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Trail Descriptions

Stone Door Trail: This easy trail leads to the Great Stone Door and overlook along the edge of the gulf. (0.9 miles)
Laurel Falls Loop Trail: A short loop leading to a beautiful 25’ waterfall behind the Stone Door Ranger Station. (0.3 miles)
Laurel Trail: This easy trail is the shortest route to the Alum Gap Campground and makes a great return trail for hikes on the Big Creek Gulf or Rim trails. The many moist fern-filled hollows become the headwaters of Laurel Creek. (2.9 miles)
Big Creek Rim Trail: This easy trail follows the edge of the plateau above the Big Creek Gulf. It can form half of a loop using either the Laurel or Big Creek Gulf trails as the other half. Several very small streams are crossed. (3.2 miles)
Big Creek Gulf Trail: The rough, challenging trail leads through the gorge below and to the west of Stone Door to the Alum Gap Campground. Due to its difficulty, an overnight hike is recommended, although it can make a long, but rewarding day hike. (4.0 miles)

Stagecoach Road Historic Trail: In the 1840’s, this toll road was authorized for construction to connect McMinnville and Chattanooga. This section has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. (1.6 miles)

Greeter Falls Loop Trail: This loop leads to three waterfalls, numerous bluffs, and two historic sites. Terrain is very rocky under the cliffs and easy above. (0.8 miles)

Greeter Trail: This short trail connects the Alum Gap Campground with the Greeter Falls area. The first mile is an easy plateau walk with the last half-mile a moderate gorge walk. The falls are sometimes dry, but there is always a water hole at the bottom. (1.4 miles)

Connector Trail: This is the most challenging and strenuous trail in the Savage Gulf Natural Area. Several climbs and seemingly endless rocky slopes are crossed. It has connections with most of the other trails as it crosses the mouths of all three gulls. (8.7 miles)

Savage Day Loop Trail: An easy loop, all on the plateau top that gives the hiker a great variety of features. This trail is the access to several of the longer backcountry trails. (4.2 miles)

North Rim Trail: This is a long but easy trail with more overlooks than any other trail at Savage Gulf. It follows the edge of the plateau on the north side of Savage Creek Gulf. (6.3 miles)

Ranger Creek Falls Trail: This short trail leads to the falls and sink of Ranger Creek. Generally easy, the trail follows the dry streambed of Ranger Creek. Crossing the Big Creek streambed is required, which can be treacherous at high water. (0.4 miles)

Collins Gulf Trail: This difficult trail is designed to accommodate extended trips. Half the length is the Collins River Gorge and the other half is along the rim. The gorge section is closed during ice buildup around Suter Falls and during times of high water. (9.9 miles)

South Rim Trail: This easy plateau top trail follows the south rim of the Savage Creek Gulf, except for crossing Savage Creek at the beginning, and crossing Peak Mountain at the end. There are several short spur trails to overlooks, blazed in blue. (5.8 miles)

North Plateau Trail: An easy plateau top trail leading through beautiful old growth forest with several outstanding Shortleaf Pine stands. Except for crossing the Cagle Knobs, the trail is virtually flat. (7.1 miles)

Mountain Oak Trail: This easy 0.6 mile trail connects the North Rim and the North Plateau trails. Combination of these trails with the Savage Day Loop offers a 10 mile loop from the Savage Ranger Station. (0.8 miles)

Hiking:

Trail Regulations

Hiking: Hiking is allowed on designated hiking trails only. Remember to protect park features and the rights of other park visitors. Take pride in knowing that no one could tell you have used the trail after your visit. Hikers MUST be off trails by dark.
Litter: Savage Gulf operates on a carry-in/carry-out trash policy. All disposable items that you carry into the area should be packed out. If you come across litter that has been left by a careless hiker before you, you are encouraged to carry it out.
Camping: A camping permit MUST be obtained for each group. Camping is permitted in designated areas only. Cutting of live vegetation, littering, piling of rocks, and other activities that detract from the natural beauty of the area are prohibited. Campers should be at their designated campsite by dark.
Fires: Fires at campsites are to be built only in established fire rings. During dry weather periods fires may not be allowed. Only down deadwood may be used.
Collection of Park Plants and Animals: The collection of area plants and animals is prohibited by state law. Berries, nuts, and fruits may be picked in season.

Motor Vehicles: Motorized vehicles are prohibited on area trails. Horses and bicycles are also prohibited on hiking trails.
Rock Climbing and Rappelling: A permit MUST be obtained before rock climbing or rappelling. Rock climbing and rappelling is restricted to the Stone Door area only.
Other Rules: Firearms, fireworks, axes, hatchets, alcoholic beverages and drugs are not allowed on the park or area trails. Dogs and other pets must be kept on a leash at all times. Please adhere strictly to overnight permits. The park ranger may check campsites in the evening to see if campers have arrived safely. No overnight parking at the Greeter Falls parking area.