

# Sumter National Forest

*South Carolina*



## Rocky Gap/Willis Knob Horse Trails

Southern Region, USDA Forest Service

Date: 3/26/2004

### Highlights

The Rocky Gap Trail in South Carolina and the Willis Knob Trail in Georgia combine to offer some of the most scenic horseback riding in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains. Winding across deeply dissected ridges, the trails descend into the beautiful Chattooga Wild and Scenic River corridor. The Rocky Gap has several loops, while the Willis Knob Trail is designed as one large continuous loop. Each trail crosses several gravel roads.

The Whetstone Horse Camp in South Carolina serves as a base camp for many users of both trails. There is a fee for the Whetstone Horse Camp.

### Surrounding Area

Earls Ford road is very close to Whetstone Horse Camp and provides a parking area, and a hiking access trail to the Chattooga River.

### For More Information

*Andrew Pickens Ranger District*

*112 Andrew Pickens Circle*

*Mountain Rest, SC 29664*

*Phone: (864) 638-9568*

*Fax: (864) 638-2659*

*Hours: Monday--Friday, 8 a.m.--4:30 p.m.*

**Directions:** From Walhalla, go north 6 miles on State Highway 28. Turn left onto Whetstone Road for about 5 miles. Go straight at the four-way stop and drive about 1.5 miles. The pavement will end and a gravel road will begin. The day-use parking area and trail head are on the right.

**Difficulty level:** Trail condition and river crossings vary. Call the District Office for specific information.

**Fees:** Horse trail and day-use parking—no fee.

**Length:** Rocky Gap (SC)—12.5 miles with several loops. Willis Knob (GA)—one 15-mile loop. Several access points allow for trips of various lengths.

#### Restrictions:

- Organized or advertised rides require a special use permit and route approval by the District Ranger.
- Within the Chattooga River Corridor in South Carolina, horseback riding is restricted to the Rocky Gap Trail. Earls Ford, Sandy Ford, and other fords downstream are closed to horse use.
- Motorized vehicles are prohibited on the trail.

**Safety:** High water levels may cause difficult crossings. Select crossings carefully. Check weather for heavy rain to prevent being trapped on the opposite side of the river from your vehicle.

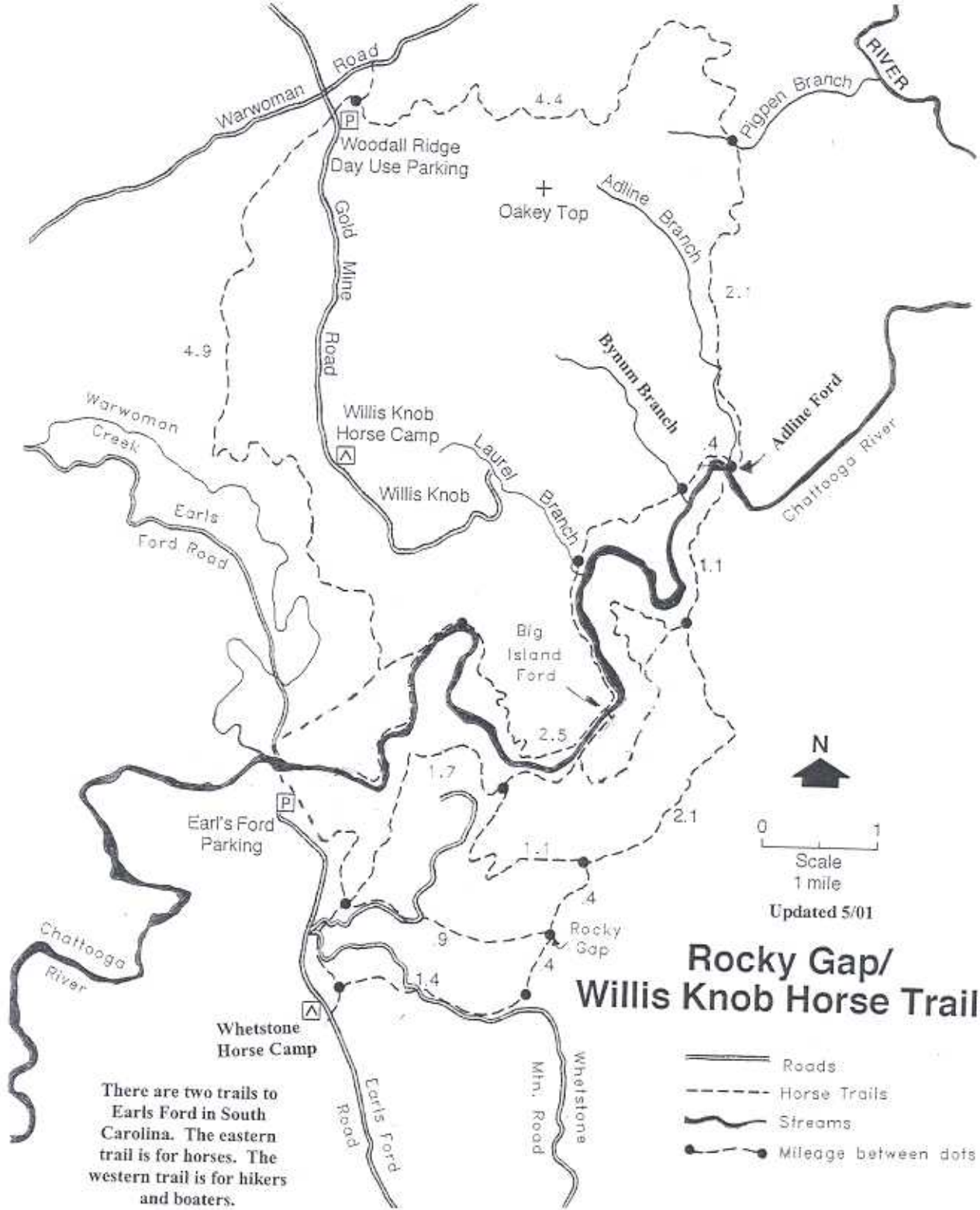
**Season:** Year-round. Busiest times are summer and fall.

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests

4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212-3530 (803) 561-4000





There are two trails to Earls Ford in South Carolina. The eastern trail is for horses. The western trail is for hikers and boaters.

## Rocky Gap/ Willis Knob Horse Trails

-  Roads
-  Horse Trails
-  Streams
-  Mileage between dots

# Horse Sense



## Safety

- File a trip plan with family or friends so someone will know where you are and whom to contact should you fail to return as planned.
- Take a first-aid kit, snake bite kit, compass and map. Know the location of the nearest hospital.
- Watch for hazards along the trail. Do not try to jump trees and other obstacles.
- When crossing the river, travel on a straight line between the posts.
- Stay on trails to avoid stump holes in the woods.
- Take a break from time to time to rest.
- Wear blaze orange during the big-game hunting season (October through December).
- Have at least two adults in your party.
- Watch for vehicles when crossing roads.
- Locked vehicles are not completely safe. Leave valuable and unnecessary equipment at home.

## Leave no Trace

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be considerate of Other Visitors

