



Apple Orchard Falls - JNF, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
5.6 mls					
Hiking Time:	4.5 hrs plus a half hour for lunch				
Elev. Gain:	1,680 ft				
Parking:	Park at the end of FS59 and Apple Orchard Falls trailhead. You can also park on the Blue Ridge Parkway at Sunset Field.				

Are you looking for a hike with lots of streams? If so, this is a hike you should do, and is one of the most popular hikes in the Jefferson N.F. You will either be right next to streams or within sight of a stream for about 90% of this hike. The highlight of the trail is the 200' Apple Orchard Falls with a very nice viewing area constructed by the Forest Service in 2000. Shane "The Mountain Lab" joined us on this hike and true to Lab nature, he was wet most of the trip!!

There are some great camping spots within the first mile of the trail and a really good one near the end of the Cornelius Creek Trail just prior to the parking area. For such a short hike it has some of the best stream views of any hikes we have done in Virginia.

From the parking area take the bridge to the left of the kiosk to begin the hike on the blue blazed Apple Orchard Falls (AOF) Trail. In 0.2 miles you will come to an intersection, bear right and stay on the AOF Trail. About 1.0 mile later you will arrive at two bridges and another campsite, take the 2nd one over the creek continuing up on the AOF trail. The next 0.75 miles starts climbing more steeply until you reach Apple Orchard Falls. You will want to stop here and have lunch and get some good photos of the Falls.

Beyond the Falls you will start to climb a series of wooden stairs coming very quickly to the only overlook with a wooden bench of the whole circuit, and just beyond that another small waterfall. Go another 0.3 miles to the intersection of the Apple Orchard Falls Road (a seeded fire road) and take a right. Follow it 1.0 mile to the blue blazed Cornelius Creek Trail. The Fire Road bears to the right but stay straight to go on the Cornelius Creek Trail.

Follow the Cornelius Creek Trail for 2.2 miles to the parking area. The trail follows Cornelius Creek and will include two crossings. The creek was flowing well on our trip and made for difficult crossings and some wet feet. There are also some very good swimming holes on the way down. There are multiple places you will want to stop and take photos of the creek flowing over the rocks.

Warning: Be careful of the plentiful stinging nettles near the creeks and ticks on the fire road.

Note: An alternative parking area if all you only want to see the Falls is at Sunset Field, near Milepost 78.4 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It is approximately 1.5 miles down to the Falls from Sunset Field.