

## **Blue Ridge Parkway - Graveyard Fields**

**Driving Directions:** Take the Blue Ridge Parkway south from Asheville or from the junction with US 276 to Milepost 418.8.

**Hiking Directions:** Start from the overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Take the trail at the lower end (right side looking away from the Parkway) of the parking area. This descends down a paved path through a thick patch of rhododendron, down some steps and to a bridge. Cross the bridge, keeping right along the trail/boardwalk until you come to the first trail intersection to the right. At the steps, descend all the way down to the viewing platform for Second Falls. When finished at Second Falls, go back to just before the first bridge and continue to Upper Falls by continuing straight ahead. The next waterfall is just over a mile ahead. Make sure you don't accidentally take the trail right up to Graveyard Ridge. Most of the hike is fairly level. The last section has a bit of a climb. The trail splits just before the Upper Falls. Keep right to reach the main drop of the falls. On the return from the upper fall in about  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles, turn right off the trail to cross the river on a newer-looking wooden bridge. Continue on this trail to the exit at the upper end of the parking area. **Mileage:** 3.0 round trip

### **Information**

Graveyard Fields is an extremely popular hiking area of the Blue Ridge Parkway, America's most popular scenic roadway. The area got its name years ago from the tree stumps and surrounding trees that looked like grave stones in a graveyard setting. The trees were toppled by a huge wind several hundreds of years ago. Then in 1925, an intense fire burned the recently logged area, and the forest has been slow recovering ever since.

The Yellowstone Prong is the water source for two beautiful waterfalls - Second Falls and Upper Falls. Yellowstone Prong meanders along the valley floor, and the Graveyard Ridge looms in the distance.

Graveyard Fields is an extremely popular hiking area for hikers, picnics, and backpackers. There are 40 paved parking spaces. Parking is permitted only in the paved spaces. If the lot is full, park at an overlook to the north or south and walk back to the Graveyard Fields area. Tickets are given for illegal parking in grass and on road shoulders. It is best to plan your hike early in the day.

