

Art Loeb Trail

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1. Revision History

Revision	Date	Revision Notes
0.0	2019/05/01	Initial Release
1.0	2019/06/11	Added section on parking and contact information for Daniel Boone Boy Scout Camp, modified Flower Gap information removing reference to rock cairn.
2.0	2030/09/29	Updated confusing areas section with new information and pictures, updated map images using the out of print Forest Service Shining Rock & Middle Prong Wilderness map

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2. Introduction

This document was prepared for the Pisgah Ranger District Visitor Center. The intent of the document is to help hikers and backpackers prepare to visit the Art Loeb trail. The document is not meant to be an exhausted trail guide. All numbers (distances, elevations) are estimates. The document is provided with best available information, no guarantees are expressed or implied as to accuracy, reliability or completeness. Use the information at your own risk.

Map images used in the document were taken from the “Shining Rock & Middle Prong Wilderness” map that was published by the National Forest Service, Recreation Guide R8-RG 23. This map is no longer published by the Forest Service.

Pictures used to illustrate trail areas were taken by the document author.

3. Overview

According to the Art Loeb pocket profile published by AntiGravityGear, LLC, the Art Loeb trail is 30.1 miles long with 28,936 feet of elevation change. The almost constant elevation change, rough conditions and changing terrain makes this a difficult but interesting trail. When planning to hike the entire trail hikers can expect almost constant up and down conditions with limited water spots, especially on the northern half of the trail.

Trail overview

- 30.1 miles long
 - Halfway point at Deep Gap Shelter just below the northern side of Pilot Mountain
- Southern Trailhead at Davidson River just before campground
 - N35.28185, W82.72053
- Northern Trailhead at Daniel Boone Boy Scout camp, Canton NC
 - N35.38726, W82.89565
 - Camp office: 828-648-0435
 - Boy Scout Camp council office in Asheville: 828-254-6189
- 28,936 feet of total elevation change
 - South to North approximately 15,000 elevation gain, 14,000 elevation loss
 - Approximately 8.5 miles in Shining Rock Wilderness
- Hard sided bear canisters required from on all parts of the trail from the Blue Ridge Parkway to the northern trailhead at Daniel Boone boy scout camp.

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4. Parking

Parking is available at the southern and northern trailhead, at Gloucester Gap and at Forest Service road 816 (Black Balsam road).

- Southern trailhead: N35.28185, W82.72053; Parking is available near the entrance to the Davidson River campsite off of US 276. After turning off 276 there is a parking lot immediately on the left. The Art Loeb trailhead is at the end of the parking lot.
- Gloucester Gap: N35.26589, W82.84702; Take 276 north to forest road 475, turn left on 475. The road is paved for about the first 2 miles and then turns to gravel. Gloucester Gap is approximately 6.5 miles from the US 276/FS 475 intersection.
- USFS 816: N35.32063, W82.87619: Forest road 816, also known as Black Balsam road, is off the Blue Ridge Parkway just south of mileage marker 420. There is a parking area approximately 1 mile on the right after turning onto USFS 816. Both the Art Loeb and the Mountain to Sea (MST) trails cross the road at this point. There is a second parking area at the end of USFS 816. Going to the right of this parking area and crossing by a gate, immediately past the gate on the right is the Art Loeb Spur trail which leads to the Art Loeb trail just below Black Balsam Knob
- Northern Trailhead: N35.38726, W82.89565; The northern trailhead is at the Daniel Boone Boy Scout Camp in Canton, NC. After entering the camp continue driving on the main road past the majority of the camp buildings to the trailhead. Parking will be on the right side of the road, the trailhead on the left. Call and let the camp know if you are leaving a car at the trailhead overnight.

Camp contact information:

- Camp office: 828-648-0435
- Boy Scout Camp council office in Asheville: 828-254-6189

5. Blazes

- Blazed with white 2x6 rectangles
 - Not to be confused with MST white circle blazes
- Blazes last updated March 2019
- No blazes north of Ivester Gap due to wilderness area regulations
- Blaze guidelines
 - One blaze every .25 miles
 - Turns marked with 2 vertical blazes, top blaze offset in direction of turn
 - Blazes at every trail and road intersection
 - Additional blazes at other potentially confusing areas.

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6. Wilderness Area

From Daniel Boone Boy Scout camp to Ivestor Gap, trail is in the Shining Rock Wilderness, a federally designated wilderness area. There are **no** blazes and limited signage on the trail in this area.

- Wilderness Area regulations:
 - Hard sided bear canisters required
 - Maximum group size of 10
 - No fires
- There are no blazes in the wilderness area

7. Maps and Electronic Guides

Your best guide will also be a paper map, a compass and the know how to use them. While electronic aids can be very helpful problems include batteries dying, no cell signal on most of the trail, electronics breaking. Hikes should always have a paper map even when using an electronic aid.

While paper maps should always be available, electronic guides can be very helpful especially in the wilderness areas where multiple trails come together and no blazes or signs exist. Handheld GPS units are typically one of the best aids. The batteries typically last longer than a cell phone and the units are usually more robust and less susceptible to moisture and breakage. GPS track logs can be downloaded to most handheld units.

If using a cell phone as an electronic aid, ensure that the app being used downloads the appropriate map or track log to your phone **prior** to hitting the trail. Most common mapping applications, such as Google or Apple maps, use the phones GPS chip to determine location but require a cell signal to download the actual map. On most of the Art Loeb there is no cell signal available and these types of mapping application s will not work.

Listed below is a sample of IOS/Android applications that are capable of downloading the required maps and/or track logs in advance so that no cell signal is required.

- Best guide: A paper map, compass and knowledge to use them. Maps can be purchased at the Pisgah National Forest Pisgah District ranger station gift shop, through many outfitters and on-line. Popular maps include
 - Art Loeb Pocket Profile from Antigravitygear
 - Pisgah Ranger District map from National Geographic
 - Pisgah Ranger District map from Pisgah Maps
- GPS track logs that can be downloaded to a phone or hand held GPS
 - www.hikewnc.com
 - www.hikingproject.com
- Sample IOS / Android Apps

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- Avenza – app is free, purchase downloadable maps from app
- The Hiking Project – free, downloads tracks from www.hikingproject.com
- GIA – free, yearly paid subscription required to download maps for out of service use, web site gaisgps.com can be used to map out hikes and get distance and elevation information
- AllTrails Pro – free, yearly paid subscription required to download maps for out of service use

8. Best views

- Black Balsam Knob
- Tennent Mountain
- Going into Flower Gap
- Pilot Mountain

9. Confusing Areas

There are multiple areas in the Shining Rock Wilderness where multiple trails come together with no indication of which trail is which. This is where a good map with a compass and/or electronic guide can help ensure you are on the right trail.

Ivestor Gap

There are three trails that come together at Ivestor Gap, the Art Loeb, Ivestor Gap and Graveyard Ridge trails. See Figure 1 : Ivestor Gap.

Coming northbound on the Art Loeb from Tennent Mountain the Art Loeb intersects with the Ivestor Gap trail. Turn right to follow both trails for a short while and then the Art Loeb goes off to the right and Ivestor Gap trail to the left. Follow the Art Loeb trail and in a short while intersect again with the Ivestor Gap trail. There is a wood barrier where the Art Loeb goes off to the right (see Figure 2: Wood barrier). Continuing straight will lead to the Ivestor Gap trail and a kiosk with information on the Shining Rock Wilderness.

After making the right after the wood barrier, the Art Loeb makes a quick left at a sign pointing to Flower Gap and then a right. Staying straight will lead to the Graveyard Ridge trail. Following the Art Loeb will lead around Grassy Top and ultimately down the Flower Gap. See **Error! Reference source not found.** If you find yourself on a steep trail up Grassy Top and encounter a sign stating the trail is closed due to erosion, then you missed the Art Loeb.

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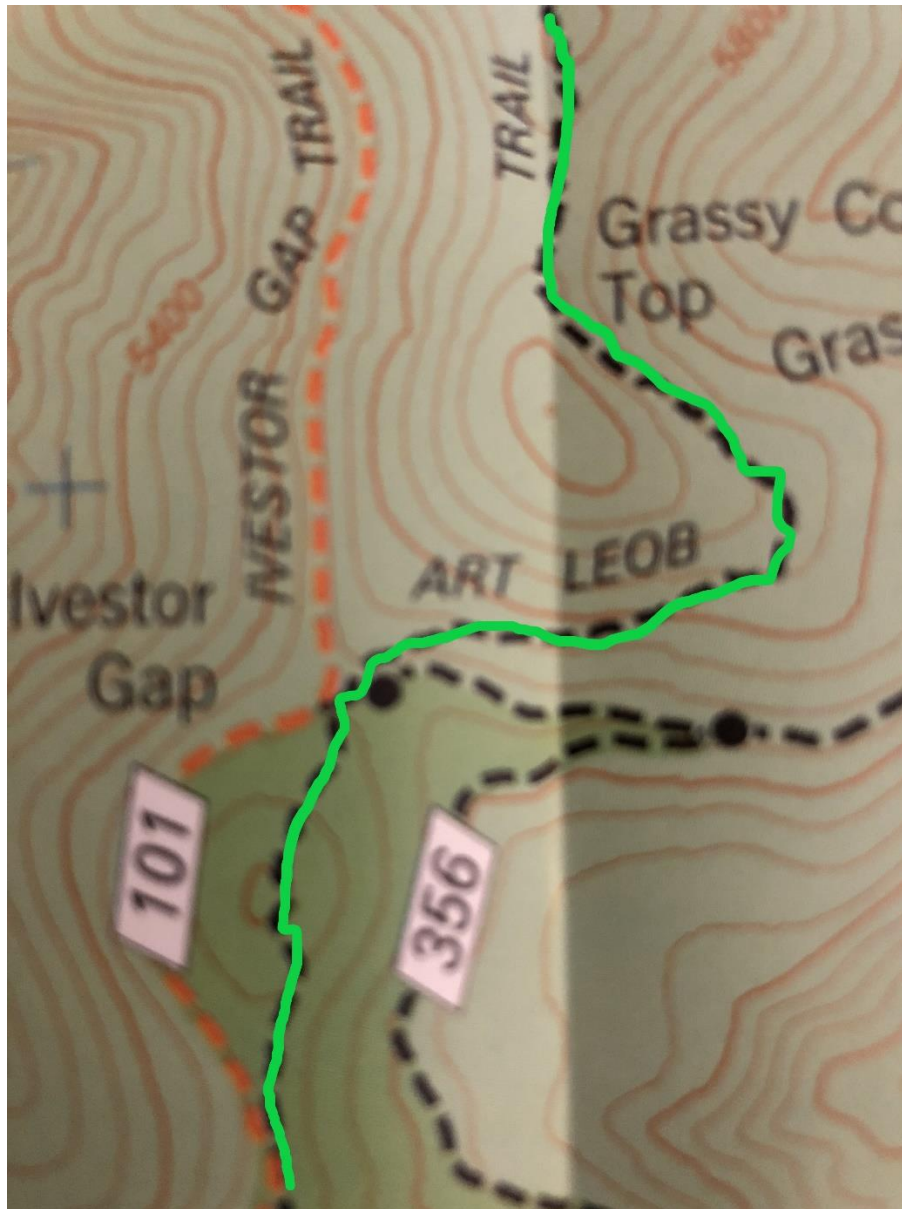


Figure 1 : Ivestor Gap

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Figure 2: Wood barrier at Art Loeb/Ivestor Gap



Figure 3: Turn toward Flower Gap

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Grassy Cove Top/Flower Gap

Going northbound from Ivester Gap, hikers go around Grassy Cove Top and then down into Flower Gap. Once the trail goes around Grassy Cove Top, the trail intersects at a T junction. The Art Loeb trail turns to the right at the T and goes down into Flower Gap. See Figure 4: Art Loeb/Grassy Top intersection.



Figure 4: Art Loeb/Grassy Top intersection

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Shining Rock Gap

There are three trails that come together at Shining Rock Gap with two more nearby, see Figure 5: Shining Rock Gap. As this is in the Shining Rock Wilderness area there are no blazes and it may be hard to determine which trail is the Art Loeb.

Coming northbound on the Art Loeb trail, you will pass the Shining Creek trail. There is a sign at the Art Loeb/Shining Creek intersection indication the direction of Shining Creek. Continue on the Art Loeb and arrive at Shining Rock Gap. At the gap it looks like the Art Loeb continues straight. This is actually the Big Butt Trail which will lead to Shining Rock and continue over Big Butt and down (steeply) to the Shining Creek Trail.

To follow the Art Loeb trail, make a left at Shining Rock Gap and then an immediate right. At the right turn there will be a sign indicating the direction to Cold Mountain.

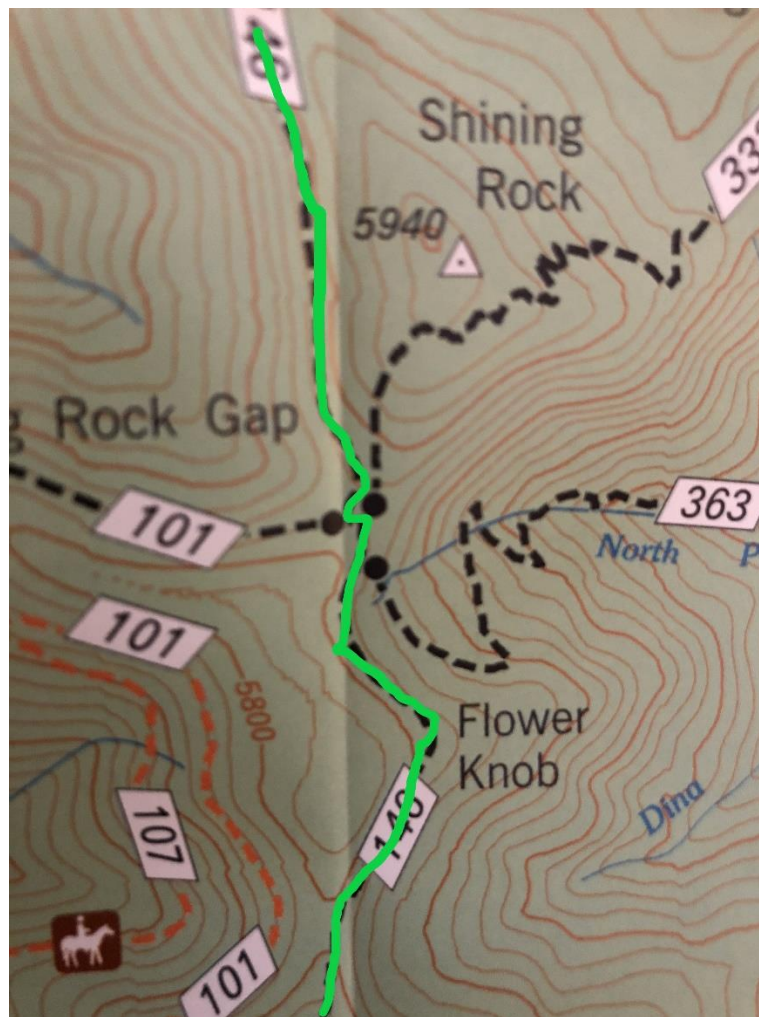


Figure 5: Shining Rock Gap

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Mile 4.7

Going northbound, after passing a narrow rocky section, the Art Loeb intersects with an unnamed trail at a T intersection, the Art Loeb makes a sharp right turn to continue going north. Southbound the trail makes a sharp left turn.

Deep Gap

Deep Gap is an open area with camping and includes a junction with the Cold Mountain Trail and an unnamed trail as well as the Art Loeb. Coming to Deep Gap going northbound the trail makes a sharp left turn prior to reaching the open area. Heading southbound the trail makes a sharp right turn. See Figure 6: Deep Gap.

Just below Deep Gap, but off the Art Loeb Trail is a second camping area. If you miss the immediate left turn when going Northbound it is easy to mistake this camping area as part of the trail and get confused as to where to go next. If you do reach this area, the trail is off the left. See Figure 7: Deep Gap camp site.



Figure 6: Deep Gap

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Figure 7: Deep Gap camp site

10. Sample Multi-day trips

4 Day

Day	Start	End	Water	Miles
1	Daniel Boone Trailhead	Deep Gap	no	3.8
2	Deep Gap	Campsite just south of BRP	no	9.4
3	Campsite just south of BRP	Sandy Gap	yes	10
4	Sandy Gap	Davidson River Trailhead		7.2

3 Day

Day	Start	End	Water	Miles
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1	Daniel Boone Trailhead	Black Balsam Knob	no	10.9
2	Black Balsam Knob	Butter Gap Shelter	yes	10.5
3	Butter Gap Shelter	Davidson River Trailhead		8.7

2 Day

Day	Start	End	Water	Miles
1	Daniel Boone Trailhead	Deep Gap Shelter	yes	15.2
2	Deep Gap Shelter	Davidson River Trailhead		14.9

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