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Florence Nature Preserve, NC

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
5.8 mls	2	2	2	3	N/A
Hiking Time: 3 hours with 30 minutes of breaks Elev. Gain: 1,560 ft Parking: Park at the Florence Nature Preserve parking area on U.S. 74A. 35.47340, -82.33229					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



By Trail Contributor: Zach Robbins_____

Little Pisgah Mountain lacks the recognition of neighboring sights in the Hickory Nut Gorge but it may have the best view of them all. Tucked behind the Florence Nature Preserve, the mountain lies outside of an official trail system. It's probably why most people have no idea it is an easy, albeit long road walk beyond the preserve. At the summit you'll be treated to glorious 270° views north, east, and south of the rugged Hickory Nut Gorge and two of the tallest mountain ranges in North Carolina.

If you decide to forego the long hike and explore the nature preserve, you'll still have a nice view from Rattlesnake Knob and see a surprisingly cool chute waterfall. Either way this is a spot worth checking out and is part of the push to expand hiking opportunities in the Hickory Nut Gorge.

Note - The trails in the Florence Nature Preserve have no official names and are simply referred to by their blaze color. There are multiple trails with the same color so it is recommended to bring the trail map on your hike

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Hike starts at the Florence Nature Preserve parking area on U.S. 74A. Take the FNP Access Trail (*Yellow Trail*) which switchbacks quickly above the parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 0.9** – Rock hop a tributary to Hickory Creek entering the Florence Nature Preserve. The FNP Yellow Trail ends at a T-junction with the Blue Trail. Turn right heading north along the stream.
- ▶ **Mile 1.1** – Small cascade beside the trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.3** – T-junction with the Yellow Trail on the left, continue straight on the Blue Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.7** – T-junction with the White Trail on the left, continue straight on the Blue Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.8** – T-junction with the Orange Trail (to Little Pisgah Point overlook) on the right. Turn right on the Orange Trail for the optional out-and-back to Little Pisgah Point.
- ▶ **Mile 2.0** – Orange Trail ends at Little Pisgah Point, a small hill covered in large boulders. Turn around to continue hiking on the Blue Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 2.3** – Veer right onto the Blue Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 2.4** – After crossing wide bridge turn left at a T-junction to begin the Red Trail. The Blue Trail continues straight to Little Pisgah Rd, which you can use to access the Orange Trail and Yellow Trail on the northwest parcel of the preserve.
- ▶ **Mile 2.7** – Four-way intersection with the White Trail, continue hiking on the Red Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 3.3** – Y-junction with the Orange Trail. Turn left for a quick out-and-back to Rattlesnake Knob.
- ▶ **Mile 3.4** – Orange Trail ends at Rattlesnake Knob, a series of rock outcrops with a nice view of the V-notched Hickory Nut Gap. Head back to the junction with the Red Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 3.6** – Turn left on the Red Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 3.9** – A forest road splits right off the Red Trail. Beyond this junction the Red Trail follows a forest road track beside private houses.
- ▶ **Mile 4.3** – Red Trail ends at the Blue Trail while the forest road curves right. Veer left following the Blue Trail. The Blue Trail climbs up and down multiple drainage divides separating tributaries to Hickory Creek.
- ▶ **Mile 4.6** – Directly before a bridge over a tributary look down to the right for a side path to a slot waterfall. The stream flows over a wide rock before plunging through a narrow chute. The scramble path leads to the slippery base of the chute waterfall.
- ▶ **Mile 4.8** – Cross a small bridge over a tributary with a cascade upstream.
- ▶ **Mile 4.9** – Turn right on the FNP Access Trail (*Yellow Trail*).
- ▶ **Mile 5.8** – Hike ends at the Florence Nature Preserve parking on U.S. 74A.