

Local Trails



[Buchanan Downtown Walking Tour](#)

[All Trails](#)

Remember when you hike - Watch the Weather, Hydrate, Team Up, Dress Appropriately, Keep in Contact, Leave No Trace

Appalachian Trail – The Appalachian Trail crosses Route 43 just 4 miles from Buchanan’s historic Main Street. The Appalachian Trail extends more than 2,180 miles from Main to Georgia with a protected 250,000 acre greenway. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy was instrumental in the passage of the federal legislation that designated the A.T. as America’s first national scenic trail in 1968.

The entrance to the Appalachian Trail along Route 43 is just below the ramp onto the Blue Ridge Parkway and offers limited parking. The Town is a rest stop and recharging point for hikers along the trail who use the Town’s U.S. Post Office, Buchanan Library, various shops and restaurants as well as occasionally setting up tents overnight at private homes willing to share accommodations. Often town residents offer shuttle service to hikers to and from the trail. The U.S. Post Office on Main Street has a Hiker Box with food items available to hikers.

[Appalachian Trail Website](#)



Apple Orchard Falls– Apple Orchard Falls is one of Virginia’s tallest and most spectacular waterfalls. Singing streams, dancing down cascades, huge boulders, and thick stands of forest surround stunning vistas and towering bluff lines. The 7.5-mile loop trail is moderately difficult.

Apple Orchard Mountain was named for the nature of the dominant northern red oak forests on its summits and ridges. The weather is so severe on the upper

elevations of the mountain that the trees have taken on a stunted appearance, as if they have been trimmed and pruned over the decades. The Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway pass within a short distance of the top of Apple Orchard Mountain.

Apple Orchard Falls is a moderately difficult, 7.5-mile hike but offers a great waterfall at the end as a reward.

Directions – The Apple Orchard Falls-Cornelius Creek loop is east of Buchanan in the Jefferson National Forest along the western side of the Blue Ridge below the Parkway. Best trailhead access is from the end of Forest Road 59 or from Sunset Field Overlook at milepost 78.7 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. To get to the FR 59 trailhead, take exit 168 off I-81 just north of Buchanan, follow Route 614 just over 3 miles through Arcadia, then turn left at the North Creek Campground sign onto FR 59. In about 4 miles, past the campground, the road will end at a trailhead. The Apple Orchard Falls Trail leads left out of here; the Cornelius Creek Trail is to the right. The Apple Orchard Falls-Cornelius Creek loop is east of Buchanan in the Jefferson National Forest along the western side of the Blue Ridge below the Parkway. Best trailhead

Spec Mine Trail – Found at milepost 96 on Blue Ridge Parkway – This trail circles around Iron Mine Hollow and Spec Mines Branch, above the 19th-century Spec Mines, as it drops 1,300 feet in 2.8 miles to VA 645. Along the way, it passes a large pine tree the Forest Service has posted as a “designated wildlife tree,” not to be cut.

The upper end of Spec Mines Trail is on the western edge of the Blue Ridge Parkway 0.1 mile south of the Montvale Overlook, 50



yards south of milepost 96, and across the parkway from the A.T., 1.7 miles north of Black Horse Gap. The lower trailhead, south of Lithia between Buchanan and Troutville, can be reached by turning east off VA 640 onto VA 645. After 0.4 mile on VA 645, opposite the second (smaller) of two ponds, look for trail sign on right. This is a popular trail for mountain bikers.

Directions – This ride’s general location is 15 miles southwest of Buchanan and just south of Black Horse Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Scenery includes forest roads surrounded by dense woods and awesome views from the Blue Ridge Parkway. This loop will take you across the Blue Ridge Parkway on Old Sweet Springs Road at Black Horse Gap. Almost half of this ride follows the gravel and hard-packed, wide Glenwood Horse Trail, and the rest traverses the Blue Ridge Parkway. Be sure to yield the right of way to horses. Although there are some decent ups and downs, the 21-mile distance is the only limiting factor for less-experienced riders.

Glenwood Horse Trail – Conveniently located at 3022 Pico Road, this trail is just minutes away from downtown Buchanan by way of Parkway Drive. You may also access this trail from the Blue Ridge Parkway at Bobletts Gap. Drop in behind the picnic table at the Bobletts Gap parking lot onto a short trail that takes you to Boblett’s Gap fireroad, also known as Chair Rock Road. Turn right, dropping down exactly 1 mile on a sometimes rocky, sometimes water-holed blast of a 5% downhill.

The singletrack is a hard right that cuts back, and straight up. Keep a close eye out, as the trail is hard to see following a left hand sweeper. Watch your odometer too, more than 1 mile exactly and you missed it. Mineshaft starts as a short, steep 25% gradient before reaching the shelf trail that becomes much more reasonable.

For 5 miles, enjoy a singletrack experience like no other, passing iron ore hollers with mineshafts and holes visible when you hike up the ore piles in certain crevasses of ancient Appalachian mountains.

Supporting Documents

Buchanan Downtown Walking Tour 374.02 KB