

NC Hike Peaks Hike Challenge		Rev. 2	10-Feb-2018				
Challenge No.	Trail Name	USFS Trail #	Trail Length	Difficulty	Blaze Color	Blaze Shape	Trail Notes
1	Bald Knob Ridge Upper trailhead at Parkway milepost 355	186	2.8	Moderate	White	Diamond	Deep woods hike along Bald Knob Ridge. Views to the North and West from breaks in the woods. No water sources.
2	Balsam Nature Loop (MMSP)		0.7	Easy	White	Triangle	Short easy trail with interpretive signs. Side trail to high mountain spring.
3	Big Butt Upper trailhead at Walker Knob Overlook (near milepost 360)	161	5.6	Difficult	White	Diamond	Balsam/Fir forest descending to hardwoods. Spectacular overlook at Little Butt. Side trail to Big Butt Near side trail junction is a small spring on trail.
4	Big Tom Gap	191A	0.4	Difficult	Blue	Diamond	Short steep trail connects BHRT and BMCT.
5	BMCT>Bolens Creek to junction Woody Ridge Trail Lower trailhead at end of Watershed Rd requires high clearance 4WD. Do NOT park at the cemetery on Bolens Creek Rd.	179a	4.6	Difficult	Orange	Triangle	Steep climb of 3000 feet from lower trailhead through rich cove forest. Follows Bolens Creek initially. Passes rough side trail to Celso Knob.
6	BMCT>Junction Woody Ridge Trail to junction Colbert Ridge Trail/near Deep Gap	179b	2.7	Difficult	Orange	Triangle	Gorgeous high altitude meadow-like sections with fantastic westerly views combined with deep Balsam/Fir forest and a steep climb up and down Winter Star Mtn. Water at campsite North of Winter Star.
7	BMCT>Junction Colbert Ridge Trail to Big Tom Trail junction	179c	2.3	Difficult	Orange	Triangle	Another spectacular section of the highest trail in the East. Ascend from Deep Gap and pass over Potato Hill and Cattail Peak. Be prepared to scramble over steep sections!

8	BMCT>Big Tom Trail junction to Summit Mt. Mitchell	179d	1.5	Difficult	Orange	Triangle	Cross Big Tom and Mt. Craig and finally reach the summit of Mt. Mitchell. Views from Mt. Craig and Mt. Mitchell.
9	Buncombe Horse (BHRT) from Colbert Ck Rd to Big Tom Trail junction Parking at lower trailhead.	191a	6.2	Difficult	White	Diamond	Climbs steadily to Maple Camp Bald (great camp spot) then more level to Big Tom junction. Some water sources.
10	Buncombe Horse (BHRT) Big Tom trail junction to Camp Alice	191b	3.0	Moderate	White	Diamond	Fairly flat but usually wet trail follows an old RR grade. Nice easterly view at cleared area. Water at Camp Alice.
Not part of challenge	Buncombe Horse (BHRT) Camp Alice to NC 128 This trail duplicates a section of the MST.	191c			White	Diamond	Shares trail with MST so NOT counted in the challenge. See MST 440c
11	Buncombe Horse (BHRT NC 128 to FS 472) Lower trailhead at twin bridges on FS 472. Upper trailhead is at the first gravel parking area on NC 128.	191d	4.6	Difficult	White	Diamond	Steep ascent from FS road through mixed forest. Top section is often wet.
12	Commissary (MMSP) Trailhead at Ranger Office.		2.0	Easy	Orange	Diamond	Spectacular views along this old RR bed. Continues past Camp Alice ending at a lovely camping area. Water at Camp Alice.
13	Colbert Ridge Lower trailhead parking on Colbert Creek Rd.	178	3.8	Very Difficult	Yellow	Diamond	3000' ascent with ecosystem changing from hardwoods to Spruce/Fir. Two rock outcrops provide nice views. Intermittent springs.
14	Devil's Den Trailhead at amphitheater in BMCG.	192	0.7	Easy	White	Diamond	Easy hike with one hill to climb. Check out the tree ID signs and learn your trees!
15	MST> Black Mtn Campground to Commissary Hill/BHRT Lower trailhead parking at kiosk across from BMCG. When reaching top at BHRT turn left and hike a short distance along BHRT to trail sign for MST section 440b.	440a	4.5	Difficult	White	Circle	The lowest section of the MST in this challenge climbs nearly 3000' from the South Toe. Camping and water near Higgins Bald. Includes Higgins Bald trail.
Part of 15	Higgins Bald	190a			Yellow	Diamond	Included with MST 440a

Not part of challenge	Mount Mitchell (portion parallel to Higgins Bald Trail) Except for this short section the Mount Mitchell trail is the same as MST 440a and 440b.	190			Blue	Diamond	included in MST 440a. Trail parallels Higgins Bald trail. Hiker can take either trail.
16	MST> Commissary Hill/BHRT to Summit Mt. Mitchell Trail joins the Balsam Nature Trail and ends at the Education Building just below the summit of Mt. Mitchell.	440b	1.3	Difficult	White	Circle	Final ascent through Spruce/Fir forest.
17	MST>Mt. Mitchell Summit to NC 128 Upper trailhead is just above the gift shop/museum on the paved trail to the summit.	440c	4.5	Difficult	White	Circle	Descend steeply from the summit and pass historic Camp Alice. Last 2 miles are nearly flat on old RR grade with several stream crossings.
18	MST> NC 128 to Walker Knob Overlook NC 128 trailhead is at the first gravel parking area on Mt. Mitchell Rd.	440d	4.6	Difficult	White	Circle	High Altitude hike in sub-alpine woods passing over Blackstock Knob at 6320'. Intermittent springs.
19	Old Mount Mitchell (MMSP) Trail starts at Ranger Office and ends near summit gift shop.		2.0	Moderate	Yellow	Circle	Another high altitude hike in the woods from Stepp's Gap to the summit of Mt. Mitchell. Stop at the restaurant (open May thru Oct) for a bite to eat!
20	Lower River Loop Can access from the Fishing Pier trail with parking on South Toe Rd. or from BMCG.	200a	2.5	Easy	Yellow	Diamond	Noted for wildflowers in Spring this trail closely parallels the South Toe River.
21	River Loop (River Loop- upper) Access from the kiosk across from BMCG or where it crossed the South Toe River on FS 472.	200	3.7	Moderate	Yellow	Diamond	Pleasant loop through hardwood forest with two crossings of the South Toe River.
22	Setrock Creek Falls Park at kiosk across from BMCG and follow Upper River Loop trail through campground toward Briar Bottom Group Camping area.	197	0.2	Easy	White	Diamond	Short easy trail with a beautiful waterfall as the reward.
23	Woody Ridge Lower trailhead on Shufford Creek Rd. Parking at trailhead.	177	2.2	Very Difficult	Yellow	Rectangle	Perhaps the steepest and most difficult trail in the Blacks it climbs nearly 4000' in just over two miles. No water on trail.

	Total Miles		66.4				
Abbreviations	BHRT = Buncombe Horse Range Trail	191					
	BMCG = Black Mtn Camp Ground						
	BMCT = Black Mtn Crest Trail (aka Deep Gap Trail)	179					
	MMSP = Mount Mitchell State Park						
	MST = Mountains-to-Sea Trail	440					
Notes	All mileages are one-way.						
	Weather conditions at the summits and on the higher slopes of the Black Mountains are often very different than in the valley. Temperatures can be 10 to 15 degrees lower with strong winds creating low wind chills. Be prepared for these conditions with extra layers. During warm weather lightning often strikes on the crest and slopes.						
	Be prepared for ice on these trails in winter.						
	Permanent sources of water on each trail are not generally available unless noted otherwise.						
References	Trails of the Black Mountains map by NC High Peaks						
	South Toe River, Mount Mitchell & Big Ivy Trail Maps by the US Forest Service						
	Interactive maps at http://www.nchighpeaks.org/node/26						
Other Area Trails Not Included in Challenge							
	Blue Ridge Pinnacle				Orange	Diamond	
	Crabtree Falls	CTF	2.6		Orange	Diamond	
	Green Knob Trail	182	3.2	Difficult	White	Diamond	
	MST>BMCG to Neals Ck (Relo)	440	2.0		White	Circle 3-inch	
	MST>Neals Creek to BRP (MP 346)	441	3.3		White	Circle 3-inch	
	MST>BRP to Buck Creek Gap (NC 80)	442	2.7		White	Circle 3-inch	
	Roaring Fork Falls	195	0.7	Easy	Blue	Diamond	