

Cochran Mill Park is the place to go for waterfalls near Atlanta.

Type	Hybrid
Parking	Plentiful
Toilets	Yes
Land Manager	City of Chattahoochee Hills
Fee	\$5 pv
Access	Paved road
Special Rules	Yes*

* Open 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. Trails closed when wet—check trails status at cochranmillpark.com.

Cochran Mill Park is one of the more interesting places to ride a mountain bike in all of the Atlanta metro area. Here you'll find five waterfalls on two different streams—Bear Creek and Little Bear Creek. Though on the southwest side of Atlanta, this hybrid system of trails really gives you a feeling of riding in the mountains. Along with the waterfalls are flowering plants like wild azalea, atamasco lily, and red buckeye. Take a ride here in mid-April and you're likely to see all three blooming along the hillsides and beside the streams.

Navigation is easy on Cochran Mill Park's miles of well maintained and superbly constructed trails. Look for diamond-shaped, colored plastic blazes on the trees as you ride along. Generally they'll be on your right if you're heading away from the trailhead and on your left when you're heading toward it. All major intersections are marked with trail wands denoting the blaze color of the trail, the shortest route back to the parking lot, and which user groups are allowed on that particular section.

Currently the two bike trails on the west side of Cochran Mill Road are separated by Bear Creek. Unless you want to get really wet, you'll ride them individually or link them by returning to the parking lot. On the east side of the road, Bear

Creek again separates two trails, but there is a good bridge on one end and a tricky dam-top move on the other that will connect them. Ride the loops separately for 2- to 8-mile spins or combine them all for an outside loop of nearly 20 miles.

Getting to the Trailhead

From I-85 take exit 69; from I-285 take exit 62. Merge onto GA 14 Spur W, then onto South Fulton Parkway. Continue 12.5 miles and turn right on Cochran Mill Road. Go 0.4 mile and turn left to the trailhead and picnic area.

Street Address 6875 Cochran Mill Road, Palmetto, GA

GPS Coordinates

33.572036, -84.713925

Cochran Mill Park Routes

Yellow Trail

Distance 8 miles
Difficulty Moderate
Surface Single track
Trailhead Cochran Mill Park

Yellow Trail takes you all the way out to Henry's Mill Falls on a newer trail designed with mountain biking in mind. It's one of those routes where the destination is great and the getting there is awesome. Expect plenty of ditch dives and ravine dips as well as some small boulder fields. There are tight turns, but not so many. Much of the route is along the side and over the top of a ridge high above Bear Creek. Hang lefts at most intersections to arrive at the falls after



you've done most of the hill climbing and not before.

Red Trail

Distance 5 miles
Difficulty Moderate
Surface Single track, paved road
Trailhead Cochran Mill Park

Like Yellow Trail, Red Trail takes you out to Henry's Mill Falls. On Red you're on the other side of Bear Creek, and it takes you to a big sandy beach below the waterfall—a fun place to hang out. Some of this route makes use of the original trail out to the falls, which closely follows the stream; parts of this stretch are sandy and eroded, making the going a bit more difficult. Ride the loop out alongside the creek first, then return over the hilly northern section.

To start this ride, you'll need to head north on Cochran Mill Road, across Bear Creek, and then up the hill just a short distance. Look for the trail wand where you'll enter the woods. Turn left at each intersection you come to.

Orange Trail

Distance 2 miles

Difficulty Easy

Surface Single track, paved road

Trailhead Cochran Mill Park

If you ride only Orange Trail, it's a pretty short spin on a mostly wide trail. This gives it the easy rating, but be forewarned that the stretch that parallels Bear Creek is narrow and steep and some portions near Little Bear Creek are severely eroded. For a longer ride, connect this route with Green Trail. There is a good bridge nearer to Cochran Mill Road and a tricky, top-of-the-dam crossing up above the farthest waterfall.

Start this ride by riding north on Cochran Mill Road to the second trail heading into the woods on the right. It's a short distance before the road bridge over Bear Creek. You'll return this way as well, unless you want to ford Little Bear Creek under the old dilapidated steel bridge.

Green Trail

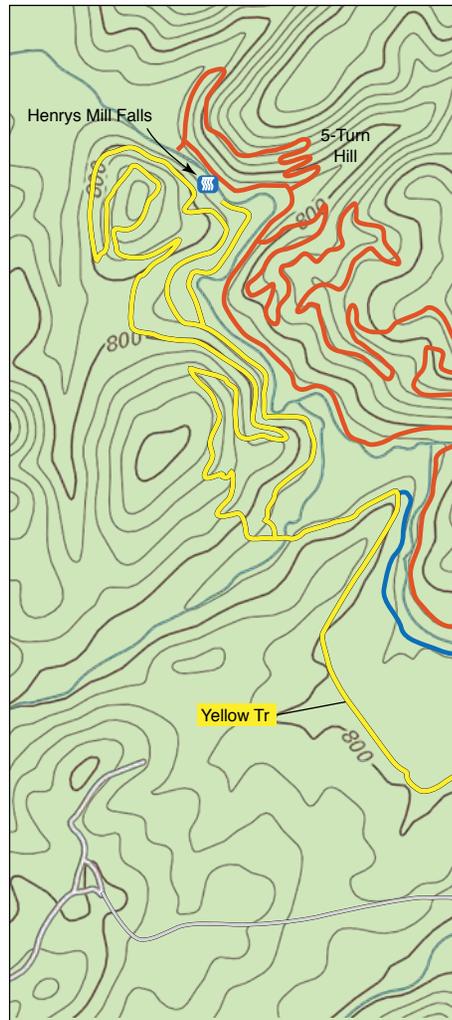
Distance 4 miles

Difficulty Moderate

Surface Single track, paved road

Trailhead Cochran Mill Park

This trail follows the north side of Bear Creek on the east side of Cochran Mill Road and crosses a ridge to the Cochran Mill Nature Center. You'll see plenty of people around the nature center, school groups in season and all types on weekends—so many that you might want to avoid this trail during peak times. Where the trail follows the creek, the going is slow. You'll ride



over big roots and slick portions of bare rock. It's also the best trail for viewing the three waterfalls along that section of the creek.

Access this trail as for Orange Trail, then go left over the wooden bridge. You can reconnect to Orange Trail on the far end, at the top of the dam.

