



Center to Center Volksmarch

Blue Ridge Parkway/Mountains to Sea Trail; Asheville, North Carolina

Welcome to the Blue Ridge Parkway/MST - Center to Center Volksmarch! Visit the home of the Southern Highland Craft Guild - with art galleries, craft store, and seasonal craft demonstrations; walk an undulating woodland trail; then visit the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center with its award winning movie and interactive exhibits detailing the history of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Rating: 3C, 11 km.

Start Point: Southern Highland Craft Guild Folk Art Center, Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 382.

Hours: January – March open 9-5 | April – December open 9-6. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year's Day

Directions to Start Point: *Note: Because the Folk Art Center is on the Blue Ridge Parkway, you cannot access it using a GPS.* From either direction on Interstate 40, take Exit 53A, Route 74A East, towards the Blue Ridge Parkway. After passing under the high Parkway bridge, turn right onto the Parkway access ramp. At the top of the ramp turn right (North) 2.7 miles to the Start Point at the Folk Art Center.

Alternate Start Point: Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center, Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 384.

Hours: 9 to 5 daily. The Visitor Center is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Directions to Alternate Start Point: Same as above, but turn at the sign marked Visitor Center and Headquarters.

Parking: Ample parking at both the Folk Art Center and Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center.

Restrooms and Water: At both the Start Point and Alternate Start Point.

Emergency Contact: Call 911 for all Emergencies.

POC: Nicole Shumate. Text (515) 822-5285, or email nicole shumate@paws-effect.org

Maps: Pisgah Map Company; WNC Trail Guide, South Pisgah Ranger District including Bent Creek.
Pisgah Map Company; WNC Trail Guide Grandfather Ranger District.

Links:

Southern Highland Craft Guild: <https://www.southernhighlandguild.org/folk-art-center/>
Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center: <https://www.blueridgeheritage.com/destinations/blue-ridge-parkway-visitor-center/>
Blue Ridge Parkway: <https://www.nps.gov/blri/index.htm>

Picture: The Great Craggies from the sanctioned section of the MST on Potato Knob near Mt. Mitchell State Park; WRP

Center to Center/Mountains to Sea Trail Volksmarch

Note: These directions describe the walk starting at the Folk Art Center. If you decide to start at the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center, begin with Step 15.

To start the walk:

From anywhere in the Folk Art Center Parking Lot, walk towards the main entrance of the Folk Art Center. You will pass a large information kiosk. Go to the kiosk and with the Folk Art Center on your left, look ahead for a short, pointed, wood post with an arrow on it next to the sidewalk. Start your walk at that post.

1) 0.0 km: From this post, cross the entrance driveway on a faded crosswalk passing a second short post. Curve around the parking lot to the right following the sidewalk passing one or two picnic tables along the way.

2) At the end of the sidewalk, bear left into the woods gently downhill following a well-worn path marked with painted circular white blazes or mounted white disks. You'll be following this trail, the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST), to the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center.

3) 0.7 km: After passing a few benches (the only ones you'll see on this walk), descend a set of steps and cross an access ramp to the Parkway. Re-enter the woods directly across the ramp on a well-worn trail.

4) 1.0 km: The trail rises up to a set of steps. Climb the steps and turn right along the shoulder of the Parkway crossing U.S. Route 70 (Tunnel Road) on a bridge. Continue along the Parkway shoulder.

5) Re-enter the woods on the right after passing a sign that points towards Black Mountain.

6) 2.0 km: The trail passes through a seasonally wet/muddy area reaching a fence stile at the edge of a field.

7) Pass through the stile and cross the field generally paralleling or walking under the Parkway Viaduct above heading towards stile on opposite side of field.

8) Pass through stile, cross street (watch for traffic), then cross Swannanoa River on bridge (Hardesty Lane). Immediately cross railroad and pass under Interstate 40 in tunnel.

9) Immediately after passing through tunnel, the trail turns right into the woods and climbs a long series of steps. At the top of the steps, the trail continues to climb steeply for a period of time.

10) 2.75 km: Pass under powerline at corner of chain-link fence. Trail continues moderate climb.

11) 3.8 km: Reach height of land (highest elevation) between the Folk Art Center and the Visitor Center.

12) 4.3 km: Reach "T" intersection with the Destination Center Loop Trail. Bear left at this intersection heading downhill towards Route 74. For the next kilometer, you will be following the combination of the MST and Loop Trail. The blazes may get a bit confusing here since the Loop Trail is marked with both yellow and blue circular blazes. You will return to this junction at Step 18 in 2.2 km

13) 5.3 km: The trail climbs a few steps reaching the Blue Ridge Parkway. At this point, the MST turns left crossing the bridge and heading ultimately to Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains. Our route, however, crosses the Parkway to the gap in the fence. Watch for traffic here.

14) Pass through the fence now following the Loop Trail (blazed yellow and blue) uphill towards the Visitor Center.

15) 6 km: Reach intersection with short trail that leads left uphill to the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center. Continue on the route by going straight ahead jumping ahead to Step 17.

This is a great time to tour the Visitor Center. Make sure to watch the film "The Blue Ridge Parkway - America's Favorite Journey." There are also interactive exhibits detailing the history of the Parkway as well as an Eastern National Bookstore, restrooms, and water. To reach the Visitor Center, turn left on this short trail and ascend to a parking lot. The Visitor Center is uphill to the right. Return to the loop the way you came.

If you are starting the walk here, enter the trail at the MTS Trail Access sign at the lower end of the parking lot.

16) Back at the Loop, turn left heading towards the Folk Art Center.

17) *6.4 km:* The trail turns right downhill on an old abandoned road. In a few yards the trail passes under the Parkway in a tunnel.

18) *6.6 km:* Reach end of the Loop at the intersection passed in Step 12 above. Turn left here heading uphill back to the Folk Art Center once again following the white-blazed MST.

19) *7.1 km:* Height of land (highest elevation) between the Folk Art and Visitor Centers.

20) *7.9 km:* Pass under powerline at corner of chain link fence.

21) *8.2 km:* At bottom of steps, turn left and pass through tunnel under Interstate 40. After the tunnel, cross the railroad tracks and river to the fence stile directly across the road.

22) Cross this stile and head towards a second stile on the opposite side of the field generally paralleling or walking under the Parkway viaduct.

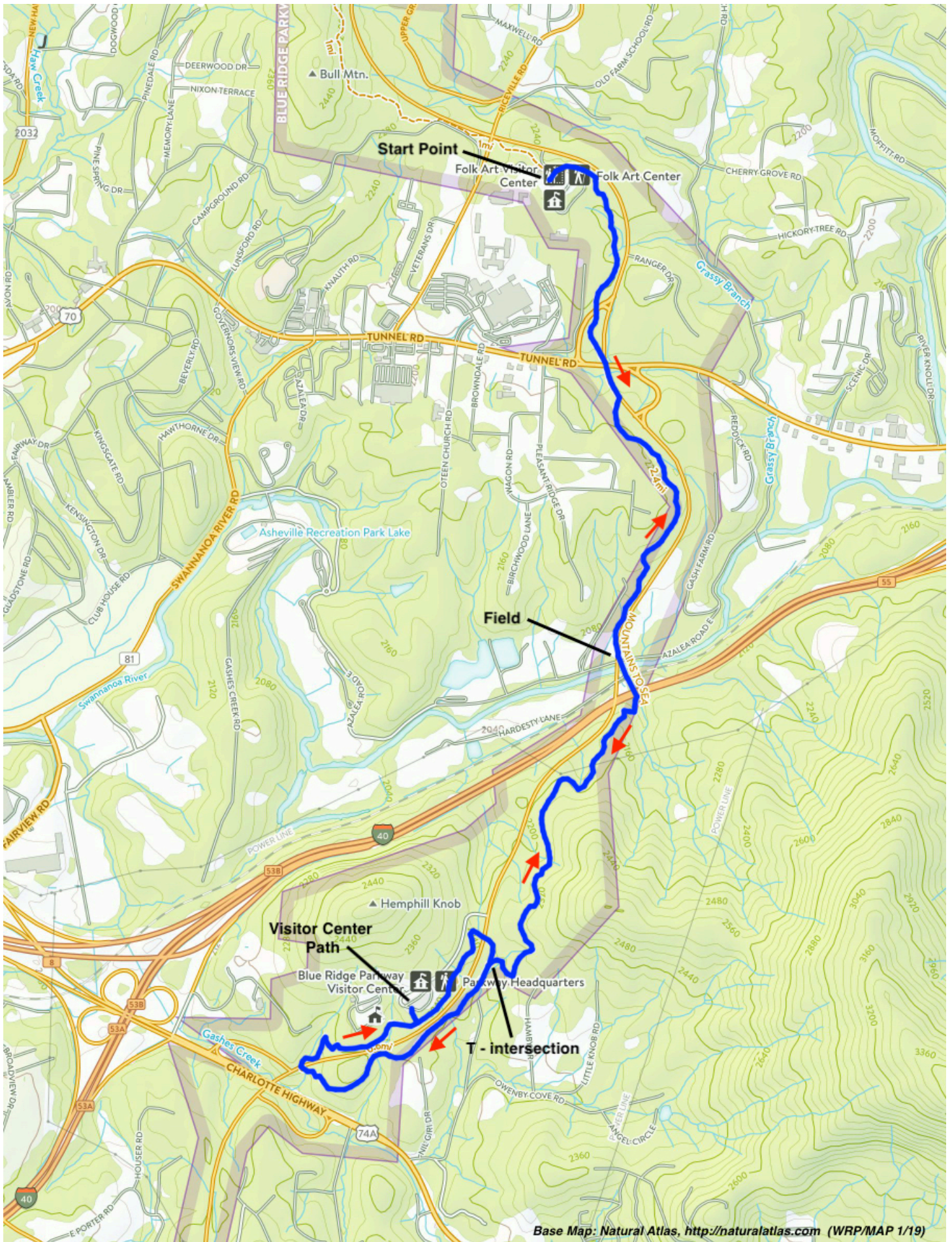
23) *9.8 km:* Reach the Parkway and turn left along the shoulder of the road crossing the bridge over U.S. Route 70 (Tunnel Road). Just after crossing the bridge, turn left descending a series of steps.

24) *10.1 km:* Cross Parkway access ramp and continue by ascending a series of steps directly across the road.

25) Emerge from woods and bear right on sidewalk around the edge of the parking lot to reach the information kiosk in front of the Folk Art Center. *11 km.*

This is a great time to tour the Folk Art Center. This is the Headquarters of the Southern Highland Crafts Guild. There are three galleries, a library and a large Craft store. There are also seasonal craft demonstrations. In addition, there is an Eastern National Bookstore as well as water and restrooms.

If you started the walk at the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center, go to Step 1 above. The walk ends at Step 15.



Sanctioned Mountains to Sea Trail Volksmarch

Pisgah Inn (on the Blue Ridge Parkway) to
Black Mountain Campground (Pisgah National Forest, Grandfather District)

The entire Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) from the Pisgah Inn and Restaurant to the Black Mountain Campground in the Grandfather District of the Pisgah National Forest, is now sanctioned as an official Volksmarch. Highlights along this seventy-one mile section of the MST, which threads through some of the east's most popular vacation spots, include:

Pisgah Inn and Restaurant: A fine restaurant with panoramic views of the Pisgah Forest, Campground, Picnic area, Campstore, Inn, and Gift Shop.

Buck Spring Lodge: Site of George Vanderbilt's mountain retreat.

Access to the Mt. Pisgah Summit Trail: A difficult 2.5 mile out-and-back hike to the 360 degree view from the summit of Mt. Pisgah.

The Shut-In Trail: Concurrent to the MST, this was Vanderbilt's route from the Biltmore Estate to Buck Spring Lodge.

Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center.

Southern Highland Craft Guild Folk Art Center.

Rattlesnake Lodge: Remains of Dr. Chase Ambler's early twentieth-century mountain retreat – a popular Blue Ridge Parkway destination.

Lane Pinnacle: A difficult ridge walk south of the Great Craggies.

Craggy Garden Picnic Grounds.

Craggy Garden Visitor Center: An NPS Visitor Center open seasonally.

Glassmine Falls: View of falls from the trail north of Craggy Gardens.

Blackstock Ridge and Potato Knob: Another difficult ridge walk south of Mt. Mitchell.

Mt. Mitchell State Park: Restaurant, concession stand, tent camping area, and miles of hiking trails

Summit of Mt Mitchell: The highest point of North Carolina with 360 degree 75-mile view.

"The Great Climb:" A six-mile, 4000 foot climb of Mt. Mitchell from Black Mountain Campground.

Black Mountain Campground: A USFS Campground along South Toe River.

Plus, dozens of side trails.

Some hikes along this section of MST can be quite difficult. Conversely, the section of MST in Asheville has been called the "Commuter Trail;" locals park at the numerous access points along the Parkway for their morning or afternoon run. We highly recommend that you further sample this scenic trail.

The Mountains to Sea Trail is a 1000+ mile trail that crosses North Carolina from Clingmans Dome in Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey Ridge State Park on the Outer Banks. The best place to read and learn about the Mountains to Sea Trail is from the Friends of the Mountain to Sea Trail website: <https://mountainstoseatrail.org>. The website includes MST trail guides, an interactive map, plus plenty of planning resources.

We suggest the following titles to increase your enjoyment of this trail section:

[Hiking and Traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway](#); Adkins, Leonard M.

[MST Trail Profiles and Maps: From Clingmans Dome to Mount Mitchell and Beyond](#); Weber, Walt et. al., Carolina Mountain Club, 3rd Ed.

[Segment 3: The High Peaks and Asheville: Pisgah Inn to Black Mountain](#); Available for free download from the FMST website. Click "Plan Your Hike," then "Download Trail Guides" on the planning page.

Note: *During the winter many sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway are closed due to snow or inclement weather. Refer to the Real-time Road Closure map on the Blue Ridge Parkway NPS website at <https://www.nps.gov/blri/index.htm>.*