

R.R.G. INDIAN STAIRCASE to CLOUDSPITTER HIKE

CAMPSITE

The troop travels to RRG from Lexington on i64 east to Mountain Parkway, Exit Mountain Parkway at Slade Ky (exit 33), turn left toward RRG to stop at Shell Gas station ahead at intersection. Stop at the gas station, GET CAR PERMITS for overnight stay!

Then travel east on Campton Rd about 3 miles to turn left on Tunnel Ridge Road.

All campsites along here are FREE, **but you must camp 100 yards from the parking lot.** (they check!)

We usually start at site #2, Fort Ancient as our primary spot, but if it's full, continue down the road:

parking lot 1 is ARCHAIC

parking lot 2 is FORT ANCIENT (our new spot)

parking lot 3 is SANDSTONE

parking lot 4 is PALEO (is last, our old spot and our final target if all lots are full)

Park vehicles and unload equipment to camp and setup tents.

Have everyone prep their backpacks for the hike.

COOK MUST PREP LUNCH to hand out to each hiker to eat on the trail later.

Load cars and head back the way we came on Campton Rd and pass by the Shell toward Nada Tunnel Rd.

Turn right onto r77 to enter RRG area and eventually pass thru Nada Tunnel, then to Bison Way trailhead.

When you pass the Suspension Foot bridge, note the available parking spaces ([see trail map below](#))

PARKING AT TRAIL HEAD

We would normally park at either:

1. The side-o-road parking spot JUST BEFORE Bison Way Lot
2. Bison Way Trail parking lot (unlikely due to crowds)
3. Cross the bridge (at Bison lot) about 1/10th of a mile and park on left, opposite the Gladie Cabin field
4. Park at Gladie Cabin Welcome Center across the street. **Note: it closes at 5pm.**

If you park in the Welcome Center parking lot then you must remove your car by 5pm so they don't lock the gates.

Welcome Center Option:

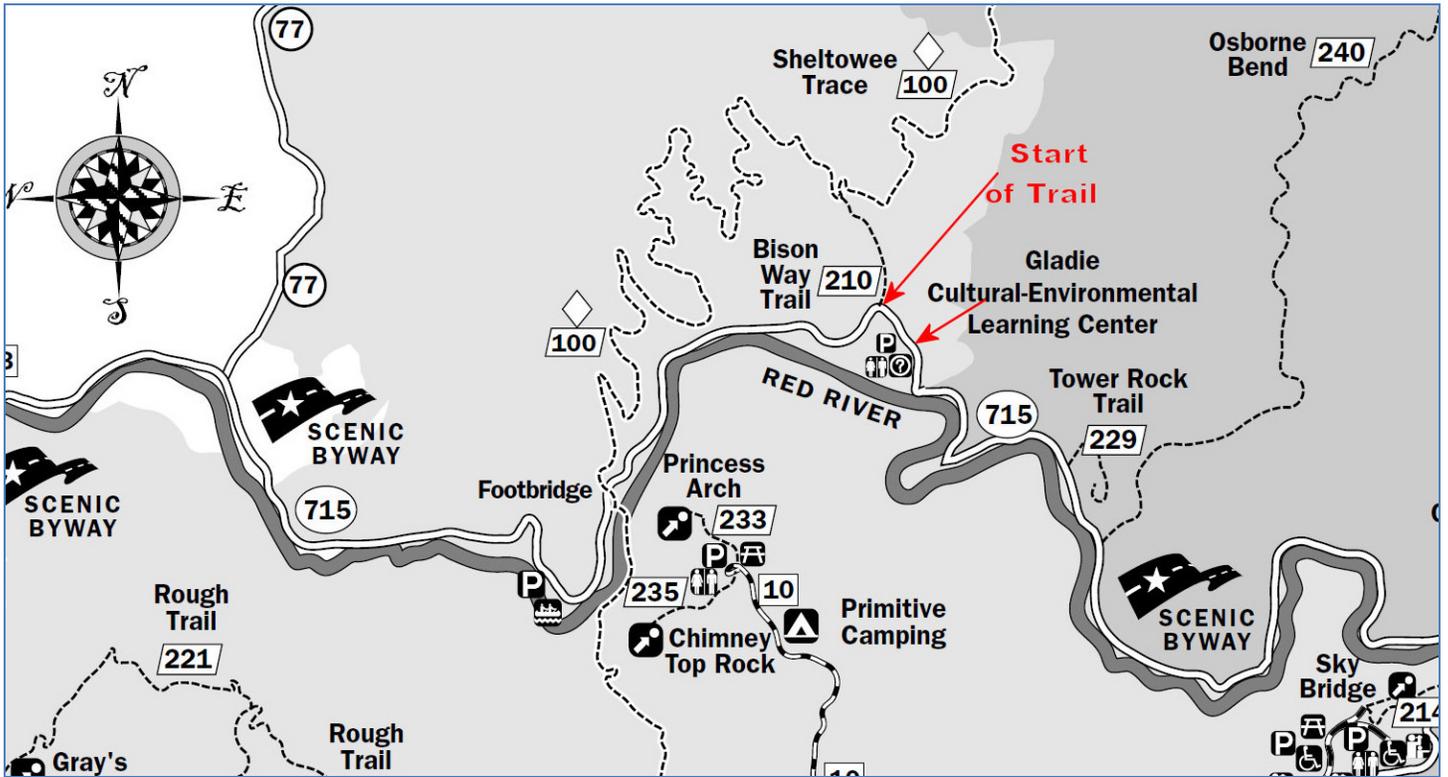
If we must park at the Welcome Center then the idea is this:

we leave 1 vehicle (a shuttle) parked on side of road near our exit point for Cloudsplitter. There is a lot on both sides of our exit. One is 0.2 miles East, the other 0.2 miles West of our exit.

This vehicle can take drivers to the Welcome Center to retrieve all vehicles if the time is near closing.

DIRECTIONS TO INDIAN STAIRCASE

Once parked, we start up the Bison Way Trail:



Take Bison Way Trail (t210) up to the trail fork (about ¾ mile), turn left (west)

About 1/4 mile is the turn to **Indian Staircase** (pt 1 on color topo below).

Normally there is no marker here, only those that know about it, know about it. BUT there SHOULD NOW be a sign on a tree at the turn. (see photos)



The GPS location of the turn is: N 37.84429, W 83.61416

INDIAN STAIRCASE MARKER

Just before a bend in the main trail there is a tree in the center of the trail with **I.S.** in a diamond (Indian Staircase) with a small 'staircase' to the right. Take that right.



I.S. marker on center tree.

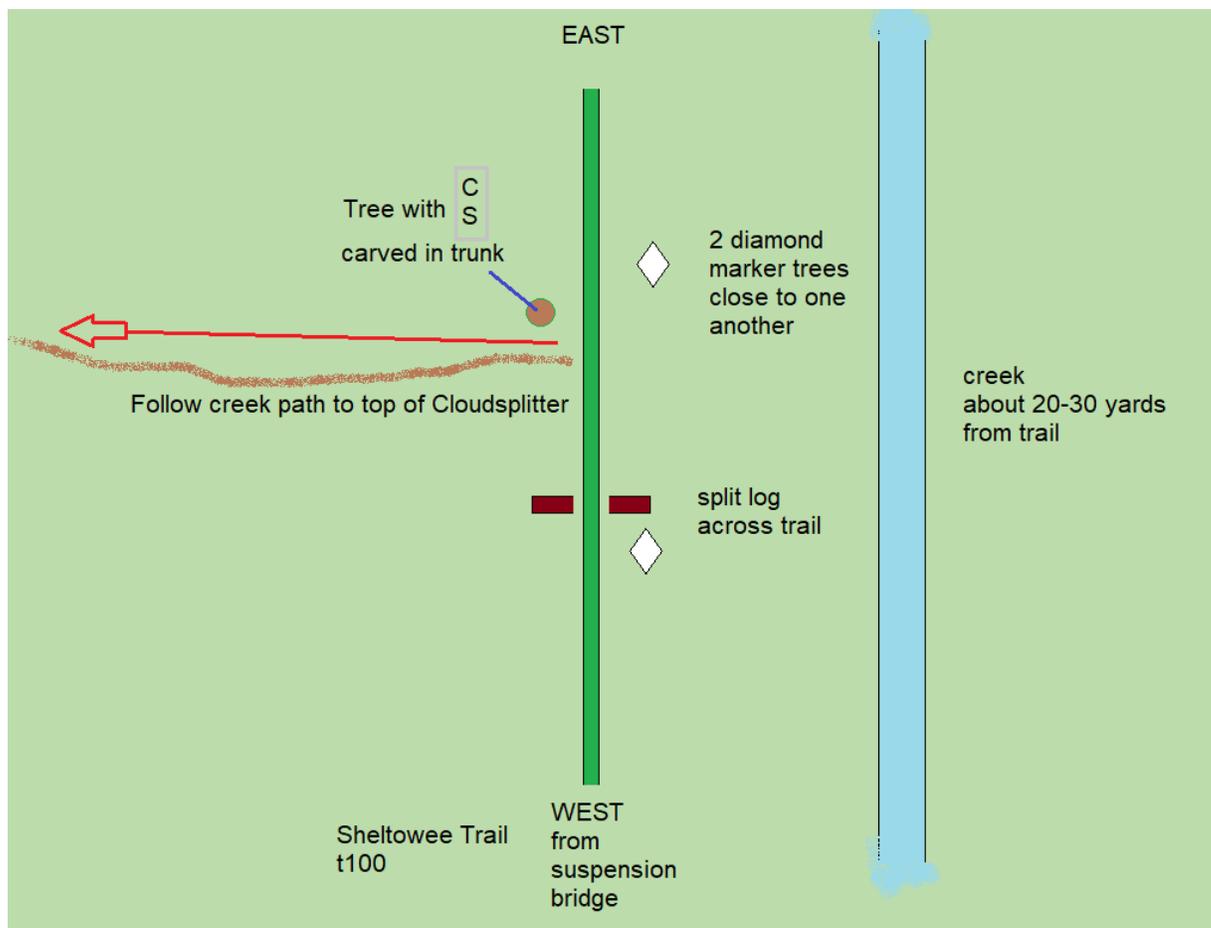
Hike from Indian Staircase to Cloudsplitter

- We hike up Indian Staircase, then follow the rim of the canyon around a hairpin turn.
- At pt 2, we have the option to remain on the main trail, or (preferred) veer toward the cliff edge and find a hidden trail that goes under rock overhangs, then rejoins the main trail.
- At pt 3 is a switchback to turn to west Cloudsplitter and thus begins the LONG hike.
- At pt 4 is a trail split going downhill with a sign that says it the trail to the highway (rt715), and our exit AFTER we hike Cloudsplitter. So we continue straight.

CLOUDSPLITTER

MARKERS OF THE SECRET PATH TO CLOUDSPLITTER

THE 'SIGNS TO LOOK FOR'. Elements to mark the Cloudsplitter trail:



Walking along the trail (west to east), there will be a stream about 20 yards on the left
Look for the white diamond and turtle logo on the 2 trees (beside trail)...it's just BEFORE the split log.
IF YOU PASS THE FALLEN SPLIT LOG, YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR.

Hike from Indian Staircase to Cloudsplitter



Before the split log is a standing tree on the right with C/S carved in it, indicating the path to climb Cloudsplitter.

Ahead, a long tree will cross the path with a section cut out to walk thru.
DO NOT GO PAST THE FALLEN TREE.

Look for the C/S tree.
Next to the tree is a creek wash, for water runoff.
Take this 'trail'.

Turn and walk up the water gully until you get to the rock face with a rope tied to the tree.

Hike from Indian Staircase to Cloudsplitter



Near the top is a steep cliff.

You CAN take the tree rope OR follow the dirt trail to the right along the rock base,
It will take you to a natural ladder of roots to get up the rockface (if you dont want to scale the rope)

CAVE

Once at 'rope tree' level there is a cave on the far right (where the root ladder ends). If you go into the cave, watch out for 1-eyed Willy!

Continue UP the rock face to Cloudsplitter summit.

END OF HIKE

When done, climb back down to the main trail and double back to the exit, pt 4. Walk down to road.