

Pickens Nose

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Pickens Nose is a place that is often heard about, but yet a place that somehow I've personally managed to avoid for quite a number of years despite its apparent fame. On a recent excuse to find an outdoor adventure, I decided to make this place happen. Now I'm wondering why I've never visited this place before... It's really rather remote, which is great in my book, but strangely accessible. Coming from N.E. Atlanta, it's just a short hop up 985, and just across the NC border. It's literally a scant one hour and fifteen minutes to some of the highest terrain around coming from Gainesville, GA. Accessibility is a quick turn off onto Coweta lab road, and then right up to the trailhead. While a 4x4 isn't necessary, it could be helpful in wet conditions as its a gravel road that is steep at times. From the trailhead which conveniently sits in a gravel parking area, a simple 1/4 mile trail takes you down the ridge to the prominent rock outcropping known as "Pickens Nose". It sits on the northernmost side of a steep ridge, off of a spur trail that could easily be overlooked if you're not paying attention. If you miss the side trail on your right, you'll run out of trail very quickly in any case as you reach a rocky cliff at the end of the ridge. A nice outcrop at this location offers nearly 180 degree views. The nose, is a sharp pinnacle that a short small trail can be taken to where one can stand on the ledge over a massive drop that, gives the illusion of standing in space over a 1000 foot drop to the lowest point of the valley. To really quite a feeling to stand there at that place and feel the world wrap around you. At that location there is a rhododendron canopy covered camping area with a beautiful rock ring for camp fires. On the night we camped there, bringing in hamburgers, potatoes and carrots wrapped in tin foil, with bellies full, and snuggled warmly in our tents, a massive front came rolling in and blanketed the area in 3" of snow. The next morning, making fresh tracks in newly fallen snow, a short 1/4 mile trip back to the car revealed a dead battery. Great. Really? With snow covering the entire truck, pondering tow trucks and what not, a fellow hunter, Bo Knight drove by and offered to swap his battery into the truck to get it started. Worked like a charm and after 5 minutes of driving down the mountain, the snow completely faded into glorious fall colors. Odd how much just a few hundred feet can make in terms of snowfall. It should be noted that a short distance away, is the parking area for Albert Mountain, which offers Appalachian Trail hiking and the glorious vistas of Albert Mountain fire tower. Ease of access, outstanding views, including absence of infrastructure, and, open wilderness makes it an amazing destination if you've just got a short amount of time.