

CUMMINS FALLS STATE PARK

Cummins Falls State Park is a beautiful, but rugged, 306-acre day-use park located nine miles north of Cookeville on the Blackburn Fork State Scenic River on the Eastern Highland Rim. In the rolling hills of Jackson County near where Putnam and Jackson counties meet, the stream gives way to a 75-foot drop. The main parking area, visitor center, restrooms, trailheads, and a designated picnic area are located above the falls.

HISTORY

It is known that buffalo wallowed in the river in a shallow basin about a quarter mile east of the falls. Native Americans used this area to kill buffalo as needed, as indicated by the numerous arrowheads found at the site. A veteran of the Revolutionary War, Sergeant Benjamin Blackburn—for whom the Blackburn Fork State Scenic River is named—was awarded this land in lieu of a pension in the 1790s. The land was acquired by John Cummins in around 1825, and he built a water-driven mill on it. Due to a growing clientele, a second and larger mill was built in 1845 about a half mile upstream of the waterfalls. Local residents came to the area for commerce and recreation. The mill was washed away in a great flood of 1928, but by then cars and paved highways had made the trek to Cummins Falls more of a discretionary trip than a necessary one. The mill was not rebuilt, but this land stayed in the Cummins family for more than 180 years. The Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation brought private individuals and public institutions together to purchase the land for resale to the State.



WATER, WOODS AND WILDLIFE

This park is in the Cordell Hull Watershed, one of the most bio-diverse watersheds in the world. The forest that borders the river includes a variety of oak, beech, buckeye, sycamore, and hemlock. Woodland plants include star chickweed, liverleaf, and Allegheny spurge. The property's long forested streamside protects turkey, quail, eagle, and other birds; soft-shell and other turtles; fox, mink, bobcat, and a myriad of insects including damselflies and dragonflies. The river is too shallow for boating. Fishing is permitted throughout the park, with the exception of the plunge pool below the waterfall. The river contains bluegill and smallmouth bass as well as many other species. A Tennessee fishing license is required.

NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- USCG-approved life jackets are required for those 12 years old and younger. PFD's are advised if you plan to get in the water below the falls. While some life jackets are available at the park, we recommend bringing your own.
- The less you take to the bottom of the waterfall the better. It is best to limit belongings to items that will fit in a small backpack.
- Keep your hands free.
- Wear sturdy shoes. Flip-flops are not recommended.
- Rather than try to take a picnic to the gorge area, plan to eat in the designated picnic area and just take snacks and water to the gorge.
- Alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the park.
- Coolers are not allowed in the gorge.
- Pool floats are not allowed in the plunge pool at the base of the waterfall.

CUMMINS FALLS STATE PARK

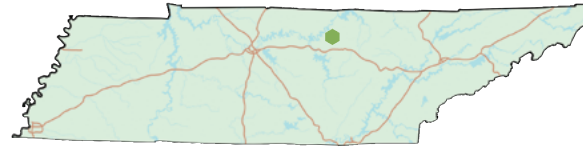
390 Cummins Falls Lane
Cookeville, TN 38501
931-268-7223 Information
931-261-3471 Urgent after-hours and weekends calls

HOURS OF OPERATION

8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. CT Summer
8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Winter

DIRECTIONS:

From Interstate 40, take exit 280 to TN-56 North toward Gainesboro for 7.7 miles. Right on TN-290, go 0.9 miles. Left onto Cummins Mill Road for 3.1 miles. Left onto Blackburn Fork Road for 0.2 miles.



GORGE ACCESS PERMITS

Gorge Access Permits are **required** for anyone who wishes to enter the gorge or access the bottom of the waterfall.



No refunds or exchanges will be issued for permits. Permits are available **online only**. Scan here or visit tnstateparks.com/parks/cummins-falls



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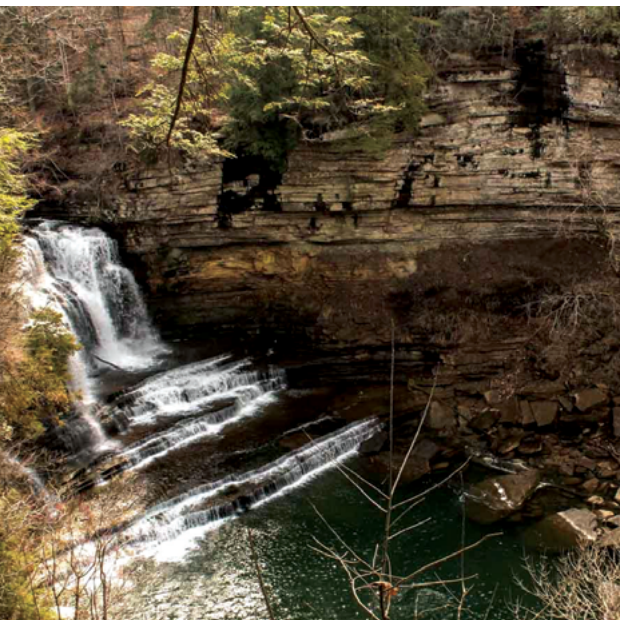


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CUMMINS FALLS
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tnstateparks.com





THE GORGE AND WATERFALL: WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO (CONTINUED)

The main parking area, visitor center, restrooms, trailheads, and a designated picnic area are located above the falls. The overlook is nearby and can be accessed by foot, 0.40-mile.

- Gorge Access Permits [available online] are required for anyone who wishes to enter the gorge or access the base of the waterfall. See back cover.
 - Please note: No refunds, exchanges, date transfers, or rain checks will be issued for permits. If notified before the date of use, we can transfer the date. If you are at the park with a permit and the gorge has closed before you go down, a rain check will be issued.

- The park is in the central time zone. Park hours are 8 A.M.–6 P.M. in-season and 8 A.M.–4:30 P.M. off-season.
- The gorge area closes at 5:00 P.M. in-season.
- People at the bottom of the waterfall must start walking out at 5:00 P.M. to get back to the parking lot and be out of the park by 6:00 P.M.
- Pets are allowed but must be on a leash and under control. Please remember to clean up after your pet.
- The hike to the base of the falls and through the gorge is a little over a mile from the parking area. It is steep, with uneven terrain and a significant elevation drop. Natural trail surfaces are varied and include slippery rocks, water crossings, boulders, and navigating the rocky riverbed.
- Please read all safety information on the website before planning to hike to the base of the waterfall.

SAFETY INFORMATION

- The base of the waterfall is only accessible on fair weather days.
- Visiting the waterfall will require strenuous hiking, swimming or wading through water, climbing rocks, and crossing slippery rocks
- Flash flooding at the base of the waterfall and in the gorge could occur any time rain is present in the watershed.
- You should comply with the park's safety instructions.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation, please respond immediately to ranger instructions and proceed to the refuge areas marked by yellow signs along the path through the gorge.
- We recommend that children age five and under not enter the gorge or visit the base of the waterfall. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult and must wear a life jacket while at the falls and while swimming or in the water.

PICNIC AREA

The park's picnic area is located across the road from the parking lot. The area has several tables and grills around the old Cummins family home site that are shaded from the sun. The picnic area is considered primitive; the ground is not level and there are no trash cans so please pack out what you bring in.

PARK EVENTS

- February: Cummins Falls Marathon/Half/10K and 5K

AREA EVENTS

- July/Aug: Upper Cumberland Regional Fair, Cookeville
- May: Annual Gainesboro Poke Sallet Festival

OTHER NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Burgess Falls State Park: 19 miles
- Standing Stone State Park: 23 miles
- Edgar Evins State Park: 27 miles

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers and the Friends of Cummins Falls State Park assist in protecting and preserving the cultural and natural resources of the park. They do this by giving of their time and talents to ensure the park's integrity for future generations to enjoy. It's easy to show your support—join the Friends group or participate in one of the many volunteer opportunities that are offered.

For more information, visit friendsofcumminsfalls.com.

