

9. Daddy's Creek

Daddy's Creek is approximately 30 miles long and feeds into the Obed National Wild and Scenic River. Daddy's Creek is a nationally recognized white water run with seasonal rapids up to Class V. Small mouth bass, blue gill, muskie, otters, beaver, muskrats and fresh water mussels are a few of the types of animal life found in and along Daddy's Creek.

The flow of the stream varies depending on rainfall amounts. Look at the debris piled on the rocks. Can you guess how high the water level gets sometimes?



11. The "Perfect Tree"

This is an American Chestnut tree. Currently, it may live 10-15 years, but will die from a blight before it reaches maturity. The blight entered the US on an imported tree in 1904. By the late 1930's almost all of the 4 billion chestnut trees (25% of all trees in the Eastern US) were dead. It was considered to be the perfect tree...it was a dense, hard wood that was disease and rot resistant making it the tree of choice for building anything made of wood - houses, fences, barns and making all types of furniture, even coffins. The grain was straight so it was easier to cut and split. It was also the favorite wood for moonshiners because the wood did not produce much smoke when it was burned -helping to hide the still. The tree had a bumper crop of nuts every year providing plenty of food for bears, deer and turkey. Settlers used the nuts to feed their livestock. The loss of the American chestnut made life much harder for mountain settlers and wildlife.



10. Winter Visitor

Look at all of the holes in the Hemlock Tree in front of you. These holes were made by a winter migrator to this area - the Yellow Bellied Sapsucker. It is a medium sized woodpecker that is mostly black and white with red on its head and throat and a yellow belly (of course!). They drill holes in a tree, wait until the sap is running and come back to eat the sap and also any insects that are trapped in the sticky sap. Yellow bellied sapsuckers spend the spring, summer and fall in the northern part of the US and Canada.

Fairfield Glade Community Club
www.fairfieldglade.cc

Friends of Glade Trails
<http://time2meet.com/gladetrails/>

For more information about
weekly guided hikes, visit:
<http://time2meet.com/gladehikes/>



Have fun on our trails but be careful. You'll be in the woods, so beware of wildlife. Hiking can be exhilarating but also challenging so proceed only if you have no ailments precluding vigorous activity. Trails are marked with blazes on trees. Please stay on the trails and off private property. Foot traffic only. Hike at your own risk.



Overlook Nature Trail Guide

When you hike the 2 mile Overlook Loop Trail, you will see many types of trees and flowers that grow in the forest and along Daddy's Creek, rock cliffs that are 2 million years old and if you are quiet, you might even see some of the local wildlife - deer, river otters, muskrats, beavers, bobcats, salamanders, snakes, butterflies and more! Take your time and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.

Use this guide as you hike to learn about the plants, animals, geology and history of the area. At each point of interest, you will see a numbered post that matches the numbered points of interest in this guide. Stop number one in the guide is at the parking lot overlooking the gorge. It's easier to hike the trail clockwise, so start your hike at the trailhead sign that is just a short walk back up the road you came in on.

1. What makes the Cumberland Plateau so unique?

Rising more than 1000 ft. above the areas surrounding it, the Cumberland Plateau is a deceptively rugged, flat top table land that was formed 250 million years ago when continents collided. The plateau is composed of layers of soft limestone and shale, with coal mixed in, and is capped by a harder sandstone layer. It is the highest landform between the Rockies and the Appalachian Mountains and the longest expanse of hardwood forested plateau in the world! It is 450 miles long spanning parts of Kentucky, Tennessee and northern Alabama. This forest is home to many plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

As you stand at the overlook, the Crab Orchard Mountains, which are still on the Plateau, are in front of you to the East. Included in the Crab Orchard Mountains, is Black Mountain, which is 2828 ft. high and just visible to the South. The gorge below you (locally referred to as a gulf) holds Daddy's Creek, rock cliffs and shallow caves known as rock houses.



2. What plants and animals depend on small streams to survive?

Wet ecosystems provide habitat for a variety of plant and animal life including grasses, ferns, sedges and moss, snails, slugs, frogs, toads, newts and salamanders. The Cumberland Plateau and the nearby Smoky Mountains have the greatest diversity and highest

concentration of salamanders in the world. Salamanders are nocturnal amphibians that can live to be 50 years old. Their porous skin makes them very sensitive to toxins so they are a good indicator of the quality of



the water (similar to the sensitivity to toxic gases of a canary in a coal mine). They are also an important link in the food chain eating worms, snails and insects and are a food source themselves for bears, otters, frogs and snakes.

3. Tennessee's State Tree

The Tulip Poplar was chosen as the Tennessee state tree because pioneers would use the tree to build houses, barns and canoes. The tree, a member of the magnolia family, can also be used for medicinal purposes, such as teas and ointments. The tulip poplar is the tallest of North American hardwoods and can range from 100 - 150 feet tall. It is one of the fastest growing trees in the region. Poplars bloom in early spring and their large light green or yellowish flowers can be found under the trees after the flowers fall.

4. What's so special about a sassafras tree?

It's the only tree with 3 leaf patterns on the same tree - single lobe leaf, right or left hand mitten shape and a 3 lobed leaf. See if you can find all three types. Every part of the tree has been used by Native Americans and early pioneers - bark for perfume and soap fragrance; roots for tea, root beer, mosquito repellent and as a pain killer; leaves for seasoning and thickening soups; and wood for



making furniture. In addition, the bark is food for deer, ground hogs, rabbits and bears.

5. Traces of the past

The Plateau was inhabited as long as 15,000 years ago by bands of hunters. In the 1600-1700's this area was considered prime, seasonal hunting ground for Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaws and Shawnee Native Americans.

The road bed that you have been walking on is a remnant of the bustling logging industry that thrived in this area from 1879 to the late 1920's. In the 1800's, logs were transported using wagons and winches. Then in the early 1900's, trucks and narrow gauge steam engine trains were used. Coal was also mined in the area during the same period. Both industries rapidly declined in the late 1920's due to the great depression.

6. Redwood Trees of the East

Eastern Hemlocks are sometimes called the 'Redwoods of the East'. They grow only 1' a year but can live to be 800 years old, 150 feet tall and up to 6 feet in diameter. Hemlocks provide a special environment of dense shade that keeps forests and streams cool in the summer throughout much of eastern Tennessee, especially in the Smoky Mountains and on the Cumberland Plateau. The loss of the hemlocks would be devastating to the plants and animals that depend on the shade and food they provide. Their shade provides a cool habitat for rhododendron, mountain laurel, ferns and many other shade loving plants and their bark, cones and foliage provide an important food source for deer, turkey, birds and squirrels.

Hemlock trees are dying from woolly adelgid insect infestations. If not controlled, it threatens to kill all of the hemlocks. There is chemical treatment available

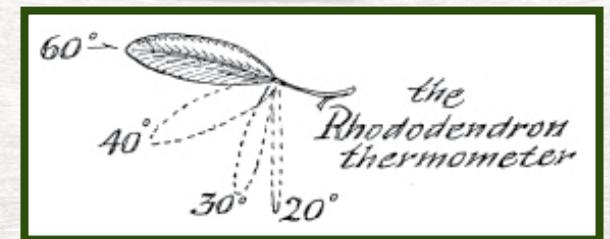


to kill the insects. There is also a type of beetle being introduced in the forests that preys on the woolly adelgid.

7. What do spoons and a thermometer have in common?

Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron are often found in similar areas - moist soil with a dense canopy made up primarily of hemlock trees. The Mountain Laurel grows 15-20 feet tall and has a very fragrant pink bell shaped flower that blooms in May. Rhododendron can grow to 25 feet tall and it's white/light pink blooms appear in mid to late June. The wood from both plants was used by the Native Americans and early pioneers to make spoons.

The rhododendron has another unique use - Native Americans used the leaves as a thermometer. When the air temperature is 40 degrees or higher, the leaves are open and flat. When the air temperature drops to 32 degrees, the leaves droop straight down. When the air temperature is 20 degrees or below, the leaves curl up to the width of a pencil. The leaves droop and then curl so that the plant can retain moisture in harsh winter conditions.



8. Rock cliffs and Rock houses

The rock that forms the cliff in front of you was laid down 500 million years ago under a shallow sea. The harder sandstone cap is more resistant to erosion than the softer layers below that are mostly composed of limestone and shale with layers of coal mixed in. It's this hard sandstone cap that forms the high cliffs, arches and shallow caves, or rock houses, which we see along Daddy's Creek and in many other gorges on the Plateau.