

Rough Butt Creek Falls



- Trailhead GPS Coordinates: 35.325486, -83.040226
- Route Type: Out-and-back
- Mileage Hiked: 2.8 miles
- Trailhead Temp: 70°F
- Min. Elevation: 2,720'
- Total Vertical Gain: 480'
- Difficulty: MODERATE (at high water) (easy dry)
- Hike Duration: 1:30
- Trail Traffic: None!
- Max. Elevation: 3,200'
- Avg. Elevation Gain / Mile: 343'

The hike to the falls begins at the intersection of Caney Fork and Ruff Butt Road, pictured here.



View along Caney Fork Road

I'd be following Ruff Butt Road for about a quarter mile before entering the woods... The road is private, hikers are welcome as long as they behave themselves... The road degrades to a two-track about a quarter mile in and soon runs right into Rough Butt Creek. I could see the trail road continuing up the hill across the stream so I made the dicey rock-hop across (which would be *very* tricky at high water) to continue on... After crossing the creek the road immediately started to climb the hillside away from the creek... After an initial steep grade the route leveled out a bit... Crossing a rather rugged slide area. Easy enough to cross on foot but if you're thinking of taking your four-wheel-drive up here be aware this section would involve some fairly serious rock-crawling... To my left the creek could still be heard but it was far, far below by this point.. Rounding this large rock cleft I would soon be reaching the important junction with Rough Butt Creek where I'd be turning off the road...

The path levels as it approaches Rough Butt Creek... As I approached the crossing of the creek a number of pretty cascades could be seen tumbling by below... Arriving at the ford of Rough Butt Creek. From here I'd be leaving the old road and following a faint scramble path upstream. To reach the path I'd be ascending the bank on the far side of the stream, marked by the break in the rhododendron seen in the left-center of this shot... the trail closely following the creek... The path from the road to the falls is only around a tenth of a mile long and stays quite close to the creek the whole way... At around thirty feet in height Rough Butt Creek Falls is no monster but it *is* a beauty... I was pleasantly surprised that, despite our run of recent dry weather, the falls was as full as it was. Also, I found the huge boulder poised at the upper brink of the cascade quite cool...