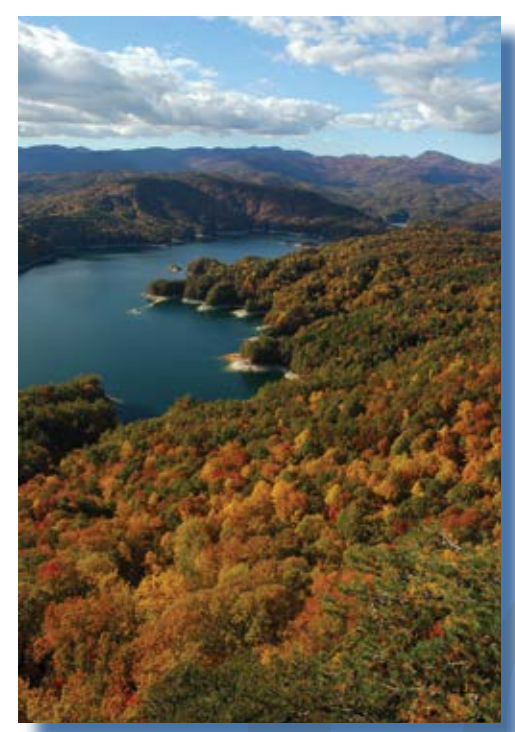


## Introduction



**Fall colors at Jumping Off Rock**

In the uppermost reaches of northwestern South Carolina, the clear waters of Lake Jocassee splash against the base of the Blue Ridge Escarpment, a “Blue Wall” of hills that represents the sharp transition between the Carolina mountains and piedmont. Forested slopes drop in elevation by 2,500 vertical feet in a matter of one to two miles. The land supports streams with names such as Saluda, Eastatoee, Laurel Fork, Toxaway, Horsepasture, Bearcamp, Thompson, Whitewater and Devils Fork, which carved the rugged gorges, creating scenic waterfalls and other natural beauties. These gorges, their streams and the more than 75 inches of precipitation that occur here each year make this area unique among mountain settings in the eastern United States. It is a place worthy of protection.

Gated residential communities began appearing across the landscape in the 1970s and 1980s and wild lands were being rapidly consumed by development. While some envisioned roads and rooftops for the Escarpment of South Carolina, conservationists Dr. James A. Timmerman Jr. and John E. Frampton of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) had different ideas. Timmerman and Frampton worked closely with business interests and conservation groups in the Upstate to protect the largest contiguous parcel of mountain property in South Carolina. In the fall of 1998, nearly 35,000 acres of land were purchased by the State of South Carolina for future generations to enjoy, and the area was formally named the “Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges.” The area had been known locally as the “Horsepasture” and is often referred to now as “Jocassee Gorges.” Jocassee Gorges, along with conservation lands in North Carolina and Georgia, helped form almost 250 square miles of protected forestland associated with South Carolina’s Blue Ridge Escarpment and its watersheds.

The name “Jocassee,” according to legend, means “Place of the Lost One.” Evocative Native American names echo throughout the Jocassee region, such as Oconee and Eastatoee, both tribes that inhabited the area. The Eastatoees were called the Green Birds and likely received their name from the Carolina parakeet, the only parrot native to eastern North America, a species that became extinct in 1904. Eastatoee Valley was the last site where scientists recorded a sighting of the species in South Carolina.

In 1787, botanist Andre Michaux discovered a “small plant with saw-toothed leaves” that today is recognized as Oconee bell, a rare plant species that is a hallmark of the Jocassee Gorges. The region was also the location of many detailed botanical studies in the mid-1900s that documented the biological diversity of the Jocassee Gorges.

During the previous century, much of the land was owned or managed by commercial timber interests. The Singer Sewing Machine Company once owned the land and harvested wood to make cabinets for their sewing machines. Duke Energy and Crescent Resources later purchased the lands for energy production and forest management purposes.

In recent years, the area has been the site of important wildlife and fisheries restoration projects involving white-tailed deer, peregrine falcons and brook trout, among others. Today, Jocassee Gorges is managed to provide a wide array of recreational opportunities as well as home to some of the most interesting botanical communities in the United States. Jocassee Gorges is not only the legacy of Dr. Timmerman and his contemporaries, but an integral component of heritage for the people of South Carolina.

Many partners, in addition to those already mentioned, helped make the Jocassee Gorges acquisition possible. Among those partnering with SCDNR were Duke Energy, Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Conservation Fund, North American Wetlands Conservation Council, S.C. General Assembly, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, S.C. Forestry Commission, Clemson University, S.C. Governor’s Office, South Carolina Congressional Delegation, U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, National Wild Turkey Federation, Foothills Trail Conference, Trout Unlimited, S.C. Wildlife Federation and many other groups and private individuals.

## Special Points of Interest

Dozens of special places exist among the ridges and hollows of Jocassee Gorges. Waterfalls, rare plants, historic valleys, scenic vistas and sparkling streams are some of the highlights of these special mountain lands. Some are accessible by vehicle, while others require a hearty jaunt into the backcountry. Good topographic maps with their place names are essential to successful outings in Jocassee Gorges.

Waterfalls and waterslides can be found on most waterways in Jocassee Gorges due to the steep gradient of the terrain. Twin Falls, a popular falls within Eastatoee Valley, may be accessed with a short ride and subsequent hike through lands of a private conservation foundation. The more adventurous falls seeker might opt to taken the mile-long hike to the top the falls on Twin Falls Trail from Cleo Chapman Road.

Several waterfalls are scattered along the shore of Lake Jocassee with some dropping directly into the lake. Dozens of smaller waterfalls can be found on the tributaries of Laurel Fork, Cane, Side-of-Mountain, Eastatoee,

**Twin Falls**

Emory and Willis creeks. Efforts to protect the resources of the area. Opportunities for “hands-on” activities and field excursions in their quest for the ocean.

Laurel Fork Falls is perhaps the most popular waterfall within Jocassee Gorges. It plummets about 100 feet into Lake Jocassee and is accessible by hiking along the Foothills Trail or by boat excursion on the lake. Laurel Fork Creek, above the falls, offers one of the most pleasant and interesting hikes on Jocassee Gorges. Some visitors will note odd patterns of vegetation that designate old homesteads, where early settlers once lived in the valley. Hidden walnut groves are clues of yesteryear and a way of life that has practically vanished.

Jocassee Gorges’ forests were once heavily cut for their prized timber, and now it seems that the same forest has attempted to cover up the past. Rusty, twisted narrow-gauge railroad rails used to haul timber may be found in the hollows, buried under a heavy layer of leaves and other organic materials. Cane Creek and Reedy Cove Creek both harbor those leftovers from early life and timbering in the Southern Appalachians.

Some families used corn, sugar and old-style distillation processes to help fund the family budget. Remains of liquor stills are a common find along clear tributaries of many hollows. Occupants who preceded the early American settlers are thought to have left some traces behind, and the forests of Jocassee Gorges have been unable to hide them all. Embedded within the sheer granite slopes of Long Ridge on Pinnacle Mountain are hundreds of oval-shaped petroglyphs, or rock carvings, believed to have been created by some earlier civilization. Yucca, or “Spanish bayonet,” is a plant once used by Native Americans in their personal hygiene, and it was transplanted from camp to camp. Small patches of those plants reveal sites that might have once been occupied by the Cherokee.

Botanical delights include Oconee bell, trillium, showy orchid, wild azalea and trout lily. Carolina hemlocks are present on Roundtop Mountain. The trees are treated periodically by SCDNR against the plight of the hemlock woolly adelgid that has devastated Eastern hemlock trees throughout the region. The Roundtop Mountain Passage of the Palmetto Trail is a relatively new trail to the Jocassee Gorges.

Oconee bells may be found deep in remote ravines in any of the drainages headed for the Savannah River. Several Oconee bell colonies thrive alongside streams that pass under the Dawkins Flat or Horsepasture roads in the heart of Jocassee Gorges. Another population of Oconee bell is alongside Cane Creek.



**Oconee bells**

Spring and fall seasons offer unparalleled views of the Blue Ridge. Dogwoods, wild cherry, redbud, downy serviceberry and wild blueberry displaying their flowery brilliance in early spring. The drumming of ruffed grouse rumble across the mountainsides to herald the coming of spring. Oaks, yellow-poplar, red maple, sourwood and hickory take their turn in creating an incredible show in the fall. A range of brilliant, earthy colors can be seen from early October until late November. When the trees have given up their leaves to blanket the earth, new vistas suddenly appear along the “hog-back” ridges that support many of the main roads. The famous Blue Ridge Parkway can be spotted to the north, and water bodies such as Lake Hartwell can be seen to the far south on a clear day. The hills of the Georgia mountains are discernible at certain points. Jumping-Off Rock and several other lookout points along Horsepasture Road reveal the immense perspective of the region.

Jumping-Off Rock has been the most popular destination within Jocassee Gorges for decades. In February 2008, a pair of peregrine falcons (formerly threatened) was found nesting near Jumping-Off Rock. For a bird of prey that favors cliffs and water, it seemed the perfect place and they successfully raised their young that year. SCDNR constructed a new overlook at the site to protect the raptors and improve safety conditions in the area. Jumping-Off Rock offers one of the most picturesque sights in the eastern United States and is worth every inch of the 10-mile drive.

Topographic maps, emergency supplies and a little backcountry skill are all helpful for those who seek the treasures of Jocassee Gorges. Outdoor enthusiasts are also encouraged to take flashlights, spare tires, a compass or other navigational aids. Old logging roads afford the adventurer literally hundreds of trails and routes to traverse the countryside, and it is possible to get “turned around”... as the locals say, maybe for just a few short minutes or possibly for a long, chilly night. The immense forests can offer quite a challenge to even the most experienced adventurer, so it is wise to be prepared.

## Educational Opportunities at Jocassee Gorges

Nestled between the mountain and piedmont physiographic regions of the Southern Appalachians, the Jocassee Gorges has unique biological and historical attributes that set the stage for special educational and research opportunities. Institutes of higher education, grade school teachers and others with simple inquiries of the wonders of the natural world will all find something of interest in Jocassee Gorges. Scientific research has established a baseline of information about the diversity of resources within Jocassee Gorges, and that information guides management of the property.

Formal researchers may secure a research permit for approved investigative studies to be coordinated and conducted in the Jocassee Gorges. Interested researchers may visit <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/managed/wild/jocassee/> research.htm to learn more about research in Jocassee Gorges.

The diverse and unique natural areas and resources on Jocassee Gorges provide an exceptional opportunity for outdoor-classroom-style education. From kindergarten to college, students can learn about the unique geological formations of the Jocassee Gorges, the unusual plant and animal communities that have resulted, and management

efforts to protect the resources of the area. Opportunities for “hands-on” activities and field excursions in their quest for the ocean.

The SCDNR and conservation organizations conduct educational excursions periodically, and state park interpreters conduct a variety of nature-based programs and walks highlight mountain resources and culture.



**Toxaway gneiss, oldest rock in South Carolina**

Jocassee offers a wide array of hiking experiences. Constructed trails include the Foothills, Palmetto, Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve Spur and Twin Falls. Experiences may be had from an easy saunter to the state’s highest point at 3,553 feet atop Sassafras Mountain to a heart-pounding plummet into some of the steepest gorge terrain in the Southeast. More primitive hiking is possible along more than 100 miles of old logging roads that have been repaired throughout Jocassee. An occasional Cherokee Indian trail might be encountered in the backcountry. Crossroads Mountain, one of the widest plateaus in South Carolina, offers some remote hiking opportunities and is best accessed through North Carolina’s Gorges State Park or by boat in the upper reaches of Lake Jocassee. Opportunities for hiking on the wilder side may be had in the Musterground area along the western shore of Lake Jocassee. Emergency supplies and good maps are essential to successful hiking experiences in the Jocassee Gorges.

The Foothills Trail is a 77-mile footpath extending from Table Rock State Park at its eastern terminus to Oconee State Park in the west. The Foothills Trail affords an east-west crossing of Jocassee at the higher revelations. Many sections are strenuous and will test the most seasoned hiker. Other sections are more suited to family outings to catch a glimpse of a hidden waterfall or display of blooming trilliums. Mountain crests with scenic views, shady gorges and coves with special botanical features are all important features along the trail. The Foothills Trail crosses or follows most of the major streams and rivers of the Jocassee Gorges and adjacent conservation lands including Eastatoee Creek, Laurel Fork Creek, Toxaway River, Horsepasture River, Bearcamp Creek, Thompson River, Whitewater River, East Fork Creek and Chattooga River, among others.

Activities associated with the Foothills Trail are coordinated by the Foothills Trail Conservancy. For information about the trail, purchasing a guide book and map or membership in the Conservancy, visit its website at [www.foothillstrail.org](http://www.foothillstrail.org) or visit the Foothills Trail Facebook page.

The Palmetto Trail is the Mountains to the Sea Trail. It now crosses from the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area in northern Greenville County over to Sassafras Mountain in northern Pickens County, and then joins with the newer 5.1-mile Roundtop Passage, which offers a number of look-hike possibilities. It also connects with the Palmetto Trail’s Blue Ridge Electric Co-op Passage, a 12.3-mile section with access points at Table Rock State Park and US Highway 178 at Beasley Gap.

More information on the Roundtop Mountain Passage is available at <http://palmettoconservation.org/passage/roundtop-mountain/>. More information on the Blue Ridge Electric Co-op Passage may be viewed at <http://palmettoconservation.org/passage/blue-ridge-electric-co-op-passage-jocassee-gorges/>.



**Hikers on the Foothills Trail**

Both the Foothills Trail and Palmetto Trail are foot-traffic only in Jocassee Gorges.

The Twin Falls Trail is located just a half-mile off US Highway 178 on Cleo Chapman Highway. The trail takes the hiker to the top of Twin Falls, also known as Reedy Cove Falls and Eastatoee Falls. The trail, moderate in difficulty, is about 1 mile and requires about two hours for a leisurely round-trip. The trail passes old logging railroad tracks from days gone by. Remnants of the old tracks are buried in the organic matter of the forest, and the occasional rail or spike can be seen along the path. Just above Twin Falls, the old narrow-gauge rail may be seen in a tangled mass, the result of a flood that took place in the 1920s. A faint angler’s trail may be followed upstream to some relaxing spots along Reedy Cove Creek.

## Fishing

Jocassee Gorges contains some of the highest quality water in the state, and excellent trout fishing opportunities exist. Since acquiring the property, SCDNR has worked diligently to improve water quality, trout streams and the species that depend on cold, clean waters. Backcountry fishing opportunities are here for those who enjoy fishing smaller streams or those who prefer reservoir fishing for trout, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and sunfish, since Lake Jocassee is centered within Jocassee Gorges.

Lake Jocassee is one of the most outstanding trophy trout lakes in the nation. SCDNR biologists first began managing Lake Jocassee as a trout fishery in 1972. Since that time, a popular trout fishery has developed with quality size rainbow and brown trout being routinely caught. The average rainbow trout caught in Lake Jocassee weighs almost 3 pounds, with the average brown trout weighing 4-5 pounds.

State records for both species—17 pounds, 9.5 ounces for brown trout, 11 pounds, 5 ounces for rainbow trout—were caught from Jocassee. Lake Jocassee also provides good fishing for largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and bream.

Popular trout streams include Eastatoee, Whitewater and Thompson rivers and Side-of-Mountain, Reedy Cove, Laurel Fork, Cane, Abner, Willis and Emory creeks. Native “specks,” or brook trout, might be caught in the smaller headwaters at higher elevations. The larger streams support both stocked and wild rainbow and brown trout. In general, the streams that can be easily accessed by vehicle support stock trout during the spring and summer months. The creeks that require long hikes and foot trail access typically support wild, reproducing populations of trout.

The Eastatoee River can be easily accessed from US Highway 178 near the state line, or from either Cleo Chapman Road or Roy F. Jones Highway further down in Eastatoee Valley. Hemlock Hollow Access Area on SC Highway 11 offers a short hike to a beautiful section of the lower Eastatoee. Other access areas on the Eastatoee are Peach Orchard Branch and Dug Mountain on Roy F. Jones Highway and Granny Gear on Granny Gear Road across from the Vineyards Fire Department. For more information on trout fishing in Jocassee Gorges, ask for a copy of the free book “South Carolina Trout Fishing” at the Clemson SCDNR office. The trout book is also available on the SCDNR website at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/fish/pdf/TroutBook.pdf>.

The rivers that feed Lake Jocassee are largely wild. They originate in North Carolina and include the Toxaway, Horsepasture, Thompson and Whitewater rivers. Bearwallow Creek is also an important stream that provides good fishing opportunities. The main rivers are most easily accessed from Lake Jocassee, and anglers who fish in North Carolina should secure the appropriate licenses.



**Fly fishing along Little Eastatoee Creek**

The Whitewater River may be best known as the source of Upper and Lower Whitewater Falls, but this water system’s energy causes many fast-flowing riffles, which provide good habitat for wild rainbow and brown trout. The segment of river above Lower Whitewater Falls offers excellent wild trout fishing. The entire reach of Whitewater River in South Carolina is protected within Jocassee Gorges and is accessible to the public. Access is via SC Highway 130 to the Bad Creek Hydroelectric Station. The gate at Bad Creek will open for entrance during daylight hours, and will open for departure at any time. Once in the gate, follow signs to the Whitewater River access parking area. There is a 1/2-mile hike from the parking access to the stream. The Foothills Trail parallels the entire length of the Whitewater River on the east side and the Coon Branch Trail parallels the river on the west side. Parking along the river on Musterground Road is prohibited.

Management on Jocassee Gorges emphasizes improvement of water quality. Old logging roads have been re-graded, stabilized and repaired to reduce sedimentation, erosion and stream impacts. Old roads have been opened to allow fisheries biologists access to several streams to conduct aquatic inventories and implement aggressive trout management.

## Hunting

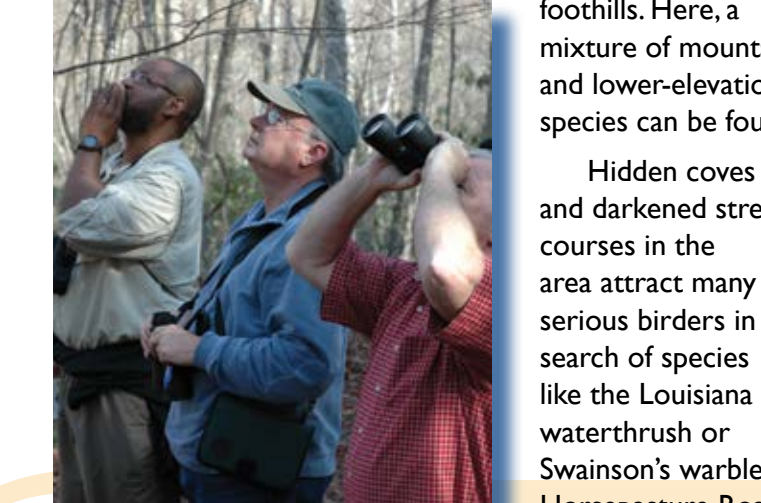
Jocassee Gorges offers one of South Carolina’s best opportunities for hunting game species that inhabit mountainous backcountry, especially black bear. South Carolina’s mountain bear population has a stronghold in this land of vast forests and rugged terrain. The carrying capacity of the habitat for white-tailed deer is relatively low; however, a number of nice bucks have been harvested in the area. Other popular game species include wild turkey, raccoon, squirrel and woodcock. Successful hunts in Jocassee Gorges depend on careful study of topographic maps, roads, trails and unique landforms. Preparation for inclement weather is essential, as rapid changes in weather are common in the mountains. Heavy rains can be expected at most any time of the year. Crisp, cold days are the norm at higher elevations during winter.

Many adjacent lands that are owned by the S.C. Forestry Commission, U.S. Forest Service or Duke Energy are enrolled in the SCDNR Wildlife Management Area (WMA) program are available for public hunting. Traditionally, the area has been a favorite destination for hunters who consider the rugged, picturesque terrain an advantage rather than a hindrance. The actual taking of game does not necessarily define success on Jocassee Gorges. Hunters who venture off the beaten trails will find hidden waterslides, trees marked and clawed by bears, quiet coves and perhaps the remnants of logging railroad tracks from days gone by. Those things are the real treasures within Jocassee Gorges.

Hunters should consult SCDNR’s “Rules & Regulations publication for specific limits and seasons: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/reg/pdf/hunting.pdf>.

## Bird-Watching

The Southern Appalachians provide unique opportunities for bird watching. In 2006, Jocassee Gorges received global recognition when it was designated as part of an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society and Bird Life International. Although South Carolina mountains rarely exceed 3,000 feet, they harbor bird populations unique to the state and add an important component to regional biodiversity. This is especially true of the Blue Ridge Escarpment, where the mountains abruptly greet the



**Bird watchers at Jocassee**

and the old road transects a wide variety of habitats that harbor different species.

Hiking along the Foothills Trail also provides easier access to more remote coves and stream courses. Hikers sometimes see great blue herons keeping solitary vigil over clear, cool mountain streams, hunting for fish and frogs.

Higher, drier habitats and moister coves provide a unique variety of habitats that harbor different species of birds. During the breeding season, the persistent song of the red-eyed vireo can be heard from ridge-top to deep cove. As with most species in this forest, more will be heard than seen. Species that may be seen or heard on the drier slopes and ridges include ovenbird, summer tanagers, solitary vireos, pine warblers, black and white warblers, worm-eating warblers and Eastern towhees. In the numerous coves, black-throated green warblers, scarlet tanagers, hooded warblers, Northern parula warblers and American redstarts are some of the more colorful members of the songbird community that may be observed.

Clemson University has documented numerous nests by Swainson’s warbler, especially in the Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve and Side-of-Mountain Creek areas. Ravens are one of the hallmark bird species of the mountains. Although they are typically found more frequently in the higher North Carolina mountains, it is not unusual to see or hear them in the Jocassee Gorges. In February 2008, the second known pair of nesting peregrine falcons in the state was discovered in Jocassee Gorges near the famed overlook, Jumping-Off Rock. Monitoring revealed that the Jocassee Gorges peregrine falcons contributed a pair of offspring to the Blue Ridge Escarpment. This represented a landmark contribution to conservation in South Carolina.

Common loons, large diving birds, overwinter on Lake Jocassee and remain through April, when they have attained their summer plumage. At this time they can be heard giving their beautiful calls that are typically heard only in the lakes and marshes of the northern United States and Canada. Loon-watching has become a popular tourism activity on Lake Jocassee during the winter, with boat excursions specifically targeting these interesting birds.

Obviously, the bird-watching opportunities at Jocassee Gorges are nearly endless. Who knows what remains to be discovered in the coming years?

## Wildlife

Jocassee Gorges is home to a number of wildlife species that are not readily found in other parts of the state such animals range from chipmunk and mink to black bear. Healthy populations of more common animals such as raccoon and white-tailed deer are also found here. Bobcats are one of the largest predators in the area. They are seldom seen, but their sign can be found scattered across the landscape, often on old logging roads.

Bald eagles, both mature and immature, can be observed over Lake Jocassee throughout the year, and a few years ago a bald eagle nest was discovered up one of the river arms of the lake. Peregrine falcons were identified for the first time in decades and successfully nested starting in 2008. Ever since that discovery, peregrines have successfully fledged young each year from a nest near Jumping-Off Rock. Ruffed grouse, another species unique to the mountains, can be heard drumming on the hillsides in springtime. Wild turkeys inhabit the forests of Jocassee Gorges, and the visitor may chance to observe a group of these secretive birds gliding overhead from one ridge-top to another—a unique and thrilling sight. With dry ridges, wet hollows and a variety of vegetative types, as well as elevations that range from about 1,000 feet to more than 3,500 feet above sea level, many birds, mammals and reptiles find areas to live here.

The abundance and diversity of salamanders are unique to the Jocassee Gorges and include numerous species of “spring lizards” (the dusky salamanders) that live along stream edges, to brightly colored species that inhabit the forest floor, to uniquely adapted species, like the rare green salamander, that live in the crevices of rock faces. The wood frog, more commonly known in the Great North Woods, breeds in Jocassee Gorges in winter during the first mild rain. Their loud, nonmusical calls can be heard in the winter woods.



**Green salamander**

## Camping in and around Jocassee Gorges

Camping opportunities on Jocassee Gorges are numerous. They range from family-type destinations that are accessible by vehicle to remote, leave-no-trace spots that test the limits of physical exertion. Some campsites are located on high mountain ridges, while others are situated in valleys, closer to water.

Camping is permitted (first come, first served) at designated campsites along the main roads in Jocassee Gorges. Designated sites are noted on the Jocassee Gorges map and on kiosks at each entrance. Many of these sites are places that were traditionally used as hunt camps in the past. When the main roads and gates are closed in late winter and summer, primitive camping is permitted anywhere on Jocassee; however, a written permit must be obtained well in advance. Permits are not required for primitive camping any time of year along the Foothills Trail or Palmetto Trail or on limited areas of Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve.

Camping is not permitted along the shore of Lake Jocassee, except for the Double Springs Primitive Campground operated by Devils Fork State Park. The

state parks surrounding Jocassee Gorges offer everything from pull-in RV sites for the weekend camper to rugged backcountry camping for the avid backpacker. Jones Gap, Oconee, Table Rock, Keowee-Toxaway, Devils Fork and Caesars Head state parks all offer camping at designated sites. Some have attractive cabins for rent as well.

Many state park camping areas include individual water and electrical hookups, picnic tables, comfort stations with toilet facilities and hot showers (winterized comfort stations are available in many parks) and dump stations for RVs. For information about a specific park’s campsites and reservations, call 1-866-345-7275 or visit the South Carolina State Parks website at [www.southcarolinaparks.com](http://www.southcarolinaparks.com).

Primitive camping opportunities are available all along the 77-mile Foothills Trail, which intersects the interior of the Jocassee Gorges. This trail and its spurs link Oconee, Table Rock, Caesars Head and Jones Gap state parks along with SCDNR-owned Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve and Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve. Access points are along SC 11, SC 107, US 178 and SC 130. For more information about the Foothills Trail, contact the Foothills Trail Conservancy by visiting its website at [www.foothillstrail.org](http://www.foothillstrail.org).

Surrounding national forest lands also provide a wide range of camping opportunities, from developed campgrounds to primitive camping. To find out what’s available, call the Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service in Mountain Rest at (864) 638-9568.

## Resource Management

Jocassee Gorges was protected because of its incomparable site, position among other conservation lands, its unique biology and because of the opportunities it offered for recreation. SCDNR emphasizes the use of techniques that result in minimal disturbances to the soils, topography and building blocks of the landscape. Basic access is provided through a diverse road network. Management activities are designed to embrace the concept of ecosystem restoration, where critical resources are considered in all management decisions.

SCDNR keeps a detailed database on the distribution of sensitive resources, especially rare flora and fauna, as well as historical sites. A Geographical Information System (GIS) is used to compile old and new records of special elements as well as the soils and other resource variables on the land. Managers consult this database during all land-planning exercises and road-management activities.



**Prescribed burning**

Existing roads are maintained for different levels of use. Main roads are used for season public access, while secondary roads are stabilized and maintained to allow non-motorized travel. Important ecotones, or the zone where two habitats intersect, exist along the roadsides and provide important habitat values for many species of wildlife. The mountainous road system requires vigilant care, thus the roads require significant dedication and management attention.

Prescribed fire is one of the most useful tools to promote ecosystem restoration. Managers carefully apply fire on Jocassee Gorges to allow the woodlands to gradually change and recover, in terms of plant species diversity, distribution and composition. Most of the woodlands were altered dramatically during the past century as the result of unprofessional timber harvests. Fire was historically an important factor in the natural landscape, and SCDNR uses controlled fire to mimic the natural processes that once occurred in order to help fire-dependent plant communities exist once again. Fire has a very low adverse impact on soils when used correctly. Vegetative changes will take place slowly and gradually, and evidence of such management may easily be seen along the central portions of Horsepasture Road.

Management decisions favor resource conservation over potential impacts from recreational activities. The balance between recreation and conservation of sensitive resources is a constant challenge on Jocassee Gorges, and future generations will be grateful for the extra efforts taken to maintain a fair equilibrium. Explore the area to discover some of the changes that are taking place.

## Botanical areas

Jocassee Gorges offers some of the best opportunities to seek and discover interesting plants in the South Carolina mountains. A number of hard-to-find floral species are hidden within the Jocassee Gorges. Popular wildflower excursions include trips into Peach Orchard Branch, Wadako Mountain and Upper Cane Creek.

Peach Orchard Branch Angler Access Area is on Roy F. Jones Highway, about 1 miles off SC Highway 11. Parking is available here, but do not block the red gate. Hikes on old logging roads follow interesting meanders along the river bottoms as well as the high ridges. Showy orchids, lady slippers and several species of trillium are common in the area. Early hikes between February and April pay special dividends to the natural seeking the ephemerals, or flowering species that quickly appear and display their showy flowers in the sunlight along the forest floor before the hardwood trees don their leaves for the summer.

Wadako Mountain is one of the most botanically diverse places in South Carolina. Wadako harbors a wide variety of herbaceous and woody species that have been documented by dedicated scientists only in recent decades. The soils in the area lack the typical acidity associated with much of the Southern Appalachians. Circumneutral soils with pH in the 6.0 to 7.0 range allow the existence of plants that are rarely found anywhere else in South Carolina. Yellowwoods trees are some of the treasures to be found by those who travel the distance to access the area. Peach Orchard Branch and the Howell Mountain Area off SC 11 both provide good access points for reaching the Wadako Mountain area.

Another favorite place for wildflowers is upper Cane Creek. The easiest way to reach upper Cane Creek is to actually follow Mill Creek to its head in the mid-section of the Eastatoee Valley. Take Mill Creek Road off Cleo Chapman Road and park at the red gates at the end of the road. Use the map to explore Cane Creek, where Oconee bells are among the many unusual floral species that may be found.

## Access and Overlooks

Jocassee Gorges has about 35 miles of seasonally open roads, along with three sections of road that are open year-round. Seasonally open roads are open from March 20 to May 10, and again from Sept. 15 through Jan. 15. The 10-mile section of Horsepasture Road on US Highway 178 to Jumping-Off Rock is open year-round, as is a 4.5-mile section of Camp Ader Road from US Highway 178 to the Franklin Gravelly Monument and just beyond. The access to Crossroads Mountain in South Carolina, which is through Gorges State Park in North Carolina on Chestnut Mountain Road, is open year-round. Horsepasture Road passes through the heart of Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens County, and several overlooks were developed along the



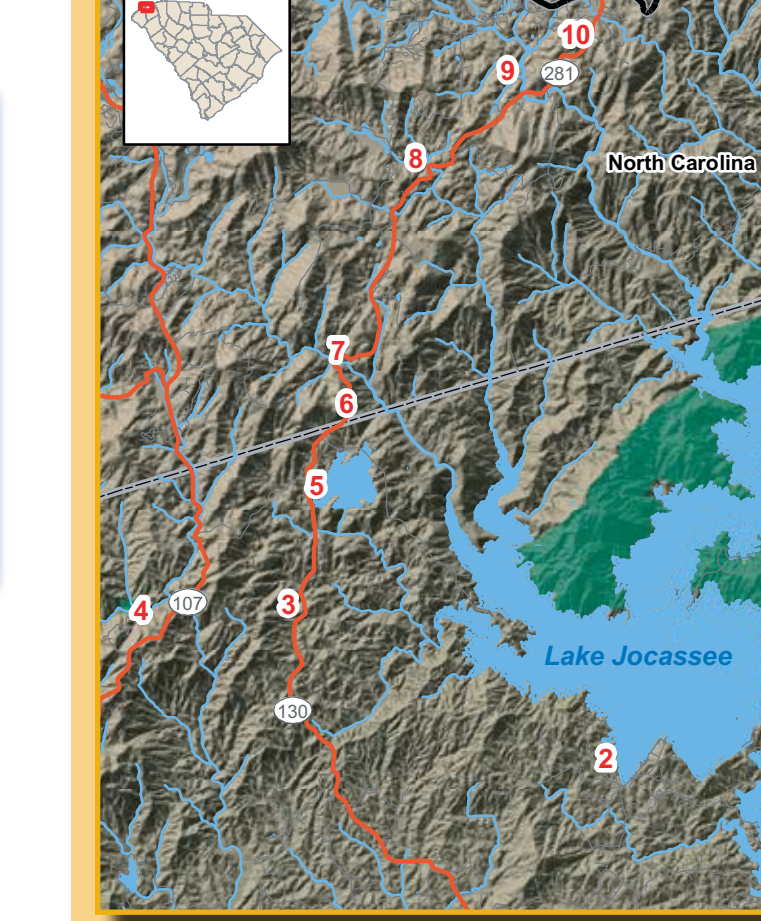
**New York ferns along Whitewater River**

route that runs the prominent ridges within the landscape. Many of the views are breathtaking and worth the trip.

Main roads are delineated on the map and code as to use. They are maintained to permit basic access to most parts of the vast property. Most of the roads are closed for public use in late winter to avoid detrimental impacts associated with winter weather, and they are also closed in the summer to allow for wildlife use of the unique habitats along the roadsides.

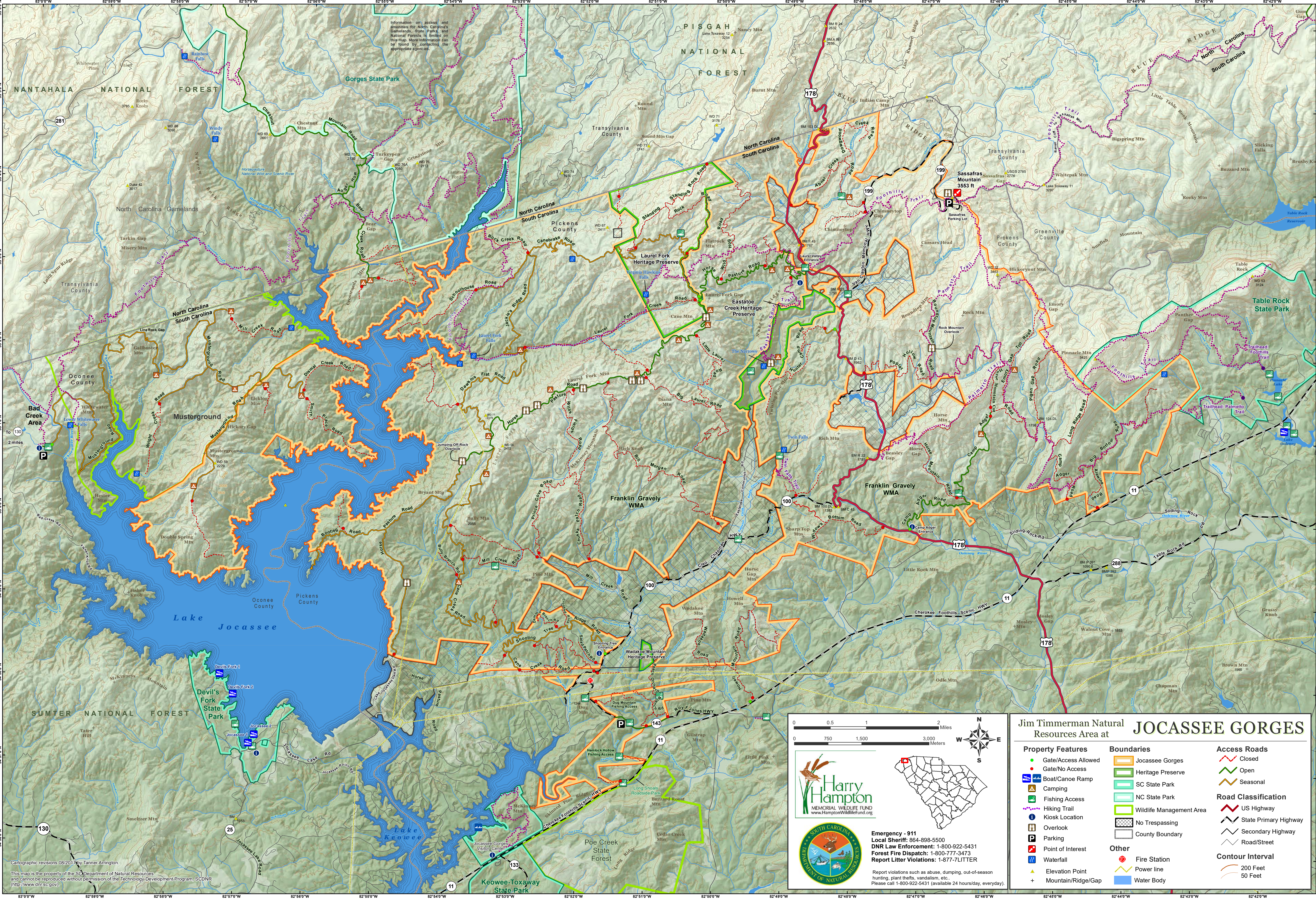
Jumping-Off Rock, to which the Horsepasture Road is now open year-round, is one of the most well-known overlooks in the Upstate. Perhaps the most photographed site on Jocassee Gorges, it provides the visitor with a panoramic view of Lake Jocassee and surrounding wild lands all the way to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Peregrine falcons set up housekeeping in the vicinity in 2008, which necessated some minor changes and the development of a new overlook site. Nonetheless, it remains as the most striking overlook on Jocassee Gorges.

While the fall season remains the most popular time to appreciate the scenery in Jocassee Gorges, better long-range views may be had in the late fall or winter, after the leaves have fallen.



- 1) Begin the driving tour at the Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center at Keowee-Toxaway State Park, at the intersection of SC 11 and SC 133.
- 2) From the Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center, turn right on SC 11, and drive 3 miles to a sign for Devils Fork State Park on the banks of Lake Jocassee. Turn right here, and follow the signs about 4 miles to the park.
- 3) Back out on SC 11, at 6 miles from the Visitor Center, turn right (north) on SC 130 toward Whitewater Falls. After traveling 9 miles of SC 130, turn left on the Southern Highroads Trail, a road that cuts across to SC 107. You’ll go about 2 miles up this road to find on the left an outstanding overlook of Lake Jocassee. To reach the Waihalla State Fish Hatchery from here, continue west a short distance to SC 107, where you turn left and in 2.4 miles reach the hatchery entrance.
- 5) Continue on SC 130 from the intersection with Southern Highroads Trail for about a mile until reaching Duke Energy’s Bad Creek Hydroelectric Station on the right. Pull through the gate, and after 2.5 miles on this road, turn left into the Whitewater River/Foothills Trail parking lot. Leave your car here and take a .5-mile hike to the Whitewater River to join the Foothills Trail or one of two spur trails: Coon Branch Natural Area or Lower Whitewater Falls. Drive down the Bad Creek Road for another mile and a half to the Bad Creek Overlook, a scenic vista of Lake Jocassee and surrounding mountains.
- 6) Travel back up Bad Creek Road to SC 130 through the gated entrance and turn right. Very quickly you will cross into North Carolina, where the road changes to NC 281, and soon after that, look for the entrance to Whitewater Falls on the right. With a drop of 411 feet, Whitewater Falls is the highest waterfall east of the Rockies.
- 7) Back on NC 281, head north and in about a mile cross the Whitewater River; the first of the four major rivers that empty into Lake Jocassee (the others being the Thompson, Horsepasture and Toxaway rivers).
- 8, 9) In another 4 miles on NC 281, cross over the Thompson River, the only major tributary of the Jocassee Gorges without a bridge. The river goes under the road through a culvert. About 1 mile beyond the Thompson River, cross the Horsepasture River. In 1986, 4.2 miles of this stunningly beautiful river, from NC 281 to Lake Jocassee, were named a National Wild and Scenic River.

route that runs the prominent ridges within the landscape. Many of the views are breathtaking and worth the trip.



Information on access and amenities for North Carolina's Gamelands, State Parks, and National Forests is limited on this map. More information can be found by contacting the appropriate agency.

**Emergency - 911**  
**Local Sheriff:** 864-898-5500  
**DNR Law Enforcement:** 1-800-922-5431  
**Forest Fire Dispatch:** 1-800-777-3473  
**Report Litter Violations:** 1-877-7LITTER

Report violations such as abuse, dumping, out-of-season hunting, plant thefts, vandalism, etc. Please call 1-800-922-5431 (available 24 hours/day, everyday).

### Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at JOCASSEE GORGES

Property Features	Boundaries	Access Roads
● Gate/Access Allowed	▭ Jocassee Gorges	↖ Closed
⚠ Gate/No Access	▭ Heritage Preserve	↗ Open
🚤 Boat/Canoe Ramp	▭ SC State Park	↘ Seasonal
🏕️ Camping	▭ NC State Park	↖ US Highway
🏠 Fishing Access	▭ Wildlife Management Area	↗ State Primary Highway
🥾 Hiking Trail	▭ No Trespassing	↘ Secondary Highway
📍 Kiosk Location	▭ County Boundary	↖ Road/Street
👁️ Overlook	⊙ Other	↗ Contour Interval
📍 Point of Interest	🔥 Fire Station	↘ 200 Feet
💧 Waterfall	⚡ Power line	↖ 50 Feet
⬆️ Elevation Point	💧 Water Body	
⬆️ Mountain/Ridge/Gap		

Cartographic revisions 08/2017 by Tanner Arrington.  
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