**Lover’s Leap Loop Trail (on the AT)**

**Hiking the mountains of Western North Carolina**

Take a 45 minute drive to historic Hot Springs, NC, a designated “Appalachian Trail Community”, where the AT cuts through town and the community is very “hiker friendly.” This short 1.6 mile loop trail combines the Lover’s Leap Trail with the famed Appalachian Trail, starts out steep, but quickly gets you on the ridgeline, affording you outstanding views of the French Broad River and the town of Hot Springs. Start at the Silver Mine Trailhead parking area. Or, start in town, following the iconic “white blazes” of the AT north across the river bridge. You can extend your AT hiking experience in two ways: Continue northbound on the AT and combine it with the Pump Gap Loop Trail (4+ miles); or, follow the AT south of town for about a 6 mile out-and-back trip up and over Deer Park Mountain (elev. 2700 feet), stopping for refreshment at the 1938 CCC-built Deer Park Mountain Shelter. (Spring nearby; be sure to treat the water before drinking.)

**Length**: 1.6 miles  
**Elevation Gain**: 510 feet  
**Trail Type**: Loop (blaze orange and white)  
**Skill Level**: Moderate-to-Difficult  
**Duration**: 1 hour   
**Trailhead Elevation**: 1300 feet  
**Top Elevation**: 1810 feet

**Directions from Asheville**

1. From downtown Asheville, take I-240 to exit 4A ramp onto (future) I-26/U.S. Hwy 19/23 North toward Woodfin/Weaverville.
2. Drive 8.4 miles and take the US 25/70 exit, EXIT 19A, toward Marshall.
3. Continue on US 25 N/US 70 W for about 21 miles.
4. Turn left to stay on US 25 N/US 70 W
5. Drive < 5 miles and turn right onto River Road BEFORE crossing the French Broad River Bridge into town.
6. Turn left at T-intersection, go under the highway, and follow the signs to the Silver Mine Trailhead parking area.
7. **Alternative**: Cross the bridge, park in town, and follow the AT white blazes north to the trailhead.