

TRAIL OVERVIEW

SYCAMORE FALLS TRAIL

a. **Black Canyon Cascade** is made by the powerful currents from Little and Big Fiery Gizzard Creeks. Dark color comes from organic deposits on the rock. Mink have been sighted here, but you must be patient and quiet if you want to see them.

b. **Hemlock Nursery.** A clear area on a southern slope allows dozens of hemlocks to sprout up. Hemlocks, reindeer lichen, and a northern species of blueberry, moosewood, and others found their way here when it was much colder 12000 years ago. They took refuge in the cooler coves once the glaciers north of here retreated.

c. **Begin steep climb.**

d. **Boulder Field.** Typical rocky formation for the plateau offers a good workout.

e. **The Chimneys.** These sandstone pillars are made of sandstone that resisted erosion. They were likely surrounded by vertical joints dividing the rock.

f. **Sycamore Falls** displays a 12-foot plunge with a great swimming hole. You can walk to both top and bottom of these falls. Look across the creek for coal seams and rocks bent by collision with Africa several hundreds of million years ago. That spot was near the South Pole at that time.



Salamander in leaf litter along the trail

PRODUCED BY

Friends of South Cumberland State Park

FriendsOfSouthCumberland.org • FriendsOfSouthCumberland@gmail.com
Post Office Box 816 • Sewanee, TN 37375 • a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

TRAIL OVERVIEWS

FIERY GIZZARD NORTH TRAILHEAD

There are two trail sections within the Grundy Forest area of South Cumberland State Park, adjacent to the northern end of the Fiery Gizzard Trail: The Grundy Day Loop, and the Sycamore Falls Trail.

In Tracy City, the Fiery Gizzard North/Grundy Forest Trailhead offers access to the famed Fiery Gizzard trail, Raven's Point, the Dog Hole Trail, Grundy Day Loop, and Sycamore Falls, along with many beautiful falls, swimming holes, the Hemlock Grove backcountry camp site, and The CCC Camp Interpretive Loop. This brochure describes interesting natural and historic features of the Grundy Day Loop and the Sycamore Falls Trail.



Black Canyon Cascade
Sycamore Falls Trail

Grundy Day Loop Trail, 2.0 mi. total, is accessed from the entry behind the picnic shelter. The first mile of this trail is easy terrain across the Sewanee conglomerate sandstone that covers the plateau. The second mile descends into the head of the gorge and is considered moderate.

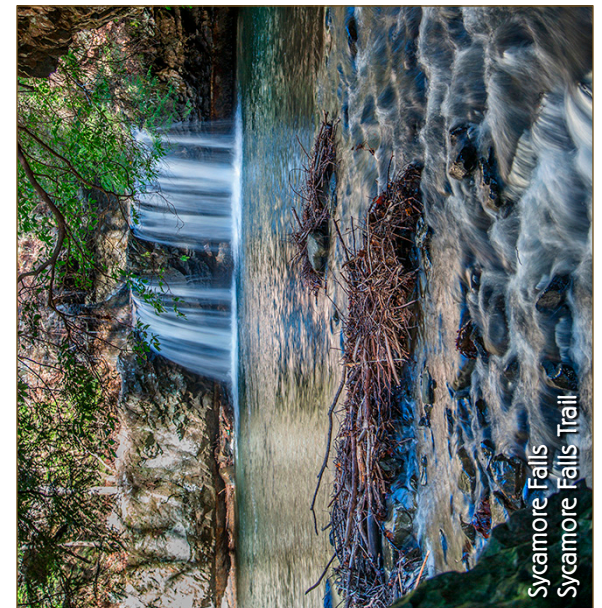
The trail also reflects the history of this area. You'll see old mines, native American hunting shelters, and maybe even a moonshine still. You'll even see the creek beside the trail flow in one direction for part of the hike and in another the remainder. Why is this?

Sycamore Falls Trail, a moderately difficult 1.6 mile out and back, begins as you cross the bridge over Little Fiery Gizzard Creek, just before it meets Big Fiery Gizzard Creek.

South Cumberland State Park NATURAL SCIENCE TRAIL GUIDE FIERY GIZZARD NORTH

INCLUDING TRAIL GUIDES FOR:

the **GRUNDY FOREST DAY LOOP**
and the **SYCAMORE FALLS TRAIL**



Sycamore Falls
Sycamore Falls Trail



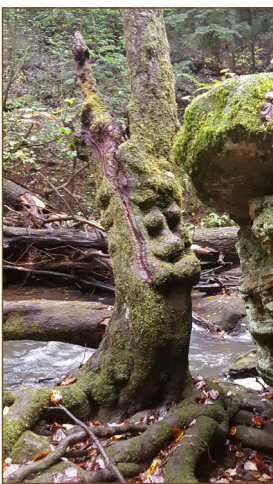
RESEARCHED AND PRESENTED BY THE
TRAIL FRIENDS INFORMATION TEAM
OF THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH CUMBERLAND STATE PARK

Don't forget to download the companion **interactive trail map** for this hike at FriendsOfSouthCumberland.org/downloadable-maps

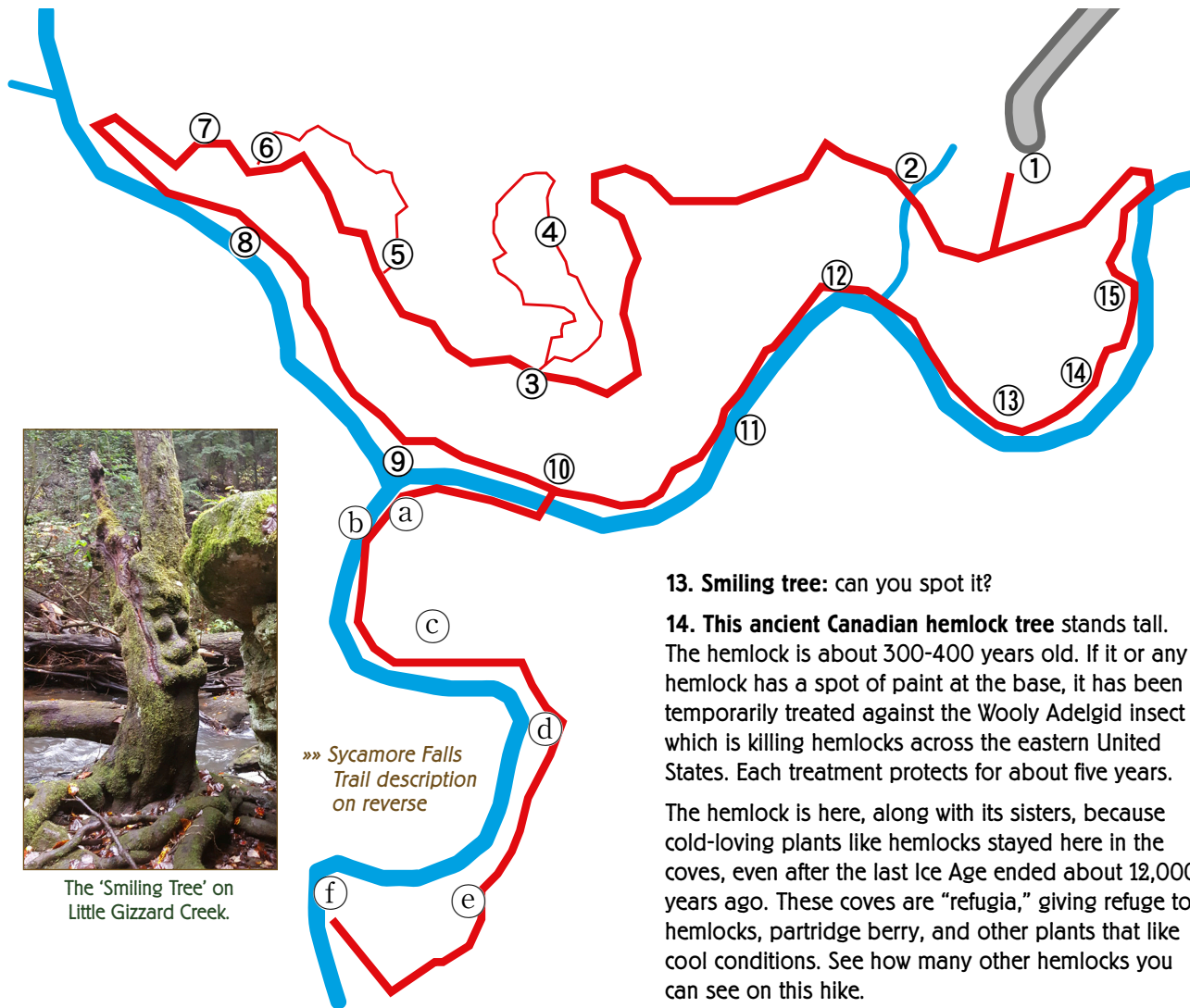
TRAIL OVERVIEW

GRUNDY DAY LOOP

- 1. TRAILHEAD.** Find the **white blazes** as you walk. White blazes show you the main trail, blue blazes show offshoots such as a path to a campground. Continue straight ahead at the first intersection to continue on the Day Loop.
- 2. Bridge over Schoolhouse Branch.** This stream originates on the Tracy City Elementary School property and crosses the trail twice.
- 3. CCC Camp Interpretive Area,** to your right, is a 0.3 mi. loop walk through the remnants of a CCC camp that was once here. Large placards tell a vivid story.
- 4. Deer live in the Grundy Forest** and when you hike early, you may see some near here.
- 5. Hemlock Grove Campground East entrance.** Follow the blue blazes to walk the 0.17 mi. campground loop.
- 6. Hemlock Grove Campground West entrance.**
- 7. These creeks** are home to many Tennessee native salamanders and reptiles. Can you find one?
- 8. Hanes Hole Falls.** You are on the less travelled side of the day loop, as the Thoreau quote on the railing tells you. Can you find it? Hanes Hole is upstream from the falls and is a local favorite for swimming.
- 9. Big Fiery Gizzard Creek meets Little Gizzard Creek** and they flow along together in the cove. This gives the surprising effect that the creek flows one direction on the first part of the Grundy Day Loop and a different direction on the second! Did you notice that?
- 10. Keep straight for Day Loop.** You're 1.3 mi. from the beginning of the loop, 0.7 from the end. Cross the bridge here for the Fiery Gizzard Trail, Raven's Point, Dog Hole Trail and Sycamore Falls Trail.



The 'Smiling Tree' on Little Gizzard Creek.



»» Sycamore Falls
Trail description
on reverse

- 11. Dog Hole Mines** are seen across the creek. A dog hole mine was made as pioneers dug out narrow seams of coal in the 1800's. The name came from the idea that a dog could stand up in these mines, but a person could not.
- 12. Blue Hole Falls** is an excellent swimming hole. Beside it remains the foundation for the 1930's era Civilian Conservation Corps water pump house. Don't jump in; watch for black rocks; they are very slippery because of fungal, algal and microorganism growth.

13. Smiling tree: can you spot it?

14. This ancient Canadian hemlock tree stands tall. The hemlock is about 300-400 years old. If it or any hemlock has a spot of paint at the base, it has been temporarily treated against the Woolly Adelgid insect which is killing hemlocks across the eastern United States. Each treatment protects for about five years.

The hemlock is here, along with its sisters, because cold-loving plants like hemlocks stayed here in the coves, even after the last Ice Age ended about 12,000 years ago. These coves are "refugia," giving refuge to hemlocks, partridge berry, and other plants that like cool conditions. See how many other hemlocks you can see on this hike.

15. The Cave Spring Rock Shelter would have been an ideal base for native American hunting parties. Top layer of this shelter is a rock called Sewanee conglomerate. All layers are sandstone. Native Americans lived on the richer land of the Highland Rim but hunted seasonally on the plateau. Is the spring visible today?

From here, take the rock staircase out of the canyon and return to the trailhead by turning right at the junction with the other leg of the trail.