

Take a hike! Area offers visitors a trek through hiking paradise

Alleghany and its vicinity are a showcase of walking and hiking opportunities, all nestled in the splendor of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Walking trails are easily accessible in Sparta. And nearby, Doughton Park, Stone Mountain State Park and the New River State Park add to a delightful diversity of hiking opportunities.

Town Trails

CROUSE PARK. The town park at 60 Cherry Street in Sparta has a paved 1/3-mile loop walking trail. It circles around and among the park's picnic, playground and recreation areas

and is mostly level with a few slight inclines. It circles beside the Crouse



Park Stage, where music events are held in warm weather, and loops beside the Crouse House, where bluegrass and old time jam sessions are held every Monday evening.

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK. A level, 1/3-mile loop walking trail with a crushed stone surface is available at Veterans Memorial Park, accessible at 254 Duncan Street in Sparta. The trail circles grassy fields where soccer and other ballgames are held, and for part of its distance runs beside Bledsoe Creek. The park is visible from the Sparta Parkway South (U.S. 21 Bypass), but parking is on Duncan Street.

SAM BROWN PARK. Home of the Sparta Lions Club, Sam Brown Park at 598 Trojan Avenue, Sparta, has a short but vigorous walk through the woods that ascends Sam Brown Mountain for an elevation gain of about 150 feet. A sign near the trailhead says the hike is a mile, but GPS argues for shorter on both inner and outer loops.

Hiking Trails

If it's a walk in the woods or a backpacking trip you like, you are in hiking heaven.

THE ASTA TRAIL'S first section was officially marked in May at Milepost 234 on the Blue Ridge Parkway east of Sparta. Underway by the Alleghany Sparta Trail Association, this footpath will eventually connect Sparta to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Park at Milepost 234 and walk around the gate. The MST will intersect in about a mile. ASTA also has group hikes on different area trails on the third Sunday of each month. For information, 336-372-5992 or spartatrails@gmail.com.

OLDE BEAU RESORT AND GOLF CLUB has new hiking trails that are open to the public. Six trails of varying difficulty combine for a total of five miles. They traverse through woods, fields and along peaceful lakes. Trails are marked with white blazes. For information, www.oldebeauresort.com/hiking-trails or 336-363-3333.

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LIFE IS BETTER IN THE MOUNTAINS

Alleghany
High Country Realty

349 S MAIN ST, SPARTA, NC 28675

336-372-1599



WWW.ALLEGHANYHIGHCOUNTRYREALTY.COM