

# Big Jennings Creek - Cowbell Hollow

## Little Jennings Creek Loop Hike

6 Mile Loop Hike - Strenuous - Elevation Gain 1235 Feet

A Multi Use Trail with a Very Rocky, Muddy Footpath and Many Creek Crossings  
Hiked June 20, 2009

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*Directions to Trailhead:* Leave Greeneville on 11-E Bypass North. Drive past the Wal-Mart Supercenter and turn right at the first traffic light on Highway 107 toward Erwin. Continue for 5.1 miles, turn right and follow the signs to Horse Creek Recreation Area. Upon entering Horse Creek turn right immediately on the Old Forge Road and drive 2.8 miles to deadend at the Old Forge Campground.

Park and walk through a wooden arch at the upper left end of the campground. The trailhead is marked with a carsonite sign for Jennings Creek. Leaving the campground, you will immediately cross the creek, then cross again in about .1 mile. At this second crossing, you will see signs

indicating that Big Jennings Creek Trail goes to the left, while the right fork is the trail for Little Jennings Creek. You can hike the loop either way, but the left fork, which has more gradual climbing, is normally taken first. The Big Jennings Creek Trail is rather flat with a very good footpath although it contains seven major creek crossings. These crossings can be rock hopped in low water conditions but wading may be needed and should be prepared for when hiking this loop.

After you have covered about 1.2 miles you will come to the end of the Big Jennings Creek Trail at the intersection with the Poplar Cove Trail, which enters from the left, and the Cowbell Hollow Trail, on which you will continue straight ahead. After one more creek crossing, Cowbell leaves the creek and climbs steeply up the ridge on seven switchbacks. At 1.6 miles, you will see a very old sign pointing to Round Knob. After finishing the switchbacks, you will skirt the side of the ridge and reach a swampy, muddy area after 2.5 miles. Continuing the climb, you will reach the top of the ridge with an elevation of 3110 feet above sea level. As you start to gradually descend you will pass the trailhead for Little Jennings Creek. You can take this trail immediately or continue for a short distance to the Round Knob Picnic Area, which is a good place to take a break or eat lunch. Round Knob is a little over 3 miles from Old Forge by the route you have taken.

After your stop, return the way you came and take the Little Jennings Creek Trail. Little Jennings is very rocky and steep and has creek crossings too numerous to mention though most are not very wide. In several places you will be hiking down the creekbed and at other places you will need to watch the trail carefully to detour around muddy sections and blowdowns. At the bottom of Little Jennings, the footbed becomes a little less rocky and more pleasant walking. After covering nearly 6 miles, you will again see the sign marking the bottom of the loop. Be sure to turn left here and return to the Old Forge Trailhead.

### SYNOPSIS OF HIKE

Mile	Elevation	Description
0	1875	Trailhead at Old Forge
.2	1866	JCT Big Jennings and Little Jennings Creek Trails.
1.2	2200	JCT Poplar Cove and Cowbell Hollow Trails.
1.65	2420	Old Sign to Round Knob.
2.57	3046	Swampy Area
2.76	3110	Top of Ridge. High point in loop.
2.89	3096	Little Jennings Creek Trailhead.
3.16	3104	Round Knob Picnic Area.
6.01	1875	Trailhead at Old Forge.

