



## Waterrock Knob – Waterrock Knob Park, Blue Ridge Parkway, NC

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
1.1 mls	2	N/A	3	1	N/A
<b>Hiking Time:</b> 40 minutes with 10 minutes of breaks <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 470 ft <b>Parking:</b> Park at the Waterrock Knob Visitors Center. 35.45985,-83.14076					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



*By Trail Contributor: Zach Robbins*

Waterrock Knob, the tallest peak in the Plott Balsam Mountains, can be reached via a short summit trail from the scenic Waterrock Knob Overlook. Located at milepost 451.2 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, this stop is located near the southern terminus of the parkway and is typically much less crowded than the popular hikes in the neighboring Great Balsam Mountains. The Waterrock Knob Visitors Center parking lot, denoted the Waterrock Knob Overlook, has outstanding views to the east and west and is a great place to take in a sunrise or sunset. The short but steep Waterrock Knob Trail climbs over 400 feet in half a mile. From the rock outcrops below the summit you'll have good views south of the Scott Creek Valley, Plott Balsam Mountains, and Cowee Mountains. This short hike is suitable for all ages, but is steep enough to make you feel like you earned the 6,292-foot summit.

**While you're here** – If you want to do some more hiking, consider the trail to Yellow Face and Blackrock Mountain. The trailhead is located at the intersection of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Waterrock Knob Rd

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Park at the Waterrock Knob Visitors Center. The massive parking lot at an elevation at 5,820 feet actually provides better views than the summit 400+ feet above, so you'll want to spend a little time walking around the perimeter. The western side of the parking lot provides panoramic views of the Great Smoky Mountains. The eastern side of the lot provides views of the Scott Creek Valley dividing the Plott Balsams from the Great Balsam Mountains. Due south Yellow Face rises to the right of a smaller knob. Waterrock Knob and Browning Knob rise immediately above the parking lot to the north.

To begin the hike, follow the Waterrock Knob Trail at the north end of the parking lot. Immediately you'll meet the Mountains-to-Sea Trail [440] (*white blaze*) heading east on the right. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail briefly follows the Waterrock Knob Trail along a paved path.

- ▶ **Mile 0.2** – Y-junction with the Mountains-to-Sea Trail on the left heading west. The paved path soon ends as the trail now climbs along a rough, dirt path.
- ▶ **Mile 0.5** – At a right curve there is a nice view east of Plott Balsam on the left and Mt. Lyn Lowry on the right. An unmarked trail turns left at a Y-junction. The main trail keeps right ascending stone steps to the summit.
- ▶ **Mile 0.55** – The trail passes over the summit of Waterrock Knob (6,292 feet), the highest peak in the Plott Balsam Mountains and 13th highest peak in the Eastern United States. Immediately after the true summit the trail ends at a series of rock outcrops with southern views. The headwaters of North Fork Scott Creek begin directly below the summit. The parkway winds around the Plott Balsam Mountains to the east, with the high peaks of the Great Balsam Mountains rising high above Scott Creek and Balsam Gap.
- ▶ **Mile 1.1** – Hike ends at the Waterrock Knob Visitors Center parking lot.