

Carvers Gap

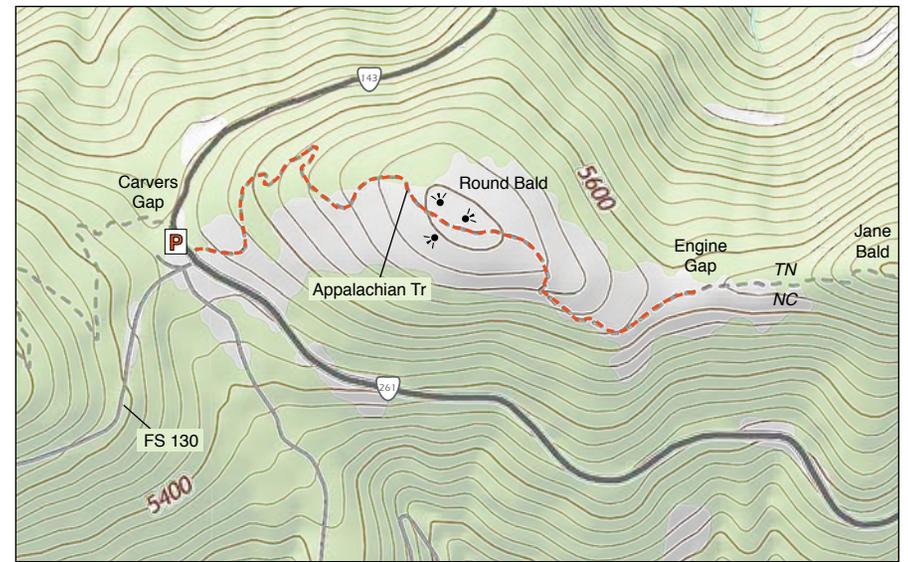


Gray's Lily

There are many good reasons to take a walk out from Carvers Gap. One is to spot the rare Gray's lily that blooms here in early July. This is one of the best places in the Southern Appalachians to view this elusive bucket-list wildflower. No worries, though, if you miss the bloom; this is a wonderful place all on its own. Just a short walk up the ridge from the trailhead opens up views in all directions. Look east and you can see open balds and waves of blue ridges. Look west to see the Roan Mountain massif. There are large stands of Catawba rhododendron and flame azalea off in the meadow and small clumps of bluets right at your feet. Come in August for the spectacular bloom of Roan Mountain goldenrod, when the entire bald glows like a golden sunrise.

Star Attraction

Gray's Lily This lily is extremely rare, though if you are in the right place at the right time, you may see large numbers of individual plants—a real treat. The best place in North Carolina to find them is around Roan Mountain in early July. You can also see them at Elk Knob State Park (p. 156).



Distance	2 miles
Primary Forest Type	Grassy Bald
Other Forest Types	Spruce-Fir
Best Season	June thru August
Parking	Plentiful
Toilets	Yes
Land Manager	USFS
Fee	None
Access	Paved road
Excursion Type	Walk

Getting to the Trailhead

From Bakersville, NC, take NC 261 north for 13.0 miles to Carvers Gap. The trailhead is on the left.

GPS Coordinates

36.106481, -82.110421

Walking Directions

Gardens Cross the highway and head north on the Appalachian Trail as it climbs Round Bald.

Mile 0.7 Reach the top of Round Bald. The views here are fantastic. Spend some time exploring around. There are great clumps of Catawba rhododendron and flame azalea here, as well as a tiny patch of spruce-fir forest.

Mile 1.0 The trail comes down to a saddle that is Engine Gap. If you've timed it right and look closely, you should find a few Gray's lilies popping up through the grass. Return the way you came.

Mile 2.0 Finish where you began.