

Trail and the Bartram Trail merge along the ridge, so those eager to experience the Appalachian Trail can do so with no extra planning.

Nantahala Lake is breathtaking when first spotted through the dense trees on the ridge, but soon becomes clearer as the trail makes its descent towards the lake. This section is roughly twenty miles long, but demanding up and downhill will make it feel like more than that!

Carry plenty of water because we crossed only one tiny stream in three days of hiking, and water becomes precious when hiking in the mountains.

The Bartram Trail offers hikers and backpackers something a little different. The vistas across the Blue Ridge and Appalachian Mountains were unparalleled in scope and beauty. The trail was traveled little, but still well marked with yellow rectangle blazes. Although somewhat overgrown in parts, it was easy to follow.

Experienced hikers should feel comfortable in undertaking large sections at a time, while novices can enjoy day hikes to the overlooks.

sediment to the water and can affect water quality. Sediment is the number one pollutant of rivers in North Carolina because increased levels can smother organisms, making it hard for them to get proper oxygen. In addition, high levels of sediment can cloud water and inhibit certain organisms from finding food.

In the case of King's Creek, vegetation is limited to certain areas along streamside. Most of the creek is surrounded by grass which serves as only a mediocre buffer. A means to improve this situation would be to plant a riparian zone composed of many small trees and shrubs lining the stream's edge. This would improve water quality, reduce sediment and erosion, and help keep stream temperatures cool.

Macro invertebrates also provide a good indication of healthy streams since these organisms measure all the elements of the stream. Mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies are highly sensitive to pollution and will not survive in unhealthy conditions. In addition to providing food for fish and birds, these less tolerant organisms are a great indicator of stream wellness and help provide an overall picture of whether the stream is healthy.

Another way to determine the overall health of a stream is to observe its shape. Meanders are considered a healthy and important part of streams because they provide habitat for organisms and distribute water flow equally. According to Dr. Kenneth Duke, coordinator of Environmental Studies here at Brevard College, King's Creek was artificially straightened sometime during the Depression period because it was assumed that the stream's natural path would interfere with the Jones Dormitory structure. This has caused major problems downstream where increased water flow from the artificial straightening has intensified erosion and caused complications for residents living near the creek.

The most recent student analysis by the ENG 217 class has considered the creek to be in good to moderate health. While the creek does have some good indicators of a healthy stream, amplified erosion, unnatural straightening, increased runoff