



# Rattlesnake Creek Trail & Ashdown Gorge Wilderness

*The Rattlesnake Creek trail is a Forest Service wilderness trail and traverses public and private lands, including Cedar Breaks National Monument.*

## Rattlesnake Creek Trail

Distance One Way:  
9.5 miles (15.2 Km)



Difficulty:  
Moderate - Difficult

Elevation Change:  
3,400 feet (1,036 m)

- No motorized vehicles.
- Dogs on leash.
- Leave no trace.

### Planning Your Hike

The Rattlesnake Creek Trail crosses rugged and undeveloped wilderness terrain. While this 9.5 mile trail can be completed in a long day hike, many extend their trip by camping. Camping is permitted only within the national forest section of the trail, and excellent campsites can be found where Ashdown Creek and Rattlesnake Creek meet. See the maps on the reverse side for boundary delineations. The upper trailhead is located just outside the north entrance to Cedar Breaks on Highway 143, while the lower trailhead is located at the landslide area between mile markers 7 and 8 on Highway 14. Parking is available at both, so it is possible to leave a car at one end and hike from the other.

The last 3.4 miles of the hike involve walking in a narrow canyon creek at the bottom of Ashdown Gorge. Be sure to wear sturdy and waterproof hiking shoes. Heavy spring runoff generally lasts well into June, and waters run dangerously high, swift, and cold in early summer with sporadic flash flooding throughout the year. Assess weather conditions and check for flash flood warnings before hiking this trail.

It is recommended that hikers bring [the ten essentials for back country hiking](#), and have map-reading experience. Remember to follow [Leave No Trace guidelines](#) when enjoying this area.

More detailed topographic maps of the Ashdown Gorge Wilderness Area are available for download on the [Dixie National Forest's web-page](#).

### The Route

To avoid strenuous uphill climbs, it is recommended to begin the Rattlesnake Creek Trail at the **1** [Rattlesnake Trail Head along Highway 143](#). Within the first mile, there are **2** [two short spur trails](#) that lead to spectacular views of the amphitheater. In this area you will also glimpse the white rocks along Snow Ridge.

The trail is faint in some places, so keep an eye out for rock cairns or tree blazes to guide you. As the trail continues, you will reach **3** [Stud Flat](#), a stunning meadow above Tri Story Canyon. Beyond Stud Flat, the trail descends 800 feet through a series of **4** [switchbacks](#) before reaching Rattlesnake Creek.

The trail follows Rattlesnake Creek for 1.6 miles to an intersection where **5** [a sign](#) will point out the High Mountain Trail and the Potato Hollow Trail. Continue on Potato Hollow Trail for 0.7 miles until you meet **6** [Ashdown Creek](#).

*Rattlesnake Creek slot canyon*



# Rattlesnake Creek Trail

## Boundary Color Key

Private Property  
(No Camping)

National Forest

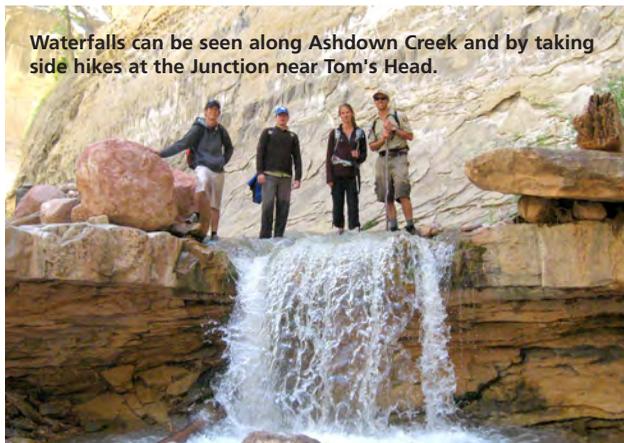
National Forest Wilderness

National Park

Tom's Head.



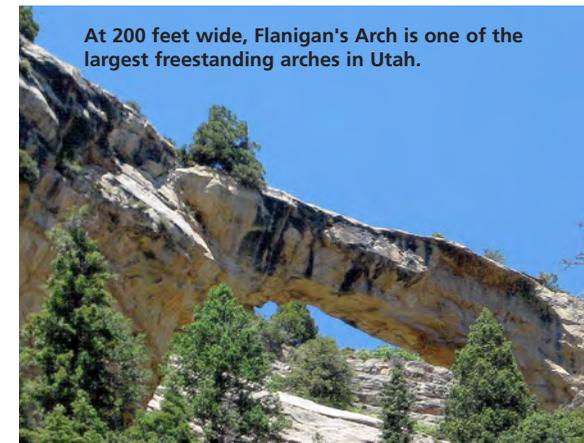
From here, there is **no** maintained trail. Hikers should follow the creek bed. Less than a mile downstream from this point, Rattlesnake Creek joins Ashdown Creek. This junction is marked by a 100-foot-tall stone monolith called **7 Tom's Head**. For a short but rewarding side trip (see yellow on map), hike northeast up the creek from this junction. Each of the two forks ends in a spectacular waterfall.



Waterfalls can be seen along Ashdown Creek and by taking side hikes at the Junction near Tom's Head.

Continuing one mile downstream from Tom's Head, you will be able to see **8 Flanigan's Arch**, positioned high on the north wall of the gorge. At nearly 200 feet wide, Flanigan's Arch is one of the largest free-standing arches in Utah.

Continue 1.4 miles downstream until you reach **9 a cement dike in the river**, or the parking area alongside Highway 14, 100 yards uphill to the south.



At 200 feet wide, Flanigan's Arch is one of the largest freestanding arches in Utah.