

Town of Bristol Outdoor Recreation, Gateway to the Green Mountains

Bristol is in northeastern Addison County, at the western foot of the Green Mountains. The New Haven River flows out of the mountains and through town.

Parks

- Bristol Town Green- Center of town with a fountain and bandstand. [Link for history- Bristol Core](#)
- Bristol Veterans Memorial Park- Wooded park with paths across a roaring waterfall. [Link for history- Bristol Core](#)
- Sycamore Park-A day use recreation area, swimming and fishing. [Link for history- Bristol Core](#)
- Eagle Park-handicapped access, picnic tables.

Biking/Mountain Biking

Bristol is home to many local trails as well as [Pump Track](#) located on the Bristol Rec. Field. [MOB \(Mountain Bike Bristol\)](#) organizes and sponsors trail work and group rides. Bristol is also a popular stopping point for [Sojourn](#) and [Backroads](#) bike tours.

- The Watershed Trail [link](#)
- Green Mountain Family Campground [map](#)

Water Sports

Bristol Pond is great for canoeing, Stand Up Paddleboarding, fishing, and kayaking

New Haven River is known for white water kayaking and part of the [New Haven Ledges Race](#), bringing kayakers from all over New England

- [Baldwin Creek](#)
- [Bristol Pond](#) (Winona Lake)
- [Monkton Pond](#) (Cedar Lake)
- Equipment Rentals: [Middlebury Mountaineer](#)
- Fishing Reference: [VT Fishing Guide](#)
- Fishing Regulations: [VT Fishing Regulations](#)
- VT Fish and Wildlife: [Stocking Schedule](#)

Scenic Views and Drives

- Lincoln Gap (~50 miles, 1.5hrs) [map](#)
- Champlain Valley Tour (~100 miles, 2.5hrs) [map](#)
- Covered Bridge Tour (~60 miles, 2hrs) [map](#)

Local Landmarks

- Lords Prayer Rock [link](#)
- Holley Hall [link](#)

Hiking

Bristol is the Gateway into the Green Mountains, there are many trails that surround the town and there are more to come.

- Watershed Trails [link](#)
- Bristol Trail Network – [link](#)

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Bristol Trail Network

The mission of the Bristol Trail Network is to create and maintain trails around Bristol...

... to promote access to and appreciation for natural, historical, and cultural resources in the vicinity & to support the recreation and education of residents and visitors alike.

... to foster human connections within our community, tie us all more closely to our landscape, and enhance Bristol's potential as an all-seasons destination for recreation and tourism.

Basin Street Trail

.2 Miles, Difficulty: Easy,

From the bottom of Basin Street, the trail follows the tree line at the mowed edge of a grassy area (the leach field for the town septic system) and enters the woods, then turns uphill for a short climb before meandering through the woods toward South Street. There is one other small uphill segment around a drainage culvert, then another short wooded path before coming to South Street. Please walk down the shoulder of South Street toward the bridge and cross carefully where you have a good line of sight in both directions. If you are accessing the trail from South Street, the trail begins on the east side of South Street just before the guard rail begins.

Coffin Factory Loop

.3 Miles, Difficulty: Easy,

Trail access is to the west of south street on the town side of the bridge. The trail loops gently through the foundations of the historic Bristol Manufacturing Company buildings with lovely views of (and access to) the New Haven River. Though you're barely a block from downtown Bristol, the site is immensely quiet and peaceful.

This trail is a collaboration between the Bristol Historical Society, the Bristol Conservation Commission, and the Bristol Trail Network.

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River Bend Trail

.7 Miles, Difficulty: Moderate

The River Bend trail connects the Coffin Factory Loop and the Business Park Loop. After leaving the Coffin trail, the River Bend trail takes a sharp right and climbs uphill. With the sound of the river in your ears, the trail traverses the steep hillside and follows the New Haven River downstream. Along the way you'll see some fascinating artifacts! After the bend in the river, the trail switches back and begins the climb up to the Business Park Loop behind the Fire Station. If you are accessing the River Bend trail from the Business Park Loop, the entrance is at the tree line where the Business Park Loop enters the woods on the eastern side of the loop.

This trail has many elevation changes and some steep sections with loose soils which can be very slippery. Boots are recommended.

Business Park Loop

.2 Miles, Difficulty: Easy

To access the trail, walk straight back to the tree line from Fire House Drive, and turn either right or left. Follow the tree line in either direction until you see the path into the woods. This loop is flat and welcoming with some lovely views to the south when the foliage is down.

High School Loop

.8 Miles, Difficulty: Easy,

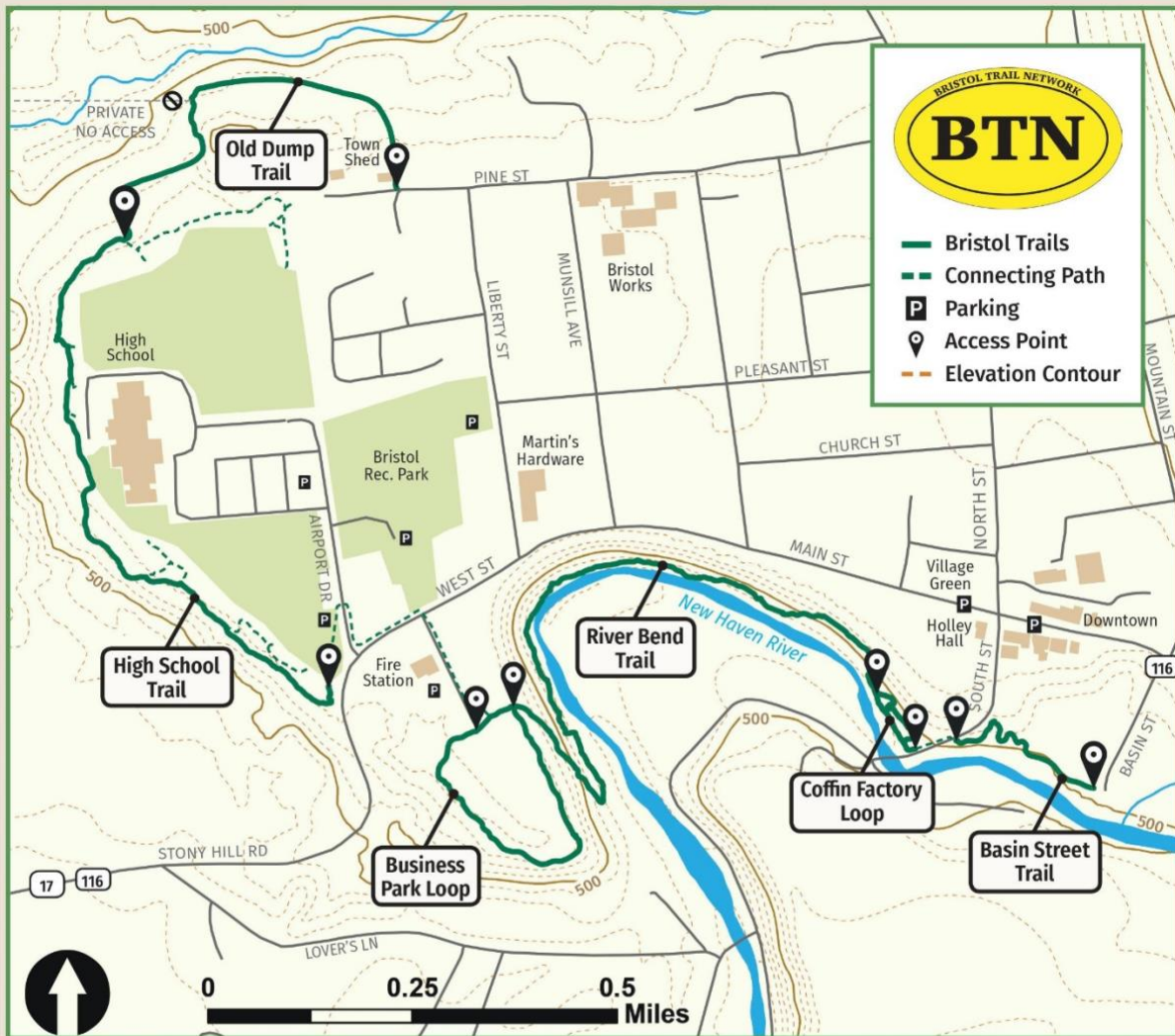
Trail follows the perimeter of the high school property from the woods at the southernmost edge of the football field around to the northeast corner of the athletic fields past the baseball diamond. Amazing westerly views.

Old Dump Trail

.4 Miles, Difficulty: Difficulty: Easy,

Trail connects Pine Street and the High School trail. To access the trail from Pine Street, turn right immediately after passing the gate to the Town Sheds, and follow the path downhill. It will turn gently to the left and then go straight for .1 mile along the outside edge of the dump, then turn sharply up and to the left into the trees briefly before jogging left again into the grassy shoulder inside the Old Dump. At the southwest corner of the Old Dump the trail turns right and connects to the High School Trail. There are some interesting historical markers along the trail.

BRISTOL TRAIL NETWORK



TRAILS AND ALLOWABLE USES

	Distance (mi)	🚶	🐕	🚴	🚲
Basin Street Trail	0.2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coffin Factory Loop	0.1	✓	✓	✗	✗
River Bend Trail	0.7	✓	✓	✗	✗
Business Park Loop	0.4	✓	✓	✓	✓
High School Trail	0.6	✓	✓	✓	✓
Old Dump Trail	0.4	✓	✓	✓	✓

PLEASE RESPECT THE LAND AND THE LANDOWNER

- Stay on the trail at all times
- Clean up after your pet
- No motorized vehicles

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The Watershed Center

Round trip hiking distance: Up to 4 miles

Difficulty: Easy

The Watershed Center is a non-profit corporation supported by local citizens. It was founded in 1995 to promote conservation and stewardship of the land. TWC provides public access to over 1,000 acres of healthy, beautiful, productive land – the 664-acre Waterworks Property, the 94-acre Lost Pond Forest, the 194-acre Middle Forest, the 50-acre Merritt Heights, and the four-acre Edith Stock Community Forest in Bristol Village. Enjoy the land!

Directions:

The public access to the Waterworks property as well as the Lost Pond and Middle forests is on Plank road in Bristol. The parking lot is located 3.4 miles west on Plank Road from North Street in Bristol Village.

The address of the parking area is: 4783 Plank Road.

The parking area is limited, so please carpool when possible. Please do not park on Plank Rd.

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Sycamore Park

Round trip hiking distance: >1 mile
Difficulty: Easy

Sycamore Park is located on a prominent meander bend of the New Haven River. The park property includes 8.4 acres and was acquired as part of an agreement between the Town of Bristol and the Federal Emergency Management Agency after a summer flood ravaged the area in 1998. Under the terms of this agreement, Sycamore Park will remain forever as a natural area.

Sycamore Park is currently managed as a day-use recreation area through the collaborative efforts of the Bristol Selectboard, Bristol Recreation Department and the Bristol Conservation Commission. It was named in 2004 for the vigorous growth of sycamore trees on the property, which are rarely found in abundance this far north.

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Sycamore Park Interpretive Sites



Site Marker Base photograph dated 2003

Visit the Stream Team website, hosted by Mt. Abraham High School:
http://www.mtabe.k12.vt.us/enviro_website/enviro/index.html

Print additional copies of this brochure at the Bristol Conservation Commission website:
<http://users.gmavt.net/vim/BCC/>

4 Forming a New Floodplain

Walk to the river's edge from the site marker (follow the path through the **Japanese Knotweed**). Streambank armoring (**rip-rap**) was installed on the opposite bank following floods of the mid-1970s, to protect the fields beyond and attempt to keep the river in a fixed position. During the flood of 1998, this rip-rap was outflanked by the raging flood waters. (Look for angular boulders submerged in the middle of the channel). In recent years the channel has become wider and shallower. Flow rates have decreased, and sediment has deposited to create a **mid-channel bar**, which causes flows to split and the channel to widen even more. Over time, the river will choose a single flow path and the deposited sediment will become vegetated, forming a new floodplain at a lower elevation than the park lands. The new floodplain can be accessed more frequently by the New Haven River to dissipate the high scour energy of floods. This is also an area of active deposition where the river can store sediments in the process of forming the new floodplain.

1 1998 Flood Chute

Site 1 overlooks a 500-foot long depression in the floodplain scoured by the New Haven River during the flood of June 1998 (**flood chute**). One of the ten homes in Palmer's Court was located on this spot prior to the flood. Compare this location on the 2003 photograph above with the same position on the 1995 photograph on the reverse side of this brochure.

5 Bankfull Channel

The bankfull channel is the typical high-water condition that occurs on average once every one to two years—usually in the spring of the year. Two markers have been placed at Site 5. 5A is located near the edge of the bankfull channel that existed in 1995 when the river was located further to the northeast. 5B is installed at the current bankfull channel (2009). These two markers help to demonstrate how far the channel has shifted in those 14 years.



2 Floodplain Forest

To the north and east of Site 2 is a pocket of mature floodplain forest which includes sugar maple, white ash, and basswood, with a diverse understory layer dominated by ostrich fern. These are tree and plant species that would be expected in other areas of the park, if these lands had not been previously cleared for agriculture and residential use. This natural community ideally relies on occasional overbank flooding from the river to supply fine sediments and organic materials that support development of rich, frequently flooded soils. Due, in part, to channel management and land use changes in the upstream watershed that have occurred over several decades, the river channel has cut downward, losing some connection to the surrounding floodplain. As a consequence, the river only rarely accesses this floodplain—it now takes a large event like the flood of 1998.



3 Tributary Confluence

Walk out to the river's edge from the site marker. At typical high-water conditions which are achieved once every year to two years (**bankfull**), water will reach nearly up to the site marker. At low water you can walk out onto the beach of sediments. Note the size of pebbles carried by the river and deposited on the inside of this bend in the channel, which is called a **point bar**. This point bar has grown considerably



since the 1998 flood as the channel shifts to the east. Sediment is coming from actively eroding areas upstream of the park. On the opposite side of the channel, note the underwater plume of sediments carried into the New Haven River by the Notch Brook tributary. Upstream land clearing, removal of buffers, and beaver activities in the Notch Brook watershed contribute to sediment loading at this tributary confluence.

6 A Shifting Channel

Site 6 is above normal flood stage and provides a relatively protected vantage point from which to observe this changing river channel. Revisit this site in different seasons, at different flow stages of the river, and through the years, to see how the landscape and the riverscape changes!

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Sunset Ledge

Round trip hiking distance: 2 miles

Difficulty: Easy

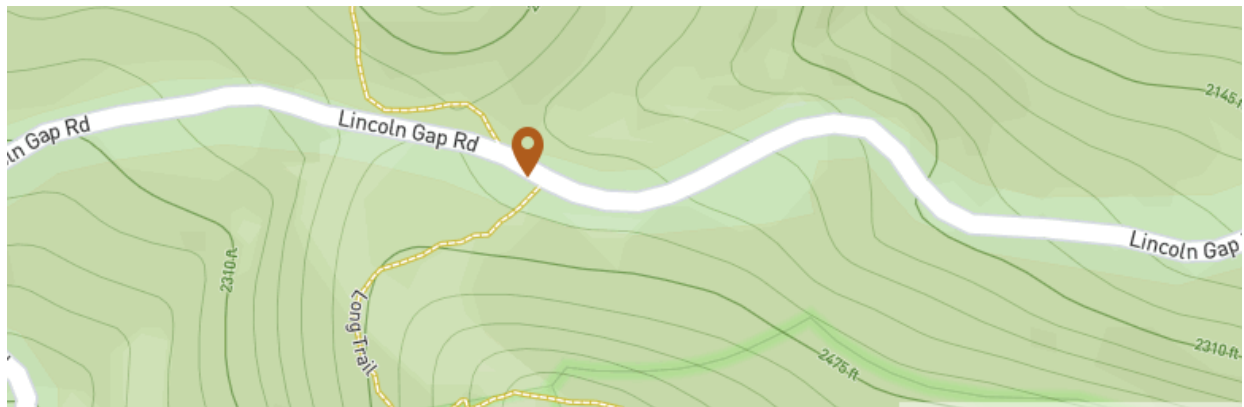
An excellent short hike to a dramatic spot. A well-established trail climbs a total of 500 feet over the course of 1 mile. Viewpoints include impressive vistas of Lake Champlain, the nearby countryside and The Adirondacks.

Directions: Drive to Lincoln Gap Rd, park and walk South along the Long Trail.

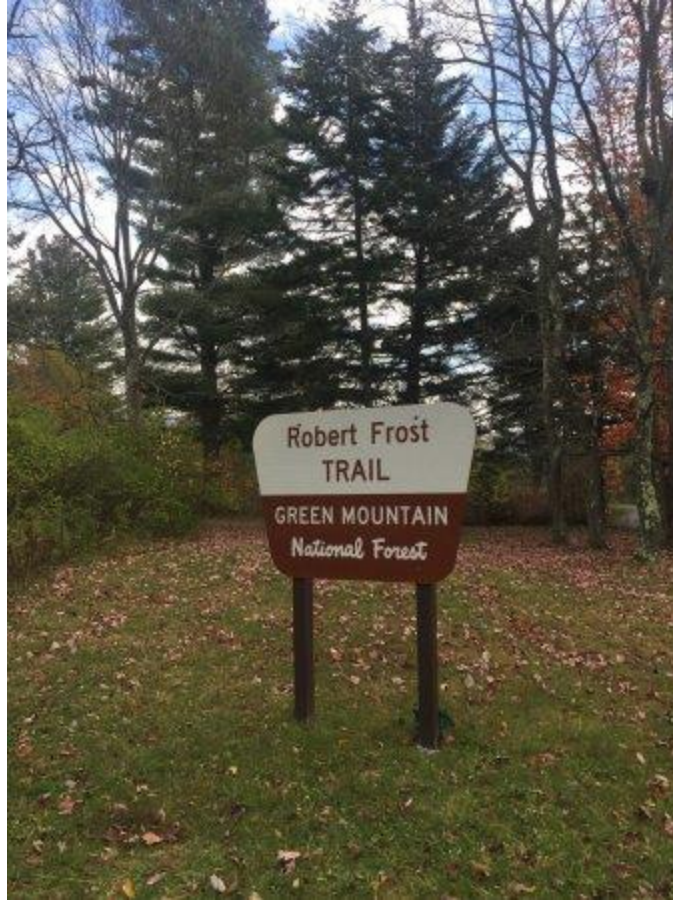
Address: Lincoln Gap Road, Warren, VT 05674

Latitude/Longitude: 44.095198, -72.928172

This is a summer-time activity, as the Lincoln Gap Road is closed from late October till mid May.



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Robert Frost Trail

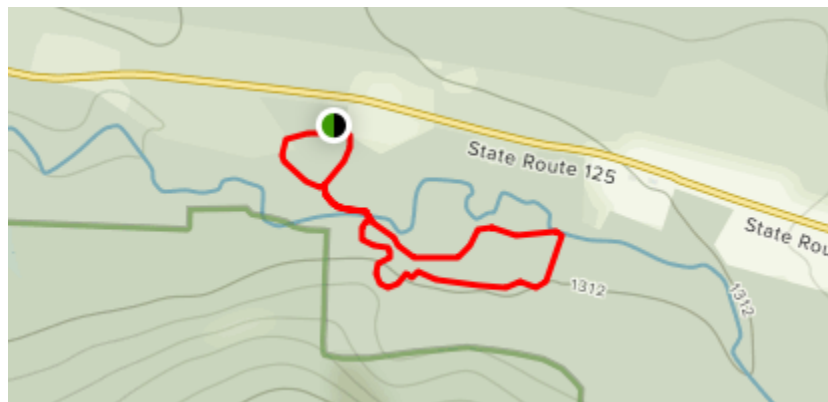
Round trip hiking distance: 1 mile

Difficulty: Easy

This is an easy one mile stroll through the beautiful fields and woods of the Breadloaf wilderness area.

The loop trail is punctuated with information on local flora and poems by Robert Frost.

Directions from Ripton, VT: Travel east 2.1 miles along the very scenic SR 125. There is a parking area on the south side of the road.



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Silent Cliff Trail

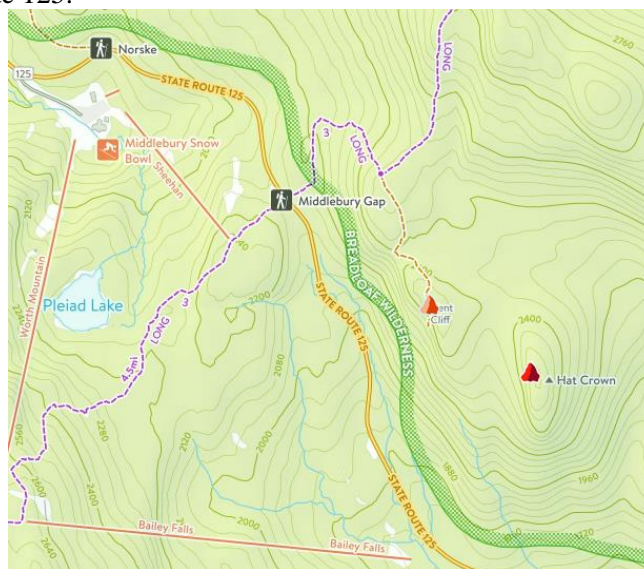
Round trip hiking distance: 1.6 mile

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

From Middlebury Gap, follow the Long Trail north into the Breadloaf Wilderness as it rises quickly to the junction with the Silent Cliff Trail at 0.4 miles. Take the spur trail east for 0.4 miles to Silent Cliff and Silent Cave. From the Cliffs there are good views south of Middlebury Gap, Monastery Gap, and the Green Mountains.

Directions:

From Middlebury, follow Route 7 south to the junction with Route 125. Follow Route 125 east for 9.2 miles to the top of Middlebury Gap. Trailhead parking is located on the right. The Long Trail north is on the opposite side of Route 125.



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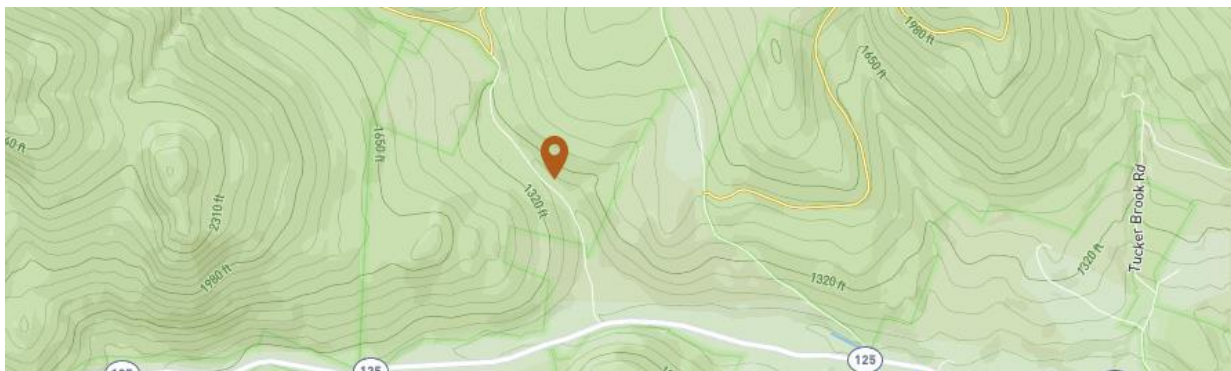
Texas Falls

Round trip hiking distance: 1.2 mile Loop Trail

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

Texas Falls is an impressive waterfall with a nice picnic area and self-guided nature trails on well-maintained paths.

Directions: From Middlebury, take Rt. 125 to Texas Falls Rd, 3 miles east of Middlebury Gap. Drive north .5 miles to a parking area.



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Falls of Lana

Round trip hiking distance: ~1 mile

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

The Falls of Lana have carved a gorge horizontally through the face of a cliff, with mist rising up from its several cascades. Venture into its secluded swimming holes, and complete your trip with a moderate walk up a babbling brook to a beautiful high-mountain lake, dotted with private backcountry campsites.

Falls of Lana Hiking Trail is 0.4 miles long and begins at 596 feet altitude. Traveling the entire trail is 0.8 miles with a total elevation gain of 374 feet.

