

# Hike Description Black Mountain (north to south):

This portion of the Grassy Cove Segment is a Registered State Natural Area that invites exploration. Its extensive rock formations and intensive vistas to the east have led to extensive overuse. Please tread carefully and help preserve Black Mountain.

From the trailhead parking area, on top of Black Mountain follow the paved path to the Cumberland Trail intersection, the Cumberland Trail has a white 2x6 blaze on trees to mark the trail. Take a right to hike the Cumberland Trail and come to the spring house. At the spring house, take a right going up the steps, passing the trail kiosks, and climbing to the crest of Black Mountain.

At the top of the slope, a side trail to the left takes hikers out to a spectacular overlook of Grassy Cove. The CT continues to the right. The trail gently follows the top of the mountain and turns to the left through a rock gateway down through the bluffs. In the winter months, watch for ice here. Upon descending, the hiker finds oneself among rising narrow bluffs with numerous passageways. Exit the bluffs and continue 0.5 miles over recovered fields and down to the campsite.

At the campsite, the trail goes left around the campsite down the west slope of Black Mountain. Many wonderful flowers can be viewed in the spring time in this mainly hardwood forested slope.

After descending Black Mountain, the trail rejoins an old roadbed and turns right onto the road. This road will take the hiker to the opening of Windless Cave (GPS: N35 52.106 W84 54.534).

The cave is the official end of this section of the Cumberland Trail at this time. Future construction will extend the trail south to Highway 68.

Unofficially, after the cave, the old trail route took the hiker on ATV roads out to the Cox Valley road walk and onto Hwy 68 trailhead. This is private property and the property has been sold since the original verbal agreement was obtained to use this road as a trail. The new property owners have not been contacted for permission to walk this road. However, many hikers still hike this ATV road out to Cox Valley road. Old blazing is still visible to guide the hiker out to Cox Valley Road. At Cox Valley Road turn left to Hwy 68.

**Black Mtn Loop Description:** This 1.7 mile recently constructed loop provides an easy hike around the top of the Black Mtn. Recreation Area with access to two overlooks, and passage for the Cumberland Trail. Traditionally, many visitors make the short jaunt to the Black Mtn. Southern Overlook, considered to be the best view of the Cumberland Plateau and the Tennessee Ridge and Valley system beyond, but consider taking a bit of time to hike the Black Mtn. Loop Trail. Recently, the American Medical Association recommended everyone to add 2,000 steps to their daily routine to fight our growing girth. Well, guess what - the loop will add about 3,000 steps to your day.

To hike the loop begin at the Black Mtn. Parking Facility and walk the paved ADA connector trail 700 feet back across the road and on to the Spring House. Here lie the ruins of two homes built by the Gill Family around 1900. These homes were abandoned in 1933 upon Mr. Gill's death and the property was subsequently donated to the First United Methodist Church. At the Spring House quickly pick up the Black Mtn. Loop Trail and Cumberland Trail up the stairs on your right and hike 0.2 miles to a left turn leading to the Black Mtn. Southern Overlook. On a crisp day the hiker will see White's Creek breaking through the Plateau on your left, Watts Bar Lake just beyond the Plateau, and the Smoky Mountains rising in the background. At your feet lies Little Cove with Grassy Cove, ringed by Brady and Bear Den Mountains to your far right

Now retrace your steps to the main trail and take a left. In just another 0.2 miles you will reach the steps leading down and out for the Cumberland Trail, just continue to the right and another .4 miles brings you to the Black Mtn. North Overlook containing glimpses of the Crab Orchard Valley, with the best views found in the winter months. Retrace your steps and continue on the loop 0.5 miles back to the springhouse through an oak-hickory forest. This area was ravaged by fire in 2000. Notice the heavy density of sprouting Sassafras and the Mountain Laurel - all indicative of the resilience of Tennessee's forests. You have now walked 3,000 steps. Congratulations.

**Attention Overnight campers!** You are **REQUIRED** to register to camp after sunset. There is no fee. The information you provide will help with security. Visit [www.cumberlandtrail.org](http://www.cumberlandtrail.org) and click on the Grassy Cove link to register online. A confirmation code will be supplied upon submission of the online form. Please be prepared to supply this code to the Park Ranger if asked. To register by phone or for questions, please call 423-566-2253. Almost all cellular phones will reach this area.

To preserve this natural and scenic area, please practice Leave No Trace principles.

## Directions to Trailheads

To reach the Black Mountain trailhead, travel 4.2 miles on Hwy. 68 from the Hwy. 68/127 intersection east of Crossville, TN, to a left on Cox Valley Road. Take Cox Valley Road 0.4 miles to the trailhead on the right. Parking for several cars is available approximately 300 yards past the trailhead at the intersection of Cox Valley Road and Old Grassy Cove Road. From here shuttle to the top of Black Mountain by continuing 3 miles on Cox Valley Road to a right on Haley Cove Road. There is a playground on your immediate left. Take Haley Cove Road 1 mile to a right on Battown Road and travel 0.9 miles up to a four-way intersection. Take the immediate left at the Cumberland Trail State Park sign and proceed 3 miles up the narrow and steep paved Black Mountain Road to a the paved trailhead parking area on the right. Parking is ample and the ADA connector trail begins on the west side of the parking area. Follow the paved connector trail 700 feet and it connects to the Cumberland Trail just 150 feet west.

