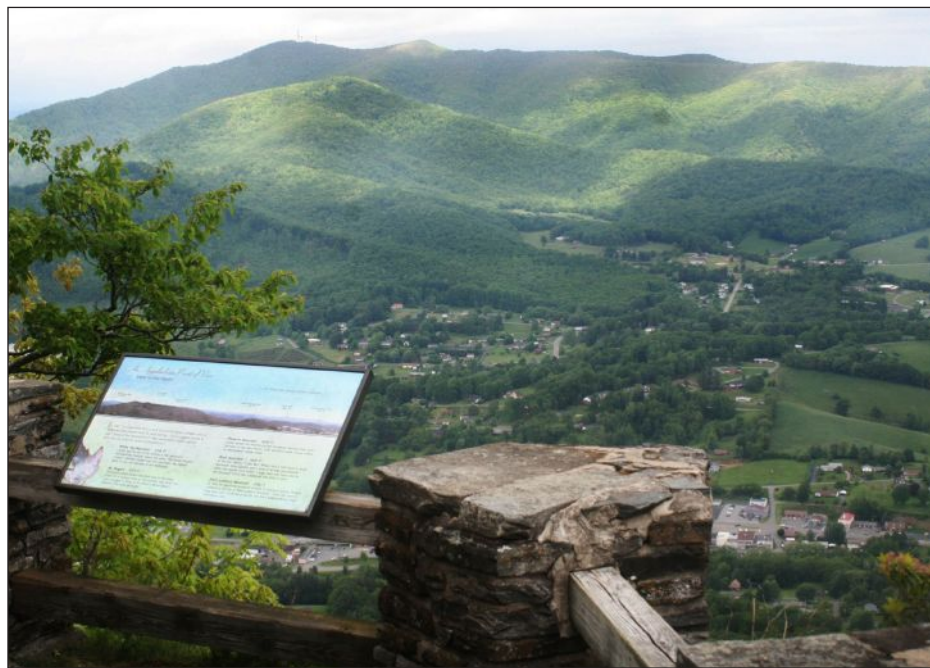




Mount Jefferson has easily accessible views

Rising abruptly to more than 1,600 feet above the surrounding landscape, Mount Jefferson is often first viewed at a distance from the Blue Ridge Parkway and is a national natural landmark with a rich history.

Five hiking trails allow exploration of rare geology and plant communities in Mount Jefferson State Natural Area, including a child-friendly TRACK trail and a strenuous scramble along the mountain's ridgeline.

Overlooks offer vistas into neighboring states, including of Mount Rogers in neighboring Virginia. Picnic grounds, some with shelters, combine scenic views with easy accessibility.

Picnic tables and grills and other amenities are available, as well as restroom facilities. The park's picnic shelters are free to the public, but prove very popular, and it is recommended that they be reserved in advance. More tables have been added elsewhere, but all are well used. The trails are well maintained and offer easy walking for most skill levels. The top of the ridge is the destination for the short but strenuous 0.3-mile hike. All the park's trails are rated moderate to difficult, the longest of which, the strenuous Mountain Ridge Trail, is two miles one way.

Mount Jefferson is open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset, but is closed on Christmas Day. A variety of programs, guided hikes and other events are held there. Meanwhile, the park office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The park's office is located at 1481 Mount Jefferson State Park Road, West Jefferson, NC 28694. GPS: 36.3936, -81.4680. More information is at ncparks.gov.

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