

Naked Ground Hangover



Difficulty	Moderate
Hike Distance	12 miles
Type of Hike	Loop
Total Ascent	4,140 ft
Land Manager	USFS
Fee	None

At Naked Ground there is a major trail junction with trails going in all directions.

Have you ever wanted to watch the sunrise from your sleeping bag? If you're fortunate enough to get the right tent site up at Naked Ground, your wish could be granted. This popular destination in Joyce Kilmer–Slickrock Wilderness Area is high on the list of must-dos for anyone backpacking in the North Carolina mountains.

Your overnight tramp starts at the entrance to the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest where old-growth tulip poplars and hemlocks tower over the land. You won't hike through the Memorial Forest proper, but on your way up Naked Ground Trail you'll pass underneath some monsters. The last mile or so before reaching Naked Ground is pretty steep, but the switchbacks make it bearable, and regardless of where you actually set up shelter, your night out here will be memorable.

Day two begins with a slight climb up toward Hangover Lead, where you definitely will want to detour over to the "hangover" for the amazing 360-degree view before coasting back down the mountain, out of the wilderness and eventually back to civilization.

Getting to the Trailhead

From the traffic light in Robbinsville, drive north on US 129 for 8.2 miles. Turn left on Joyce Kilmer Road and continue another 6.0 miles to the entrance to Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Park here at the Jenkins Meadow Trailhead immediately on the left. Overnight parking is not allowed at the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Trailhead.

GPS Coordinates

N 35° 21.74' W 83° 55.29'



Hiking Directions

Begin Walk along the pavement for the first half-mile.

Mile 0.5 Continue out past the information station and onto the combined Naked Ground and Joyce Kilmer Memorial Loop Trails.

Mile 0.8 Bear right on Naked Ground Trail as JK Memorial Loop heads off to the left.

Mile 1.1 Naked Ground Con-

necter Trail enters from the right. Stay straight on Naked Ground Trail, then bear right as the trail splits into lower and upper trails. There is a good campsite just down the left split if you are in need of one.

Mile 2.2 Here you'll reach the second campsite, a small one with room for 1 or 2 tents. Water is from the adjacent creek.

Mile 2.5 A very small campsite here has room for a single tent. Another (just barely larger) site is located a little farther along. Water is from the adjacent creek.

Mile 3.9 After hiking through an area of very large trees, you'll reach the last campsite before the trail begins to climb steeply toward Naked Ground. This is a relatively small site just big enough for a few tents. Water is from the adjacent creek.

Mile 5.7 Reach Naked Ground, a major trail intersection and your best bet for a campsite. It comes complete with an awesome view facing east. Yes, you can watch the sunrise from your sleeping bag! Water is from a small spring 100 paces down Slickrock Creek Trail. Turn right onto Haze Lead Trail.

Mile 6.6 This is the high point of the hike. Turn left on Hangover Lead Trail for the short detour out to the "hangover."

Mile 7.0 Deep Creek Trail will enter from the right, and then the trail opens up in a high meadow with several dry campsites just beyond it. A little farther on you'll

Naked Ground (cont.)

reach the “hangover.” Enjoy one of the best views in this wilderness area, then return to the high point and turn left to continue on Hooe Lead Trail.

Mile 8.6 Turn right on Jenkins Meadow Trail, which leads down the mountain.

Mile 11.0 Naked Ground Connector Trail exits right. Stay straight on Jenkins Meadow Trail.

Mile 12.0 Finish where your car is parked in the overnight lot.

