



Connestee Falls

— Hiking Trails Guide —



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Welcome to the Hiking Trails at Connestee Falls.

Few private communities, or public parks for that matter, can rival the hiking trails at Connestee Falls. Ranging from easy to moderately strenuous, our hiking trails wind through and around the community's many forested areas offering views of creeks, waterfalls, lakes and mountain vistas.

The trail system is extensive and quite elaborately planned and maintained, including parking areas at main trailheads. Look for the symbol "P" on the trail maps to locate each trailhead's parking area.

Our 20+ miles of trails are lovingly maintained by the Connestee Falls Trailbuilders and the Connestee Falls Trail Stewards. If you are interested in volunteering to help maintain our trails, or to report a problem on one of the trails, please contact trail steward Linda Fradley at longhappytrail@yahoo.com.



Enjoy!

Hiking Hints

When planning a hike, please keep your safety and that of your hiking party in mind. Here are a few helpful hints.

- Review the trail maps and trail descriptions found in this guide prior to your hike.
- Consider the difficulty level of a trail and the abilities of those in your group.
- Miles noted on the maps are distances for a one-way hike.
- Stay on the trails to avoid potential dangers, such as steep slopes and slippery rock ledges.
- Wear sturdy hiking shoes and appropriate apparel for the conditions.
- Have a copy of the trail map in your pocket and follow trail blazes and signs.
- Carry a full water bottle.
- Watch for yellow jacket nests on the trails. Yellow jackets are active from July until the first freeze. If you are allergic to stings, carry the appropriate medications.
- Do not climb around waterfalls or other fast-moving waters as these are dangerous areas that can cause serious injuries.
- Respect our natural beauty and leave nature as you find it to preserve its assets.
- Lastly, cellphone service in the forest is spotty, therefore let someone not on your hike know of your whereabouts before hiking any trail.
- Connetsee's hiking trail maps may also be printed from <https://cfhiker.wordpress.com/connetsee-falls-hiking-trails/>



Amakola Trail System

This system of five trails and several spur trails offers the possibility of several different loop hikes. A suggested first hike in this system is Amakola, Amakola Loop or Ogana Trail to the Connestee Falls and Batson Creek Falls overlook, returning on Middle Falls Trail.



Amakola Trail

“Amakola” means “place where water makes rolling thunder noise” in the Cherokee language. This trail features several spur trails. The first spur after the trailhead crosses the creek below Upper Batson Creek Falls and connects to the Ogana Trail. The loop trail to Pisgah View gives a winter view of Mt. Pisgah, while the Cave and the Carson Creek spurs have many interesting rock formations. Amakola Trail ends with a grand view at the overlook above the intersection of Connestee Falls and Batson Creek Falls.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY**

Amakola Loop Trail

This trail follows Amakola Brook, then crosses Chagee Lane where it becomes an open forest. Views of the French Broad River Valley and Mt. Pisgah can be seen from the area above the cave. Rare “British Soldiers” (aka. *Cladonia cristatella*) growing on a dead log can be seen in this area as well. A new trail extension now connects Amakola Loop directly with the Cave Trail.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY**

Carson Creek Trail

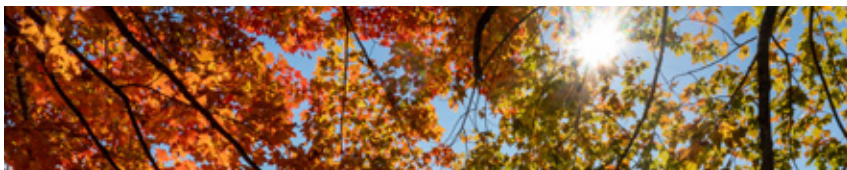
Descending 200 feet in elevation from the end of the Cave Trail down 17 switchbacks, this trail leads into a boulder-filled gorge to Carson Creek. The creek abounds with cascades and waterfalls before climbing up to intersect Amakola Trail near the top of Connestee Falls.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MODERATELY STRENUOUS**

Cave Trail

The Cave Trail is an easy 0.4 mile stretch that runs parallel with Carson Creek and connects with Amakola Loop and Carson Creek Trail on one end, which is a great point to start hiking the Carson Creek Trail and view the waterfalls. Just off the north side of the trail, the terrain drops steeply to Carson Creek 300 feet below. The other end is the convergence of the Amakola Trail and the Carson Creek Trail, where you can enter the stairs going down to view the Connestee Falls waterfall. You will see many interesting rock formations, mosses and ferns, as well as signs of the unfinished right of way of the Carolina Knoxville and Western Railroad from 1888.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY**



Middle Falls Trail

This trail follows Amakola Brook and Batson Creek. The many cascades and Middle Batson Creek Falls can be best viewed by starting from the Ogana Connector at the north end of the trail so that you are facing the cascades and falls as you hike up the trail. Rare Oconee Bells (aka. *Shortia glaucifolia*) and many other native wildflowers grow along the banks of Amakola Brook and Batson Creek.

> DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

Ogana Trail

From the Ticoa Dam, the Ogana Trail provides access to a spur trail with a view of Upper Batson Creek Falls. Short connector trails lead to Middle Falls Trail and Amakola Trail. “The Grotto” found on Ogana feature ferns throughout the year and wildflowers in the spring and early summer, such as abundant Jack-in-the-pulpit and trillium. Ogana Trail continues beyond this lay-by for another mile where it passes through open forest and follows a mountain brook before exiting on Dotsi Drive.

> DIFFICULTY LEVEL: TICOA DAM TRAILHEAD TO “THE GROTTTO” - EASY

> DIFFICULTY LEVEL: “THE GROTTTO” TO DOTSI DRIVE - MODERATE



Ecusta and Tshakanawi Trail System

Ecusta Trail

A loop trail that follows the forested shore of Lake Ticoa, turns up a creek entrance with numerous cascades with heavy Rhododendron and hemlock growth, returning to the trailhead across ferny slopes under a light canopy.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY**

Tshakanawi Trail

This adds some stimulating elevation and open forest areas.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MODERATE**

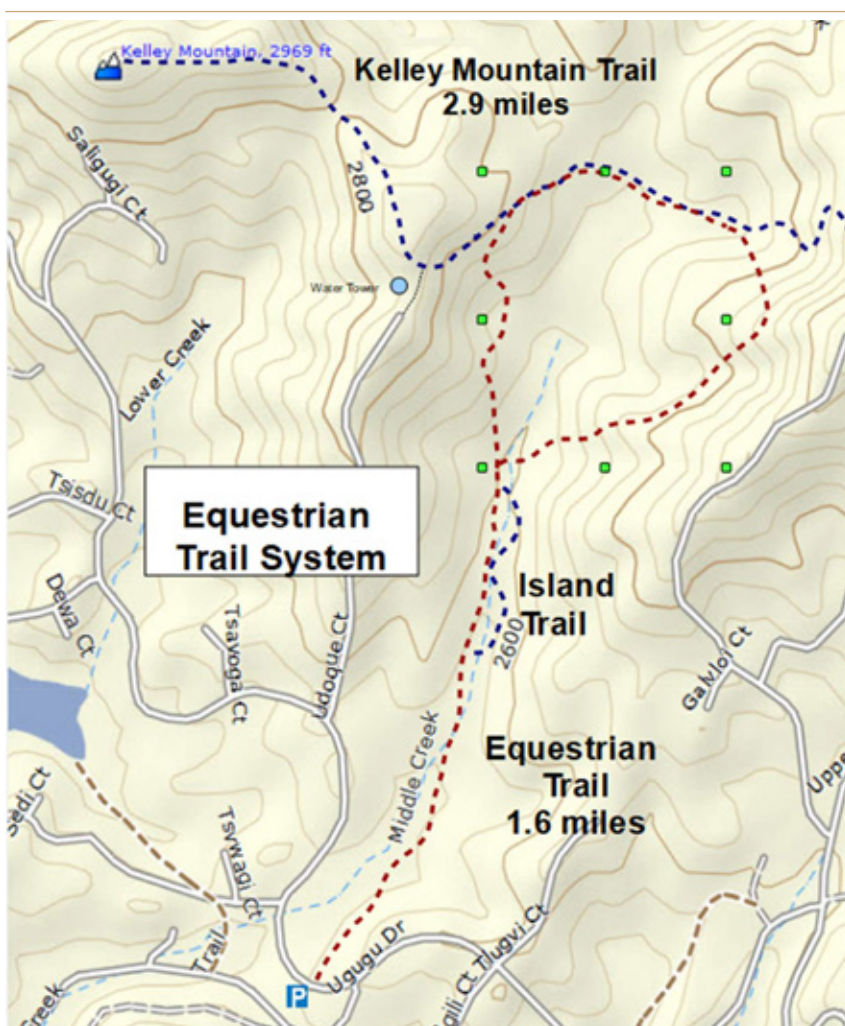


Equestrian Trail System

The trail entrance is off Ugugu Drive, across the street from the Organic Gardens and the Dog Park. Rare Oconee Bells (aka. *Shortia galacifolia*) grow prolifically along the banks of Middle Creek. The Island Trail, 0.3 miles long, is a favorite spot for seeing trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit and other wildflowers in spring months. The Kelley Mountain Trail provides winter views of Brevard on one side and Lake Wanteska on the other.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: FIRST MILE - EASY**

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: UPPER LOOP AND KELLEY MOUNTAIN TRAILS - MODERATE**

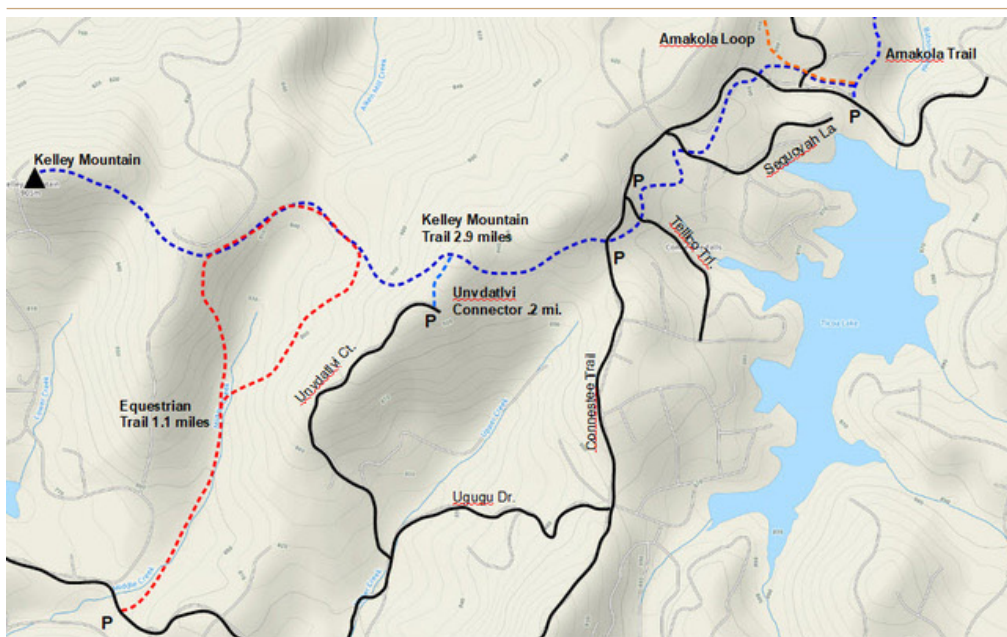


Kelley Mountain Trail and Unvdatlvi Connector

At 2.9 miles, Kelley Mountain Trail is Connestee's longest trail connecting the Amakola and Equestrian Trail systems. The trail runs east and west, mainly along a ridge. You can access the trail in several ways.

- Hiking the Equestrian Trail, take the left side of the loop. At the intersection, take a left turn to hike to the water tower and continue to the top of Kelley Mountain. Or you may take a right turn instead of a left and return to the Equestrian Trail via the right side of the loop, or stay on Kelley Mountain Trail via a set of switchbacks and intersect with our main street, Connestee Trail.
- Pick up Kelley Mountain Trail at the Unvdatlvi Connector near the end of Unvdatlvi Court.
- Park on Connestee Trail between Tellico and Cheulah, and you may head east toward Amakola Loop or west toward Kelley Mountain.
- If you're on the Amakola Loop, the Kelley Mountain Trail begins shortly after crossing Chagee Lane.

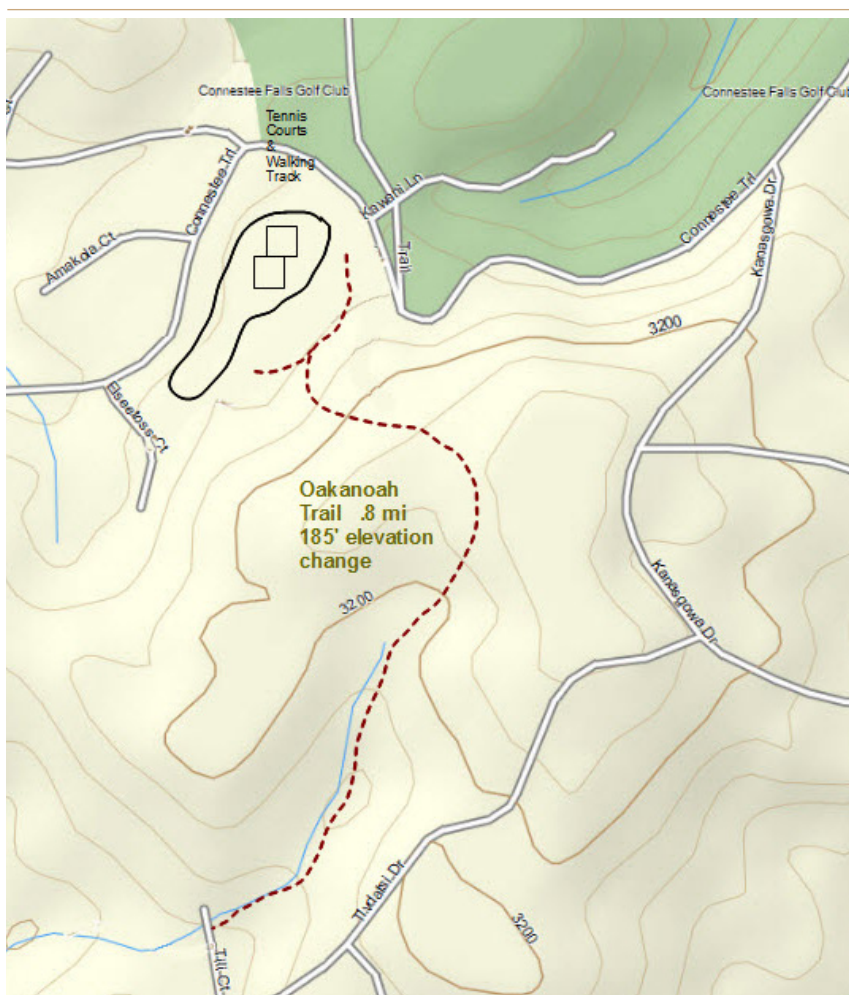
> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MODERATELY STRENUOUS**



Oakanoah Trail

Oakanoah Trail begins as a maintenance road that turns off Connestee Trail near the tennis courts. The trail leads to a large water tank in a few hundred feet. After the water tank, the trail becomes a foot trail that ascends the crest of the hill, then descends to follow the bank of a beautiful creek through a Rhododendron thicket. A proliferation of flame azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) bloom along the trail during summer. The trail intersects with Tili Court and continues at the end of Yuda Court, meandering under an open hardwood forest. The trail ends at a private property boundary.

> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY**



Tall Pines Trace

Located at the end of Hokassa Court, Tall Pines Trace leads to the ruins of the Frederick V. Batson home.

Built around 1910, the home's stone chimney is all that remains of the house. At the site, the trail continues 0.4 miles through the former Batson farmstead before returning to the trailhead.

This site has been registered with the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, which designated it as historic site 31TV959.

> DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

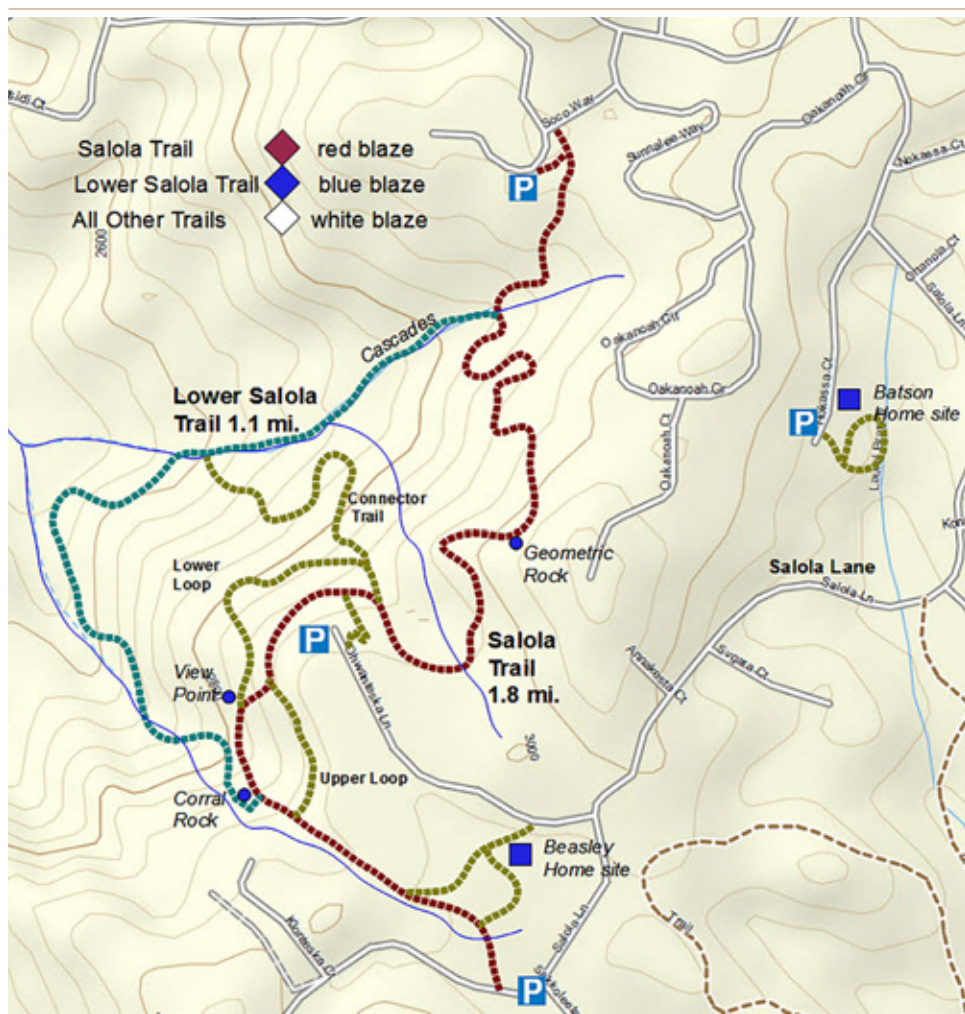
Interpretive Trail Markers Along Tall Pine Trace

1. In spite of the size of the pines, in 2007, a professional forester estimated the pines' age at 40 years, making these trees currently over 55 years old. The Batson land was cleared in 1910, farmed until 1925 and logged in the 1950s.
2. Fred Batson raised crops here, as evidenced by the discovery of a one-horse "side hill" plowshare point that was made in Syracuse, NY, before 1914. Two of the farm's main crops were corn and cabbage.
3. This site is believed to have been a form of root cellar known as a "bank house," which is simply a cut into the dirt bank with a wooden enclosure that creates even temperature storage for fruits and vegetables. Fragments of an iron pot and the base of a wood stove were found buried here.
4. This path leads to what is believed to be the Batson's water source. The creek is too shallow to even permit dipping a bucket, but a small earth dam would have pooled sufficient water for easy collection or bathing.
5. Driveway through the "yard," providing access to the road in either direction.
6. Site of Batson's 900-square-foot two story frame house, of which only the stone chimney remains.
7. Stone paved footpath from house to the road and lower fields.
8. This area contains several clusters of small locust corner posts arranged in a rectangle. They may be the remains of a small chicken coop.
9. This road connected between Carson Creek Road to the north (along Setsi Lane near Echota Lane in Qualla Village) and to East Fork Road to the south. At that time, Carson Creek Road continued from its current termination to nearby Connestee's East Fork gate.
10. Headwaters of Laurel Branch Creek passes through the Batson farm and merges with the East Fork of the French Broad River.

Salola Trail System

Beginning at the Salola Trailhead, this trail meanders through mountain laurel beside a creek. A short detour brings you to the old Beasley Place ruins. Shortly after the trail descends through hemlock and Rhododendron alongside numerous cascades. Corral Rock provides views of a beautiful forest cove. The View Point has excellent views of Whiteside and Toxaway mountains. Lower Salola Trail features many spring wildflowers and a stream with continuous cascades.

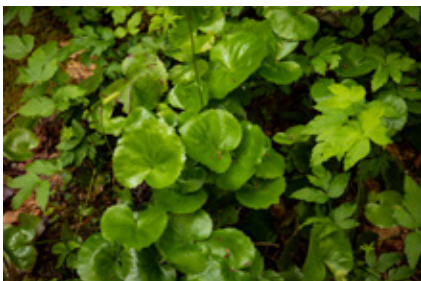
> **DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MODERATE**



Wildflowers You May See Along the Trails

Please take care not to harm the plants and wildflowers along the trails. Leave no trace. Thank you!

- Bear Corn
- Carolina Silver Bee Tree
- Crane-Fly Orchid
- Dog Hobble
- Downy Rattlesnake Orchid
- Dwarf Iris
- Fairy Wand
- Flame Azalea
- Fly Poison
- Foamflower
- Galax
- Golden Ragwort (yellow daisy)
- Green-headed Cone Flower
- Heartleaf
- Jack-in-the-pulpit
- May Apple
- Oconee Bells
- Painted Trillium
- Partridge Berry
- Piedmont Rhododendron
- Pink Lady's Slipper
- Red Wake Robin
- Round-leaved Yellow Violet
- Smooth Solomon's Seal
- Snowy Hydrangea
- Solomon's Plume
- Strawberry Bush (Heart-A'bustin)
- Vasey's Trillium
- White Baneberry (aka Doll's Eyes)
- White Clinton Lily
- White Wake Robin
- Yellow Mandarin
- Yellow Spicebush

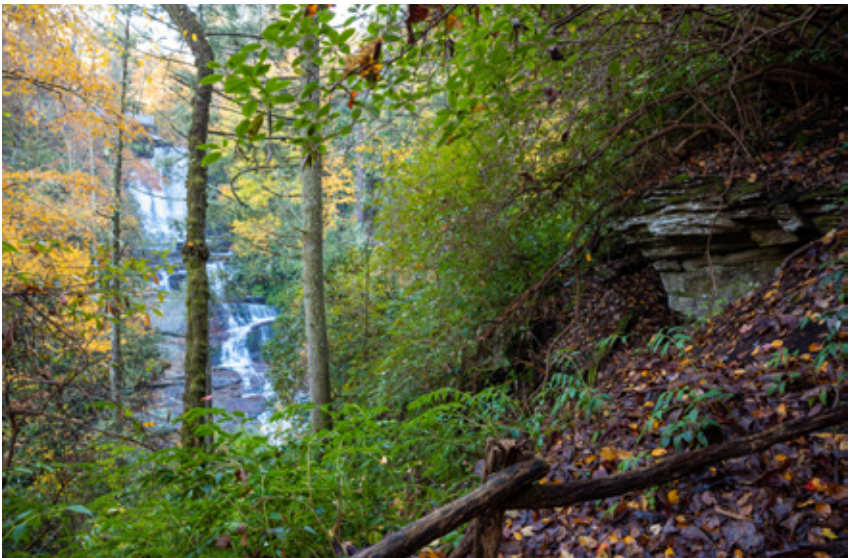


Hiking Trails Rules for Use*

Connestee Falls has over 20 miles of hiking trails, all maintained regularly by resident volunteers. Many volunteer hours are spent building and maintaining the trails to keep each trail in good environmental health, as well as enhancing and protecting the beauty of our natural forest.

- 1. Use.** The use of the trails is open to all Connestee Falls residents, guests, and renters. Keep on the trails to avoid trailside damage. Preserve the natural habitat at the side of the trails. Walk single file, or if in a group in open spaces spread out to minimize impact. Do not shortcut switchbacks.
- 2. Renters.** Renters should be informed by the homeowner of these regulations. The rental packet given by Connestee Falls should include this information.
- 3. Information.** This Hiking Trail Guide is available at the Administration Office and the Main Gate. Trail maps are also available on the Connestee Falls Hikers website: <https://cfhiker.wordpress.com/connestee-falls-hiking-trails/>
- 4. Parking.** Parking is available near trailheads and along the roadside. Care should be taken to not block driveways or roads.
- 5. Pets.** Dogs must remain leashed on the trail to ensure safety to hikers, other pets and themselves. Pet owners are required to pick up after their pets and carry out waste materials.
- 6. Wildlife.** The feeding of wild animals is prohibited on the trails, as it is anywhere within Connestee. Encouraging the presence of wild animals, such as bear and deer, could lead to harm to either a person, their pets, the animal or all parties.
- 7. Vehicles.** Absolutely NO bicycles, ATVs or vehicles of any kind are allowed on the trails. This is an environmental issue that causes ruts and uproots natural plants. It is also a safety hazard to our hiking community, including dogs.
- 8. Plants.** Removal of plants from the trail is not permitted unless by trail volunteers who are doing required maintenance. Leave rocks, plants or cultural objects behind in order to preserve the experience for others.
- 9. Trees.** Tree climbing is not permitted. Tree climbing can damage the tree and/or cause injury to a person.
- 10. Litter and Waste.** Pick up and carry out any litter brought in or left behind by other hikers. Please help keep our trails clean and beautiful.
- 11. Smoking.** Smoking is prohibited while on the trails and is a fire hazard within the forest.

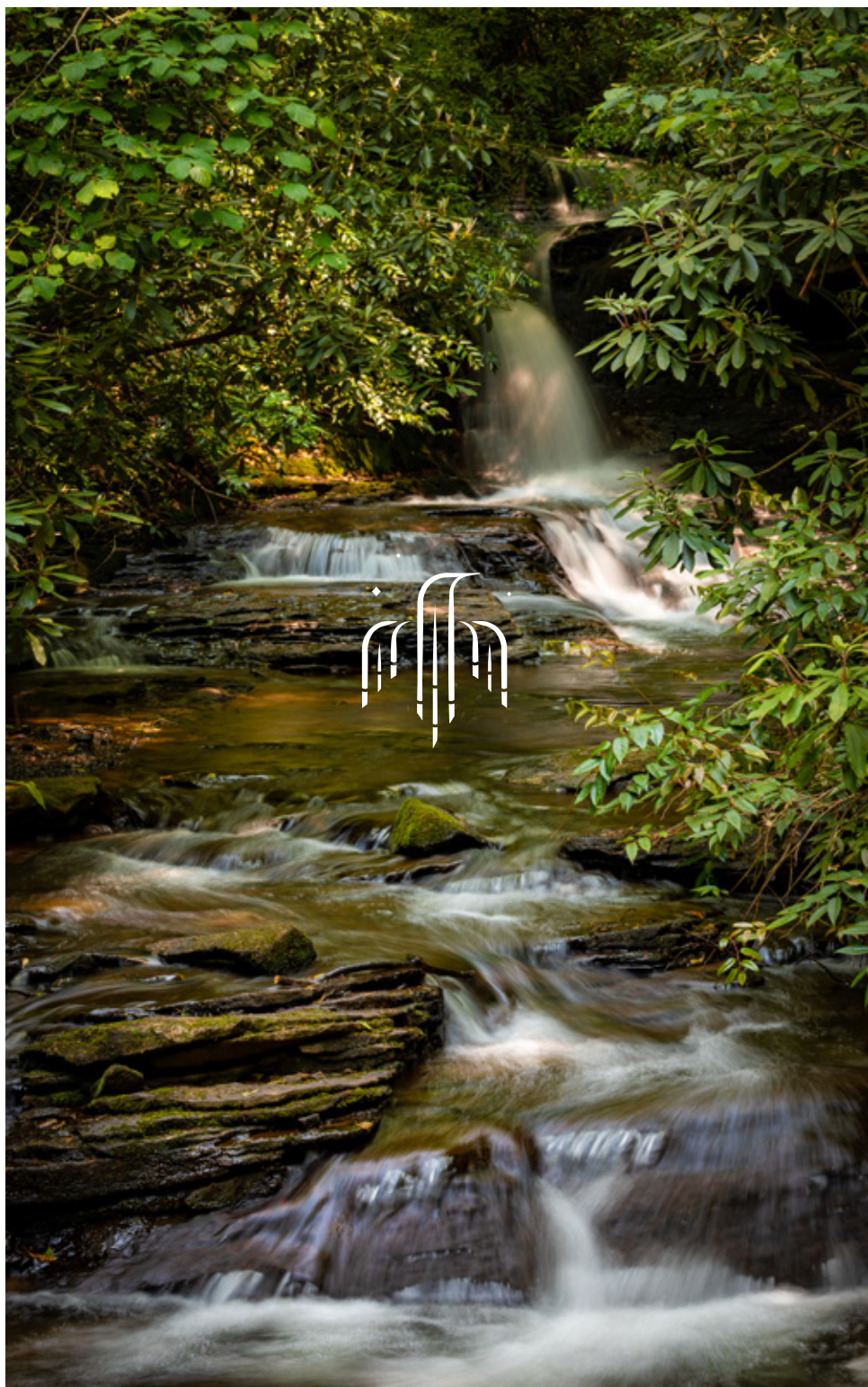
12. **Fires.** Open fires are prohibited throughout Connestee, including our trails system.
13. **Environmental impact.** No debris shall purposely obstruct the trail or litter the green space adjacent to it. Residents who have A&E approval to remove trees must also receive approval from the General Manager if trees will fall into Connestee Green Space. Proper clean-up of debris from cut trees falling across or near hiking trails is required. Debris from cut trees must not be visible from hiking trails. Utilize cutting methods that lessen the impact on other trees, bushes and plants in that area. Follow “Leave no trace” principles.
14. **Violations.** Violations of hiking trails regulations can result in said offender and/or responsible member being issued a citation requiring an appearance before the Judicial Committee, where a fine may be imposed for each violation.
15. **Liability.** The Association will not be responsible for any harm or damage to any individual or animal while making use of the hiking trail system. Pet owners are solely responsible for their pets and any harm or damage caused to a person or natural areas by their pets while on the hiking trails.
16. **Emergency Help.** Should you or another person have a medical emergency while hiking, please call 911 as soon as possible.



* Connestee Falls Property Owners Association, Inc.,
Rules and Regulations, Article XII, as of March 2021

Connestee Falls

Trail Notes:





TRANSYLVANIA CTY.



W. NORTH CAROLINA

CONNESTEEFALLS.COM

Connestee Falls

is a peaceful, welcoming and well-established community located on 3,900 acres of pristine forested land in the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina.

Connestee Falls Property Owners Association, Inc.
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