

= Lake Winfield Scott =

Lake Winfield Scott is an 18 @-@ acre (7 @.@ 3 ha) mountain pond located 10 miles (16 km) south of Blairsville , Georgia in Union County . The lake , which is owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service , is the source of Cooper Creek . It is the centerpiece of the Forest Service 's Lake Winfield Scott Recreation Area , a park which features hiking , fishing , boating and other outdoor activities . At 2 @,@ 854 feet (870 m) elevation it is one of Georgia 's highest altitude lakes . The various habitats surrounding the lake support a wide assortment of plants and animals .

= = History = =

Completed in early 1942 , Lake Winfield Scott is a man @-@ made reservoir created as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps ' efforts to establish recreational areas in north Georgia . It was the final CCC project in Georgia and one of the last in the nation , completed just after the United States ' entry into World War II . It is located in the southern Blue Ridge Mountains near Blood Mountain .

The lake was named after General Winfield Scott , a 19th @-@ century United States Army general , diplomat , and presidential candidate . Known as " Old Fuss and Feathers " and the " Grand Old Man of the Army " , Scott was a hero of the Mexican @-@ American War and the first American since George Washington to hold the rank of lieutenant general .

By the late 17th century the Cherokee and Creek had begun to compete for the same resources and fought a battle at nearby Slaughter Gap . The Creek lost , ceding the Blood Mountain area to the Cherokee , who considered it a holy place . Archaeological evidence has been discovered that tends to back the story of the battle , but the date of the battle and its participants are still disputed .

In 1838 , the American Indians were removed from the area by General Winfield Scott and forced westward along the " Trail of Tears . " Farmers moved in later , and by the 1880s lumber companies began logging the area . On May 14 , 1938 , the lake was first opened to the public as part of the Forest Service 's multiple @-@ use plan for administering the Chatahoochee National Forest for the " greatest good for the greatest number of people . " During the 1990s , the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rebuilt and strengthened the lake 's dam .

= = Location and surroundings = =

Lake Winfield Scott is 4 @.@ 5 miles east of Suches on Highway 180 and 7 @.@ 1 miles west of U.S. Highway 19 / 129 near Vogel State Park . Two roads provide access to the park , although the north entrance is only for lake access . The south entrance leads to the campgrounds , hiking trails and lakeshore facilities . The hardwood forests surrounding the lake and in Sosebee Gap offer brilliant autumn displays , making it a popular destination during the leaf season .

= = = Wildlife and flora = = =

Like the rest of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains , the area surrounding the lake consists of many valleys , ridges and mountains formed by repeated plate tectonic movement and collisions , starting with the Grenville Orogeny nearly 1 @.@ 5 billion years ago . The resulting landscape created diverse topology containing many different species of plants and animal . Much of the area is similar to Pennsylvania in climate , vegetation and wildlife . The lake is near the southern limit for Eastern hemlock and Eastern white pine . Coves in the area vary by elevation and topography , with second @-@ growth oak and hickory more common in lower @-@ lying areas . Forests surrounding the lake contain rich , high @-@ altitude flora including rare wildflowers and ferns , such as Painted Trillium , which grows near Rhododendron . Boulderfields near Sosebee Cove include Dutchman 's breeches , squirrel corn , waterleaf and other herbaceous plants .

The lake area is populated with white tail deer , grouse and raccoon . The deer population , which was extirpated by 1895 , has rebounded since re @-@ introduction by park ranger Arthur Woody during the 1930s . Over 100 species of birds inhabit or migrate through the area , including native

songbirds such as the Canada , Blackburnian , Black @-@ throated Blue , Black @-@ throated Green and Chestnut @-@ sided warblers . Also found are hawks , owls , woodpeckers , kinglets , thrushes , vireos , cuckoos , phoebes , chickadees , titmice , nuthatches , brown creepers , wrens , tanagers , grosbeaks , indigo buntings and red crossbills . Migratory species are present during the late spring and early fall , making the area popular among birdwatchers . The creeks surrounding the lake are rich with different species of salamanders .

= = Recreation = =

The recreational area encompassing the lake includes camping , picnicking , boating , fishing and a variety of hiking trails . Motorcyclists refer to the area as the starting point of " The Georgia Triangle " , a scenic riding circuit beginning on Highway 180 .

= = = Fishing , boating and swimming = = =

The small lake is a local favorite for fishing . Lake Winfield Scott is stocked with rainbow trout and also contains local species of warmwater fish such as largemouth bass and sunfish . Also on the lake are a boat ramp , boat dock and swimming area with a sand beach . The Forest Service allows only man @-@ powered and electric @-@ powered watercraft on the lake .

= = = Camping and hiking trails = = =

The recreational area has camping loops offer 36 campsites , including 21 which can accommodate tents and RVs ; these sites provide utility hook @-@ ups . There is also a group camping area which accommodates up to 25 people . The area houses comfort stations with flush toilets and showers . There is also one cabin available for rental . The recreational area includes a children 's playground and picnic sites . The campground is open spring through fall and is administered by the USFS 's Chattahoochee @-@ Oconee National Forest / Blue Ridge Ranger District .

There are three trails at the lake . The 0 @.@ 4 @-@ mile (640 m) Lake Winfield Scott Trail circles around the lake shore . This easy trail has portions which are wheelchair accessible . Jarrad Gap Trail and Slaughter Gap Trail share a common trailhead , located on the lake 's southern tip . Both are approach trails to the nearby Appalachian Trail and are marked with blue blazes .

Slaughter Creek Trail passes through a hardwood forest on the south bank of Slaughter Creek for most of its distance , following a series of old roadbeds . It climbs 1 @, @ 000 feet (300 m) over its 2 @.@ 7 @-@ mile (4 @.@ 3 km) path to Slaughter Gap (elevation 3 @, @ 920 feet) , where it intersects the Appalachian Trail at the base of Blood Mountain . The trail passes through thickets of mountain laurel and rosebay rhododendron along the way , and crosses the creek at one point . Also present are excellent spring wildflower habitats . The summit of Blood Mountain is 1 @.@ 4 miles (2 @.@ 3 km) from Slaughter Gap along the Appalachian Trail .

Jarrard Creek Trail is an easy to moderate hike which leads southward 1 @.@ 2 miles (1 @.@ 9 km) to Jarrard Gap (elevation 3 @, @ 300 feet) on the Appalachian Trail . It follows Lances Branch creek through second @-@ growth hardwood forests . Jarrard Creek Trail can be combined with Slaughter Creek Trail and a 2 @.@ 1 @-@ mile section of the Appalachian Trail to form a six @-@ mile loop hike that starts and ends at the lake .