

Lee County – SITE VISIT

SITE VISIT

On March 25th 2009, toured portions of Lee County with Tina Rowe and Jack McClanahan.

Jonesville is the county seat. Population is less than 1,000 in the town and about 23,500 in the county. Other communities include Ben Hur, Dryden, Ewing, Keokee, Pennington Gap, Rose Hill, St. Charles and Blackwater. Portions of both [Cumberland Gap National Historical Park](#) and [Jefferson National Forest](#) are located in Lee County.

First stop upon coming through the Cumberland Gap from Kentucky was the Wilderness Road State Park.



The Visitor Center offers travelers tourist info, a wonderful interpretive center, a gift shop and restroom facilities.



Martin's Station, a recreated fort is located on the back portion of the property, buffalo can be seen as one enters the park and the Wilderness Trail is located directly behind the Visitor Center.

Camping: The park offers primitive group camping for groups of up to 50. Campers must bring drinking water; portable toilets are available, showers are not. Reservations can be made at the visitor center.

Trails at Wilderness Road State Park include:

- The Wilderness Road Trail, a 10-mile hiking, biking and equestrian trail.
- The Indian Ridge Trail, a self-guided natural heritage trail.



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Town of Jonesville



Views of the Town of Jonesville as one drive east along VA 58



Historic home on VA 58 in Jonesville.

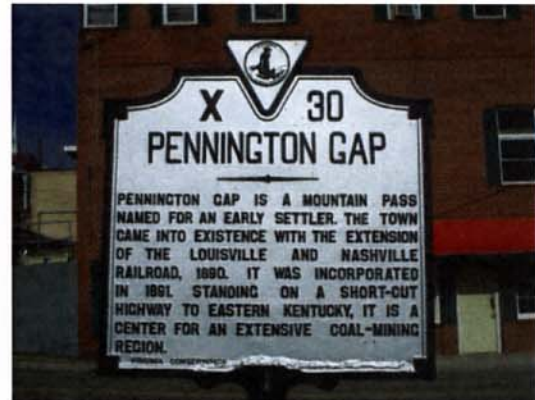


Jonesville Motor Lodge across the street.

Town of Pennington Gap



Rooster's Pub is an excellent restaurant we ate at while touring the area. It is located down near the railroad track in Downtown Pennington Gap.



Leeman Field Park in Pennington Gap has a lot to offer including a walking track and access to Powell River.

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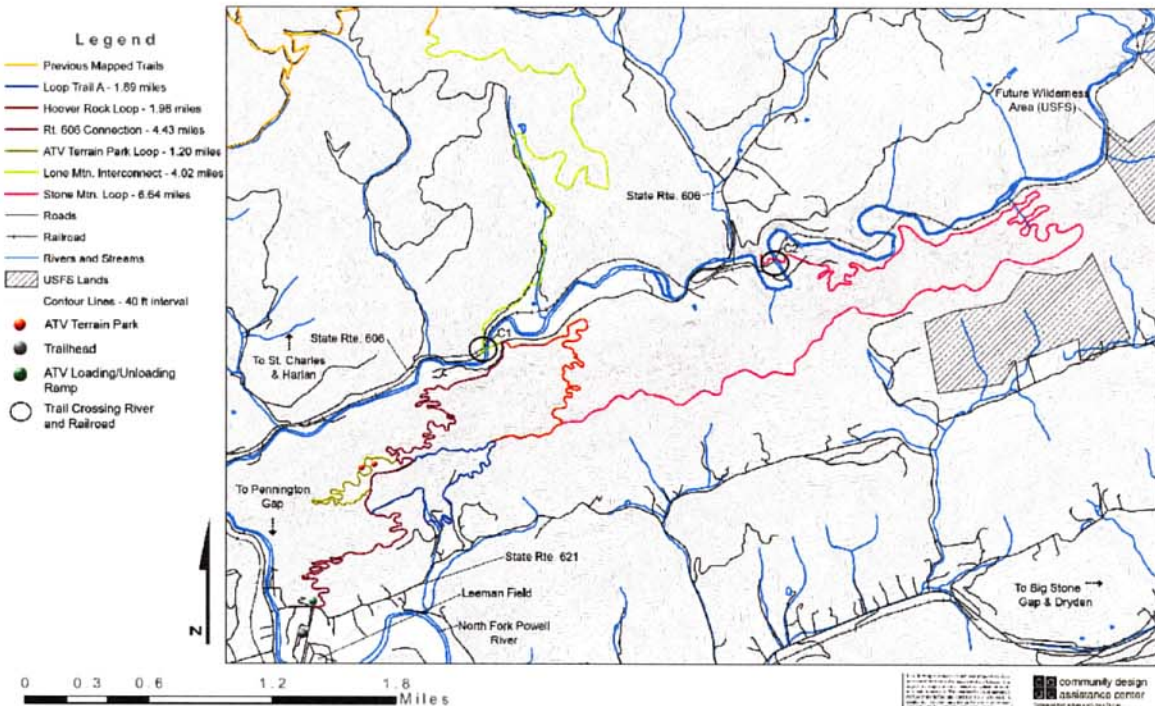


Leeman Park offers baseball fields, basketball, volleyball and tennis courts, two playgrounds, a swimming pool, an amphitheater, three pavilions, restroom facilities and a walking/hiking track that is attracting people of all ages to get out and exercise. There is also river access to the Powell River from Leeman Park.



Leeman Park also offers riding stables that are privately owned and available for rent and will serve as an excellent trailhead for the multi-use trail system currently being developed on Stone Mountain.

Conceptual Master Plan Pennington Gap - Stone Mountain Trail System



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Potential Trailhead

There are 20 acres of property currently owned by the Town of Pennington Gap right off Left Hand Road that could serve as a trailhead location providing easy access to existing trails leading to Yellow Rock and Stone Mountain.

Trails in Pennington Gap Area – Hiking, biking, ATV (These trails have been mapped)

- Take Left Hand Road that runs along Stone Mountain then turn right onto Hwy 637 (Left on Hwy 627 will take you to the High School and Hwy 58)
- Cross RR multiple times.
- Pass Yellow Rock where there was a trailhead next to a graveyard which is currently closed due to the owner getting tired of trash being dumped. Potential to reopen with proper policing.
- Turn Right onto Occonita Road (Fenced pond) then Right again on Hubbard Church Road then right on Hubbard Springs Road.
- Will pass by Wagon Tunnel on the right. Across from it is the old site of a hotel located next to seven springs. The current owner is cleaning up the area and the springs have ferns and could make a nice picnic area in the future.
- Continue on Hubbard Springs (past a pay lake on the left).
- Go through a small tunnel and come to an intersection. Turning left takes you to Hwy 58. Continuing right takes one to Hagan ATV Trailhead. Ample parking for 12 to 15 cars and trailers. Trash cans at site. Cross over RR and go behind two homes to connect with trails. (Home owners are very ATV Friendly) White Rocks is a favored stop along the route?

Trail leads to Wagon Tunnel and to Yellow Rock.

Hell's Trail is in rough shape and washes out – Considered a black diamond. There is a way to drop down and avoid it. Trail will take rider to Harlan Substation in Kentucky.



View of Yellow Mountain



Trailhead (next to Cemetery) leading to trails to Yellow Mt. is currently closed.

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Wagon Tunnel on Little Black Mountain (One of the many sites along the route to Hagan ATV Trailhead)



View of Wagon Tunnel on top of Little Black Mountain. The mountain ridge is the KY/VA state line.



Across the road, a large hotel once stood and attracted many visitors who came to see the Wagon Tunnel and enjoy the "healing powers" of the seven springs which still flow today. Someone has recently begun cleaning up the area and cleaning out the springs so they can flow more naturally as they once did.



Small privately owned pay lake is located along Hubbard Springs Road.



Potential to convert old school into lodging facility for ATV riders if building is still structurally sound.



Tunnel one passes through as one nears Hagan ATV Trailhead.



Community Center also along the route.

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Tunnel one passes through as one nears Hagan ATV Trailhead. Community Center also along the route.
Hagan's ATV Trailhead (lead to trails on Yellow Mountain, Little Black Mountain and trails in Harlan County KY)



Hagan's Trailhead is located next to a railroad track



ATV trails goes between these two homes. The owners are very ATV friendly.

A few riders using Hagan's Trailhead.



Traveling Hwy 58 back to Pennington Gap Community will take one past Phoebe's Butt at the intersection of 880 and 758. Just turn right onto 758. Hwy 58 also takes one past Lee High School and the turnoff to Hwy 645 which connects with Hwy 627 that leads to Hagan Trailhead.

Road leading back to VA 58 from Hagan Trailhead



Vacant buildings that may find a new use if Spearhead Trail System reaches full potential in Lee County.

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Community of Keokee

- Named for Asian Indians – Coal Industrialist’s wife’s name)
- Company store still exists and is now a convenience store. Could be included on a Coal Trail. Follows State Route 606.



Lake Keokee Recreation Area (Clinch Ranger District of the George Washington and Jefferson Forests)

The recreation area includes a 92 acre lake where Tiger Muskie, Large Mouth Bass, Catfish and Sunfish can be caught and a hiking trail around the lake. There are also vault toilets, central garbage, and two picnic units with tables and grills.

Keokee Hiking Trail: The trail is 3.7 miles long creating a loop around the lake. It is an easy trail primarily used for hiking and wildlife viewing which gets light use and is open year-round.



Where is this?

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LEE COUNTY INVENTORY OF TRAILS

EXISTING TRAILHEADS

- Hagan's ATV Trailhead – Existing (primarily just a park and ride site – no restroom facilities)
- Trailhead at Cumberland Gap for Equestrian and Hiking
- Leeman Park

POTENTIAL TRAILHEAD

- Rose Hill at White Rocks
- ATV Trailhead next to cemetery (to access trails to Yellow Mountain) – Currently closed.

EXISTING TRAILS

- Scout Camp – 19.6 miles (10 hour hike) near Sand Cave. (MishiMauga)
- Wilderness Road Trail – 10 mile trail for hiking, biking and equestrian (Proposed expansion)
- Indian Ridge Trail – Self-guided natural history trail at Wilderness Trail State Park
- Keokee Trail – 3.7 mile loop around Lake Keokee (Part of the Big Stone Gap BWT Loop)
- Olinger Gap Trail – 2.5 mile - connects the Keokee Loop Trail to the Stone Mountain Trail
- Water Trail on Powell River – Access from Leeman Park
Note: DCR 2007 Study recommends additional boat landing and bank fishing opportunities along the Powell River as well as develop a canoe trail that includes canoe-in camping, more access points and public rest stops.
- Cave Spring Hiking Trail from campground to Lake Keokee
- Stone Mountain Trail – 14.3 miles – from mouth of Roaring Rock to Cave Springs Recreation Area. Strenuous trail. Lightly used.

FUNDED NEW TRAILS

- Pennington Gap – Stone Mountain Multi-use Trail System – Phase I funded – 10 miles
- Town of Pennington Gap Greenway – In the works – 1 mile funded. Connects downtown shopping area to local park.

PUBLIC LANDS

- Cedars Natural Area Preserves – 1048 acres near Powell River
- Unthanks Cave Natural Area Preserve – 22 acres near Powell River – Cave gated
- George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
- Fletcher Ford Natural Area Preserves – 54.5 acres plus an additional 202 acres owned by Nature Conservancy.

DRIVING TOURS

- Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail from Cumberland Gap through Lee County and Scott – 100 miles
- Crooked Road (Lee, Scott, Wise, Dickerson etc)

MULTIPLE STATE TRAIL

- Great Eastern Trail connecting existing trails from Alabama to New York. Potential to connect with Cumberland Gap Trail. *Conference to address this June 28th at Breaks Interstate*

- ASSETS - Full time parks & recreation director
- Outdoor environmental education center at Cumberland Gap

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Stone Mountain Trail (Wise County into Lee County)

<http://www.mountaintravelguide.com/Hiking%20Trails/virginia/lee/StoneMountainTrail.htm>

[George Washington and Jefferson National Forests](#)

Length: 14.3 miles

Rating: Strenuous

Light Use

The first mile of the trail is a series of rock stairs that were constructed by the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) in the 1970's. Many miniature falls cascade along the solid rock streambed exposing interesting rock formations. There is a stand of old-growth Hemlock over 300 years old. High Butte is a large rock outcrop where views of the Powell River, Black Mountain and Kentucky can be seen. Olinger Gap is where the hiker can take a trail off to the north to Lake Keokee. The lake is stocked with Tiger Musky, Large Mouth Bass, Catfish and Sunfish. There are roads within the area of the trail. One of the nicest natural settings in Southwest Virginia lies in the Roaring Branch drainage among the Hemlocks.

Trail Beginning: Starts at the mouth of Roaring Branch. The hiker must climb a series of stairs.

Trail Ending: The trail follows the top of Stone Mountain to its final destination, Cave Spring Recreation Area.

Directions:

From Big Stone Gap follow US 58A west for 2.5 miles. Turn right on VA 621 and follow it 6.1 miles to Cave Spring Recreation Area. The other access is at Roaring Branch along US 23 between Appalachia and Big Stone Gap. There is limited trailhead parking at the Roaring Branch end.

Region: [Heart of Appalachia](#)

Locality: [Wise County](#)

9416 Darden Drive

Jefferson National Forest

[Wise](#), VA 24293

Phone: (276) 328-2931