

BRACKEN MOUNTAIN SCAVENGER HUNT

Can you find these species while you explore Bracken Mountain? Check them off as you go!



American Cancer Root (*Conopholis americana*)

American cancer root, sometimes referred to as bear cone, can be spotted near oak trees. They live on the roots of oaks, and are classified as parasites, but generally don't harm the tree. Once it germinates, it spreads roots and lives underground for roughly four years. Unlike most plants, it does not photosynthesize, and lacks chlorophyll. Sometimes, people use cancer root for medicinal purposes!

Can you find this colorful parasite?

Liverworts (*Marchantiophyta*)



Considered one of the most primitive plants on earth, these leafy greens are unlike many other common plants. Unlike other plants, they do not have roots. Instead, they have small, hair-like fixtures that help attach them to rocks, trees, or soil, called **rhizoids**. They also do not have seeds or fruit like many other plants, but instead reproduce through spores, like mosses and fungi do.

Can you spot this prehistoric plant? (Hint: look near water!)



Tree Burls

Burls, also known as tree knots, are often formed as a result of stressors that threaten the health of the tree. These burls act as a scab of sorts, that helps to seal off the affected area and heals the tree. Some people use these knots for furniture, veneer paneling, artwork, and more.

Can you find this trademark of a healing tree?

Red-spotted Newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*)



Newts start off as tiny eggs and hatch into larvae. Very few newts make it to the third stage as an eft- only a slim 2%. In this stage, they turn bright red and earn their spots. Their red coloring acts as a warning for predators, since oftentimes red prey are poisonous. They primarily live on land until they mature fully into a newt and return to their aquatic habitat. There, they reproduce, and the cycle continues!

Can you spot these brightly colored amphibians?



Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)

Black bears are a common sight in WNC! Black bears frequently leave behind evidence of their travels- whether it be scat, fur, or claw marks. They often claw at trees to eat bark, mark their territory, or stretch. Look for signs of these avid tree-climbers as you hike!

Can you find signs of black bears living on Bracken Mountain?

Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)



Eastern Hemlocks are common throughout Western North Carolina. But did you know that this species is declining due to an invasive insect? These beautiful trees are targeted by exotic pests introduced from Asia, known as the hemlock wooly adelgid. Luckily, several methods of control exist. Look for these evergreen trees as you go, and head to savehemlocksn.org to learn more about how you can help conserve this species.



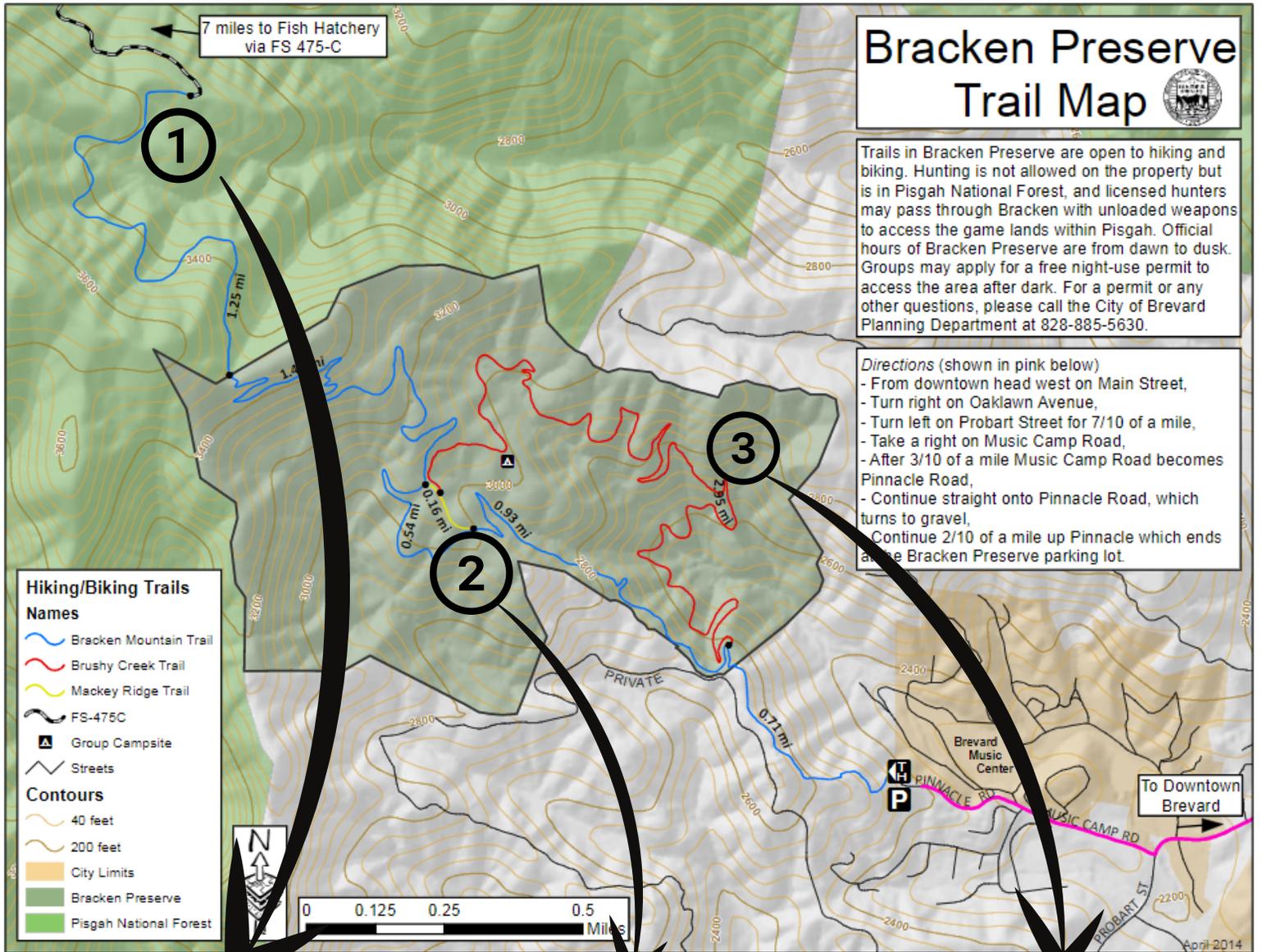
Photo courtesy of Hemlock Restoration Initiative (HRI)

Please remember to be respectful to all plant and animal life while hiking!

Having fun on Bracken Mountain? Let us know! Share and tag pictures of your hike and scavenger hunt on social media.

Instagram & Facebook - [@ConservingCarolina](https://www.instagram.com/ConservingCarolina)





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