

Introduction to Hiking on the East Lakeshore Trail

How the Trail was Built

Planning for a hiking trail along the eastern side of Tellico Reservoir began in 2003 as a collaborative agreement between TVA and the Watershed Association of Tellico Reservoir (WATeR) to provide public recreational opportunities on TVA property. Construction of the East Lakeshore Trail started on what is now the Coytee Loop Branch, across Tellico Reservoir from the historic Bowman house (built in 1828) on Tanasi Court in Tellico Village. Trail building continued northward along the lake to Powerline Point and then east into Powerline Cove (the current Glendale Branch). It took 5-6 trail builders three years to complete this first section of trail, working one day each month. Trail construction and the number of trail builders increased after 2006, with more than 100 volunteers working at least once to build or maintain the trail, under the direction of trail directors Jerry Barr (2003-2006), Bob Martin (2006-2015), Mel Fisher (2015-2018), George Zola (2019-2020), and Steve West (2020-2021). The last section of the 31-mile trail – the Wildcat Ridge spur trail – was finished in 2016. Although trail work was done concurrently on some trail branches, the order of completion of the 9 trail branches was: Coytee Loop, Glendale, Sinking Creek, Davis Ferry, Lotterdale, Jackson Bend, Morganton, Baker Hollow, and Canal. Distances for mile markers on the trail were determined by volunteers using a DuraWheel distance measuring tool. Volunteer trail builders came from several local communities, and TVA provided oversight and technical support, heavy construction equipment needed for some of the bridges (e.g., for crossing Coytee and Glendale coves) and trail sections, and parking lots at the nine trailheads. Funding of trail building was also provided by grants from the Tennessee Trails Association, the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation, the American Hiking Society National Trails Fund, and Kiwanis International and other local service groups. The trail was recognized in 2012 as a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. TVA and TRDA continue to provide financial support, trash pickup, and oversight, and WATeR volunteers in the Adopt-a-Trail group hike, clear, and maintain the trail.

Trail Information and Safety

Trail Signs – A WATeR kiosk at each trailhead parking lot has a trail map and information for the hiker (QR codes for scanning will soon be present at each kiosk, to get trail information). White blazes on the sides of trees are used as guides along the trail. At trail intersections, double white blazes and metal signs are used to alert the hiker to a potential change in trail direction. Mile markers are present at the top of vertical wood posts along the trail to help hikers identify their location on the trail; these posts are generally found on the uphill side of the trail.

Trail Surfaces – The common trail surface is a dirt path. Other common trail surfaces include mixed gravel (especially in wetter areas) and wood (bridges, steps, stairs, and water bars). Bridges are often covered with a metal non-skid grating. Rocks and tree roots are common on the trail, especially on slopes where erosion of the soil is significant. Pine needles

are present on the trail in areas of pine woods and fallen oak leaves may cover the trail in the late fall and make it more difficult to follow.

Fence Stiles – Privately-owned and TVA land leased for cattle farms may have cattle fences that border some parts of the East Lakeshore Trail. These are permitted by TVA. Fence stiles have been installed for hikers to climb over cattle farm fences that cross the trail. The Lotterdale and Sinking Creek Branches have more fence stiles than other branches of the trail.

Stinging and Biting Insects – Wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, and bees may be encountered when hiking the East Lakeshore Trail. The hiker is reminded to keep watch for these, and to carry medication if needed to counteract the effects of, or allergies to, insect stings. Ticks are common in Tennessee in the warmer months and contact of the hikers' clothing with plants along the trail is a common way to acquire them. Lone star ticks (females have a white dot on their backside) seem to be increasingly encountered on the trail. The hiker is advised to check for ticks on the lower body, and on his/her clothing, after returning from a hike. Ticks always climb up, but not down, the clothing and body. Chiggers are small biting insects and chigger bites can cause days of itching. Chiggers are found in low grasses such as non-native Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium*), which is common in moist areas along the trail. The hiker is advised to avoid walking through these grasses whenever possible.

Spiders – On warm and humid summer mornings spider webs may cross the trail, especially where there are many shrubs and trees at trailside to provide shade and “cover” during the day. Most of the webs are made by “orb weaving” spiders. The most common of these on the East Lakeshore Trail is the triangulate orb weaver. This small spider is named for the easily seen white or yellow triangle that covers the back of the abdomen of the spider. This spider is not a threat to humans.

In open areas such as TVA powerline cuts, flowering plants grow tall quickly during the summer months. Many spiders are present in these areas in the summer and fall, including jumping spiders (Family Salticidae), wolf spiders that hunt on the ground (Family Lycosidae), and larger orb weaving spiders (Family Araneidae) such as the yellow garden spider.

Although all spiders have poison glands, in Tennessee only the Southern Black Widow and the Brown Recluse are extremely toxic to humans. Neither of these spiders is likely to be encountered while hiking on the East Lakeshore Trail, as both are most often found in or around human-built structures and woodpiles, as well as tree stumps.

Reptiles and Amphibians – Reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles) and amphibians (salamanders, frogs, toads) may be seen when hiking the East Lakeshore Trail. Snakes are certainly present but appear to do their best to get off the trail when people are around. Among poisonous snakes, only the copperhead is likely to be found in this area of Tennessee. Lizards that are likely to be seen include the common five-lined skink and the eastern fence lizard. Box turtles may be seen on the trail, and water turtles (e.g., Northern Map Turtle, Pond Slider) are often seen basking on tree trunks close to and in the water along the shoreline of the

lake. Frogs and toads may be heard calling in spring and summer from wet areas along the trail (e.g., the pond at mile 24.9 of the Jackson Bend Branch). Salamanders are rarely seen on the trail but are present under logs, rocks, and leaf cover in moist and wet areas next to the trail.

Poisonous Plants – Poison ivy is commonly seen in all branches of the East Lakeshore Trail. The hiker is strongly encouraged to learn to identify this plant. Poison ivy has compound leaves with 3 leaflets (“leaves of three”), unlike the common Virginia creeper that has compound leaves with 5 leaflets. Unfortunately, many other plants in East Tennessee also have “leaves of three”, including the relatively common boxelder tree that looks like poison ivy when it is small. Poison ivy is often found growing up the trunks of trees and through shrubs, or on the ground along the trail. Although some people are not allergic to poison ivy, most people are. If the hiker touches poison ivy, he/she is advised to wash hands as soon as possible, and to never use a hand that has touched poison ivy to touch any other body part until the hand is cleaned in water. Taking a shower soon after hiking on the trail is a good way to avoid getting skin rash from poison ivy.

Ragweed is found in some sunny sections of the trail. Those with an allergy (“hay fever”) to ragweed pollen may wish to avoid hiking when ragweed is blooming in the summer months.

What to Carry on a Hike – The hiker should carry water, medications as needed, and a cell phone for communication. Proper and comfortable shoes should be worn; shoes that are worn when walking along the street in the hiker’s local community are suitable for the trail. A hat may be useful both to protect from the sun and to reduce the number of spider webs in one’s face. Hiking sticks or poles may be useful for stability in rocky and steep trail sections.

Forest Succession, Age, and Environments – Forest succession is the process where an open sunny area becomes a mature, old growth forest over a long period of time. The first trees to become established in a newly cleared area are the “pioneer species” that need full sun and grow relatively fast. Tulip (yellow) poplar, walnut, and sycamore are typical pioneer, early succession trees in East Tennessee. Eastern red cedar is also a pioneer tree, especially on former farm pastureland in areas of calcium-rich clay soils on bluffs and rock outcrops. Trees that can grow in the shade will eventually “shade out” the seedlings of the pioneer sun-loving species, to create a mature “climax” forest. American beech, white oak, and sugar maple are common climax forest trees in East Tennessee.

Along the East Lakeshore Trail, the hiker can note the difference between young and mature forest. Young forest is present on land that was previously farmed but recently allowed to regrow. All trees at these sites are about the same age. In contrast, on many of the steep and rocky slopes where farming was not practical, there are trees of many ages in a mature forest of tall white oak and hickory trees with a rich understory of dogwood, pawpaw, and blackgum trees, along with many shrubs. The Baker Hollow Branch close to the Mizell parking lot, as well as along the steep south side of Mizell Cove at about mile 2.6, are good examples of mature hardwood forest. Mature forest can also be seen on the Lotterdale Branch between miles 17 and 18, and along the Wildcat Ridge and spur trail.

Dry areas alongside the trail will often have a combination of pines, oak, and hickory trees, whereas low and wetter areas will have tupelo, sycamore, swamp chestnut oak, box elder, sweetgum and red maple trees. Soil pH (acidity) also determines what trees and plants will grow along the trail. When limestone is close to the surface, the soil is neutral to alkaline, and eastern red cedar and redbud trees grow readily in this environment. On the other hand, blueberries, pine trees, sourwood, and red maple prefer acidic soils.

Invasive Non-native Plants – Many invasive non-native plants are present on land next to the trail. Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinensis*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), “heavenly bamboo” (*Nandina domestica*), kudzu vine (*Pueraria montana*), mimosa tree (*Albizia julibrissin*), and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) are examples of non-native invasive plants that can be seen on the East Lakeshore Trail. Large autumn olive shrubs are common along the trail, and have colorful, edible fall berries. Leaves of autumn olive are darker colored on the top side than on the under side, and both fruit and leaves have many tiny silver dots. However, autumn olive and other non-native plants are not used by local insects (such as caterpillars) as food, and insects are the major food needed by growing birds. Because non-native plants take over space that could be used by native plants that do sustain our local insects, they should be removed where possible. More information on invasive plants in Tennessee can be found on the website of the Tennessee Invasive Plant Council.

English ivy (*Hedera helix*), periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), mimosa, and heavenly bamboo are non-native plants that are commonly grown around houses and may therefore indicate sites where homes existed in the past. The native Southern Magnolia tree is another potential indicator of a former home site.

Geology – The East Lakeshore Trail lies in the Valley and Ridge section of Tennessee. Cambrian and Ordovician age limestone and dolomite of the Knox Group strata is present here. Weathering of the Knox Group rock produces the reddish-orange soil seen locally. Chemical erosion of limestone has led to formation of sinkholes, caves, and springs throughout this area. The trail does not cross any sinkholes, but they have been seen within sight distance of the trail (e.g., at the north end of the Davis Ferry Branch, and on the Glendale Branch about mile 9.4). Blankenship cave is on private property close to the East Lakeshore Trail. Coytee and Mizell springs at the bottom of bluffs overlooking the Little Tennessee River are now under Tellico Lake.

Trail Elevations – The minimum elevation of the East Lakeshore Trail is the level at which Tellico Reservoir is at “full pool” in the months from April through October, and that is 813 feet above sea level. The maximum elevations on the trail are 1,000 to 1,100 feet, and these are at the beginning and middle of the Wildcat Ridge spur trail (about 1,045 feet) of the Morganton Branch, the high bluff in the Red Knobs across from Rarity Bay at miles 22.5-23 on the Jackson Bend Branch (about 1,025 feet), and on the Sinking Creek Branch at about mile 13.5 (1,015 feet).

Maintenance of the East Lakeshore Trail – Maintenance of the trail is performed throughout the year by volunteers in the Adopt-a-Trail group who “adopt” a Branch of the trail to keep

weeded, free of fallen trees, branches, vines, and trash. In addition, a trail work crew meets monthly to repair bridges, stairs, steps, and damaged areas of the trail, and to move heavy downed trees from the trail. Hikers can assist with trail maintenance by picking up trash and reporting needed maintenance of the trail on the WATeR website under "Trails".

Trail Maps -- Maps of the East Lakeshore are available from the WATeR website tellicowater.org, as well as the Tellico Village Welcome Center. These maps were prepared by Ryan Janikula, Manager of the Geographic information System (GIS) or Loudon County, TN.

The Canal Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

- 1) The Canal Branch Trailhead and kiosk are in a parking lot close to the canal connecting Tellico Reservoir with Fort Loudoun Reservoir. The parking lot is the end of a small gravel road that is reached from Route 321 northbound toward Maryville, soon after crossing the bridge over the canal.
- 2) The Mizell Trailhead parking lot off Jackson Bend Road. From the parking lot the trail goes downhill a short distance to meet the southern end of the Canal Branch trail.

Trail Highlights

- 1) At mile 1.1, the trail passes through an overstory of large pine trees, and the path may be covered with pine needles.
- 2) The trail passes a former home site with a very large southern Magnolia tree that blooms in the early summer.
- 3) Several TVA power line cuts that have tall wildflowers blooming in the fall, and violets, pipsissewa and little brown jug can be seen in the woods in the spring.

Degree of Difficulty

The trail is relatively flat and easy to hike.

Local History

The area the Canal Branch trail passes through was formerly Cherokee land that was acquired by James Bussell in 1826. At that time the land was a peninsula whose boundaries were the Tennessee River on the north and east, and the Little Tennessee River on the west. Lenoir City was located across the Tennessee River, north of the peninsula, and was reached by ferry. On the peninsula, a small trade center and farming community named Busselltown was established. Construction of the Fort Loudoun Dam in 1943 resulted in partial flooding of

Busselltown, and farmland on the west side of Busselltown was flooded when the Tellico Dam closed its gates. The South Holston Church, located above the retaining wall at the entrance of Jackson Bend Road from Route 321, served Busselltown.

Trail Description

The Canal Branch is named after the 1000-ft. long canal that connects Tellico Reservoir with Fort Loudoun Reservoir. The canal was constructed in 1980 to direct the water from the Little Tennessee River into Fort Loudoun Reservoir, and to allow barge traffic between the two reservoirs without the need for a boat lock.

The trail starts at a yellow car barrier next to the gravel parking lot and trailhead kiosk, and proceeds on a wide, flat gravel path along the canal. There is no overstory of trees, so it may be hot here in the summer. The trail passes through a series of TVA power line cuts with no trees, but many tall wildflowers (e.g., goldenrod, frostweed, cup plant, thistles, and ragweed) and shrubs that bloom in the summer and fall. Watch for a directional sign with a double blaze, where the trail turns to the right. Between the power line cuts, the trail passes through wooded areas on a bluff above and close to a small cove; they provide some shade and variety. Along the north side of the next cove, after crossing a bridge, look for a large southern Magnolia tree. This tree has fragrant white blossoms in the early summer and was formerly the site of a home close to Busselltown. The hiker then crosses a footbridge over a small creek bed, and proceeds along the south side of the cove and past mile marker #1. Here there are pine and mixed hardwood trees overhead, with Chinese privet, stiltgrass, and Christmas fern along the trailside. In the early summer, the hiker may see Turk's cap lily, elderberry, and swamp rose blooming along the trail in wet areas and/or next to the two bridges just passed. Going uphill, an understory of small hickory, oak and maple saplings is present on both sides of the trail, and an impressive overstory of large pine trees covers the trail with a cushion of pine needles. The trail then goes downhill past a directional sign and the ground becomes wet. The hiker walks over a series of logs placed on the ground to form a short "corduroy bridge" to drier land. The trail goes uphill and flattens out, passing through a pine overstory. Uphill on the left side of the trail a few homes can be seen. The trail continues uphill through woodland to the Mizell Trailhead kiosk. A right turn takes the hiker to Mizell Bluff, whereas going uphill past the kiosk leads to the Mizell Parking lot. Cranefly orchid plants have been seen along the trail to the parking lot.

The Baker Hollow Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

The north end of the Baker Hollow Branch begins just downhill of the parking lot for the Mizell Bluff Trailhead, off Jackson Bend Road. The southern end of the branch ends at a TRDA parking lot (and picnic site, with bathrooms), at the end of Antioch Church Road West.

Trail Highlights

The Mizell Bluff overlook is a “don’t miss” for its scenic views and natural beauty. From the Mizell trailhead parking lot to Mizell Bluff, the trail passes through a mature oak forest, and large and colorful acorns may cover the trail in the fall. At the entrance to Baker Hollow cove is a lakeside bench for resting and a view of the Wind River boat dock. There are good views of the narrow Baker Hollow cove, and possibilities of seeing ospreys and wood ducks (see “Local History” below).

Degree of Difficulty

The Baker Hollow Branch is moderately strenuous to hike, with many short uphill and downhill sections, and some narrow and rocky areas of trail.

Local History

The Baker Hollow Branch of the ELT begins downhill from the Mizell parking lot for Mizell Bluff. Mizell Bluff is named after Henry Calvin Mizell, who owned the land in the 1900s. Before the closure of Tellico Dam, Mizell Bluff was next to the Little Tennessee River, and overlooked the river, farmland, and Hall Bend. There was a cave at the bottom of the south end of the bluff, and a spring (Mizell spring) at the bottom of the bluff south of Mizell cove, close to ELT mile 2.8, where a scenic view bench has been placed. The cave, spring, and farmland are now below the water of Tellico Reservoir, but Mizell Bluff is still a popular meeting spot for young and old alike, due to its beauty and scenic views.

Jackson Bend Road is named after Jackson Bend, a curve (or bend) in the Little Tennessee River at mile 3. The name Jackson was used to commemorate President Andrew Jackson from Tennessee.

In the TVA Tellico Reservoir Land Management Plan of June 2000, Baker Hollow (named after the Hugh Baker family) is described as a 95-acre Sensitive Resources Management (Zone 3) parcel, as follows: “This tract of land is partially covered with a mixture of pine and hardwood forests, in addition to a small wetland in the inland point of the cove. This mixture of forest cover provides a year-round visual and noise buffer for people on both sides of the shoreline and should be maintained in such a way that these qualities are kept intact. During the data collecting stage of this plan, several adult ospreys and sharp-shinned hawks were observed in the area. This cove provides an important foraging site for osprey, and the adjacent woods provide nesting and foraging habitat for the sharp-shinned hawk. Additionally, many of the shallow coves along Baker Hollow are used as foraging areas for breeding wood ducks. Because of the species of birds, wetland, and other remarkable characteristics found in this cove, this parcel is placed in **Zone 3** to provide the protection it requires.”

Trail Description

From the Mizell parking lot off Jackson Bend Road, the trail goes downhill to the kiosk marking the beginning of the Baker Hollow section and the end of the Canal section. The trail for Baker Hollow turns left and goes uphill along a sloping hillside with many types of oak trees. Large yellow and brown acorns cover the trail in the fall months. The trail flattens, then goes downhill toward Mizell Bluff. There are views of the lake. The hiker is advised to take the short spur trail to Mizell Bluff, because this overlook has one of the best views of any site on the East Lakeshore Trail and is also a good picnic spot. From Mizell Bluff, the trail proceeds past a trail information sign and downhill along the north side of Mizell Cove. Mile marker 2 is passed. In the fall, native late purple asters are blooming. The trail goes around the end of Mizell Cove; uphill from the trail is Jackson Bend Road, and several homes on the road have paths leading to the lake. Invasive autumn olive shrubs are fruiting here in the fall. After crossing a footbridge at the end of the cove, the hiker goes uphill along the south side of Mizell Cove and toward the lake. Blackgum trees growing here have red leaves in the fall, and smooth hydrangea bushes can be seen. The trail is benched into a relatively steep hillside bluff with rock outcrops. These steep rocky slopes are not suitable for farming; the trees on the slopes were not cut and are thus larger than those in areas that were suitable for pasture crops, where trees have grown back more recently. Large oak and hickory trees shade an understory of sassafras, blackgum, pawpaw, and ferns. The trail goes up and downhill along the entrance to Mizell cove, with views across the lake. Lakeside at mile 2.8 is a bench that offers a view of the WindRiver boat dock. The trail then proceeds along the north side of the entrance to Baker Hollow Cove on a steep, well-drained hillside with reindeer moss. Mile marker 3 is passed and a small footbridge is crossed. The trail becomes wide and mostly flat, and because it receives direct sunlight from the south, it is pleasingly "bright". At the end of Baker Hollow Cove (mile 3.5) is a footbridge, and the ground is low and moist. The trail then proceeds along the south side of the cove. Because the south side of the cove receives little direct sun from the north, it is humid, and poison ivy, ferns, and mushroom are commonly seen. The trail on the south side of Baker Hollow Cove has short up and down sections, and because the hillside is steep, erosion has resulted in the appearance of many exposed tree roots. At about mile 3.7 there is a flat area with a short trail spur that extends to the side of the cove. Mile marker 4 is passed and the trail goes down and around a small cove, then uphill to a flat section on a steep hillside, and toward the lake along Baker Hollow. At mile 4.37 near the lakeshore is a small bridge; from this site one can see Tellico dam in the winter months. The trail is now parallel to and above the lake on a steep slope with mature oaks and other trees, along with non-native privet and Amur honeysuckle, which has small red berries in the fall. At the end of the Baker Hollow branch is a set of four timber stairs leading down to a TRDA picnic area and kiosk, close to the bathrooms and parking lot for the Antioch Trailhead.

The Davis Ferry Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL,

Trail Parking

The north end of the Davis Ferry Branch begins at the Antioch Trailhead, at the end of Antioch Church Road West. At this site is a parking lot, restrooms with running water, picnic tables, and a kiosk. The trail begins past the kiosk and picnic tables, at steps that lead uphill and into the woods. The south end of the Davis Ferry Branch at its junction with the Glendale Branch is at the end of Glendale Community Road. A parking lot and kiosk are there.

Trail Highlights

The Davis Ferry Branch parallels Antioch Church Road for a mile, where it is at the edge of the WindRiver golf course. It goes across a small part of the golf course on golf cart paths, then along a small stream in a ravine below the golf course. The trail passes through a mixed hardwood forest and proceeds along the east side of Powerline cove with good views across it. Just south of mile 7 is a scenic view bench facing Tellico Reservoir and toward the Tanasi golf course.

Degree of Difficulty

The Davis Ferry Branch is relatively easy hiking. There is one steep uphill and downhill section to and from a knoll at mile 6.8.

Local History

The Davis Ferry Branch is named after (no surprise) Davis Ferry. Davis was a small community on the west side of the Little Tennessee River before Tellico Dam was completed, and the location of a ferry that carried residents across the river, to commute between Loudon and Glendale on Davis Ferry Road. The Davis family purchased their land in 1782, and at one time owned 1,200 acres. Today the Davis home and land is under the water of Tellico Reservoir, and the western part of Davis Ferry Road ends at route 444. Davis Ferry Road east of the river is now at the bottom of the northwest side of Powerline Cove, and the road from the end of the cove continuing to Glendale has been renamed as Glendale Community Road.

Trail Description

From the Antioch Trailhead at mile 4.7, the trail goes uphill through a quarter-mile wooded area that is quiet and restful, with large oak trees and a few beautyberry shrubs that have purple fruits in the fall. The trail crosses Antioch Church Road and up a set of stairs. The next mile of trail is between the road and the WindRiver golf course. There is little tree cover, but many perennial flowers bloom alongside the trail in late summer, including frostweed, goldenrod and yellow crownbeard. The trail briefly crosses the golf course on several cement cart paths and goes downhill to mile marker 6 off the golf course and along a small ravine below the golf course. The ravine contains a stream that flows to a small cove that goes to the lake. The uphill side of the trail is steep, with large trees. From the ravine, the trail goes uphill through mature forest that provides shade, and large mushrooms can be seen. The trail flattens at the top of the hill, in a young woodland with many red cedar trees. Red cedar likes to grow in

areas with limestone close to the surface. From the top of the knoll, the trail goes downhill. Several sets of timber-tread stairs are present. At the bottom of the hill, the trail crosses a gravel road, a footbridge over an intermittent stream, and past two private boat docks. There are many autumn olive shrubs in this area. A scenic view bench at the side of Powerline cove just past mile marker 7 is a good place to rest and enjoy the view across the lake to the three old farm silos and Tanasi golf course. The trail continues south along Powerline cove. The slope above the trail is steep, and the trees are large, suggesting that the area was not used as a cow pasture in the past. Fan clubmoss is seen along the trail, and downy blue Lobelia blooms here in the late summer. The trail then flattens and goes past young pine and cedar trees, and turns to go around a small cove, at the end of which is a large powerline cut with 2 towers. In this sunny area are many wildflowers that bloom in the late summer, including thistle, frostweed, pokeweed, purple ironweed, goldenrods, yellow crownbeard, and Jerusalem artichoke. Many butterflies are seen here when flowers are blooming. From the powerline cut the trail goes uphill in a mixed hardwood (oak, hickory, maple) forest with an open understory. The area is humid, and moss grows along the trail. Mile marker 8 is passed, and the Davis Ferry section ends at the Glendale Trailhead and parking lot.

The Glendale Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

The north end of the Glendale Branch begins at the Glendale kiosk, close to the parking lot at the end of Glendale Community Road. The south end of the Glendale Branch is at the north end of the Coytee loop trail of the Coytee Branch, and there is no vehicle road access there, although the end of Coytee Road is nearby.

Trail highlights

The Glendale Branch contains the Powerline Cove loop trail that begins about 0.4 miles from the Glendale trailhead. If the hiker starts and ends at the Glendale parking lot, the length of the loop hike is approximately 2.3 miles, making it a good choice for many family hikers. The Powerline Cove loop trail and the rest of the Glendale Branch offer good views across Tellico Reservoir toward the Tanasi area of Tellico Village. Also notable are some remarkable large trees, a historic concrete watering trough, and an open powerline cut with many wildflowers that bloom in the summer and fall months.

Degree of Difficulty

The Glendale Branch is relatively flat and easy to hike, with a few short up and down slopes and one challenging hill.

Local History

The Glendale Branch is named for the farming community of Glendale, and the small stream (the Glendale Branch) that originates close to it, which can be seen on the side of Fisher Lane for much of its length. At mile 9.5 is a scenic view bench with views across the lake to the 3 farm silos of the former Davis family farm; the bench would have overlooked the Davis Ferry on the Little Tennessee River before Tellico Dam was closed.

Trail Description

From the Glendale Trailhead at the end of Glendale Community Road (mile 8.1), the hiker proceeds along the edge of Glendale cove and across 2 footbridges that span parts of the Glendale Branch stream. There is a private boat dock here. The hiker proceeds on the trail past the boat dock, up the stairs, and around the wooded south side of the large Powerline cove, which is named for the TVA power lines that cross it. Christmas fern and other ferns, mosses, and Solomon's seal are present, and Indian pink may be blooming in June. Further along is a boat landing constructed of rock inside a wire mesh "gabion", which serves to reduce shoreline erosion at the site. Past the boat landing, the hiker has good views across the cove. At mile 8.6, the hiker crosses a footbridge over a deep streambed, next to which is a huge tulip poplar tree. Past it, the hiker sees signage for the "shortcut" and loop trail; stay right to see the Powerline loop trail. There are red cedar trees here, indicating that limestone is close to the surface. Dogwood, pine trees, and invasive autumn olive shrubs also grow in this second-growth woodland. Next is an open TVA power line cut in which sun-loving plants grow, including thistles, blackberry, autumn olive, cup plant, and Canada lettuce. The trees past the power line cut are larger and the forest is quieter. The hiker passes mile marker 9. The trail is close to the lake and flat, with a young woodland above it, including dogwood, cedar, and autumn olive. At mile 9.25 is a scenic view bench. Tellico Dam can be seen far across the lake to your right, and three former grain silos (which were on Davis farmland before Tellico Dam was closed on the Little Tennessee River) can be seen in the lake, slightly to your left. From the scenic view bench the trail goes uphill then becomes flat. A sign identifies a persimmon tree. Red cedar trees are common, and mushrooms are seen. The trail goes uphill again, past sugar maple trees and autumn olive and privet shrubs. Signs identify white oak, green ash, and hackberry trees. Large tulip poplars and a large oak are seen. At the top of the hill, the trail crosses a power line cut with two towers. This area is open (and hot in summer) with a good view of the TVA power lines crossing the lake at mile 6. In summer oxeye daisies bloom in the power line cut, and in September/October many tall wildflowers bloom, and butterflies are present. On the far side of the power line cut, the trail goes downhill, and signs identify blackgum, Shumard red oak, and sourwood trees. Redbud trees are also present. Redbuds bloom early in spring and provide the first source of nectar for overwintering bees. Sourwood trees bloom in early summer when long stalks of small white, fragrant flowers extend from the tips of their branches. The trail continues and soon intersects with the "shortcut" trail at mile 9.74. Going left takes the hiker back to the Glendale trailhead via the shortcut; going right takes the hiker toward the Coytee loop trail.

The 0.28-mile shortcut trail, when coming from either the Coytee loop or the power line cut on the Powerline cove loop, starts by going uphill in an easterly direction. A barbed-wire fence is seen on the right side of the trail. Many tree roots cross the trail, indicating that soil is being eroded by water flowing downhill. The trail flattens out in a young woodland with a thick understory. There are many autumn olive and Chinese privet shrubs. A sign identifies a honey locust tree; these trees have sharp thorns and long, twisted, brown seed pods that drop to the ground in the winter months. A deep gully can be seen on the downhill side of the trail before the hiker reaches a footbridge over the gully and the end of the shortcut. A right turn takes the hiker back to the trailhead.

If the hiker continues on the Glendale Branch toward the Coytee Loop Branch when reaching the shortcut trail from the Powerline cove loop, he/she goes downhill along a small cove with good views of the lake, and young trees. Mile marker 10 is passed. The trail is flat and close to the lake. The hiker should note an old concrete watering trough (about 4 feet wide and 15 feet long) between the trail and the lake. The trail turns to go around another small cove, and down a set of timber stairs and across a private road; there is a boat dock lakeside and a house uphill of the trail on Coytee Road. Across a grassy area, a sign directs the hiker toward the Coytee Branch. Signs identifying a sugar maple, a red maple, and a dogwood are seen. Also along the trail are fan clubmoss and a trio of non-native plants: Chinese privet, autumn olive, and “heavenly bamboo”. Signs identifying a loblolly pine and an eastern red cedar are seen before the hiker reaches an open area and site of a power line cut. The trail then goes uphill and across two sets of several timber-tread steps to intersect with the north end of the Coytee Branch loop trail. Directional signs for the Coytee Trailhead and Coytee Loop are present.

Coytee Loop Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

Parking for the Coytee Loop Branch is located at the Coytee Trailhead on Coytee Road, which is reached from Axley Chapel Road. Coytee Road continues past the large Coytee Trailhead parking lot to a second small parking lot close to mile 11 of the trail, if the hiker wishes to park closer to the Coytee loop trail. Between the two parking lots are the developments of Yellowwood and River Cove.

Trail Highlights

The highlight of the Coytee Loop Branch is the 1.3-mile Coytee loop. An excellent interpretative guide to the Coytee loop trail was written by Shaney Palmer. It can be found at the Tellico Village Library in a binder labelled “Interpretative Guides”, Dewey decimal number 796.5. The Coytee loop trail contains both young and mature forest areas, a view across the lake to Tellico Village Tanasi homes from an overlook with a scenic bench, several rock outcrops, and many interesting older trees.

Degree of Difficulty

The Coytee loop trail has both uphill and downhill sections and is rocky and narrow in spots along the lakefront. The 1-mile trail section from the Coytee Trailhead to the Coytee loop is flat, close to or on the shoulder of Coytee Road as well as close to Coytee Cove, and easy to hike.

Local History

The Coytee Loop Branch is named after Coytee Springs. Coytee Springs was an elliptical pool of spring water about 12 feet long and 8 feet wide, between the Little Tennessee River and the bottom of a bluff that is now next to Tellico Lake. The springs were a holy place for the Cherokee Indians, as the water was considered to heal. Coytee (or Coyatee) was a Cherokee village. In the late 1800s, the Linginfelter farm and homesite were located close to Coytee Springs on the east side of the Little Tennessee River. Coytee Springs is underwater below the sharp turn at the south end of the Coytee loop trail.

Trail Description

When hiking from the south end of Coytee Branch to the north end where it intersects with the Glendale Branch, the hiker parks at the Coytee Road parking lot. The trail passes the kiosk and is flat and close to Coytee Road. An overhead electric transmission line is between the trail and the road. The trail here is sunny and partridge peas and other flowering plants are seen. On Coytee Road the hiker passes signage for the River Cove development, a large fenced boat dock on the lakefront, and Summit Hill Road before being directed off the road and back onto the trail. After a short distance, the trail splits, and the hiker goes to the right. The trail passes through a TVA power line clearing and into a woodland with many red cedar and dogwood trees, and moss on the ground. The trail is flat and can be narrowed by overgrowth of invasive Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), which is widespread throughout eastern Tennessee. The trail passes through a pinewood, across a small power line right-of-way, and into a small parking lot on Coytee Road. Crossing the parking lot, mile marker 11 is seen. In approximately 0.2 miles, the trail splits, and a signpost directs the hiker left to the Coytee loop, or right to the Glendale Branch of the trail, which begins a short distance downhill.

The Coytee loop trail is one of the oldest sections of the ELT but is not included in the trail mile marker calculations reflected by the mile marker posts; it therefore adds approximately 1.2 miles to the total trail length indicated by the mile markers. The loop trail has wood posts with engraved alphabetical letters from "A" to "H" that are used to identify interesting natural features described in the Interpretative Guide noted above in Trail Highlights. The loop begins in a small section of young forest (wood post engraved with "A" in a diamond), and tree markers for a dogwood and a redbud. The trail is relatively wide and flat as it moves southward. The wood post engraved with a "B" refers the hiker to a discussion of non-native plants in the Interpretative Guide. After passing over a footbridge, the hiker reaches wood post "C" in a pinewood with a loblolly pine identified. The trail goes uphill, and there is a view of the lake.

Black walnut and shagbark hickory trees are identified, and large oak trees grow in this mature woodland. Wood post “D” is seen. The trail goes downhill to a directional post where it turns sharply right, in an area with many older red cedar trees that are growing over a limestone base. The trail is close to the lake, and “narrow trail” signs caution hikers to be mindful of their footing. Limestone rock outcrops are seen, and these are discussed in the Interpretative Guide under post marker “E”. A beech tree is identified. Beech trees are “climax forest” trees in Tennessee. A bit further along the trail is a scenic view bench (marker “F” in the Interpretative Guide) overlooking the Tellico Reservoir toward Tanasi homesites in Tellico Village. Past the bench, a basswood tree is identified. Marker “G” notes the presence of ferns and other spore-bearing plants. Close to the end of the Coytee loop, the trail goes uphill and across a timber-tread set of stairs. Along the trail, fan clubmoss is seen on the ground, and a blackgum tree is identified. At the end of the loop trail is signage to direct the hiker to the Glendale Branch or to the end of the Coytee loop (and marker “H” in the Interpretative Guide) back to the Coytee Trailhead. Double white blazes on a tree here indicate the presence of a trail junction.

The **Sinking Creek Branch** of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

Parking for the Sinking Creek Branch is located on both of its north and south ends. The north end is at the Coytee Trailhead parking lot on Coytee Road, and the south end is at the Sinking Creek Trailhead parking lot at the intersection of National Campground Road and Axley Chapel Road. South of the intersection, Axley Chapel Road becomes the East Coast Tellico Parkway, which continues south to Route 411 in Vonore. North of the intersection, Axley Chapel Road continues to Route 95.

Trail Highlights

The 4.5-mile Sinking Creek Branch is notable for the TVA-built Coytee Bridge over the Glendale cove, and for the scenic views and natural features of the four coves that are seen along the trail: Coytee, Hannah Ferry, Owl Hollow, and Sinking Creek. One of the best easy family hikes on the East Lakeshore Trail is that from the Coytee Trailhead southwest to the Coytee Cove beach area, and back, for a round-trip distance of 1.5 miles. The hike starts by going up and over the Coytee bridge and into the woods that overlooks the Coytee Cove. The walking path is shaded by trees and mostly flat. When the trail moves downhill close to the lakeshore, there are potential spots for fishing. Continuing to the Coytee Cove beach area, the hiker can relax on a bench or a sandy beach area, with beautiful views across the cove and lake.

Degree of Difficulty

The Sinking Creek Branch is moderately challenging to hike. There are uphill and downhill sections when going around the Owl Hollow and Hannah Ferry coves, and up to the bluffs on either side of them. Close to the Sinking Creek cove are several farm fence stiles that must be climbed over.

Local History

Sinking Creek originates on the south side of the Red Knobs, a series of hills with elevations of 1100-1250 feet that run southwest to northeast, north of Greenback. Sinking Creek has cut a narrow valley through the Red Knobs, and SR95 passes through this cut. The Sinking Creek Trailhead is at the intersection of National Campground Road and Axley Chapel Road. The National Campground itself is located at 1849 King Road in Greenback. In 1873, local churches from several denominations held a meeting at this site to unite families of former Confederate and Union soldiers under a large tent. The group incorporated and built an open meeting tabernacle to host an annual revival. Many local leaders, including members of the Hammtree, Blankenship, and Griffitts families, served on the Board of the National Campground Corporation.

Trail Description

Starting at the Coytee Trailhead, the hiker goes up and over the Coytee bridge and into the shaded woodland uphill from Coytee cove. Mile marker 12 is passed. There are good views of the cove from the trail. The trail goes downhill close to the water and small inlets, and across a footbridge over an intermittent stream. The area is quiet. The trail opens onto a small, sandy beach area with a bench to sit on. This is a good place to relax and enjoy the view across the cove. The trail continues uphill along the cove, and there are many invasive autumn olive shrubs seen; these plants fruit in the fall, with berries that gradually change in color from tan to red. The fruits are edible but tart. Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) grows quickly and shades out understory plants. Mile marker 13 is passed, and the top of the bluff is reached. It is quiet here and the forest has some large oaks and occasional lowbush blueberry plants. The trail goes downhill, passes an old path that leads to McKelvey Road (McKelvey Road meets Axley Chapel Road close to the church). Around a bend in the trail, the hiker can see the rusted body of an old truck. There are also good views of the small Hannah Ferry cove. The hiker walks down across a 6-step stairway on the trail and onto Hannah Ferry Road, which is now overgrown. Signage directs the hiker to 3-step wood stairs downhill off Hannah Ferry Road. The hiker passes mile marker 14 along the north side of Hannah Ferry cove. At the end of the cove is a small footbridge. The area on the south side of the cove is moist, and there are patches of fan clubmoss and partridgeberry. Continuing through the woods south and above Hannah Ferry cove, the hiker will see small but beautiful red mushrooms appropriately called "elf cups". The trail then goes downhill toward Owl Hollow cove. At mile 14.5 there is a lakeside scenic view bench that faces Toqua golf course across the lake. Sparkleberry shrubs are seen above the trail along the north side of the pretty cove. At the end of Owl Hollow cove is a short boardwalk, and jewelweed. The trail proceeds uphill on the south side of the cove. Tick trefoil plants are common, and "beggar's ticks" adhere to one's pants in the fall. Mile marker 15 is passed. The

wood understory is open, and there are many mushrooms growing on the ground. The trail flattens and continues through a pine wood that is quiet and open and occasionally used by cows. The hiker is guided through this area by white blazes on the sides of trees next to the trail. The trail then goes downhill and crosses a small bridge over a deep, but usually dry, creek bed; the bridge has been named the "Kissing Bridge". Mile marker 16 is passed about 200 yards from the bridge and the trail continues along the north side of the Sinking Creek cove. Erosion of the trail has led to exposure of many tree roots, and the hiker should be careful of his/her footing. Looking southeast, the hiker can see a bridge on the East Coast Tellico Parkway that crosses over Sinking Creek. On the trail a small footbridge is crossed, then a cattle fence stile is passed (it may be open). The area next to the trail is used as cattle pasture, and several more fence stiles must be crossed over by the hiker to continue on the trail. The trail crosses the parkway, where it meets the Lotterdale Branch (which continues over the bridge across Sinking Creek) and the parking lot and trailhead kiosk at National Campground Road.

The Lotterdale Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

- 1) The north end of the Lotterdale Branch begins at the Sinking Creek Trailhead and parking lot at the corner of National Campground Road where it meets Axley Chapel Road at the north end of the East Coast Tellico Parkway.
- 2) The south end of the Lotterdale Branch is at the Lotterdale Campground entrance road off the East Coast Tellico Parkway. There is space for parking a car, but there is no parking lot there.

Trail Highlights

The highlight of the 3.8-mile Lotterdale Branch is a mature hardwood forest with some huge trees on a bluff overlooking the lake, between mile markers 17 and 18. A scenic view bench along the lakeshore at mile 18.3 offers views of lakefront Toqua homes in Tellico Village. The trail also crosses over the Lotterdale inlet to the lake on a bridge for the East Coast Tellico Parkway, and there are excellent views of the Lotterdale Campground and Fishing Pier from the bridge.

Degree of Difficulty

The Lotterdale Branch is mostly flat and easy to walk, with short uphill and downhill sections to and from the bluff. The major difficulty is crossing over the many fence stiles along the trail when it is close to cattle grazing areas.

Local History

Lotterdale Knob is a hill with an elevation of 1237 feet in the Red Knobs, a series of hills north of Greenback. In 1982, the TVA sold land to TRDA for development and recreation, including the Lotterdale Cove Recreation Area. Jackson Ferry Road, which now ends at the East Coast Tellico Parkway, once extended into Lotterdale Cove to the Little Tennessee River and the site of Jackson's Ferry.

Trail Description

From the Sinking Creek Trailhead at National Campground Road, cross the small footbridge toward the East Coast Tellico Parkway and turn left to go alongside the guard rail on the Parkway, across the bridge over Sinking Creek. After crossing the bridge, cross the guardrails and walk up the right side of Carpenter Loop Road. The trail leaves the road at a signpost to a wide path above Sinking Creek. Fan clubmoss can be seen along the trail, and many spider webs may be present, as small insects are numerous in this humid area. The trail moves back toward the road and up 4 timber-tread steps. The hiker proceeds a short distance up the road, then leaves it to go down an old roadbed (that once led to a former housing site) uphill of Sinking Creek. People sometimes camp or picnic here. Mile marker 17 is passed, and a fence stile is climbed over. The trail proceeds uphill through a quiet, wooded area with an overstory of mature oak, tulip poplar, maple, hickory, and walnut trees, and an open understory. Several trail switchbacks are present to reduce the grade. The hiker reaches the top of a bluff overlooking the lake and Sinking Creek. Here are huge red and white oak trees, many shagbark hickories, and an understory of redwood, dogwood, and pawpaw, with Solomon's seal at the ground level. Further along, a fence stile is crossed, mile marker 18 is passed, and the trail goes downhill. At the lakeside is a scenic view bench facing the Toqua area of Tellico Village. The trail proceeds along the lakefront, next to an open farm field edged with a barbed-wire fence. Two small foot bridges allow the hiker to cross intermittently flowing streams. The trail then crosses three fence stiles in quick succession and passes a large maple tree. In the late spring, many blue violets and mayapples can be seen in woods close to the trail. The trail is close to the lake, where a floating boat dock is present. A large beech tree with carved initials is seen, and in the summer, ripe grapes are on the ground, courtesy of an overhead grapevine. Mile marker 19 is passed. A fenced field for quail hunting appears on the right side of the trail. The trail goes down a 5-step stairway to Jackson Cemetery Road, turns left and down the road, then right at a Trail sign, and down some steps to enter a quiet mixed forest of pine and hardwood trees. There are often webs of the triangulate orbweaver spider across the trail; this spider is small, and the name refers to its triangular abdomen, which is usually white in color. Mosses, lichens, and pine needles are seen on the ground. White trail blazes guide the hiker. The trail intersects with a side trail to the Lotterdale Fishing Pier, and several lakeside spots along the trail appear to be used by campers. Red flowers of trumpet creeper vines can be seen in trees in the spring. The trail crosses a short foot bridge and goes up to the guardrail along the East Coast Tellico Parkway. The next 0.45 miles of trail is located along the Parkway (behind the guardrail) on the bridge over Lotterdale Cove. There are good views of the Lotterdale RV park and the Lotterdale Cove. As one crosses the bridge, a hat is useful to provide shade from the hot summer sun. Mile marker 20 is passed close to the south end of the bridge. After crossing the bridge, the trail

turns right to proceed along a wide, flat path next to a small cove. There are fishing spots here, and a day use campsite. The Lotterdale Branch ends at the entrance road for the Lotterdale Campground.

The Jackson Bend Branch of the EAST LKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

- 1) The Peterson Road parking lot is at the south end of the Jackson Bend Branch. It is located off Peterson Road very close to its junction with the East Coast Tellico Parkway (ECTP), and it is a large lot.
- 2) One can also park off the side of the entrance road to the Lotterdale Campground, which is at the north end of the Jackson Bend Branch, but there is no parking lot.

Trail Highlights

The Jackson Bend trail both challenges and rewards the hiker. The section is relatively long (5.1 miles) with some steep uphill and downhill sections and rocky areas where attention is required. The rewards include the excellent lake and cove views from a high bluff, interesting wildflower sightings and rock formations, and both low wetland and upland forest scenery and wildlife.

Degree of Difficulty

The hiker should allow 3 hours to walk the Jackson Bend Branch in either direction, including brief stops for rest and observation. The uphill and downhill sections can be steep, and the trail is rarely flat; the Jackson Bend Branch is one of the most challenging hikes on the East Lakeshore Trail.

Local History

Jackson Bend was a large curve in the Little Tennessee River at river miles 10-12 from its origin at the Tennessee River. Before the construction of the Tellico Dam, much of the farmland on the northwest side of the bend was owned by the Jackson family. The Jackson store was a favorite meeting place of local residents. The Jackson family established Jackson School, Jackson Church, and Jackson's Ferry, all of which are now under the water of Tellico Reservoir. Higher land on the east side of the Little Tennessee River at Jackson Bend still remains above water as Jackson Bend Island. At the south end of the Jackson Bend Branch is Griffitts Keep, named after the Griffitts family that came to Loudon County about 1800. At mile 24.9, a bridge passes over a small creek that crosses the trail. This creek is on the south side of the Red Knobs, and it flowed into the Little Tennessee River before the East Coast Tellico Parkway was built.

Trail Description

Starting from the Lotterdale Campground entrance road close to the East Coast Tellico Parkway, the Jackson Bend Branch goes south through a mature hardwood forest with easy uphill and downhill sections. Two small streams are crossed by a foot bridge and a boardwalk. Mosses and ginger plants are seen trailside, along with invasive autumn olive shrubs. Mile marker 21 is passed at the intersection of the trail with a smaller trail that connects to the Lotterdale campground; signage is present to direct the hiker. The trail then goes across a small intermittent stream on a foot bridge, then uphill and downhill along the north side of a small cove, the Teeter Road Cove. The trail intersects with Teeter Road, and there is signage for a TVA designated camping area close to the side of the cove. Teeter Road itself is gravel and little used except as an access road to the campsite and trail. Around the end of Teeter Road cove, crawfish holes, box turtles, and beaver-cut trees have been seen. Mile marker 22 is passed, and the trail continues uphill and downhill along the south side of the cove. In the spring, many yellow trillium plants are flowering along the next mile of the trail. Moving away from the cove, the trail goes uphill along switchbacks to a wide bluff above the lake, across from Rarity Bay. This is a quiet area of upland hardwood forest with walnut, hickory, and tulip poplar trees. Small-flowered leafcup plants border the trail, and bloom in July. The presence of many small holes and mounds close to the trail suggest the presence of moles, chipmunks, and/or other small underground animals. From the bluff, the trail goes downhill to a low area with sassafras and pawpaw trees. Mile marker 23 is passed. The forest is young, the trail is rocky, and a large rock outcrop is present above the trail. Along the lakefront is a scenic view bench that is a good resting spot, with a view of Rarity Bay across the lake. This bench is dedicated to Nils Johannesen, a former trail builder. Tiger swallowtail butterflies have been observed to “puddle” in low, wet areas of the trail here, and frogs may call from the shoreline. From the bench the trail continues around the rock outcrop and uphill along the side of the bluff; a farm is next to the trail. There are good views of the lake and the mouth of a cove that extends into the Connatser Development area. Further along the trail above the side of this cove are some very large oak trees in the woods, and downy yellow foxglove may be blooming beside the trail in July. Looking downhill toward the water, turtles may be visible on fallen trees that extend out into the cove. Hikers are advised to stay on the trail as they pass several private homes, driveways, and boat docks in the next half-mile of trail. Landscape timbers border some of the trail. Mile marker 24 is passed, and the trail crosses a low area at the end of the cove, with lakeside jewelweed, swamp milkweed, morning glory and other flowering plants. The trail goes uphill and enters a wooded area, then downhill to arrive at the north side of Griffitts Keep Cove. Along this cove, the trail crosses another private easement and goes uphill along an electric utility power line cut. Large oak, beech, and maple trees are seen. The trail then moves downhill, and down a steep stairway, on a hillside along the edge of the cove. Several boathouses are seen. The trail continues downhill along the hillside bordering the cove, crosses a driveway that leads to a boat dock, and turns right at the end of the cove. A small foot bridge and a large drain culvert are crossed as the trail goes uphill close to a small streambed, then meets and crosses the East Coast Tellico Parkway close to the Griffitts Keep entrance road. The trail along the parkway is on gravel. It crosses over a private gravel driveway, goes downhill

through a “weedy” area with many wildflowers and grasses, and enters a wooded area. The ground is low, and the trail can be wet. A pond is seen between the trail and the parkway. A short foot bridge crosses over the pond outlet. Crawfish holes and millipedes are commonly seen along the trail, and the call of a bullfrog or two can often be heard. The trail goes steeply uphill and across two sets of timber-tread steps. The hiker has good views of the pond from the hillside. On the ridge at the top of the hill, there are views of the entrance to Foothills Pointe. The trail then goes downhill as mile marker 25 is passed, across a small stream, and back uphill into a pine forest covered with pine straw. The trail passes a sign identifying it as the Jackson Bend Branch of the East Lakeshore Trail and ends at the Peterson Road parking lot and trailhead.

The Morganton Branch of the EAST LAKESHORE TRAIL

Trail Parking

- 1) Wildcat Pointe parking lot off the East Coast Tellico Parkway (ECTP)
- 2) Peterson Road parking lot off Peterson Road and close to its junction with the ECTP

Trail Highlights

- 1) The 1-mile Wildcat Ridge spur trail passes through a beautiful mature forest along a high and dry ridge. There are many ravines extending downward from both sides of the trail. The area is quiet with no housing sites or road crossings. The spur trail ends at a bench overlooking the lake, with a view of the bridge across Route 411.
- 2) There are good views of Baker Creek and residential housing across the wide creek inlet into Tellico Lake, and there is a bench from which to enjoy the view.

Degree of Difficulty

The hike north from the Wildcat Pointe parking lot to the Wildcat Ridge spur trail, or hiking up to the spur trail when coming from the Tellico Industrial Park, is moderately strenuous, as is the spur trail itself. The rest of the Morganton Branch trail is relatively flat, with a few short up/down sections. The trail may be narrow or wet in some spots.

Local History

The Morganton Branch of the trail is named after the former town of Morganton. Morganton was a regional business center and small community at the confluence of Baker Creek and the Little Tennessee River from its incorporation in 1813 in Loudon County until its purchase by TVA in the late 1960s. Residents and merchants of Maryville and other local towns came to Morganton to buy and sell goods (including lumber from the mills on Baker Creek) to others in the Tennessee Valley and beyond, after Morganton became the last stop on a steamboat line

connecting it to Knoxville in 1831. A ferry in Morganton also carried passengers across the Little Tennessee River from the early 1800s until 1961. The highest point in Morganton was the cemetery, and it is the only part of the former town that is not now under water. The Greenback Heritage Museum and Public Library have more information on the history of Morganton and its residents.

Trail Description

Hiking north from the parking lot at Wildcat Pointe, the hiker passes the Wildcat Pointe trailhead kiosk (trail mile 28.5) and goes steeply uphill into a mature forest. Two wooded ravines are seen below the trail. At the top of the hill is signage for the 1-mile Wildcat Ridge spur trail. This is an out-and-back trail section, beginning and ending at the same point (ELT mile 28.33). A large cell phone tower surrounded by fencing is present close to the beginning of the trail; the trail proceeds alongside then past it, and into the woods. The spur trail is on a high ridge that drops off into ravines on both sides; the highest elevations (1040 feet) on the entire East Lakeshore Trail are on this ridge. The trail passes through an oak-hickory forest that is mature, with many large trees. The trail is dry. In addition to large oak trees (chestnut and/or chinquapin oaks, as well as red oaks), and hickories, there is a distinct group of 3 large tulip poplars toward the end of the trail. There are many large sparkleberry shrubs along the first half of the trail. The ridge is quiet, and no street noise is heard. I photographed a female Southern trapdoor spider in the middle of the trail in July; most people never see a trapdoor spider in their lifetime, so I was very lucky. The spur trail ends at a bench overlooking the lake, with a view of the bridge across Rte. 411.

Upon returning from the Wildcat Ridge spur trail, the hiker can continue north on the Morganton Branch trail. The trail goes downhill past many lowbush blueberry plants and some Solomon's seal, an area of moss and lichens, and a few yucca plants at mile marker 28.1. This forest is younger, with fewer large trees, as one proceeds downhill. The trail passes alongside a small streambed (often dry) and ends at the side of the paved road going into the Industrial Park. After crossing the road into the Industrial Park, the trail continues (mile 27.82) across a footbridge into a wooded section that is very close to the East Coast Tellico Parkway (ECTP). This trail section is mostly flat, subject to noise from vehicles on the ECTP, and weedy, with lots of poison ivy. The trail crosses the ECTP at mile 27.38 and continues downhill to the edge of a very wide section of Baker Creek where the creek embayment enters Tellico Lake. The trail here is weedy on both sides, with privet, Japanese stiltgrass, and poison ivy. At mile mark 27.9, there is a long boardwalk over wet ground. Trumpet creeper vines with red flowers in early summer are seen in the small trees that grow alongside the boardwalk. The hiker can stop at a bench on the edge of Baker Creek (mile 26.88) and enjoy the view across the wide creek inlet toward the houses on the other side of the creek, in the housing development on Morganton Road.

From the bench on Baker Creek the trail continues through lakeside woods and up a stairway to the end of a parking lot for the TVA Morganton campground. The campground is on the edge of Baker Creek and is used by the public for camping, swimming, and fishing. The trail continues

through the campground and woods and clearings and is sometimes wet. There is noise from vehicles on the ECTP, and little privacy. The trail then turns left to reach a set of stairs that lead to a guardrail on the ECTP, at the south end of the Baker Creek Bridge. After stepping over the bridge guardrail, the hiker walks over the bridge, then proceeds along the west roadside to a lift station. The trail turns left at the lift station toward the lake. Here there is a TVA sign indicating that the lakeshore clearing is a "Day Use Area". There is a view of the Morganton boat ramp across the lake; the boat ramp can be reached by car from Morganton Cemetery Road. Close to the day use area, kudzu grows rampantly. The trail proceeds from this lakeside clearing along the lakeshore to another clearing at mile 26.2. This site is also used by campers and has access to the ECTP from a small parking area servicing a fenced gas pipeline station. Proceeding north from this site, the trail stays very close to the lake. One may occasionally see a box turtle beside the trail, and there are a lot of kudzu vines and poison ivy here. The trail passes between shrubs on both sides, and one is likely to walk through spider webs. There is a good view from the lakeside of Foothills Pointe houses and boat docks. The hiker passes mile marker 26 (on the ECTP side of the trail). The trail then turns toward the ECTP, passes alongside and below a guardrail, then moves back into the woods (where English ivy, poison ivy, and privet are present). The hiker goes across a small bridge over a wet area, then up a stairway to a gravel path alongside the ECTP. The path reaches another pumping station, with a small parking area, and turns toward the lake and a small clearing. At lakeside is a large oak tree with a rope swing. From this clearing, the trail leads north alongside the lake, through a wooded area with beech, oak, and pine trees, and up to the gravel shoulder alongside the ECTP. The trail crosses the ECTP at mile 25.66. After crossing the ECTP, the hiker goes downhill on a gravel path and across a small bridge. The area is wooded and the trail is narrow with lots of stiltgrass and poison ivy. After a short distance in woods, the trail then goes uphill, across several wooden steps, across Peterson Road, and uphill in a pine woods and into the parking lot (mile 25.4). This is the end of the Morganton Branch trail section.