

Hike Description Soddy Gorge

Hike Description: Mowbray Road Trailhead to Heiss Mountain Road Trailhead 16.0 Miles

Beginning at the Mowbray Road Trailhead Kiosk. Skirt the edge of the power line right-of-way until reaching a rock cliff (0.3) that gives a view of the old Town of Daisy and the Tennessee River Valley. Crossing atop the rock cliff and following the Mikel Branch stream, you pass through "Little Stone Door", which is a slit through the rock bluff. Reaching the exit of the "door", an old rock house is located to the left, which archeologists believe ancient Tennessee tribes used.

Following the brow of the bluff, pass a number of huge rocks (1.05) and view the valley below from a couple of overlook points before descending to traverse the slope of the escarpment. Ascending the slope again, a great valley view is available (2.40). Traveling along on a mining ridge, which separates the valley from a large coal mining strip cut, the hiker can now observe how nature is trying to heal the scars from this human infringement.

Crossing the mine cut and working around the upper reaches of Clemmons Point, a descent is made into the Little Soddy Creek Valley along an old mine cut road. Reaching the bottom, the main trail intersects the Little Soddy Trailhead connector (4.15), which is 0.4 miles from the Trailhead Kiosk on Hotwater Road. Crossing Little Soddy Creek on a pole bridge, there remains the hub of the historic Soddy Coal Company. These remains include concrete abutments for the boiler house, cable wench, mule barn, etc. This was the site of the first tunnel mines in the state of Tennessee, having its beginnings in 1866, with seven shafts originating in this area.

Passing along the roadbed the hiker ascends and crosses Hotwater Road (4.85).

Continuing up the bluff to Posey Point a view of HWY 111 can be seen descending into the town of Soddy Daisy (5.8). A number of overlooks give views of the stream valley when passing through a corner of an old pine farm. (6.3) Traversing a rhododendron field, the trail rounds a curve into the Deep Creek valley. (7.25). Cross the stream of Deep Creek, where the confluence point with Big Soddy is rounded and another view of the valley is afforded the hiker (8.2).

Descending into the Big Soddy Valley, cross Big Soddy Creek (8.65), and ascends the bluff to Board Camp Creek Valley. Crossing a pole bridge (9.05), the trail leads to the base of a rock cliff and down across a narrow ledge just above the stream (10.75) before ascending a steep timber staircase. Crossing two more pole bridges (11.25), the hiker is soon is traveling along the gentle flowing stream (12.8). After crossing the Highway 111 fence line (14.05) cross Board Camp Creek on the highway embankment. Traverse the south side of the roadway for about 1.5 miles, mostly hidden in the tree line, and then cross the Jones Gap Road Bridge onto Heiss Road. The Possum Creek Trailhead is 0.5 miles away. (16.0)

Directions to Trailheads:

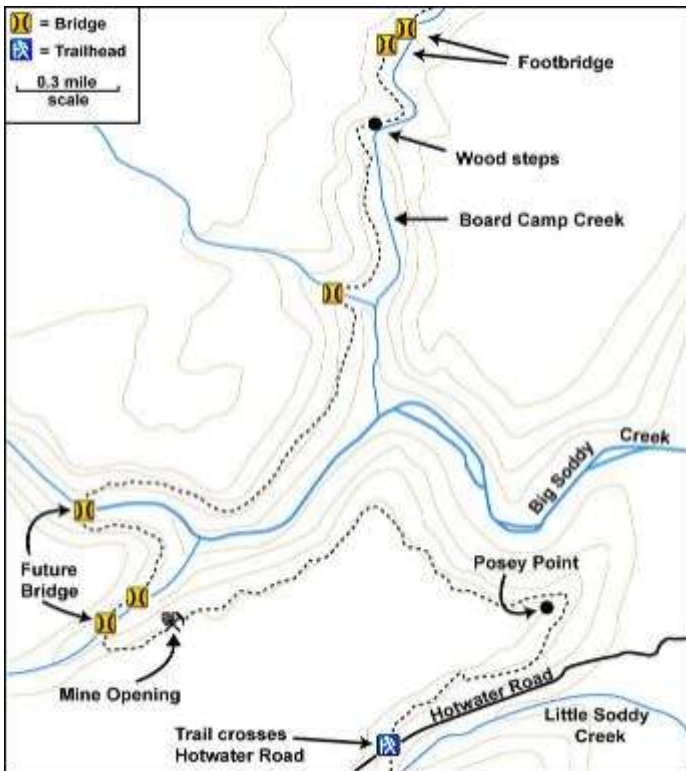
Mowbray Road Trailhead: The Mowbray Road Trailhead is designed and scheduled for construction by the State in the future. At present, there is no place to park.

Hotwater Rd. Trailhead(connector trail to CT): From Chattanooga, take U.S. Hwy 27 north to Hwy 319 Hixson Pike Exit. Exit and take a left back over the highway to the t-intersection at Dayton Pike. Turn right and continue 0.7 miles to Durham St., turn left (Soddy Lake on your right). Go 0.6 miles to a t-intersection at Back Valley Rd, turn right and travel one block to a four-way stop at Hotwater Rd., turn left. Follow Hotwater Rd. 2 miles through Little Soddy Gorge until you crest the hill and reach Sluder Road on your left. Park on the gravel at the corner of Sluder and Hotwater Rd. The trailhead is 100 ft back down Hotwater Rd. on your right. The trailhead is planned to be constructed and paved by the State in the future.

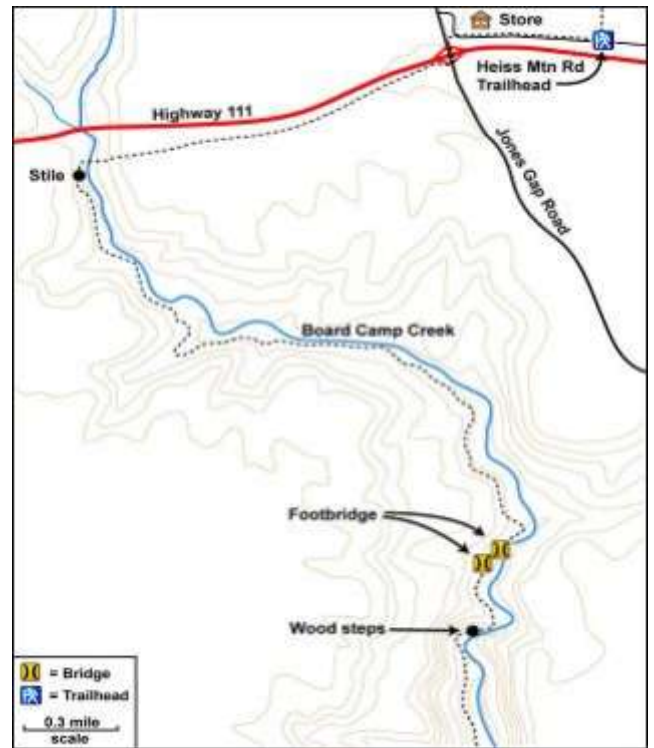
Heiss Mountain Road Trailhead: From US-27 north of Soddy Daisy, ascend the Cumberland Plateau on TN-111 and proceed a total of 5 miles to the Jones Gap Road exit. (Jones Gap Road overpasses TN-111.) Immediately turn right onto (paved) Heiss Mountain Road, a dead-end road that parallels TN-111. Proceed approximately 0.5 mile from the service station at Jones Gap Road to the end of a guard rail on the left and the nearby trailhead. Plenty of parking is available along the side of the road. The road is sees very little traffic. The paved trailhead parking area is flagged and marked for construction by the State in the future.

Description by Jim Schroeder and maps by Don Deakins

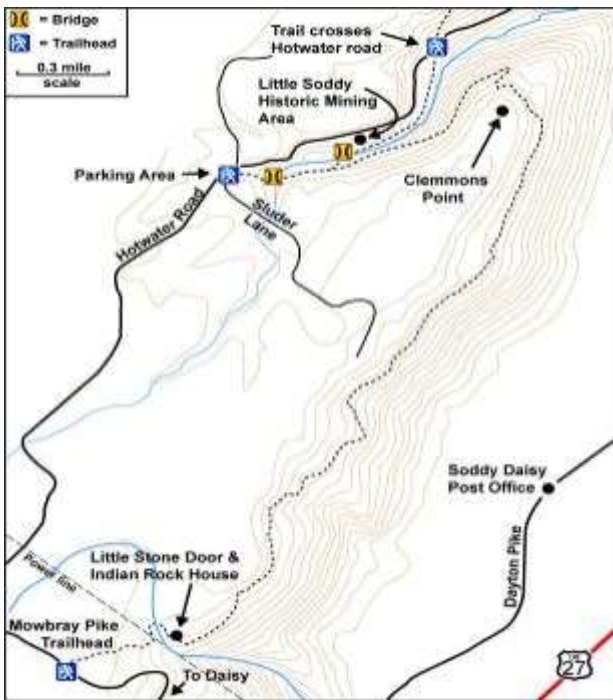




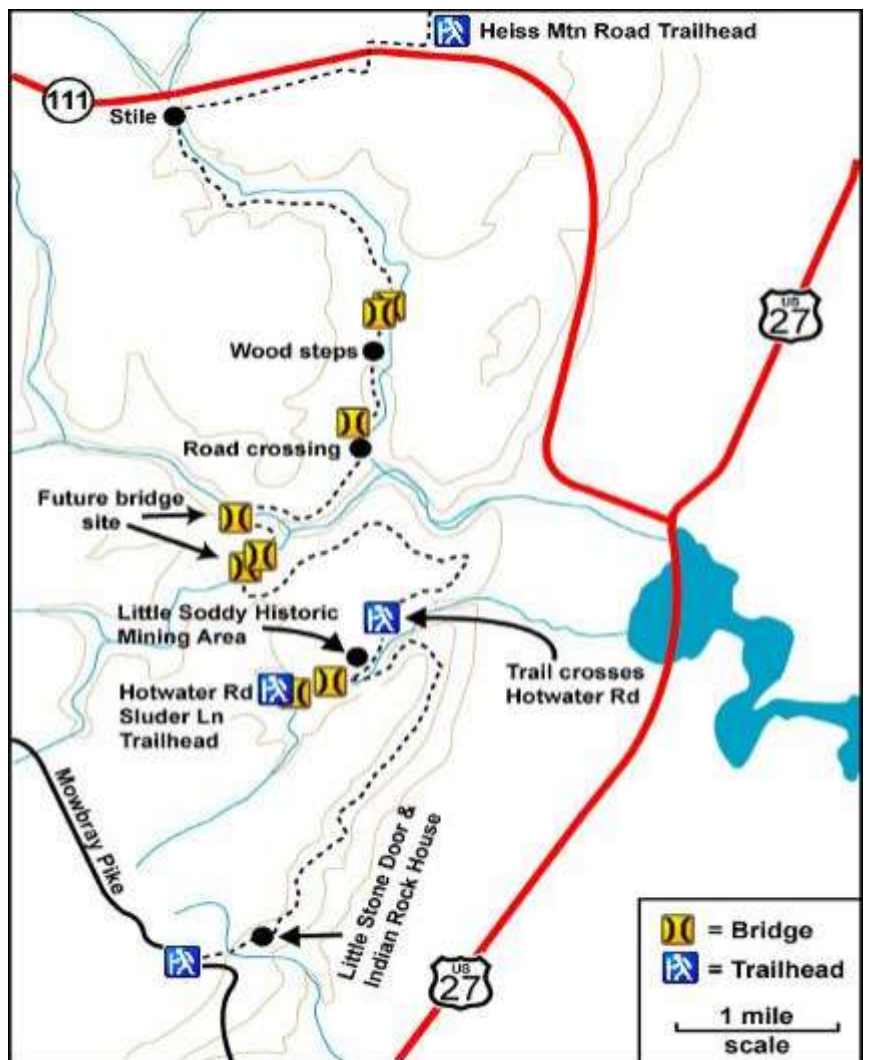
Hotwater Road Crossing to Wood Steps and pole bridges



Wood Steps to Heiss Mtn rd. trailhead



Mobray Road trailhead to Hotwater road crossing



Complete Soddy Segment