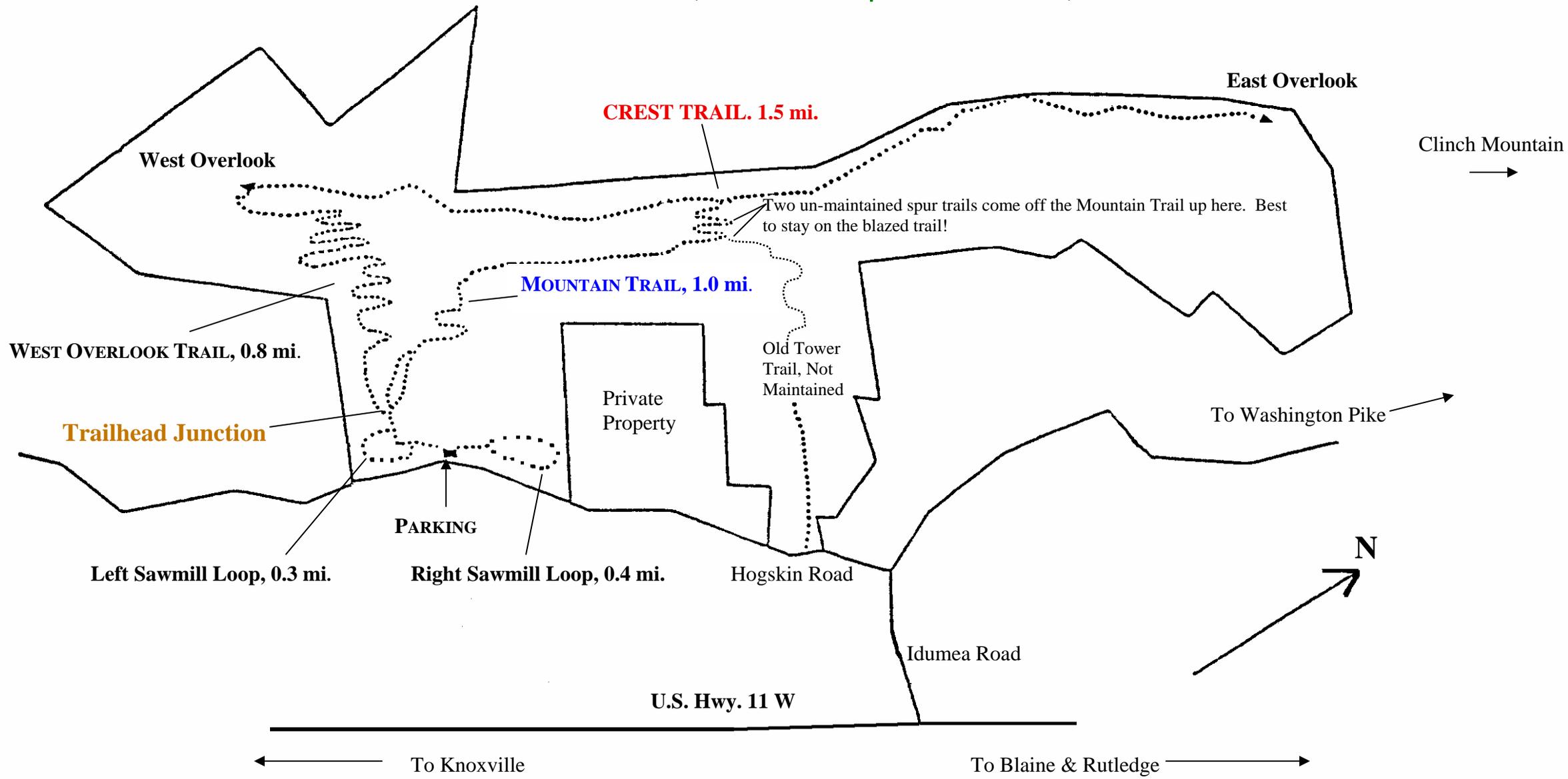


Trails of House Mountain State Natural Area (trail descriptions below)



HOUSE MOUNTAIN TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS

(Please return this information to the kiosk when you finish your hike. **PLEASE DON'T SHORTCUT THE SWITCHBACKS; IT CAUSES SERIOUS TRAIL EROSION**; STAY ON TRAIL AT ALL TIMES.)

Sawmill Loops (easy)

White blazes. The Left Sawmill Loop is 0.3-mile long and the Right Sawmill Loop is 0.4- mile long. The trailheads are near the parking area. The Right Sawmill Loop has some old signs that orient visitors to plant species along the trail. You will also see the remains of many dead pine trees that were killed by the Southern pine bark beetle outbreak in 1999-2000. **BEWARE of poison ivy that grows in profusion along these two trails.**

Trailhead Junction

This junction is in the woods on the other side of the power line right-of-way, just a few hundred feet beyond the parking area. At the Trailhead Junction, the West Overlook Trail and the Mountain Trail split and go to the top of the mountain. The Mountain Trail has a small loop at its base near the trailhead junction, but either part of the lower Mountain Trail will take you up the mountain. **The entire hike - going up, out to both overlooks, and back down - takes 3 to 4 hours to complete and amounts to about 4.5 miles.** Take plenty of water and be prepared for extreme changes in weather. **THE MOUNTAIN RECEIVES MANY LIGHTENING STRIKES DURING THUNDER STORMS. IF A STORM APPROACHES, DESCEND IMMEDIATELY!!**

West Overlook Trail (difficult)

White blazes. This trail is 0.8 miles long and takes off from the left at the Trailhead Junction, going up the west end of the mountain to the West Overlook. This is the shortest hike to any overlook and is very rewarding, because when you get to the top, you don't have to walk any further to get a good view. For this reason, many people choose to go up the mountain on this trail and come down via the Mountain Trail. From the West Overlook, you can see the Cumberland Mountains to the north and west, the Ridge and Valley Province, Knoxville, and Sharp's Ridge to the west and south, and the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains to the south and east.

Mountain Trail (moderate to difficult)

Blue blazes. This trail is 1.0 mile long starting at the Trailhead Junction and terminating at the Crest Junction near the middle of the mountaintop. The last 0.3 miles of the Mountain Trail is very steep and difficult. If you take the Mountain Trail to the top, you'll have to walk another 0.8 miles to get to either overlook, but there is a resting bench at the Crest Junction. There are two old spur trails near the top of the Mountain Trail, which you'll see on the right hand side on the way up (on the left coming down). If you mistakenly go down these spurs, you'll quickly see that they are not maintained (see Old Tower Trail description, below). To avoid this mistake, follow the blue blazes to stay on the Mountain Trail.

Crest Trail (easy to moderate)

Red blazes. The Crest Trail extends the length of the mountain from end-to-end. It is 1.5 miles in length from overlook-to-overlook along the Crest Trail. The Crest Junction lies nearly in the exact middle of the Crest Trail at the point where the Mountain Trail joins the Crest Trail. From the Crest Junction it is 0.8 miles out to the West Overlook and 0.7 miles to the East Overlook. There are rocks to climb over and around, especially near the East Overlook. The Crest Trail offers especially dramatic views to the north side of the mountain, especially in leaf-off seasons. **The Crest Trail winds along the top of the ridge and is partly on public land and partly on private land.** Visitors should remember that we all share the mountain and that our neighbors on the north side do a lot to keep the trails open for all users. Please do not harass or speak rudely to ATV riders that you may encounter near the crest of the mountain. The north side of the mountain is all privately-owned property and the land owners have every right to do as they wish, within the law, on their own properties.

Old Tower Trail (not blazed and not maintained; status: abandoned)

This old, un-maintained "trail" was the original access road to the top of the mountain for many years. It has not been maintained for a long time. It was always a poor access to the mountain, because it was built very steeply and has no switchbacks. Two old, un-maintained spur trails that lead to the Old Tower Trail are still visible about mid-way up the Mountain Trail. These are mentioned here to remind you not to take them unless you are planning on a very rough, scratchy, buggy, and unpleasant hike along this old route. Not recommended.

RULES OF NATURAL AREA USE: House Mountain State Natural Area is a day-use

natural area. Please allow enough time on your hike to get off the mountain by dusk. **It is unlawful to take unleashed pets on the trails;** be kind and remember that some people do not like dogs or may be afraid of them, so keep your pets leashed and under control at all times. **Please do not litter. Practice "Leave NO Trace," or "pack-it-in, pack-it-out" etiquette. If you must relieve yourself while hiking the trails, please don't throw toilet paper on the ground!!** Trails accessed from the parking area on Hogskin Road are for hiker foot traffic only. No horses or vehicles are allowed.

If you need to report any problems at House Mountain, including maintenance needs, please contact Doug Bataille, Knox County Parks and Recreation, 865-215-6600.

If you would like to volunteer to maintain the trails at House Mountain, please contact Lisa Huff, Tennessee State Natural Areas Program, 865-594-5601.