



Hikes and Other Adventures Around Bonclarken

The roads through the residential areas of Bonclarken also serve as walking paths. Be sure to watch for the white squirrels. The half mile walk around the lake is easy and worth the time, as is a walk through the meadow next to the soccer field.

There are scores of good hikes within 45 minutes driving time of Bonclarken. Following are some of our favorites, starting with the closest. All times are from Bonclarken front gate. (Most interesting for children are Sandburg, Holmes, Pisgah Hatchery and WNC Nature Center.)

Please note that travel times are approximate.

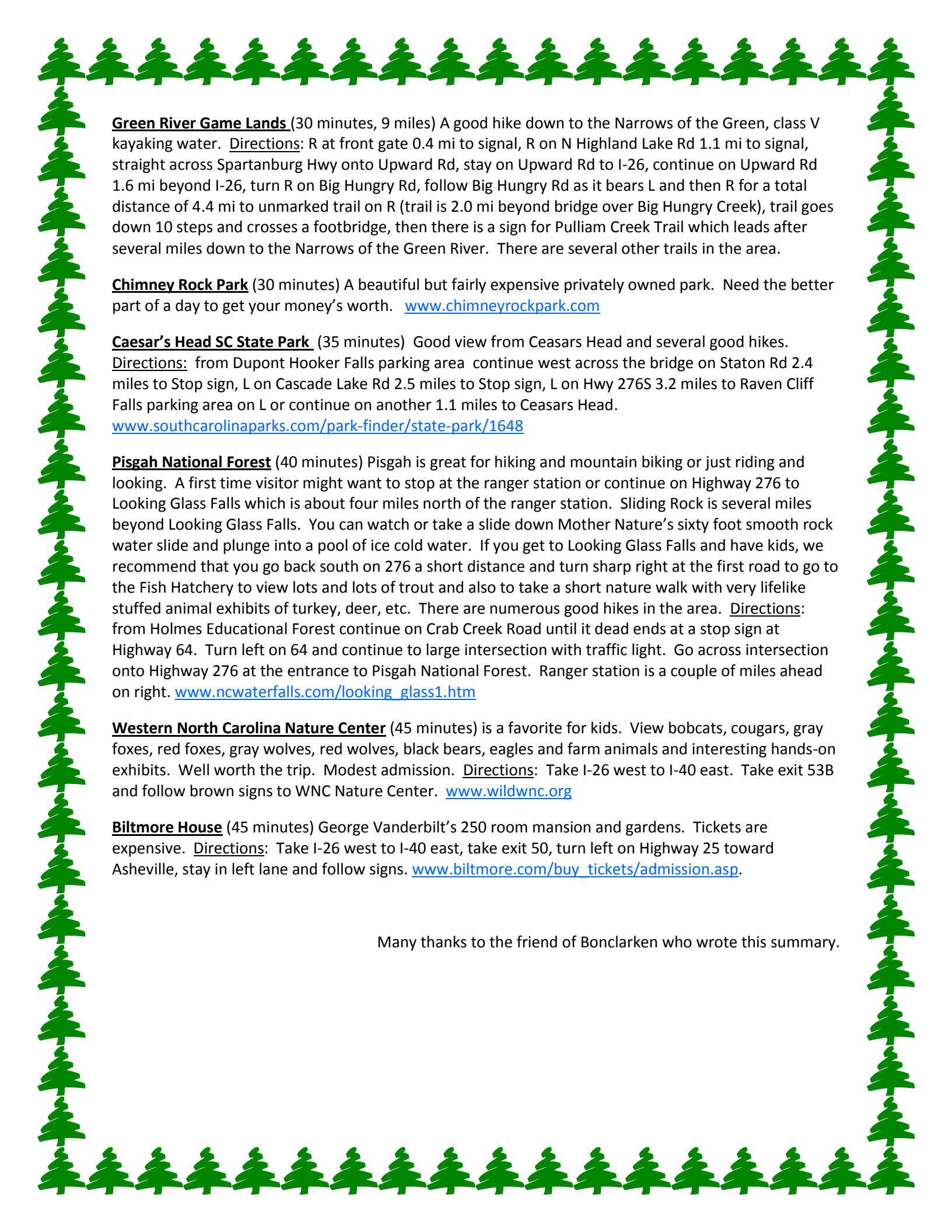
Maps to Sliding Rock are available upon request in the office.

Carl Sandburg's Home (3 minutes) At front gate of Bonclarken, turn left. At first traffic light, turn sharp right. Within a tenth of a mile turn into Sandburg parking lot (just behind Flat Rock Playhouse). Hike by lake up trail for two-tenths of mile to Sandburg house and goat farm. Kids love to pet the goats. The gift shop, short film and tour of the house (\$5.00 charge) are very interesting for history or literature buffs. The two mile relatively easy climb to the top of Glassy Mountain is a good hike to a good view. The best way to take the hike is to turn left at the lake trail and take the trail that begins to ascend at the other end of the lake. There is also a short trail around the lake with a number of wild flowers for those who look carefully.

Holmes Educational Forest (17 minutes) is a favorite of kids. They like to visit the cutout of Smokey Bear and take their tools to work for extended periods on the real forest service bulldozer and Vietnam era helicopter. Both are readily assessable and kid friendly. Another favorite is a half mile hike on the Talking Trees Trail. Kids love to find and push the buttons to make the various trees tell their individual stories. Directions: continue past the Carl Sandburg parking lot on Little River Road for four miles until you reach a dead end stop sign with blinker light. Look carefully and turn left. Proceed about 5.8 miles on Crab Creek Road to the brown sign for Holmes Educational Forest on the left at 1299 Crab Creek Road. www.ncesf.org/HESF/hesf_recreation.htm.

Dupont State Forest (22 minutes) Three excellent waterfalls within an hour's (round trip) walk of the parking lot. From the Hooker Falls parking lot Triple Falls is about a 7 minute walk upstream, though the main trail is quite steep as you approach the Falls. High Falls is about 15 minutes farther upstream from Triple Falls on moderate terrain. Both of these Falls are worth the hike. At the base of High Falls you can stand under the falls, swim in the pool or slide down the rock on the left. Upon returning to the parking lot you can take about a 6 minute walk downstream to Hooker Falls. It's only about 11 feet tall, but there is a place where the adventuresome can slide the last portion of the Falls into a shallow pool. A less visited favorite is Bridal Veil Falls which requires a hike of a couple of hours. All can be viewed at www.dupontforest.com/attractions.asp. Directions: from Holmes Educational Forest continue on Crab Creek Road for 1.3 miles. Turn left onto Dupont Road and proceed 3.1 miles to brown sign for Hooker Falls parking area on the left. There are trail maps available and a number of good hikes and mountain bike trails in Dupont.

Jones Gap SC State Park (25 minutes) Several good hikes from easy to difficult, maps available. Directions: At front gate turn L on 225S, go 3.3 miles to 25S, go approximately 6 miles (1 mile beyond SC state line), turn R on Gap Creek Rd, 5.2 miles to dead end, turn R on River Falls Rd 1.9 miles to parking area for Park on R. www.southcarolinaparks.com/park-finder/state-park/962



Green River Game Lands (30 minutes, 9 miles) A good hike down to the Narrows of the Green, class V kayaking water. Directions: R at front gate 0.4 mi to signal, R on N Highland Lake Rd 1.1 mi to signal, straight across Spartanburg Hwy onto Upward Rd, stay on Upward Rd to I-26, continue on Upward Rd 1.6 mi beyond I-26, turn R on Big Hungry Rd, follow Big Hungry Rd as it bears L and then R for a total distance of 4.4 mi to unmarked trail on R (trail is 2.0 mi beyond bridge over Big Hungry Creek), trail goes down 10 steps and crosses a footbridge, then there is a sign for Pulliam Creek Trail which leads after several miles down to the Narrows of the Green River. There are several other trails in the area.

Chimney Rock Park (30 minutes) A beautiful but fairly expensive privately owned park. Need the better part of a day to get your money's worth. www.chimneyrockpark.com

Caesar's Head SC State Park (35 minutes) Good view from Ceasars Head and several good hikes. Directions: from Dupont Hooker Falls parking area continue west across the bridge on Staton Rd 2.4 miles to Stop sign, L on Cascade Lake Rd 2.5 miles to Stop sign, L on Hwy 276S 3.2 miles to Raven Cliff Falls parking area on L or continue on another 1.1 miles to Ceasars Head. www.southcarolinaparks.com/park-finder/state-park/1648

Pisgah National Forest (40 minutes) Pisgah is great for hiking and mountain biking or just riding and looking. A first time visitor might want to stop at the ranger station or continue on Highway 276 to Looking Glass Falls which is about four miles north of the ranger station. Sliding Rock is several miles beyond Looking Glass Falls. You can watch or take a slide down Mother Nature's sixty foot smooth rock water slide and plunge into a pool of ice cold water. If you get to Looking Glass Falls and have kids, we recommend that you go back south on 276 a short distance and turn sharp right at the first road to go to the Fish Hatchery to view lots and lots of trout and also to take a short nature walk with very lifelike stuffed animal exhibits of turkey, deer, etc. There are numerous good hikes in the area. Directions: from Holmes Educational Forest continue on Crab Creek Road until it dead ends at a stop sign at Highway 64. Turn left on 64 and continue to large intersection with traffic light. Go across intersection onto Highway 276 at the entrance to Pisgah National Forest. Ranger station is a couple of miles ahead on right. www.ncwaterfalls.com/looking_glass1.htm

Western North Carolina Nature Center (45 minutes) is a favorite for kids. View bobcats, cougars, gray foxes, red foxes, gray wolves, red wolves, black bears, eagles and farm animals and interesting hands-on exhibits. Well worth the trip. Modest admission. Directions: Take I-26 west to I-40 east. Take exit 53B and follow brown signs to WNC Nature Center. www.wildwnc.org

Biltmore House (45 minutes) George Vanderbilt's 250 room mansion and gardens. Tickets are expensive. Directions: Take I-26 west to I-40 east, take exit 50, turn left on Highway 25 toward Asheville, stay in left lane and follow signs. www.biltmore.com/buy_tickets/admission.asp.

Many thanks to the friend of Bonclarken who wrote this summary.