

GORGES STATE PARK

WATERFALLS



Rainbow Falls

Gorges State park is known for its many spectacular waterfalls and streams. Several plant species more typical of the tropics thrive where the constant spray from the waterfalls and plunging whitewater streams showers the sheer rock walls and slopes with mist. While few larger plants can establish a hold on the steep rocks surrounding the falls, a rich community of ferns, mosses and liverworts grows in the moist air and moderate temperatures.

Challenge: Take a picture of a fern, moss, or liverwort and then identify which of these three types it is. Also, include one fact about the plant, such as where it lives or how many leaves it has.

Safety Tip: Stay Alive, Play at the Base
Never play at the top of a waterfall. The current of the water can be deceiving and sweep you over before you have a chance to save yourself. Playing at the bottom is more fun and you can enjoy the view a lot better.



Detailed hiking directions can be found online.

Bearwallow Falls

Hike distance: .5 miles roundtrip
GPS for trailhead: 35.10130, -82.94529
Hike difficulty: Easy
Elevation changes: moderate

The following are accessed through Gorges State Park, however they are actually on National Forest Property and you can visit all three on the same hike.

Stairstep Falls

Hike distance: 2.5 miles roundtrip
GPS for trailhead: 35.08890, -82.95191
Hike difficulty: Difficult
Elevation changes: Moderate, with steep section down to falls

Rainbow Falls

Hike distance: 3 miles RT
GPS for trailhead: 35.08890, -82.95191
Hike difficulty: Moderate
Elevation changes: Moderate, with several steps up to the waterfall

Turtleback Falls

Hike distance: 3.4 miles RT
GPS coordinate of trailhead: 35.08890, -82.95191
Hike difficulty: Moderate
Elevation changes: Moderate, with several steps along the way.

Additional Waterfalls:

Waterfall Keepers of North Carolina
Junior Waterfall Keeper Waterfall Passport Program
www.waterfallkeepersofnc.org