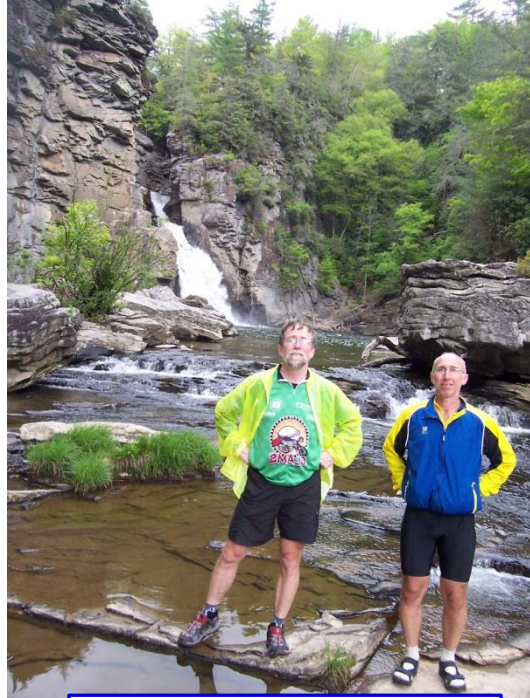
Start: Mt. Mitchell State Park (5 miles to MP 355)

End: Linville Falls Campground (MP 316)

44 miles, 4043 ft climbing



This should be an easy day to recover from Days 1-2. There will be time to explore Mt. Mitchell State Park in the morning and to hike to the lower and/or upper Linville Falls from the campground at the end of the day. Little Switzerland is a nice place to visit and makes for an excellent lunch stop at MP 334. The Museum of NC Minerals at MP 331 is a park service museum with exhibits on rocks and minerals as well as a book store, rest rooms, and water. The Orchard at Alta Pass (MP328) has a great store and is a good place to stop for fresh fruit.



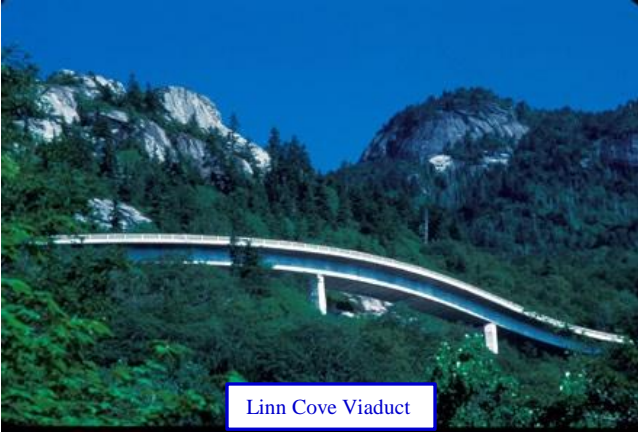
Waterfalls near Linville Falls Campground

Breakfast: Mt. Mitchell State Park restaurant
Lunch: Little Switzerland restaurant
Dinner: Rock House Restaurant in Linville Falls (historic restaurant on corner of three counties)
Lodging: Linville Falls Campground (hot showers at private campground just down the road for \$1.00)



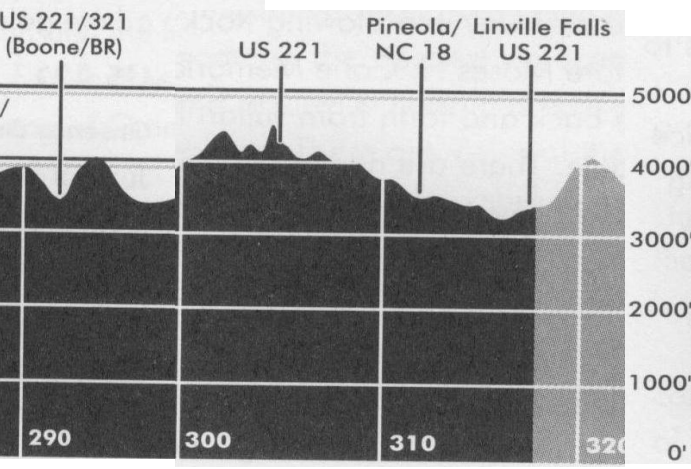
Day 4 – Saturday, May 14

Start: Linville Falls Campground (MP 316)
Blowing Rock: (side trip) - 2 miles after exiting BRP at MP 294.6 onto US 221
Grandfather Mountain: (side trip) – 3 miles after exiting BRP at MP 305 onto US 221
End: Flintlock Campground (7 miles after exiting BRP at MP 291.8 onto US 221)
40.4 miles, 2344+ ft climbing



Linn Cove Viaduct

Breakfast: Rock House Restaurant
Lunch: Grandfather Mtn Restaurant
Dinner: Restaurant in Boone
Lodging: Flintlock Campground (laundry, hot showers, camp store)



Day 4 should be short and easy with lots of things to stop and see. If we didn't get a chance on Day 3, we can begin the day with a hike to the lower and/or upper Linville Falls. Next is a side trip to Grandfather Mountain. This privately owned mountain (5890 ft) and a protected area for black bear, deer, and more. It features a mile-high pedestrian suspension bridge, museum, and restaurant. There is a \$12.00 entrance fee and neither bikes nor pedestrians are allowed to go up the very steep 3 miles to the top. We can lock up bikes at the bottom and catch a ride with motorists (I have done this twice with no trouble.) MP 304.4 features the Linn Cove Viaduct, a remarkable bridge around Grandfather Mountain with a visitor center on its construction. A side trip to Blowing Rock is a must as this quaint, picturesque town is fun for visiting and dining. When we exit the BRP at MP 291.8 for the campground, we will pass many restaurants on the way to Boone.

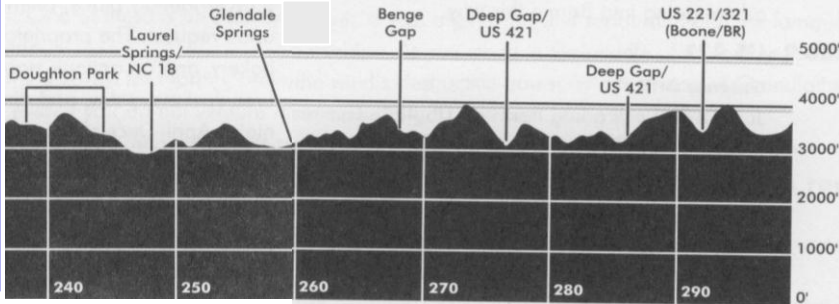


Day 5 – Sunday, May 15

Start: Flintlock Campground
(7 miles to MP 292)

End: Doughton Park Campground
(MP 239)

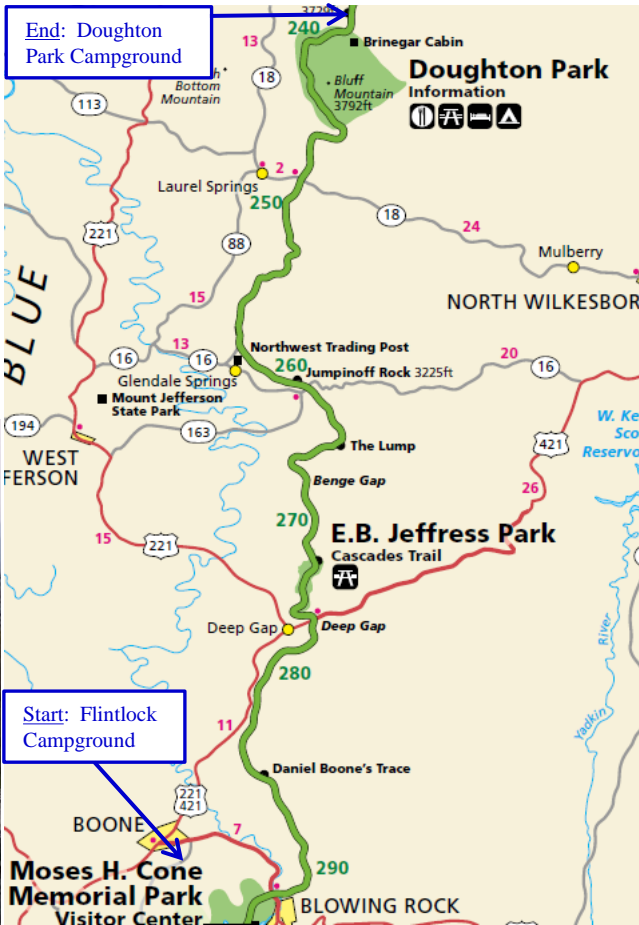
60 miles, 6485+ ft climbing



Breakfast: Restaurant near Boone
Lunch: The Gathering Place Café in Glendale Springs (MP259) or the Glendale Springs Inn & Restaurant
Dinner: Bluff’s Lodge at MP 241 (2 miles before camp)
Lodging: Doughton Park Campground (no laundry, no showers)

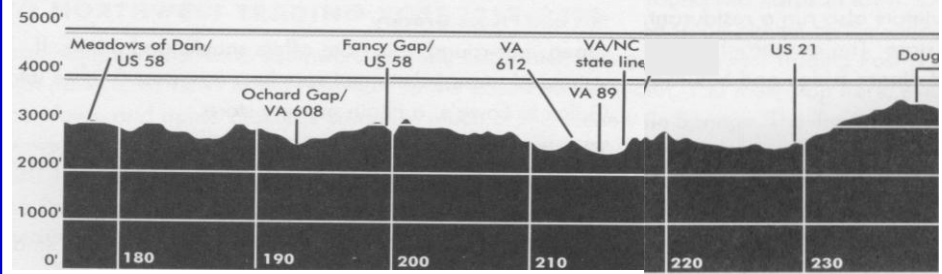


Day 5 will start with breakfast near camp in Boone, NC. The elevation profile doesn’t look too bad, but the many climbs still add up to over 6000 ft. We will stop at Northwest Trading Post, Church of the Frescoes, and eat lunch in Glendale Springs. We will hit a beautiful section of the parkway near Doughton Park. The cut rock walls near the park are impressive and at times you can see the BRP winding through the mountains ahead in the distance. Bluff’s Lodge & Coffee Shop is a fun place to stop for dinner.



Day 6 – Monday, May 16

Start: Doughton Park Campground (MP239)
End: Meadows of Dan Campground (MP 180)
65 miles, 5248 ft climbing



Breakfast: Cycle back 2 miles to Bluff's Coffee Shop
Lunch: Pack lunch
Dinner: Poor Farmers Market
Lodging: Meadows of Dan Campground (laundry & hot showers)

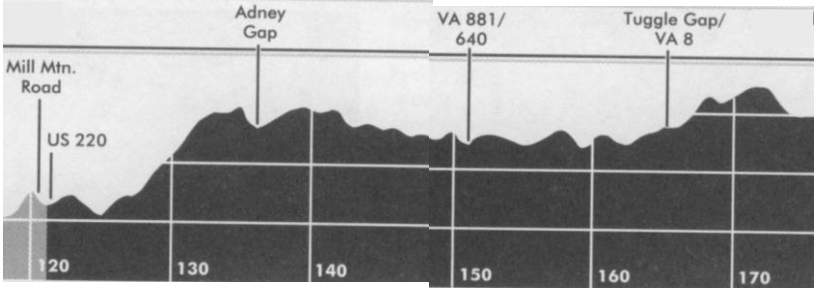


Day 6 should be relatively easy with only 5248 ft of climbing. We will cross into Virginia and will encounter some fun stops, such as the Blue Ridge Music Center, a 27-acre alpaca farm at MP 204 (they give free tours and have a nice gift shop), an exhibit of various types of wooden fences at Groundhog Mountain, and the bicycle-friendly Orchard Gap Market & Deli. We will end in Meadows of Dan and eat at Poor Farmers Market which has plenty of fresh produce and groceries – and they keep a pot of soup or chili going in their deli.



Day 7 – Tuesday, May 17

Start: Meadows of Dan Campground (MP 180)
End: Roanoke Mtn Camp. (1.2 miles from MP 120)
62 miles, 4834 ft climbing



Mabry Mill

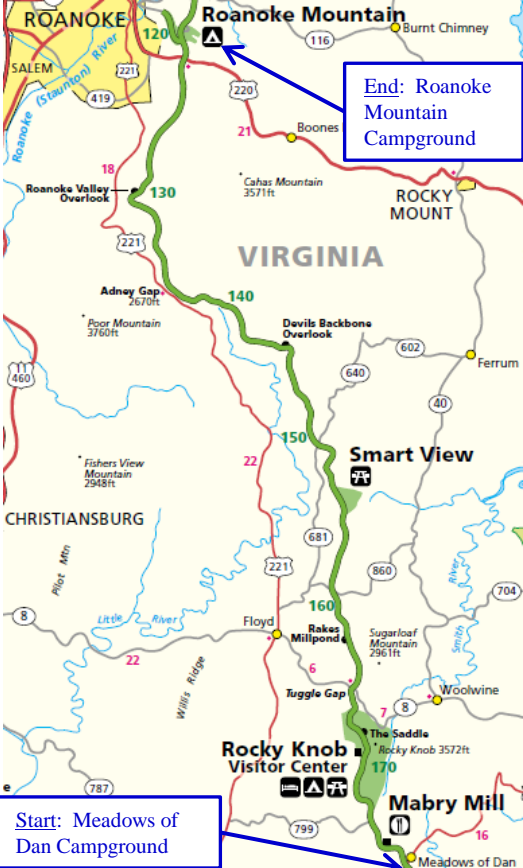


Mabry Mill Restaurant

We might start Day 7 with a short ride back to Poor Farmer’s Market to stock up on fruit and maybe to buy a sandwich for lunch on the road later in the day. We will then have an easy 2-mile ride to Mabry Mill for breakfast (the sweet potato pancakes are a treat). The scenic mill (see below) is said to be one of the most photographed sites in the country. There are many exhibits at the farm/mill to see as well. The area near Mabry Mill is lush with azaleas, rhododendron, and wildflowers. As we continue north we will climb up to the scenic Rock Knob Recreational Area, which features a campground, visitor center, and many hiking trails. Smart View (MP154) is a nice picnic area with restrooms and water – a good spot for a packed lunch. As we near Roanoke, we will have a fantastic coast down Bent Mountain.



Breakfast: Mabry Mill restaurant
Lunch: Buy sandwich & fruit at Poor Farmers Market to eat at Smart View.
Dinner: Eat in camp or cycle 5 miles downhill into Roanoke
Lodging: Roanoke Mountain Campground (no laundry or showers)



End: Roanoke Mountain Campground

Start: Meadows of Dan Campground

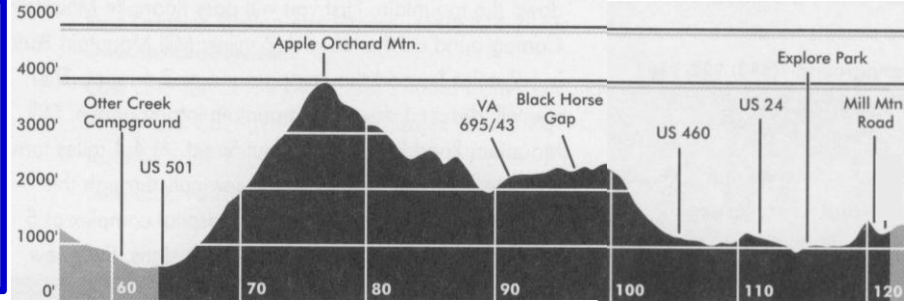
Day 8 – Wednesday, May 18

Start: Roanoke Mtn. Campgr.
(1.2 miles back to MP 120)
End: Wildwood Campground
(1 mile from MP 61)
60 miles, 5545 ft climbing

We will hit lots of traffic for the first 15 miles (MP120 – MP105) as the BRP is (unfortunately) used by many Roanoke commuters. After MP105 the BRP will be quiet again and quite beautiful as we make the climb up to Peaks of Otter (MP85). In places you can clearly tell you are riding on a ridge as the mountain steeply falls away your left and your right. Peaks of Otter is a wonderful place to eat lunch with incredible views and good food. After lunch we will continue the climb up Apple Orchard Mountain – you will see a big radar dome near the top. Then a 13-mile downhill will take you from the highest point on the BRP in VA on Old Apple Orchard (3950 ft) to the lowest point on the BRP at the James River (668 ft). Just after crossing the river, it is worth taking a few minutes to visit the James River Visitor Center (MP63.6). Shortly after the visitor center we will exit the BRP on Rt. 130 (near MP62) and cycle 1 mile to the Wildwood Campground.

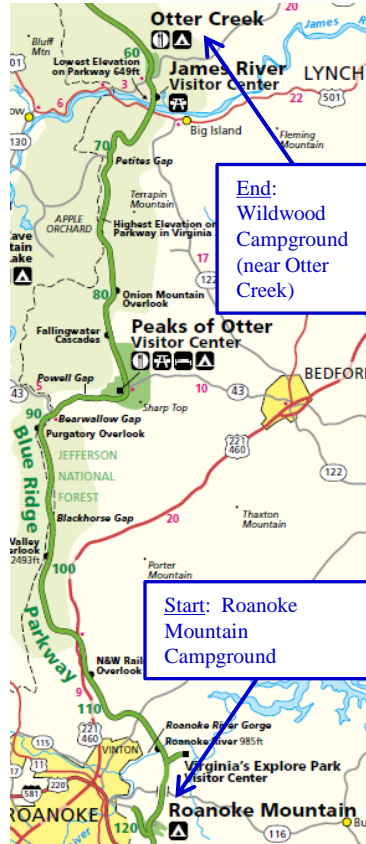


Sharp Top Mountain beyond the lake – seen from the Peaks of Otter Restaurant



Crossing the James River

Breakfast: Eat in camp
Lunch: Peaks of Otter Restaurant
Dinner: Otter Creek Campground Restaurant (2 miles from camp)
Or H&H Food Market & Rest. on 501 (3 miles from camp)
Lodging: Wildwood Campground (hot showers, laundry, small store)



End: Wildwood Campground (near Otter Creek)

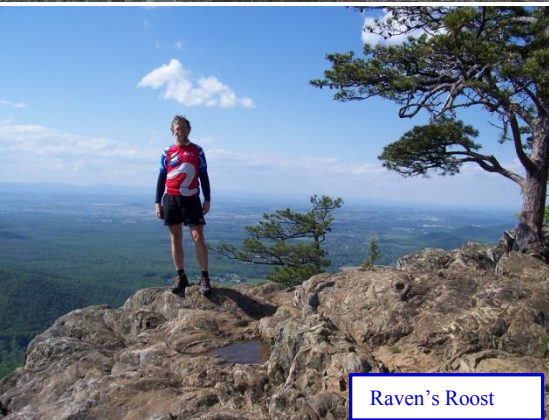
Start: Roanoke Mountain Campground

Day 9 – Thursday, May 19

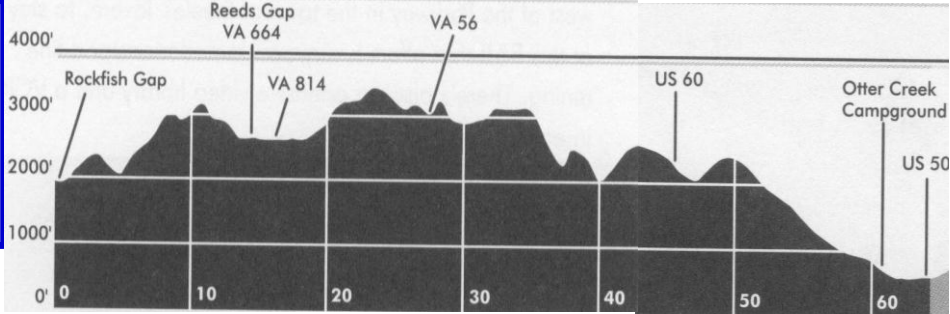
Start: Wildwood Campground
(1 mile to MP 61)
End: The Inn at Afton (MP 0)
62 miles, 5990 ft climbing



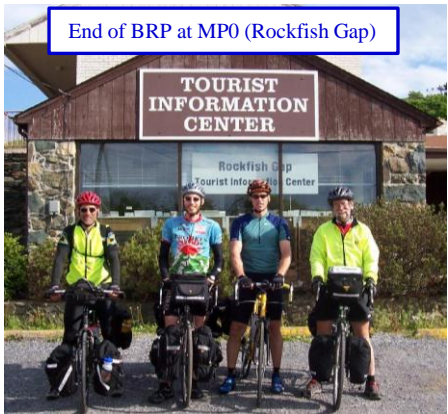
Whetstone Ridge



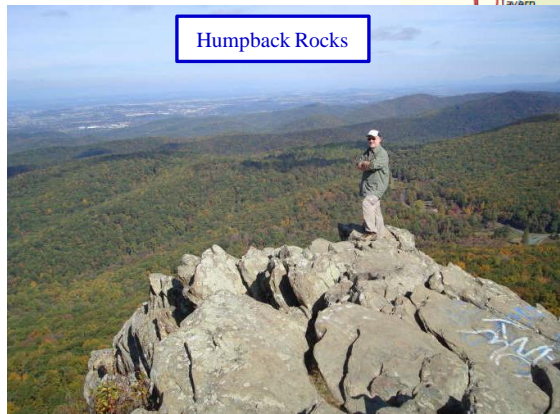
Raven's Roost



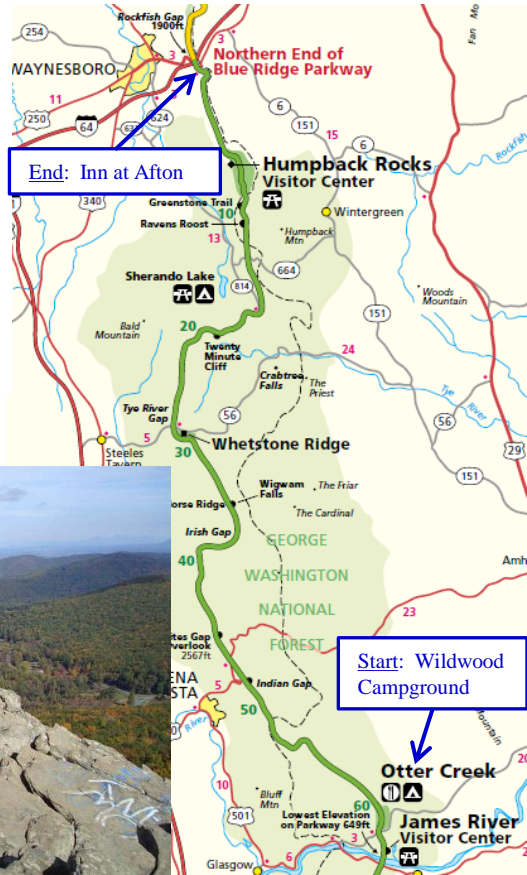
Day 9 will take us to the northern end of the Blue Ridge Parkway at Rockfish Gap (or Afton). Our campground is near the James River where the BRP elevation is only 668 ft, but we will climb to over 3000 ft. We will stop for a picnic lunch at Whetstone Ridge (MP 29). There is a nice overlook at Raven's Roost (MP10.7 , elevation 3200 ft) which is a popular spot for rock climbing and hang gliding. We even saw a wedding here one year! After leaving Raven's Roost, there will be a fast downhill to Humpback Rocks Picnic Area (MP8.5) includes a steep trail up to the massive rocks that inspired the name if you are up for a hike. The Humpback Rocks Visitor Center (MP5.8 includes water and restrooms). The BRP ends at MP 0 where it turns into the Skyline Drive (MP105). We will exit the BRP at MP0 to the left and climb a steep hill to the nearby Inn at Afton.



End of BRP at MP0 (Rockfish Gap)



Humpback Rocks



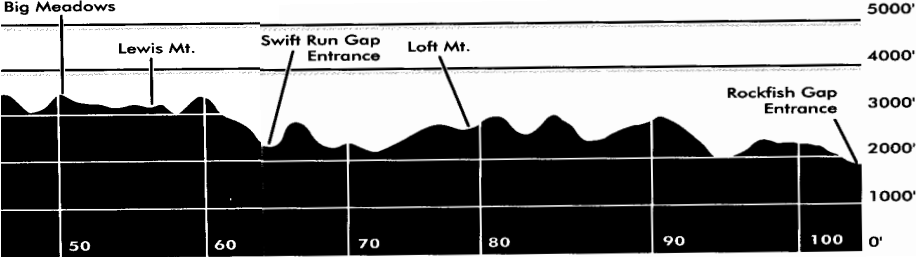
Breakfast: Otter Creek Campground Restaurant (opens 8:30) or H&H Grocery & Restaurant (opens early)
Lunch: Pack lunch and eat at Whetstone Ridge (restrooms, picnic tables, & water)
Dinner: Cycle downhill to Waynesboro or have pizza delivered to the motel
Lodging: Inn at Afton (reservations recommended)

Day 10 – Friday, May 20

Start: Inn at Afton (MP 105)

End: Big Meadows Campground
(1.5 miles from MP 51)

56 miles, ??? ft climbing



We will begin at the southern entrance of the Skyline Drive. The Skyline Drive is quite similar to the Blue Ridge Parkway, but there are a few differences, including: a lower speed limit (35 mph, not 45 mph), a charge to enter (\$7.00 for bicycles for a week pass), many more park rangers (ride single file or they will stop you), heavily used campgrounds, and many hikers as the Skyline Drive crosses the Appalachian Trail several times. Big Meadows also has a large black bear population. Rangers estimate the population at about 600 bears in this narrow, 100-mile long park - or about “6 bears per mile.” Keep a look out as you cycle and you might spot one. Storing food properly is important.

We will eat lunch at Loft Mountain which is a popular spot for Appalachian Trail hikers. There is a small café and gift shop, but there are also picnic tables if you pack a lunch. We will finish the day at Big Meadows, by far the largest campground that we will see on the trip with hundreds of campsites. Big Meadows has a café, very well-equipped camp store, visitor’s center, lodge (with a nice restaurant), and a variety of activities and programs. Several nice hiking trails accessible from the campground.



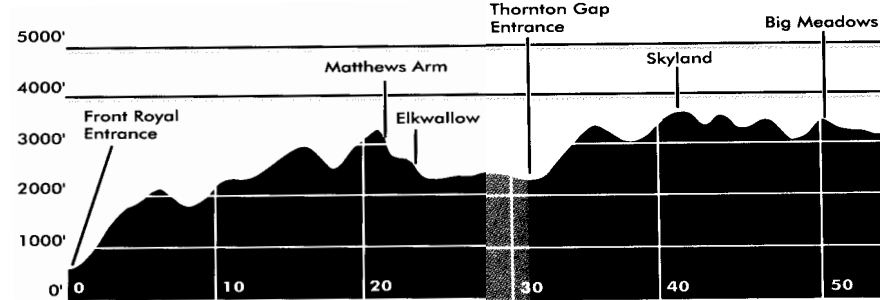
Breakfast: Cook in motel?
Lunch: Loft Mountain Grill (burgers, sandwiches) or pack lunch
Dinner: Big Meadows Lodge (very nice restaurant and huge great room)
Lodging: Big Meadows Campground (laundry, hot showers)



Day 11 – Saturday, May 21

Start: Big Meadows Campground
(1.5 miles to MP 51)

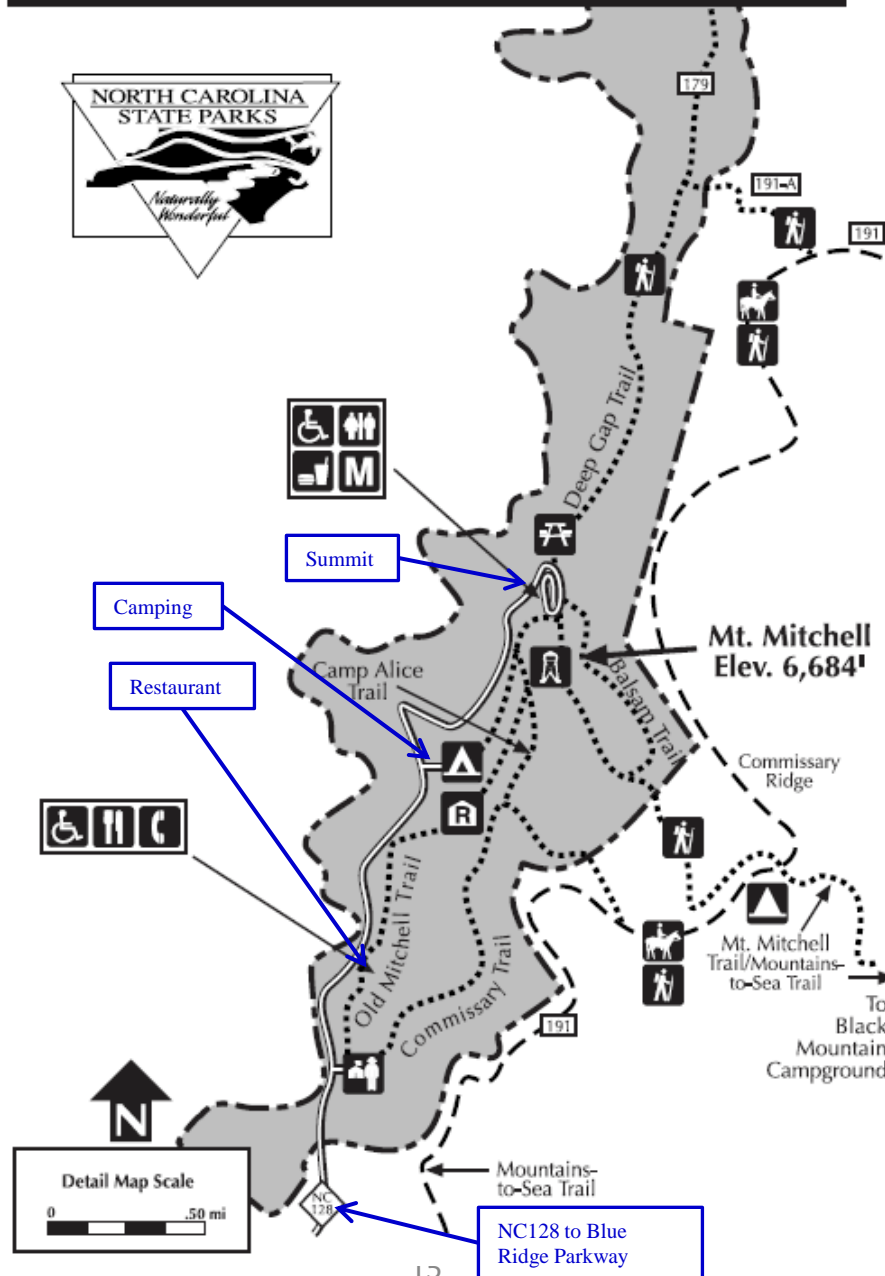
End: Front Royal (MP 0)
53 miles, ??? ft climbing



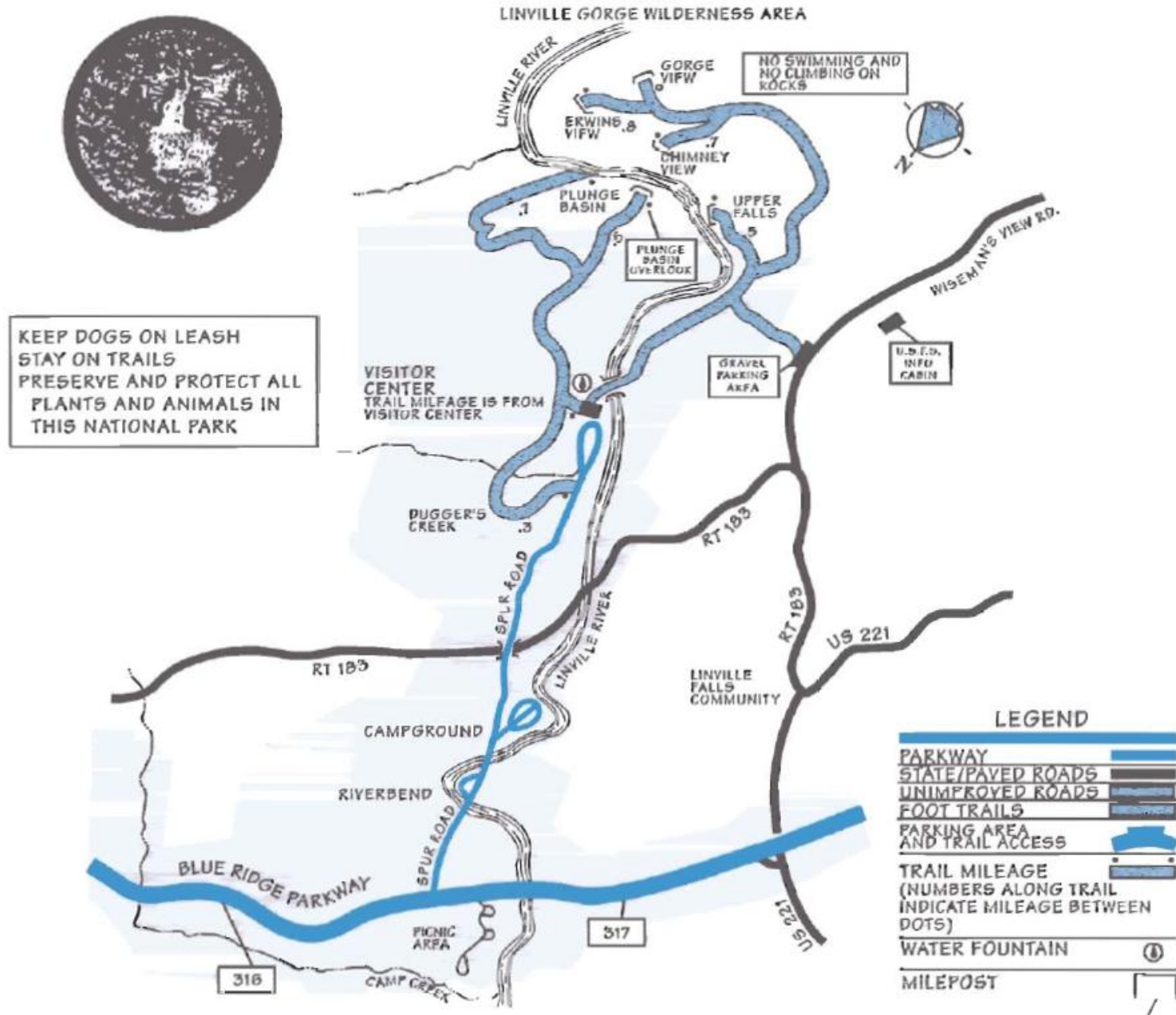
Breakfast: Big Meadows Grill or cook in camp
Lunch: Elkside Wallow Grill and picnic area (MP 24.1)
Dinner: Victory dinner in Front Royal restaurant!
Hotel: To be specified later

Day 11 should be our easiest day as we drop in elevation as we approach Front Royal, VA. We will start out with a beautiful stretch between Big Meadows and Skyland (where there is a lodge similar to the one at Big Meadows). We will hit the highest point on the Skyline Drive near Skyland at 3680 ft near MP41. We will go through the only tunnel (Mary's Rock Tunnel) at MP32.2. The last 20 miles of the trip will go by fast as it is mostly downhill. We will have done about 650 miles and 60,000 ft of climbing in 11 days!



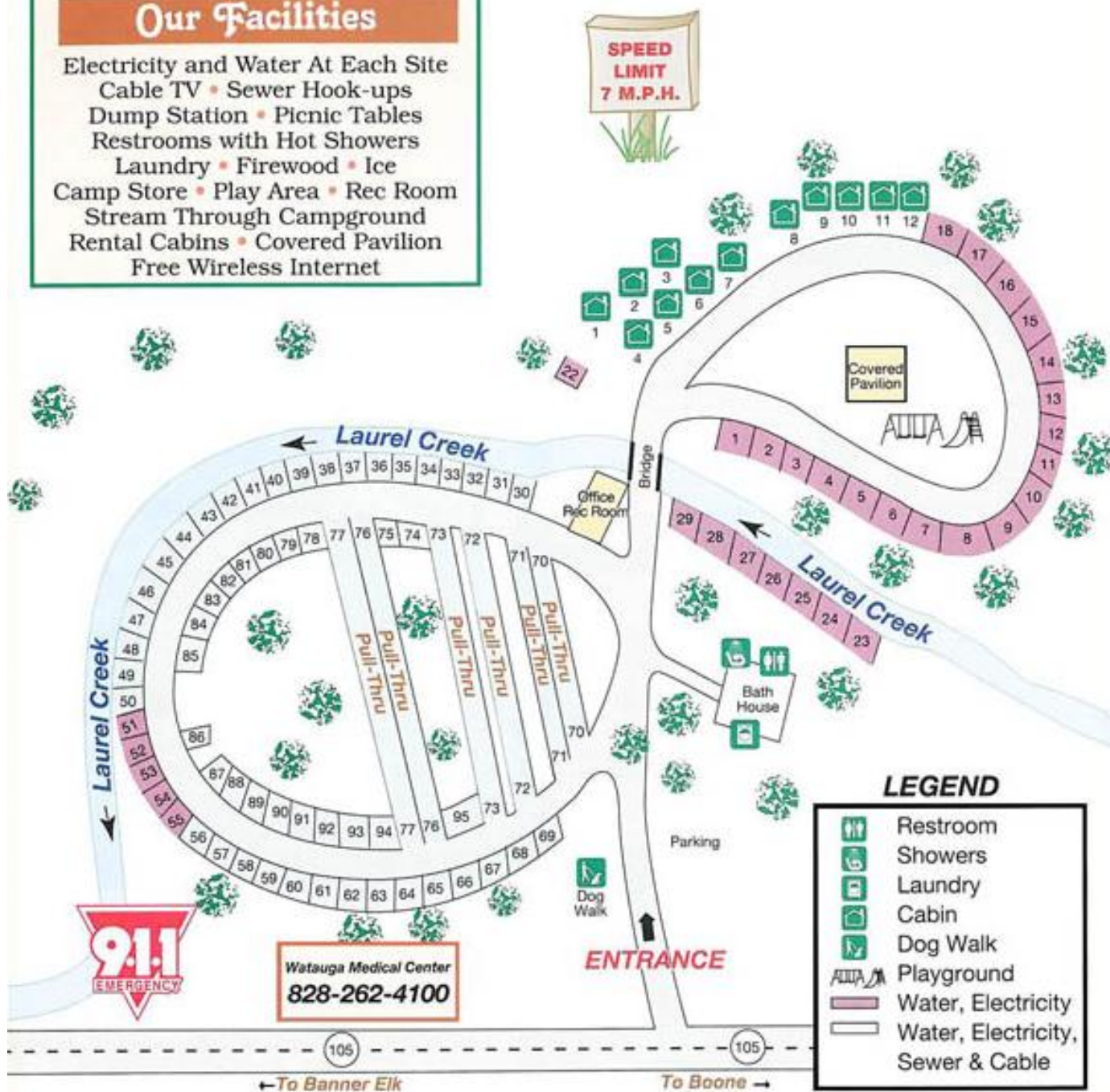


Linville Falls Trails

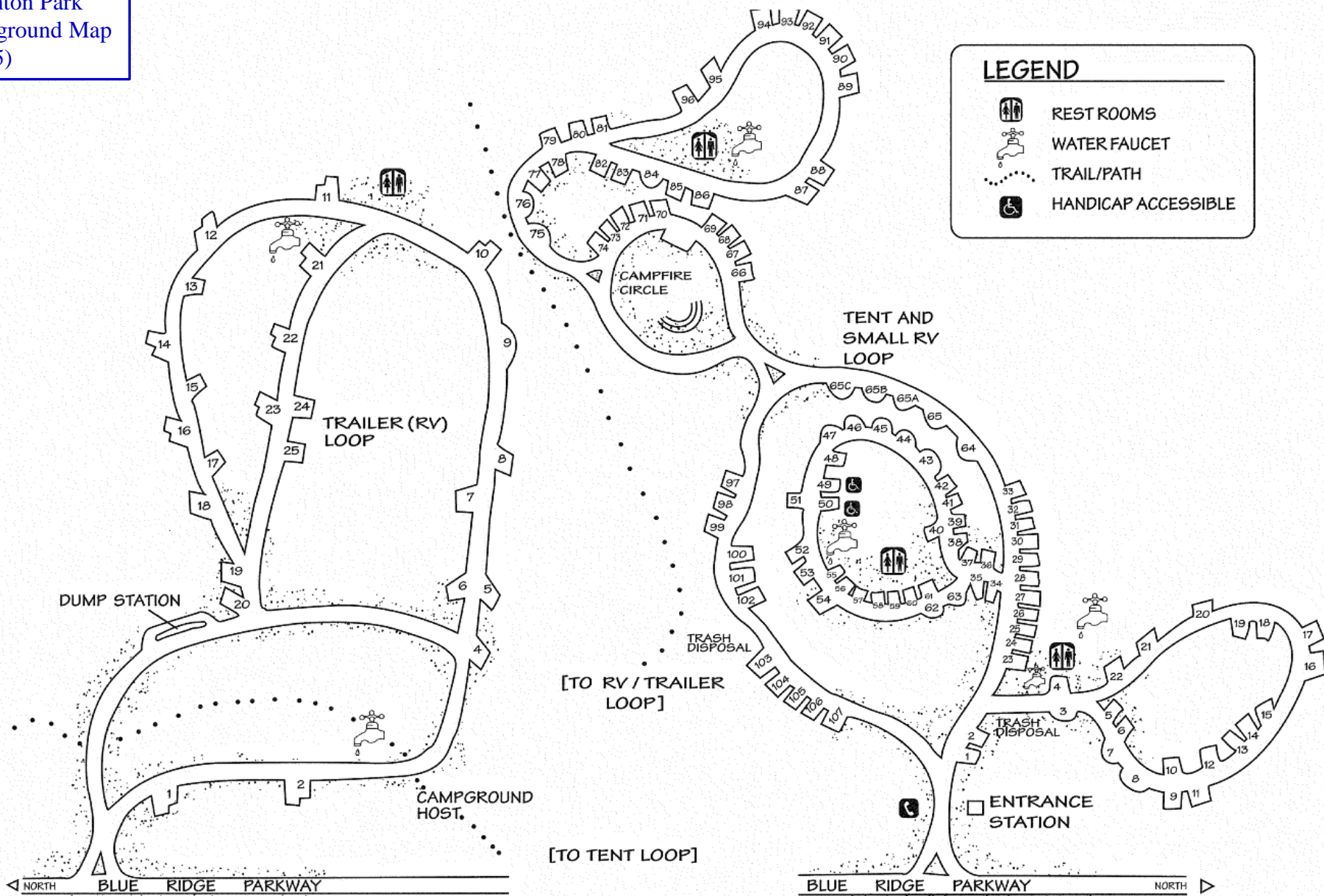


Our Facilities

Electricity and Water At Each Site
Cable TV • Sewer Hook-ups
Dump Station • Picnic Tables
Restrooms with Hot Showers
Laundry • Firewood • Ice
Camp Store • Play Area • Rec Room
Stream Through Campground
Rental Cabins • Covered Pavilion
Free Wireless Internet




Doughton Park Campground




Roanoke Mountain Campground


LEGEND




REST ROOMS



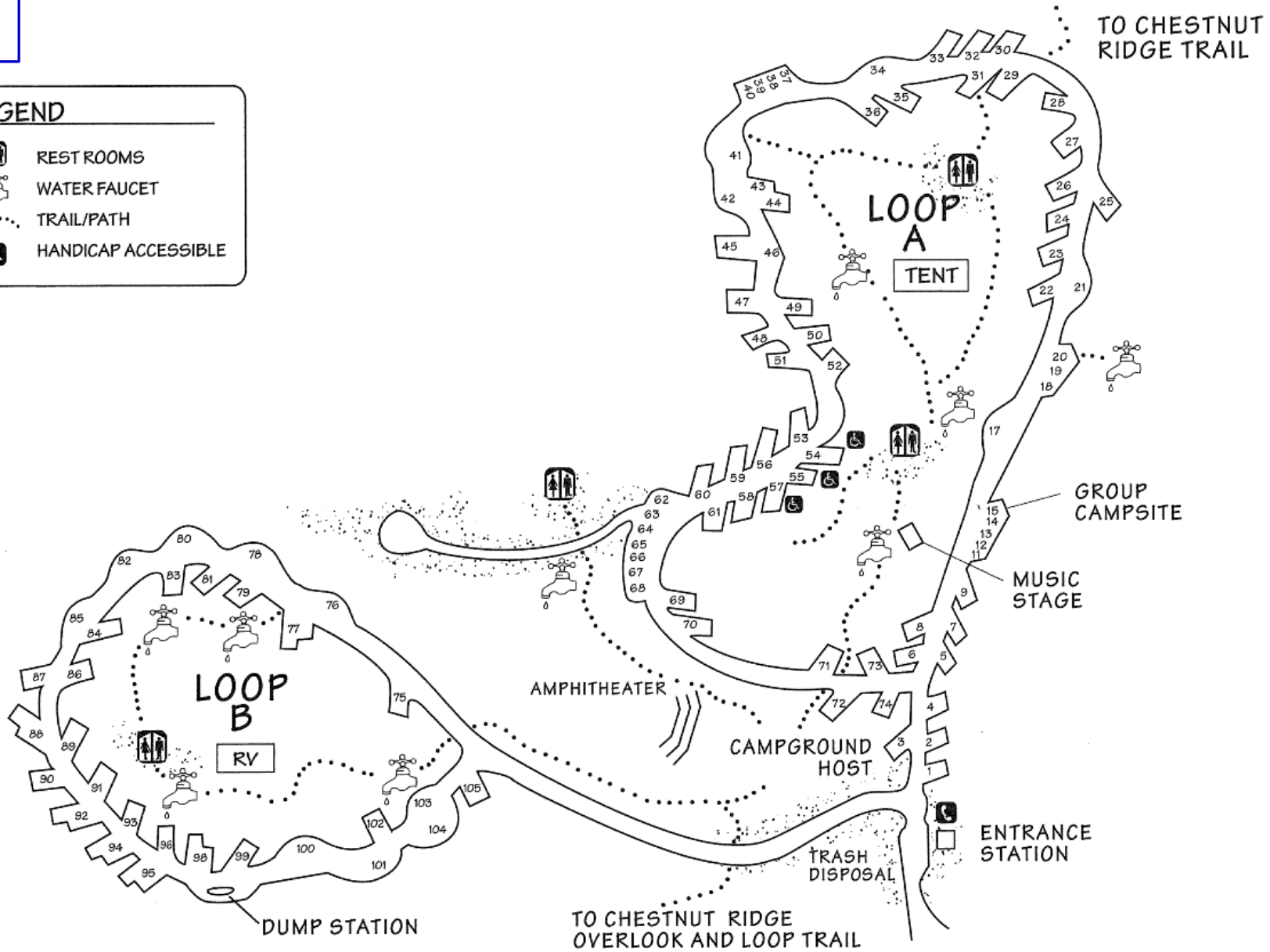
WATER FAUCET



TRAIL/PATH



HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE



◀ TO BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY 1 MILE

TO ROANOKE 4 MILES ▶

Wildwood
Campground
Map (Day 8)



Big Meadows Campground Map (Day 10)

10 mph

