

Gauley Mountain

Climb 1000 feet in elevation in eight miles of curvy mountain road with breathtaking views of the New River Gorge Canyon and heart-stopping twists and turns. Scenic views of the natural elements of the New River and its canyon, reveal why this is known as the Grand Canyon of the East.

The driving fun begins as travelers climb the Gauley Mountain between Gauley Bridge and Ansted.

Can you really see your taillights in the rear view mirror as the car bends around the twisty turns near Chimney Corner? Or is it just another mountaineer tale? These curvy roads challenge and delight the best of car enthusiasts. Recently Car and Driver Magazine sent seven high-end sports cars along the Trail for a performance comparison.

As you maneuver the twists and turns, enjoy the picturesque views on the western slope of Gauley Mountain. Fetty's Country Store & Crafts in the log cabin at the Y at Chimney Corner offers a rest stop, plus a variety of mountain crafts and souvenirs.

Take a moment to "Be Shocked and Amazed" at the Trail's renowned tourist trap—oops, we meant to say roadside attraction—The Mystery Hole.



Landmarked by a Volkswagen protruding from a quonset hut, The Mystery Hole allegedly sits over a hole in the ground where the law of gravity does not apply. Balls roll up hill. Chairs sit half-way up a wall. Money vanishes from your pocket in the the gift shop. Kids and adults alike are awed.



Ansted and Hawks Nest

5.35

A town with a hawk's view.

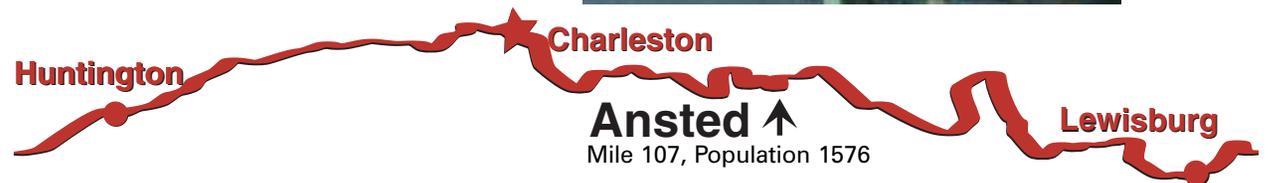
The Town of Ansted, located at the top of Gauley Mountain, is the western edge of the outdoor region of the Trail and is a center from which to enjoy West Virginia's natural beauty. Hawks Nest State Park, which is inside the town limits, sprawls over the top of the mountain and down to the base of the New River Gorge. East bound travelers first see the newly spruced-up Hawks Nest Golf Course on the north (left) side of the road, then the Hawks Nest Picnic Area and Overlook, which offers wonderful walks and a breathtaking overlook of the "Grand Canyon of the East," the New River Gorge. Nearby, enjoy an incredible view of the Gorge while dining on great home cooked food in the Hawks Nest Lodge's glass dining room, or inch down the Gorge on the tram for a picnic and jet boats at the base.

Rich coal seams originally led settlers to the hilltop town of Ansted in the 1790s. Today, travelers seek the opportunity to enjoy the rich-flavored Blue Smoke Salsa and the chance to explore the "Grand Canyon of the East," the New River Gorge. When we say "Head For the Hills on the Midland Trail," Ansted is the town that pops to mind. Perched in a fold atop Gauley Mountain and hugging the rim of the New River Gorge, Ansted is building on its unique geography to transition from a coal to an environmental and tourism based economy.

When chartered in 1891, the town was named for British geologist, David T. Ansted, who mapped out the seams of the area's high-grade coal. On a knoll in the middle of town, the Victorian-style mansion of industrialist William Nelson Page stands as evidence of the once thriving coal business. Built from native wood in the 1890s by the Gauley Mountain Coal Company, the mansion was a perk for Page.

At the western edge of Ansted is Hawks Nest State Park, with spectacular canyon views, a tramway to the bottom of the New River Gorge, a lodge, restaurant, gift shop, and facilities for swimming, hiking, tennis, golf, and jet boats. The famous Hawks Nest Overlook is just west of the lodge complex.

Take time to enjoy the recently created 2.5 mile Ansted-Hawks Nest Rail Trail that retraces the rail path used to convey coal from the mines around the Town of



Ansted and Hawks Nest

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5.36

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Ansted to larger tracks at the bottom of the New River Gorge. The trail is unique in that hikers and bikers can access the bottom by using the Gorge Tram from Hawks Nest Lodge. Bike racks are being installed on the gondola to encourage round trips. Along the way, visitors see the entrance to Mill Creek Colliery Mine, rebuilt bridges, and beautiful unspoiled foliage, cliffs and streams.

Robin Hilderbrand, nationally-recognized Entrepreneur of the Year, operates Blue Smoke Salsa's manufacturing facility in downtown Ansted. There's ample space to accommodate visitors by tour bus who want to enjoy the homegrown salsa that is becoming a nationwide favorite.

Historical landmarks include the grave site of Julia Neale Jackson, mother of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson; Halfway House, a former tavern on the Kanawha Turnpike and headquarters of the Chicago Dragoons during the Civil War; the African American Heritage Family-Tree Museum which helps Afro-Americans trace their roots and Contentment Historical Complex, an 1830 home that houses a museum and headquarters for the Fayette County Historical Society.

The grounds of Hawks Nest Park are filled with food, artisans and entertainment during Country Roads Festival on the third week in September. During the Holidays don't miss the Festival of Lights at Hawks Nest Park. Nearby, the Fayetteville Theater offers well-produced plays, including an annual holiday play the first few weekends of December.



Huntington

Charleston

Ansted ↑

Lewisburg

Mile 107, Population 1576

Hico - Crossroads of U.S. 60 & Gateway U.S. 19

5.37

Hico

The center of West Virginia's world-renown recreational activities.

opportunities. Just north of the 900-foot high Gorge Bridge is the Canyon Rim Visitors Center.

The hip town of Fayetteville is the outdoors services and gear capital of West Virginia. Downtown shops offer recreational gear, book shops, natural food restaurants, and works by local artisans.

Cross the world's longest arch span bridge to reach Oak Hill, Mt. Hope and Beckley. North, Summersville Dam and Lake provides fishing, camping, hunting, and the best Class VI rafting east of

At Hico, U.S. Route 19 intersects U.S. Route 60. The heavily traveled U.S. 19 provides an important gateway to the Midland Trail as it links I-79 and I-77 South to the recreational offerings of the New River Gorge National River and the town of Fayetteville.

One of the oldest rivers in the world and one of the few on earth that flows north, the New River offers visitors spectacular vistas and recreational



Huntington

Charleston

Hico
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Mile 114

Lewisburg