

## Rocky Face Mountain - Taylorsville, NC

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
3.6 mls	2	N/A	4	3	1
<b>Hiking Time:</b> 2 hours and 15 minutes with 45 minutes of breaks <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 730 ft <b>Parking:</b> Park at the quarry. 35.96295, -81.12050					

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*By Trail Contributor: Zach Robbins*

Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Park is located in the south central Brushy Mountains and offers big views for its elevation and location. This park is relatively unknown and is in a region where there are few public recreational opportunities. Fortunately, Alexander County opened this park in 2012 for hiking, climbing, and camping. When you arrive it is immediately obvious why this park is popular with climbers. The old rock quarry is a fantastic backdrop for the parking area, with vertical walls rising more than 80 feet.

There are 5+ miles of trails in the park and they are relatively easy and present multiple loop opportunities with great views. The Vertical Mile Challenge Trail has a fun 350-foot climb up an open granite face similar to the climb in Stone Mountain State Park without the stairs to assist. After you reach the broad summit of the mountain the upper loop of the Hollow Brook Trail takes you by two fantastic views of the Brushy Mountains and if you're lucky, Grandfather Mountain. You'll also get to follow the rim of the quarry wall and possibly get to see some climbers in action. This is a great little park with excellent views that all types of hikers can experience.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – After admiring the walls of the rock quarry, follow the paved Walking Track towards the exit of the park. The track is a 0.3-mile loop around the wetlands at the base of the quarry. You can also follow the track closer to the quarry wall.
- ▶ **Mile 0.1** – Turn right following the Grindstone Trail (*green blaze*) and the Vertical Mile Challenge Trail (*blue blaze*). The trails follow a dirt track as you parallel the road on the right and the quarry wall on the left.
- ▶ **Mile 0.3** – Side access to Rocky Face Church Rd beside a picnic table.
- ▶ **Mile 0.5** – Stay right on the Vertical Mile Challenge Trail at a T-junction where the Grindstone Trail turns left heading uphill. On your right is the backcountry campsite for the park beside Rocky Face Branch.
- ▶ **Mile 0.6** – The Vertical Mile Challenge Trail turns left leaving the forest behind as it climbs up bare granite rock. Currently cones guide the way in addition to infrequent blazes and signs. You will climb ~350 feet in 0.3-mile. This is a steep, exposed section with no assistance and could be dangerous if the rock is wet or icy. (If conditions are bad the alternative is taking the Grindstone Trail at **mile 0.5** to reach the Hollow Brook Trail.) As you climb you will have views to the south of the rolling hills of the Yadkin Valley.
- ▶ **Mile 0.9** – The trail turns left and reenters the forest leaving the rock face behind.
- ▶ **Mile 1.0** – T-junction with the Hollow Brook Trail (*red blaze*). Turn right beginning the loop around the summit. Avoid the first obvious side path on the left, this is the former trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.2** – T-junction with the upper loop of the Hollow Brook Trail, turn right. You will return to this spot so you can hike in either direction.
- ▶ **Mile 1.5** – Picnic table with a small window view east. This viewpoint is shown on the map but is unremarkable.
- ▶ **Mile 1.6** – After swinging around the north side of the mountain the trail crosses a flat granite face beside the true summit. From here you have wide open views northwest of the largest peaks in the Brushy Mountains. Dead center with the communications tower is Pores Knob, the highest peak in the range at 2,660 feet. The Brushy Mountains continue northeast towards Wilkesboro. On the far left to the west you can see Grandfather Mountain on a clear day.
- ▶ **Mile 2.0** – Pass another massive rock face with big views southwest of the Brushy Mountains. The range continues southwest towards Lenoir and Rhodhiss Lake. On a clear day you may be able to spot the high crest of the Black Mountains in the distant southwest and Grandfather Mountain to the west.
- ▶ **Mile 2.2** – The upper loop ends at the T-junction, continue straight down the Hollow Brook Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 2.3** – Continue straight through the T-junction with the Vertical Mile Challenge Trail now following the Hollow Brook and Vertical Mile Challenge Trails west.
- ▶ **Mile 2.6** – Side path on the left to another open rock face.
- ▶ **Mile 2.8** – Continue straight through a four-way intersection with the Grindstone Trail (*green blaze*) on the left and the Prison Camp Trail (*orange blaze*) on the right.
- ▶ **Mile 3.2** – Hollow Brook Trail ends at the Buzzard Loop (*purple blaze*) at the beginning of the quarry overlook section. The loop splits here, take the left side of the loop which follows the wire fence at the edge of the cliffs. You'll pass by an overlook of the parking lot before closing the short loop.
- ▶ **Mile 3.4** – Y-junction with the Prison Camp Trail on the right.
- ▶ **Mile 3.6** – Hike ends at the parking lot.