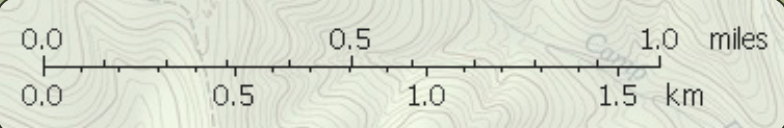


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Green Knob Lookout Tower - Pisgah National Forest, NC

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
5.9 mls	★	N/A	★	★	N/A
Hiking Time: 3 hours and 30 minutes with 50 minutes of breaks Elev. Gain: 2,070 ft Parking: Park at the hikers lot at the entrance of the Black Mountain Campground. 35.75120, -82.22012					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)

By Trail Contributor: [Zach Robbins](#)



The picturesque lookout tower on Green Knob provides stunning views of the Black Mountains. This hike follows the Green Knob Trail, which begins at the Black Mountain Campground and climbs over 2,000 feet along Lost Cove Ridge to reach the summit. While most of the hikers in this area will be trudging up to Mt. Mitchell, you might have this trail to yourself. Before you reach the summit you'll pass by a nice viewpoint of the South Toe River Valley. The tower lies just south of the summit where the exact elevation is

unknown, just above 5,080 ft. Built in 1931, this is one of the nicer lookout towers in the state. Unfortunately, the top cab is locked unless you are on a guided hike. You can still climb the stairs to get great views of the Hickory Nut and Swannanoa Mountains to the south, Graybeard Mountain and Pinnacle to the west, and the Black Mountains dominating the northwest horizon.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Park at the hikers lot at the entrance of the Black Mountain Campground before the bridge over the South Toe River. The trails begin beside the information board. Initially you will follow the Green Knob Trail [182] (*white blaze*), River Loop Trail [200] (*yellow blaze*), and Mountains-to-Sea Trail [440] (*white blaze*).
- ▶ **Mile 0.3** – At a Y-junction turn right following the Green Knob Trail and River Loop Trail. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail turns left.
- ▶ **Mile 0.4** – Turn left at a Y-junction following the Green Knob Trail (*white blaze*). The River Loop Trail turns right. The next 2.5 miles is a continuous climb up Lost Cove Ridge.
- ▶ **Mile 2.3** – Begin following a narrow section of the ridge with views to the west.
- ▶ **Mile 2.8** – Pass by a viewpoint north of the mountains around the South Toe River Valley. The Black Mountains rise thousands of feet above the valley to the west. In the northern distance are the Roan Highlands, with Grandfather Mountain on the far right.
- ▶ **Mile 2.85** – Turn right at a T-junction on the short summit trail. The Green Knob Trail continues left dropping down to the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- ▶ **Mile 2.9** – Reach the lookout tower near the summit of Green Knob (5,060 feet). (The true summit is a few hundred feet to the north hidden in the trees.) The 21-foot lookout tower was built in 1931 and was rehabilitated in 1996. Although the door to the top cab is locked, you can still climb the stairs to get wonderful views of the Black Mountains and surrounding peaks. To the south you can see the Hickory Nut and Swannanoa Mountains. Graybeard Mountain and Pinnacle rise above the Blue Ridge Parkway to the southwest, with the Great Craggy Mountains poking up behind. Immediately west are the southern Black Mountains across the South Toe River Gorge. Mt. Mitchell, the tallest peak in the east, is the broad peak covered in dark conifer forests. The northern Black Mountains dominate the northwest horizon. You can see Celo Knob, the northernmost peak, from this vantage point.
- ▶ **Mile 5.9** – Hike ends at the Black Mountain Campground.