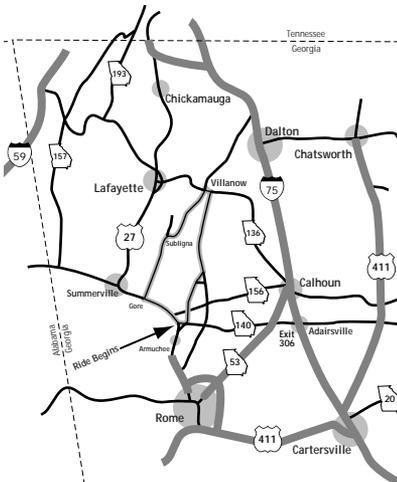


Ridge & Valley Scenic Byway

Perhaps one of the best-kept secrets of Georgia motorcycle riding, this short, scenic route passes through the Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area and part of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Rolling farmland and quiet tree-canopied roadways are what it's all about.



GAS

Gas is available before you start this ride, in Adairsville. Once you turn on Floyd Springs Rd., you won't see a gas station until you reach Villanow (23 miles). You'll also find gas at mile 41.6 on US 27.

GETTING TO THE START

From I-75 go west on GA 140 (exit 306) through Adairsville. The ride begins about 20 minutes off the interstate as you turn right onto Floyd Springs Rd. Be sure to zero your trip meter at the beginning if you want to keep up with the mileage points listed in this chapter.

RIDE OVERVIEW

After turning off of GA 140 onto Floyd Springs Rd., you'll immediately notice the lack of traffic. Turns are sweeping here at the ride's beginning; the curves come later. Resist the temptation to go fast in the straightaways; cattle and deer in the roadway are common hazards here.

Be prepared for sudden twists in the road about 7.5 miles into this ride; there are no signs to warn you ahead of time. Also, the road narrows a bit, making it really exciting. If the unmarked twists and turns or the livestock in the roadway haven't increased your heart rate, the views ahead will.

As you ride north, the craggy ridge of Johns Mountain looks down at you. This little valley has mountains on each side, and the scenery is spectacular.

Continue straight onto Lover's Lane after Floyd Springs Rd. makes a 90-degree turn. Lover's Lane is a short piece of road, at the end of which you'll find Touchstone Bros. Store. They closed some years back, so don't expect to gas up there. From Lover's

Lane, a left onto Everett Springs Rd. takes you to the Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area and part of the Chattahoochee National Forest.

As you enter the Wildlife Management Area, the road begins to parallel Johns Creek. The sound of the rushing water and its cooling effect on a hot summer day will be welcomed by any motorcyclist. This area is popular with locals, and many camp on the roadside to enjoy the benefits of this little stream. Someone has dammed up a short section of the creek to create a swimming hole, complete with a rope swing, on the right side of the road. If you take your swimsuit, you can have at it.



Farmyards and old barns dot the landscape as you travel the Byway.

Of the many places to stop in the Wildlife Management Area, the Keown Falls Scenic Area stands out, offering views of Keown Falls and, more spectacularly, the Johns Mountain overlook. From the small wooden observation deck, look back up the valley through which you've just traveled. The driveway and parking lot for the scenic area is paved.

From the Wildlife Management Area, you'll return to civilization by way of

TOTAL DISTANCE
50 miles

TIMEFRAME
1 to 1½ hours from start to finish. Add time for stops and getting to and from the ride.

the little town of Villanow. There are two theories on the origin of the name Villanow. One is that it got its name from Jane Porter's novel, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. However, residents prefer the theory that the name came from the phrase, "We're a village now!"

At the intersection of GA 136 and West Armuchee Rd. is the Villanow Country Store. Marty and Sharon Vess bought the little store from Rodney and Ebeth Edwards in November of 1999. Its first owner, Mr. Cavender, opened the business in 1840, and it has been a country store ever since. According to its new owners, it's the oldest operating store in the state. Mr. Cavender offered everything the townspeople might need, from fresh produce to hardware and candy to clothing and coffins. These days the Vess's don't sell coffins. They do sell everything else Mr. Cavender sold, plus some of the more modern conveniences, like gas for your motorcycle.

The second half of the ride is quite different from the first. The shaded canopy is replaced by rolling hills and gently sweeping curves. You'll be riding toward Subligna. No, Subligna isn't a medical term, although it does sound right in the sentence, "Doctor, my subligna is swollen." Subligna is a small town consisting of one grocery store and one stop sign. And, Subligna is just plain fun to say.

More sweeping curves and quiet farms lie ahead. Soon you'll be turning left onto US 27, a freshly paved, divided four-lane. The ride ends when you turn left, back onto GA 140 toward I-75.

RIDE ALTERNATIVES

There are two major alternative routes on this ride. The first is to skip the second half of the ride altogether. To do this, turn right onto GA 136 after leaving the Wildlife Management Area. GA 136 is a scenic little roadway in its own right and leads you to I-75 in the city of Calhoun. The second alternative is to skip the last five miles of the ride by turning right onto US 27 and head toward Summerville, just ten minutes away. The Pigeon Mountain (p. 86) and Lookout Mountain Loop (p. 94) rides start just north of Summerville.

ROAD CONDITIONS

In a word, *unmarked*. There are many unmarked twists and turns on this ride. The asphalt is in great condition with a few exceptions. These exceptions are on Pocket Rd. (just before you get to GA 136) and Lover's Lane. Both have potholes that pose a real hazard. Cattle and deer are everywhere along this ride, so watch your speed.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Johns Creek (swimming hole), Keown Falls Scenic Area (falls and overlook), and the Villanow Country Store.

RESTAURANTS

Restaurants are nonexistent on this route. One good idea is to stop at a restaurant in Adairsville before you start the ride, get your order to go,

then enjoy it on the banks of Johns Creek. Another option is to wait until you reach Summerville, at the end of the ride, to eat at one of the fast food outlets there. For snacks along the way, try the gas station in Villanow or the Villanow Country Store.

DETAILED DIRECTIONS

MILE 0—Start by turning north onto Floyd Springs Rd. from GA 140 (that's a right turn if you're coming from I-75).

MILE 2—Straight across GA 156. *Watch out; the road gets mighty twisty near mile 7.5.*

MILE 8.2—Straight onto Lover's Lane (Floyd Springs Rd. turns off to the right).

MILE 9.2—Left onto Everett Springs Rd. (Lover's Lane ends). *You'll enter the Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area and the Chattahoochee National Forest at mile 13.6. Don't pass up the Keown Falls Scenic Area at mile 18.*

MILE 20.8—Bear left onto Pocket Rd.

MILE 23—Left onto GA 136.

MILE 23.3—Left onto East Armuchee Creek Rd. *Welcome to Villanow! Stop in at the Villanow Country Store and see what a home improvement warehouse looked like in 1840.*

MILE 33.3—Left at the end of East Armuchee Rd. onto West Armuchee Rd. (also known as Gore-Subligna Rd.).

MILE 41.6—Left onto US 27.

MILE 50—Left onto GA 140 finishes this ride.

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