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**A new view**

**Skyline trail showcases a different side of Hickory Nut Falls**

Marla Steinfeld, from Joplin, Missouri, knew she wanted to visit Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park as soon as she saw a photo of the Park’s 404-foot waterfall—Hickory Nut Falls-- on Pinterest.

During her recent visit to the Park, Steinfeld was overjoyed to learn that the Park’s new Skyline trail would take her to the top of the waterfall.

 “I was so glad to hear about the new trail to the top,” said Steinfeld. “The hike out here was beautiful. I loved crossing over the creek and seeing the cascades roll over the rocks at the top of the waterfall. I’ll never forget it.”

The new trail officially opened on Friday, Sept. 22, and can only be accessed by climbing more than 800 steps to the Skyline trailhead, located at Exclamation Point.

It is named after the Park’s old Skyline trail which led guests across the upper cliff face to the top of the Park’s waterfall. Concern about upgrading and maintaining the many walkways, railings and bridges along the former trail led to its closure in 2008.

NC State Parks, Chimney Rock Management, LLC and the Friends of Chimney Rock State Park have worked together to bring back the upper trail in a more sustainable way.

 “In 2015, it was determined that a new 1.1 mile trail would be built that would not require any structures or boardwalks,” said Chimney Rock State Park Superintendent James Ledgerwood. “The new Skyline trail travels along a higher route on the mountain which provides for sustainable natural resource protection and excellent views of Hickory Nut Gorge.”

Hikers Jill and Thomas Avery, from Burke County, NC, enjoyed the new trail, which cuts through rich forest.

 “It’s like hiking inside of a fairy tale,” said Jill. “The whole trail is lined with these amazing trees and there’s areas that just take your breath away.”

At Peregrine’s Point, an overlook located halfway along the trail, hikers can enjoy a picnic and amazing views of Exclamation Point and Lake Lure.

From there, Park visitors can journey to the end of the trail where cascades tumble over the mountainside to form 404-foot Hickory Nut Falls. Stunning views of the cascades and Hickory Nut Gorge make this the perfect finish for the trail.

“Where can we go to do some more hiking?” “That’s one of the most frequently asked questions we get from our guests,” said Mary Jaeger-Gale, General Manager of the Chimney Rock section of the Park. “In addition to the Rumbling Bald access area, the new Skyline trail gives avid hikers another reason to come and spend more time in the Gorge. Many of our guests remember the old trails and have been waiting for them to reopen.”

Hikers interested in exploring the new 2.2-mile roundtrip Skyline trail should wear sturdy shoes and bring plenty of water and snacks.

Since this is an extended hike, all hikers must start from the Skyline trailhead by 5 p.m. (EST) or by 4 p.m. during Daylight Savings Time. This will allow hikers ample time to explore and make it back to their car before the Park closes.

**About Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park**

[Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park](http://chimneyrockpark.com/index.php) is a still-developing international outdoor destination located 25 miles southeast of Asheville on Highway 64/74A in Chimney Rock, N.C. It is recognized as one of the Southeast’s most iconic sites and popular travel destinations. The Park’s 535-million-year-old monolith called Chimney Rock can be accessed via the 500-step Outcroppings Trail and offers guests 75-mile panoramic views of Hickory Nut Gorge and Lake Lure. The Park features one of the highest waterfalls of its kind east of the Mississippi River, Hickory Nut Falls, at 404 feet. Hickory Nut Gorge, one of the state’s most significant centers of biodiversity, is home to 36 rare plant species and 14 rare animal species. The Rumbling Bald section of the greater State Park off of Boys Camp Road in Chimney Rock is the only other area of the Park that is currently open to the public. A destination for travel groups, weddings and special events, the Chimney Rock section of the Park also hosts innovative educational programs for schools, homeschoolers, scouts and summer camps. Visit Chimney Rock’s website at [chimneyrockpark.com](http://www.chimneyrockpark.com).

#1 (COURTESY CHIMNEY ROCK AT CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK)

Expansive views of the Hickory Nut Gorge and Lake Lure make the trail unique.

#2 (COURTESY CHIMNEY ROCK AT CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK)

Hikers enjoy strolling along the new, shaded trail.

#3 (COURTESY CHIMNEY ROCK AT CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK)

The view from the end of the Skyline trail.