

CATALOOCHEE RANCH

Southern Section Trails

This map is composed of trails on the Southern Section of Cataloochee Ranch:

Bunchberry | Meadow Loop  
Moody Top | Pond Loop  
Salamander Falls Loop

- Hikers Checklist:
- Wear suitable clothing, especially shoes or boots to support your ankles.
  - Bring rain gear. Even when skies look clear, weather can change quickly in the Smokies.
  - Bring this map or a field guide to the area.
  - Carry a mobile phone. There is limited reception.
  - Bring enough water and snacks.
  - Stay on established trails.
  - Remember to close any gates you open.

BUNCHBERRY

.72 miles, one way | 214 ft. ascent

This short trail provides a safe route leading to the Northern Section trails. Leaving Switchback, head North (right) on Ranch Drive about .1 mile. At the entrance to the Ranch, is the intersection of Fie Top, Ski Lodge, Falls, and Sheep Pasture Roads. Just across this is Bunchberry. This route is just downhill and runs parallel to Ski Lodge Road. The first part of this trail is in a brushy setting with blackberry brambles, apple trees, and well established rhododendron, but it becomes more forested as you continue. Views westward are the mountains associated with the Balsams and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Keep north all the way to Devil’s Britches Trail. From here you can choose to walk back to the ranch, or walk to your right for a short distance to connect with other trails.

MEADOW LOOP

1.8 miles, round trip | 333 ft. ascent

This delightful route takes you uphill on a little traveled road through a meadow with occasional grazing horses and cattle. Southward is Cataloochee Ranch. This pleasant trip offers many inspiring panoramas.

To reach Meadow Loop, head North (right) from Switchback on Ranch Drive about .1 mile. Walk briefly on Ski Lodge Road past the Hayloft to reach Sheep Pasture Road on your right. This is the trailhead.

After passing through the meadow, continue through a rich forested environment upwards and soon you will pass through a set of gates. Be mindful that you are on private roads and, at times, residential property. This route continues uphill to a marked intersection. This is where Wagon Trail Road is located. Turn right, unless you want to travel to Moody Top. You are close to halfway back now. Walk along Wagon Trail Road a short distance. Take a hairpin right leading downhill for the continuation of Wagon Trail Road and the route back. After passing through a set of gates, continue left on Falls Road. In a short distance the pond will be on your left.

POND LOOP

.4 miles, round trip | 62 ft. ascent

Leaving Switchback, head North (right) on Ranch Drive about 500 ft. to Pond Road. Turn right. Proceed on Pond Road to begin this short, pleasant walk that provides the sounds of a creek in a pastoral ranch setting. After continuing on Pond Road a short distance, near the end of the road, turn left and travel pond side across the foot bridge, and back to Pond Road.

In the fenced area to the right is our goat pen and the future sight of our kitchen garden. Be careful, sections close to the creek can be quite boggy. Follow the trail on the map to avoid it.

MOODY TOP

1.3 miles, one way | 340 ft. ascent

To reach this trailhead, you start as though you are taking the Meadow Loop trail. Walk briefly on Ski Lodge Road past the Hayloft to reach Sheep Pasture Road on your right. Follow Sheep Pasture road through two gates until you intersect Wagon Trail Road. This is the start of the Moody Top trailhead on your left. As you begin this trail, be mindful that you are on private roads and, at times, residential property.

At the first intersection, continue left uphill along Saddle Ridge Road. At the first road intersection, turn right on Watershed Drive to the top. There will be a large home at the top. As you continue into the wooded area you’ll see our water reservoir on the left. Just beyond that is Moody Top. Moody Top sits at 5299 ft. above sea level. It is part of the Cataloochee Divide along with many of the peaks surrounding Cataloochee Ranch. On the Northern side of Moody Top are the downhill slopes of Cataloochee Ski Area.

This is an out and back trail. When you’re ready, head back the same way down Watershed Drive. Once you arrive back at the intersection of Wagon Trail Road and Sheep Pasture Road, you can choose how to make your return to the Ranch. You can use the same route up or continue on Wagon Trail Road along the Meadow Loop Trail. It is also about 1 mile back. Refer to the Meadow Loop description.

SALAMANDER FALLS LOOP

2 miles, round trip | 473 ft. ascent

To reach Salamander Falls trailhead turn North (right) from Switchback. Just beyond our property entrance, turn right to Falls Loop Road, below Hayloft. This is the start of the trailhead.

This route is more challenging since it starts downhill and ends with a steep uphill walk back to the Ranch. Nearly all of this route is located in a mountain cove forest environment. There are

several tree and plant species represented here. To give you a sense of location you are directly North of Maggie Valley and above Evans Cove.

Continue on Falls Road, passing the pond on your right. As you continue along this trail, you’ll come upon two gates to go through. Be mindful that you are on private roads and, at times, residential property. Soon you’ll begin your downhill journey on a gradual path along Falls Road. The topography here gives you a sense of what it was like to travel through the mountains. Wind along this shaded route to Salamander Falls, listening to the sounds of nature along the way.

Just before the falls, in the tree tops to the right, is our Challenge Course. Take a break at the picnic table to enjoy Salamander Falls. When you’re ready to continue, cross the shallow rock hop over the creek. After a short distance, a new trail with steep switchbacks will appear to your right. Switchback is just beyond the ridge. You’ll climb 299 ft. of elevation in .16 miles. If it appears too daunting, feel welcome to return the way you came. (You’ll reach a locked gate if you continue straight – do not go past.)

Once over the ridge, you’ll reach a graded road bed with a single cabin ahead on your left. Follow this road bed to the right until you’ve reached another single cabin on the left where you’ll have returned to the hub of Cataloochee Ranch.

*We strongly recommend following this trail direction to avoid going down the steep switchbacks which can be slick with rain, mud, leaves, snow, and ice.*

THINGS TO NOTE

- There is no parking at any trailheads.
- Throughout the trails, you may come across some gates that are dummy locked – a non-functional lock that is used to give the appearance of one, but is not actually locked. Typically, you can lift the chain up over the post. Please remember to leave it the way you found it once passing through.





19  
33

# CATALOOCHEE RANCH

## SOUTHERN SECTION

- BUNCHBERRY  
.72 MILE ASCENT 214 FT.
- MEADOW LOOP  
1.8 MILES ASCENT 333 FT.
- POND LOOP  
.43 MILE ASCENT 62 FT.
- SALAMANDER FALLS LOOP  
2 MILES ASCENT 473 FT.
- MOODY TOP  
1 MILE ASCENT 340 FT.

PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE  
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

