

Benton MacKaye Trail Blurb

Short Cut to Round Top From FS 80 in Nantahala National Forest

Distance: 1.6 miles

Elevation Change: 1210 feet

High Point: 3710 feet (Round Top)

Low Point: 2500 feet (FS 80)

Trail Rating: Moderately Strenuous (please refer to our trail difficulty rating system on our website)

Parking: Parking is available just off FS 80.

Driving Directions to the Parking at FS 80: FS 80, also known as Copper Creek Road intersects with Beaver Dam Road 0.9 miles north of the Unaka Fire Station. Drive up FS 80 to a very sharp right hand turn around a gulch, 3.5 miles from Beaver Dam Road. Park a little ways up the abandoned old logging road paralleling the upstream side of the gulch though which Groundhog Creek runs. If coming from Davis Creek Road across from Tennessee up the Tellico River Road, then the distance from the Beaver Dam Road/Davis Creek Road intersection is 6.5 miles.

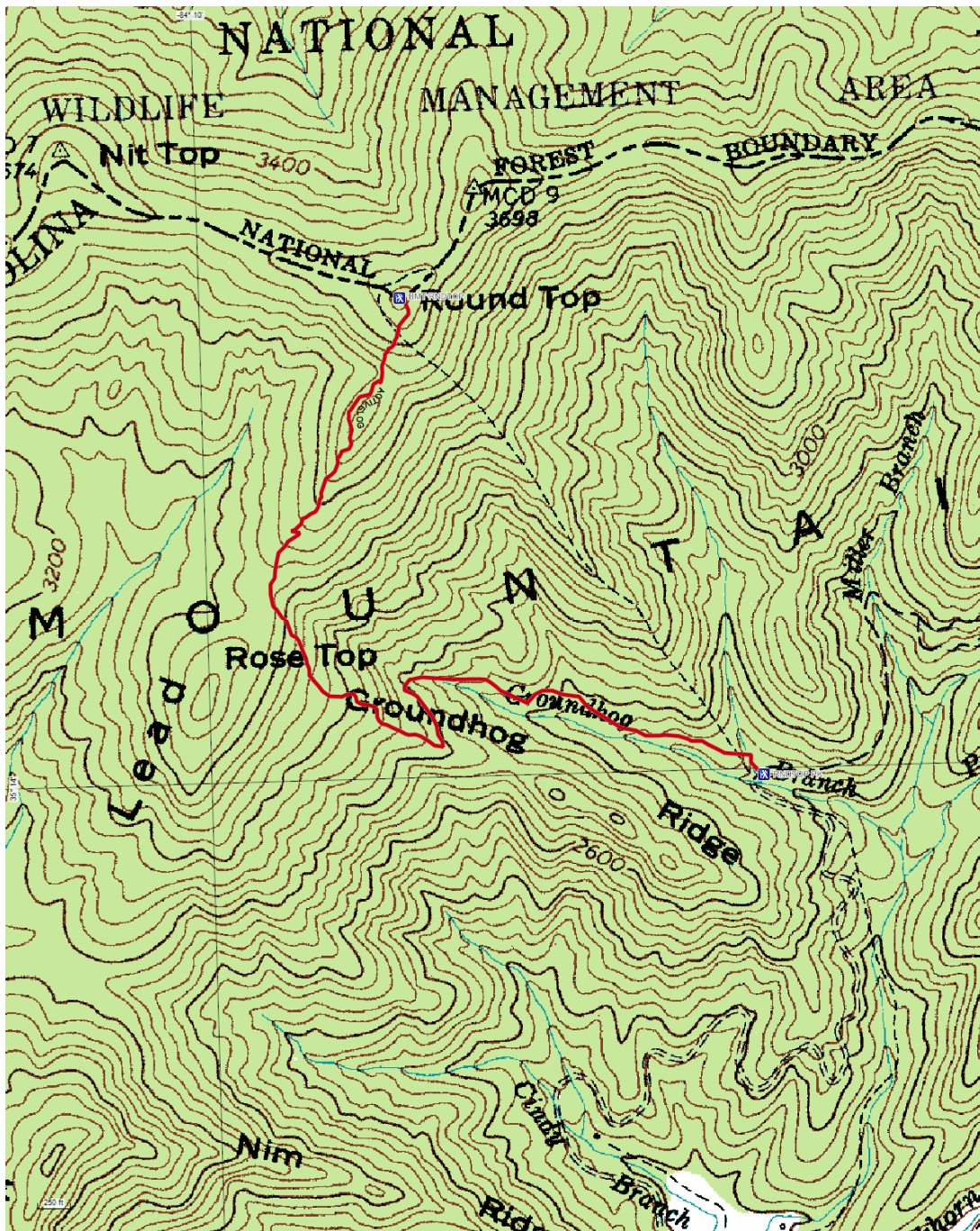
Trail Description: This is a route to get to Round Top for maintenance of the Benton MacKaye Trail in the "Heart of Darkness". You could come in from Sandy Gap and head north to Round Top or from Beaver Dam Bald heading south to Round Top performing maintenance, then come out this route to a car which you have spotted at the bottom of the short cut. Or, you could just park at the bottom of the short cut and climb the 1.6 miles and 1210 feet to the top of Round Top to perform maintenance, then return to your car. The trail follows old logging roads and 4-wheeler roads which are kept fairly open and free of trees by the 4-wheelers. It is not marked in any way. The best would be to download the GPS route to your GPS or bring the attached map and a good compass or GPS to find your way. It is not too hard to follow because of the 4-wheelers. From the top, one needs to find the intersection, preferably via your GPS to which you have downloaded the waypoint. Head down the SW slope of the mountain on the 4-wheeler track. At first it is quite steep, but levels out in a couple of hundred yards as it heads towards Rose Top. When the track gets to the gap between Round Top and Rose Top, the route becomes a well defined old logging road which winds down the gap to the creek bed below (Groundhog Creek) and out to your car. The only really steep section is the first couple of hundred yards from Round Top.

Updated April 1, 2009

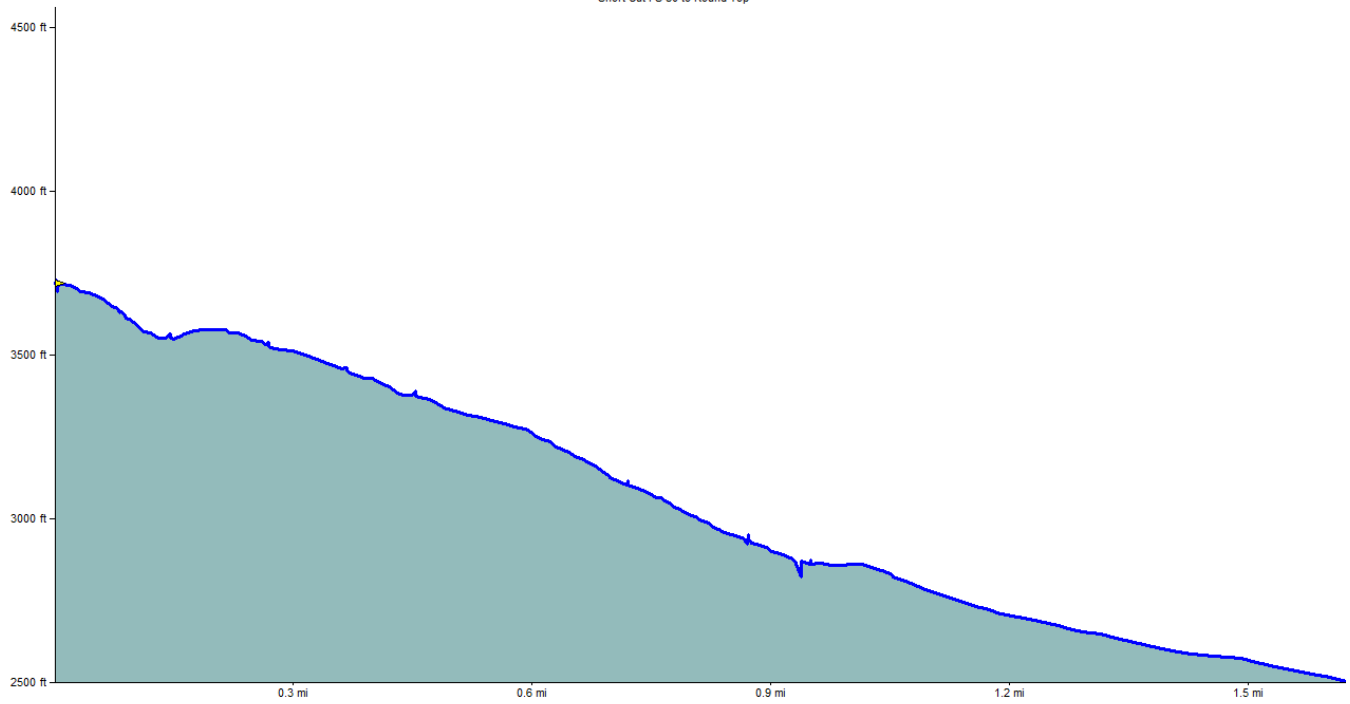
This trail blurb was developed by the TN/NC Maintainers of the Benton MacKaye Trail. For more information, check out our website at www.bmta.org.

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Short Cut FS 80 to Round Top



GPS Coordinates for Top of Trail

N 35.24339

W 84.16154

Elevation 3710 feet

GPS Coordinates for Bottom of Trail

N 35.23319

W 84.15259

Elevation 2500 feet

If you would like the GPS route emailed to you, please contact Richard Harris at HarrisRi@aol.com