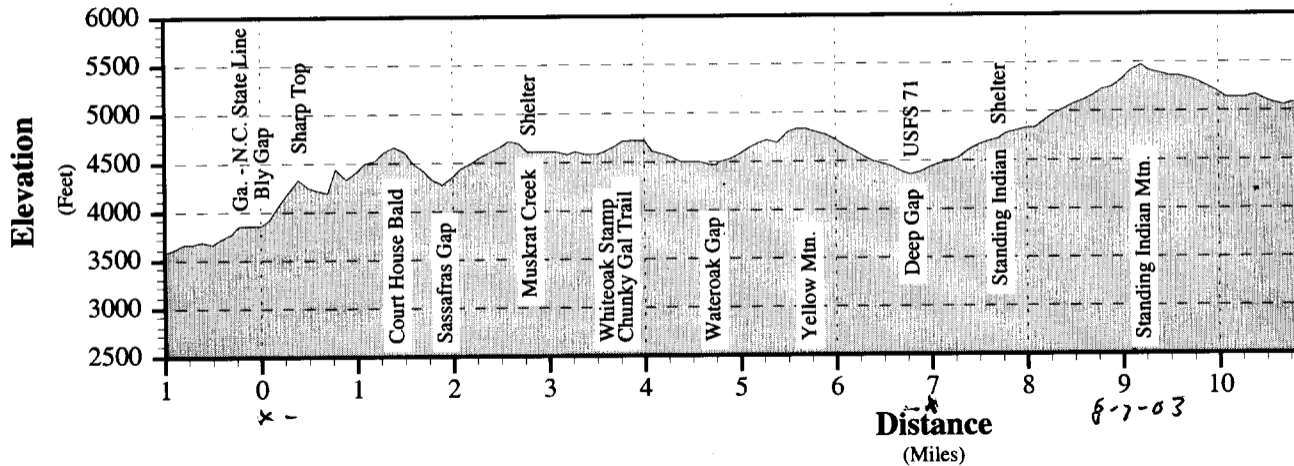
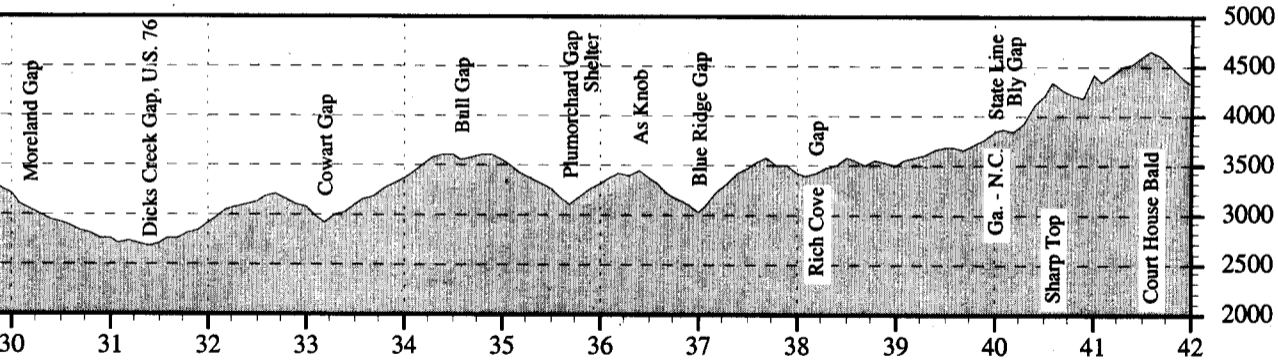


Elevation Profile





Vertical exaggeration: 5.28

Deep Gap to Bly Gap

Section Ten

6.8 Miles

Brief Description of Section

This section starts at Deep Gap (4,341 feet) and follows the crest of the Blue Ridge, with views to the west of Shooting Creek Valley and Lake Chatuge. In this section, the Trail completes a long curve around the headwaters of the Tallulah River and heads south into Georgia. The Trail climbs steeply over Courthouse Bald from Sassafras Gap on one side and Bly Gap on the other side. This route enters and leaves the Southern Nantahala Wilderness Area twice and remains in wilderness for more than half the section.

Points of Interest

Bly Gap (3,840 feet), with its open view northwest to the Tusquittee Range, is an outstanding feature of the section, as are the views from the crest of the Blue Ridge. A half-mile trail near Muskrat Creek Shelter to Ravenrock Ridge affords an outstanding view.

Road Approaches

Deep Gap is at the end of a six-mile, one-lane gravel road, USFS 71, which leaves U.S. 64 just west of the Clay-Macon county line and five miles west of Winding Stair Gap.

There is no road approach to Bly Gap.

Maps

USFS map of Southern Nantahala Wilderness Area and Standing Indian Basin; TVA Rainbow Springs and Hightower Bald quadrangles; and ATC Nantahala National Forest map with this guide.

Shelters, Campsites, and Water

The only shelter in this section is the Muskrat Creek Shelter, 4.0 miles south of Deep Gap and 2.8 miles north of Bly Gap. Water is located at a spring behind the shelter.

Bly Gap has two springs, one on each side of the Trail, about 100 feet away. Whiteoak Stamp has water and there are a few seasonal springs and streams along this section. A fair spring is located about 400 feet south of Whiteoak Stamp on an unmarked trail.

Public Accommodations and Services

No public accommodations are available in either Deep Gap or Bly Gap.

Precautions

Several trails converge in Bly Gap, and caution must be taken to follow the A.T. To the west is a five-mile route down Eagle Fork of Shooting Creek; it begins as a worn woods road. Another trail, as indicated on the TVA Hightower Bald quadrangle, leads to Tate City on the Tallulah River *via* Fall Branch.

Trail Description, North to South

Miles	Data
0.0	The A.T. crosses a parking area at the end of USFS 71 in Deep Gap (4,341 feet), bears right into woods, and begins graded ascent of Yellow Mountain. The blue-blazed Kimsey Creek Trail on right leads 3.7 miles to Standing Indian Campground. Seasonal water is available 150 feet down the blue-blazed trail at the edge of an old camping area.
0.7	Trail switches back up rock outcrop.
1.1	Reach view to north and highest point in section.
2.1	Reach Wateroak Gap in small clearing. Trail continues up ridge.

- 3.0 Junction with blue-blazed Chunky Gal Trail on the right, which leads 5.5 miles to U.S. 64. A.T. bears left.
- 3.2 Trail crosses edge of large, grassy clearing at Whiteoak Stamp. Unreliable water to the left 400 feet on obscure trail.
- 4.0 Reach **Muskrat Creek Shelter** (left 100 feet) just before crossing small stream. This shelter has a latrine uphill to the left of the shelter. One hundred feet on A.T. beyond stream, blue-blazed trail leads right about one-half mile to outstanding cliff view on Ravenrock Ridge.
- 4.1 Just to right of Trail is view to west.
- 4.3 Cross logs over stream.
- 4.9 Reach Sassafras Gap. Begin ascent of Courthouse Bald.
- 5.4 Trail levels. Skirt top of Courthouse Bald, then begin descent.
- 5.7 Thirty feet to right is fine view into Shooting Creek Valley.
- 6.0 Trail passes through two small gaps, skirts side of Sharp Top, then resumes steep descent.
- 6.8 Reach Bly Gap (3,840 feet) in clearing with fine views to north. One spring is to right, 100 feet from edge of clearing, and a second spring is below and to left. To continue on A.T., cross clearing on top of ridge, then make sharp left at far side of clearing.

Trail Description, South to North

Miles	Data
0.0	The A.T. enters Bly Gap (3,840 feet) from the south, turns right to cross the clearing, and continues straight up the top of the ridge. Springs are located on the right before clearing, and another spring is 100 feet on left just before starting up ridge.
0.7	Trail levels, then passes through two small gaps before resuming climb.
1.1	Thirty feet to left of Trail is fine lookout into Shooting Creek Valley.
1.2	Trail levels, slabs southern side of Courthouse Bald, then descends.

- 1.9 Reach Sassafras Gap. Trail begins gentle climb.
- 2.5 Cross logs over stream.
- 2.7 Viewpoint just left of Trail.
- 2.8 Reach junction with blue-blazed trail on left, leading about a half-mile to outstanding views from cliff on Ravenrock Ridge. One hundred feet farther on A.T., cross stream, and reach **Muskrat Creek Shelter**, 100 feet right of Trail in woods. A latrine is 150 feet uphill beyond shelter.
- 3.6 Trail crosses edge of large, grassy clearing at Whiteoak Stamp. Unreliable water is to right 400 feet on obscure trail.
- 3.8 A.T. bears right at junction with blue-blazed Chunky Gal Trail, which lead 5.5 miles to U.S. 64.
- 4.7 Descend into Wateroak Gap. Trail bears slightly left across small clearing. Start gradual ascent of Yellow Mountain.
- 5.7 Reach view to north (left) and highest point in section.
- 6.1 Descend rock outcrop *via* switchbacks.
- 6.8 Reach Deep Gap parking area (4,341 feet) at end of USFS 71, six miles from U.S. 64. Seasonal water is available 150 feet down blue-blazed trail at edge of old camping area. The blue-blazed Kimsey Creek Trail, leading 3.7 miles to **Standing Indian Campground**, begins on the northwestern side of the parking area. The A.T. continues straight across the parking area.

Bly Gap, North Carolina, to Dicks Creek Gap (U.S. 76)

Section Eleven

8.8 Miles

Brief Description of Section

This is the northernmost section of the Georgia A.T. Interestingly, Bly Gap is almost exactly the same elevation as Springer Mountain, the southernmost point on the Georgia Trail. Dicks Creek Gap, on the other hand, is the lowest gap crossed by a paved road on the Georgia Trail. Consequently, the elevation gain from south to north on this section is greater than from north to south. The route is a graded trail broken by three gaps: Blue Ridge Gap (3,020 feet), Plumorchard Gap (3,090 feet), and Cowart Gap (2,920 feet).

The division between the Chattahoochee National Forest (Georgia) and the Nantahala National Forest (North Carolina) is at Bly Gap. The TVA Hightower Bald quadrangle indicates that Bly Gap is not on the Georgia-North Carolina line but is a short distance (0.2 mile) north in North Carolina.

From Bly Gap (3,840 feet), the Trail generally follows the crest, descending steadily to Blue Ridge Gap. This section of the A.T. now traverses an area that was congressionally designated as protected wilderness in 1984. This designation determines maintenance and management practices by both the Georgia A.T. Club and the U.S. Forest Service.

From Blue Ridge Gap, the Trail ascends As Knob (3,440 feet) and descends to Plumorchard Gap. It climbs up Buzzard Knob (3,760 feet), down to Cowart Gap, and then to Dicks Creek Gap and U.S. 76 (2,675 feet).

Points of Interest

The highlight of this section is Bly Gap, with its open clearing and views. The mountain range to the northwest is the Tusquitee.

The road in the distance to the right, snaking out of mountains and descending to the valley below, is U.S. 64 through Glade Gap.

Along this section are splendid views to the northeast of the imposing Standing Indian Mountain (5,498 feet), as well as of the Nantahala Mountains in North Carolina. The isolated peak of Hightower Bald (4,568 feet) is conspicuous to the northwest.

Road Approaches

Bly Gap is not accessible by car. It is 6.8 miles north, *via* the A.T., to Deep Gap, North Carolina, and USFS 71 (six miles from U.S. 64) and 3.2 miles south to an almost impassable road in Blue Ridge Gap.

Blue Ridge Gap is crossed by narrow, rutted USFS 72, which is usually passable only by four-wheel-drive vehicles. The road leads 7.5 miles through Titus, Georgia, to U.S. 76, 2.8 miles west of Dicks Creek Gap.

Dicks Creek Gap, the southern end of the section, is on U.S. 76, 18 miles west of Clayton and 11 miles east of Hiawassee, Georgia. Parking is available; fee (\$2.00 in 1998).

Maps

USGS Hightower Bald quadrangle; ATC Chattahoochee National Forest map with this guide.

Shelters, Campsites, and Water

The only shelter in this section is Plumorchard Gap Shelter, located near Plumorchard Gap, 4.5 miles south of Bly Gap. Plumorchard Gap Shelter has water, and a second spring is located 0.1 mile from the Trail to the west of Plumorchard Gap. A small stream flows through the picnic area in Dicks Creek Gap.

Public Accommodations and Supplies

No facilities are available in or near Bly Gap.

No public transportation is available in Dicks Creek Gap. The nearest reliable sources of supplies are in Hiawassee, 11 miles west,

or in Clayton, 18 miles east. The Blueberry Patch, an organic farm and hostel 3.5 miles west on U.S. 76, offers lodging, shower, laundry, and shuttle services, and some services to northbound thru-hikers February 15 to May 15 and to southbound thru-hikers on request; (706) 896-4893.

Precautions

Several trails converge in Bly Gap, and caution must be taken to follow the A.T. To the west is a five-mile route down Eagle Fork of Shooting Creek; it begins as a worn woods road. Another trail leads to the valley along the Tallulah River.

Trail Description, North to South

Miles	Data
0.0	From open ridge in Bly Gap (3,840 feet), descend slightly, and turn sharply left. Descend about 100 yards, then turn right on graded trail. A spring is located several yards to left and downhill at this turn.
0.2	Cross North Carolina-Georgia state line (unmarked) while swinging around eastern side of Rich Knob (4,132 feet).
0.7	Reach ridgetop. Follow along narrow crest. Cross over small knob through laurel and rhododendron. Just over top is rock outcrop on right with views of the valley and Hightower Bald to far right. Cross over ridge, and continue descent.
1.3	Reach level section. Obscure trail on right leads one mile to headwaters of Hightower Creek. Cross over small knob through laurel and rhododendron.
1.8	Bear to left side of ridge, skirting eastern side of Rocky Knob (3,560 feet).
2.0	Reach Rich Cove Gap (3,400 feet). Cross to right side of ridge, and continue descent.
2.6	Regain ridgetop, then descend steadily.
3.2	Reach Blue Ridge Gap (3,020 feet) and dirt road, usually impassable by two-wheel-drive automobiles. Cross road, and ascend.

- 3.8 Reach high point of As Knob (3,440 feet). Beyond, cross small knob, and cross to eastern side of ridge.
- 4.0 Begin steady descent.
- 4.5 Reach Plumorchard Gap (3,090 feet). To left (east), side trail leads approximately 0.2 mile to **Plumorchard Gap Shelter**, built in 1993 by GATC and USFS. Water may be found at the creek that crosses trail to shelter. A spring is about 600 feet from A.T. on trail to right, west, from gap. Below shelter, side trail leads down Plumorchard Creek about three miles to road at Plumorchard Church. In Plumorchard Gap, old trail to right, west, leads down Big John Creek to Pleasant Hill School at road on Hightower Creek. From Plumorchard Gap, A.T. ascends along western slope. Green moss, laurel, and rhododendron cover rocky slopes above the Trail.
- 5.3 Reach crest of ridge. Beyond, skirt left side of ridge, then right side, descending.
- 5.6 Reach Bull Gap (3,550 feet). Ascend around eastern side of Buzzard Knob (3,760 feet).
- 5.9 Begin steady descent along, or just below, narrow ridgetop.
- 7.0 Reach Cowart Gap (2,920 feet), with stand of tall pines. Old, impassable road between Hightower Creek and Holden Branch crosses Trail. Ascend on right side of ridge.
- 7.5 Cross to left side of ridge, and skirt southern side of Little Bald Knob (3,440 feet).
- 7.7 Cross over spur (3,160 feet). Water is located north on Trail and downhill about 600 feet.
- 8.4 Reach small gap. Ascend, and cross over shoulder of ridge.
- 8.8 Descend through picnic area, and reach Dicks Creek Gap (2,675 feet) and U. S. 76; parking available. To continue on A.T., cross highway.

Trail Description, South to North

Miles	Data
0.0	From highway in Dicks Creek Gap (2,675 feet), follow Trail through picnic area, and ascend along stream up ravine. Reach ridgecrest. Cross over shoulder of ridge.
0.4	At small gap, bear right from crest, skirting southern side of Little Bald Knob (3,440 feet).
1.1	Cross over spur (3,160 feet). Water is available ahead on Trail and downhill about 600 feet.
1.3	Reach ridgecrest. Beyond, descend.
1.8	Reach Cowart Gap (2,920 feet), with stand of tall pines. Located here is an abandoned crossroad. From Cowart Gap, ascend steadily on left side of ridge.
2.2	Cross to right side of ridge with knob on left. Continue below ridge, then ascend generally along narrow crest, with fine views on both sides in winter.
3.0	Pass to right of Buzzard Knob (3,760 feet). Descend.
3.2	Reach Bull Gap (3,550 feet). Ascend, bearing to left and then right side of ridgetop. Descend to left of ridge. Green moss, laurel, and rhododendron cover rocky slopes above Trail.
4.3	Reach Plumorchard Gap (3,090 feet). This is the midpoint of the section. To right (east), blue-blazed trail leads about 0.2 mile to Plumorchard Gap Shelter, with stream. A spring is approximately 600 feet from A.T. on trail to left of gap. Below shelter, trail leads down Plumorchard Creek about three miles to road at Plumorchard Church. In Plumorchard Gap, old trail to left, west, leads down Big John Creek to Pleasant Hill School at road on Hightower Creek. From Plumorchard Gap, A.T. ascends toward summit of As Knob.
4.8	Reach crest of As Knob. Descend, and ascend slightly.
5.0	Reach high point of As Knob (3,440 feet). Descend.
5.6	Reach Blue Ridge Gap (3,020 feet) and dirt road, usually impassable by two-wheel-drive automobiles. Cross road, and ascend, following wide trail.
6.2	Bear to left of ridge, swinging around western side of Wheeler Knob (3,560 feet).

- 6.8 Reach ridgecrest at Rich Cove Gap (3,400 feet). Ascend to right of ridge, skirting eastern side of Rocky Knob (3,560 feet). Regain ridgetop. Cross over small knob.
- 7.5 In wide, level section, obscure trail on left leads one mile to headwaters of Hightower Creek. Along this section in the fall and winter are views of Hightower Bald on left. Ascend, continuing along narrow ridgetop. Descend, then cross over small knob. Near top is rock outcrop on left with fine views.
- 8.1 Bear to right of ridgecrest, skirting eastern side of Rich Knob.
- 8.6 Cross Georgia-North Carolina state line (unmarked). Turn left uphill, then right at top of ridge. Spring is located several yards to the right and downhill at left turn on A.T.
- 8.8 Reach cleared crest of Bly Gap (3,840 feet). The A.T. continues along crest straight ahead and climbs towards Sharp Top. An old road crosses the gap from west to east, leading east to the Tallulah River Valley. Springs are located on the right before clearing, and another spring is 100 feet on left just before starting up ridge.