



Pilot Mountain - Pisgah National Forest, NC

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
5.0 mls	4	N/A	5	2	4
Hiking Time: 3 hours and 15 minutes with 50 minutes of breaks Elev. Gain: 1,810 ft Parking: Parking at Gloucester Gap. 35.26591, -82.84692					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)

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Pilot Mountain is a notable landmark on the Art Loeb Trail in Pisgah National Forest. Its steep, conical summit rises high above the surroundings and can be seen from many viewpoints along the Blue Ridge Parkway and in the Pisgah Ranger District. You can access the peak and make a loop using the Art Loeb Trail and FR 229 from Gloucester Gap on FR 475. Do not be fooled by the short distance, the hike to the 5,095-foot summit climbs over 1,800 feet in 2 miles. Pilot Mountain, the site of a former lookout tower, has open views southeast of Looking

Glass Rock and north and west of the Great Balsam Mountains above the Blue Ridge Parkway. The ALT continues north into Deep Gap, where a shelter and spring welcome weekend campers. From Deep Gap you can take FR 229 back to Gloucester Gap or explore deeper into the forest.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Follow the Art Loeb Trail [146] (*white blaze*) north from Gloucester Gap. The ALT climbs switchbacks through open, deciduous forests.
- ▶ **Mile 0.4** – Cross FR 229.
- ▶ **Mile 0.5** – The ALT crosses FR 229 a second time.
- ▶ **Mile 0.7** – Pass by a dry campsite in open woods on the left side of the trail. From here the climb gets tougher as it plows straight uphill using tight switchbacks.
- ▶ **Mile 1.0** – On the left side of the trail are rock outcrops with a view west. After this view the trail begins climbing through narrow tunnels of rhododendron, mountain laurel, and rare pinkshell azalea.
- ▶ **Mile 1.4** – The ALT passes through a saddle with nice campsites. An overgrown forest road on the right leads down to FR 229.
- ▶ **Mile 1.9** – Reach the narrow summit of Pilot Mountain (5,095 feet). From the heath bald you have a good view east of Looking Glass Rock and surrounding plutons, and outstanding views west and north of the Great Balsam Mountains. Beyond the summit the ALT descends moderately (except for the final steep section), towards Deep Gap through sparse forest and pinkshell azalea.

(You can also shorten this hike by turning around at Pilot Mountain on the ALT, but this very steep descent may be tough on the legs for some hikers.)

- ▶ **Mile 2.5** – The Art Loeb Trail passes through Deep Gap below Sassafras Knob. If you continue straight to the left you'll pass by the Deep Gap Shelter. A water source is close to the shelter. Both Deep Gap and the shelter are excellent for camping. To hike back to Gloucester Gap, make a hard right following FR 229 south.
- ▶ **Mile 2.8** – Y-junction with FR 229C on the left.
- ▶ **Mile 3.5** – Y-junction with FR 229B on the left. You will likely hear Laurel Fork roaring far below.
- ▶ **Mile 4.4** – Turn left on the Art Loeb Trail descending to Gloucester Gap.
- ▶ **Mile 5.0** – Hike ends at Gloucester Gap.