





Morrow Mountain/Sugarloaf Mountain – Morrow Mountain State Park, NC

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
7.3 mls		N/A			
Hiking Time: 3 hours and 30 minutes with 30 minutes of breaks Elev. Gain: 1,164 ft Parking: Park at the entrance for Morrow Mountain State Park. 35.37163, -80.09607					

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Morrow Mountain State Park is located in the southwest corner of the ancient Uwharrie Mountains of central North Carolina. Erosion has worn down these previously tall coastal mountains, and now they are merely rocky, forested hills. The state park has many loop options perfect for day hiking or backpacking. This hike begins at the park entrance and crosses the two tallest peaks in the park, Sugarloaf Mountain and Morrow Mountain.

First you'll climb the long backbone of Sugarloaf Mountain with winter views of the region. The highlight of the park is the Mountain Loop Trail around Morrow Mountain, which features great views south of Lake Tillery and Stony Mountain, and northeast of Uwharrie National Forest. At the summit you can enjoy the picnic tables and shelter under a dogwood canopy before turning around and completing the hike. Morrow Mountain will surprise you in many ways, this is a great state park to visit if you are looking for a mountain experience close to the largest cities in the state.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – The Bridle Long Loop Trail (*red circle blaze*) begins behind the stone building at the park entrance.
- ▶ **Mile 0.2** – Pass through the ranger residence area following service roads.
- ▶ **Mile 0.3** – The Bridle Long Loop Trail splits right leaving a service road.
- ▶ **Mile 0.55** – The Bridle Long Loop Trail curves right passing by the horse trailer parking lot. Leave the bridle trail and walk towards the entrance of the parking lot.
- ▶ **Mile 0.7** – Begin the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail (*orange diamond blaze*) heading east.
- ▶ **Mile 0.75** – The Sugarloaf Mountain Trail loop splits, go left on the northern section which parallels the road and then ascends the mountain.
- ▶ **Mile 1.1** – Cross Morrow Mountain Rd. After the crossing the trail begins a continuous 300-foot climb for 0.6-mi to the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain. As you climb you'll get good winter views of Morrow Mountain to the south and the Pee Dee River to the east.
- ▶ **Mile 1.8** – Reach the top of Sugarloaf Mountain, the second tallest peak in the state park at 858 feet. The summit is lightly forested with a large patch of grass amidst the trees. Beyond the summit the trail begins descending a narrow path cut into a steep slope and turns east then south with good winter views.
- ▶ **Mile 2.3** – Sugarloaf Mountain Trail intersects the Morrow Mountain Trail (*blue triangle blaze*) and Backpack Trail (*white circle blaze*) at a T-junction. Turn right following all trails southwest.
- ▶ **Mile 2.5** – T-junction with the Backpack Trail (*white circle blaze*) heading left to backcountry campsites.
- ▶ **Mile 2.9** – At a T-junction turn left on the Morrow Mountain Trail leaving the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail loop.
- ▶ **Mile 3.3** – Walk through a cross intersection with the Bridle Short Loop Trail (*white circle blaze*) and Bridle Middle Loop Trail (*blue circle blaze*). The trail soon ascends Morrow Mountain. You'll encounter the steepest section of the hike beginning at **Mile 3.5** when the trail ascends 400 feet in 0.4-mi. This gradient will surely surprise you and everyone else on the trail, it is equivalent to many tough Blue Ridge hikes.
- ▶ **Mile 3.9** – Morrow Mountain Trail ends at the Mountain Loop Trail (*red square blaze*), turn left at the split beginning the loop. The trail encircles the southern rim of the mountain which has been scarred by fires and has open views south and east. Directly south you'll see Stony Mountain and Lake Tillery.
- ▶ **Mile 4.4** – Mountain Loop Trail passes by the summit of Morrow Mountain (906 feet). Leave the trail to explore the top. The road ends at a cul-de-sac with an open view northeast of the vast Uwharrie Mountains surrounding the Yadkin and Uwharrie Rivers. The Pee Dee River is formed by the confluence of these two rivers on the right side of the view. A stone wall beautifully lines the parking spots along the road offering similar views to those you had on the trail below. There are many picnic tables on the grassy summit surrounded by dogwood trees. To continue the hike head south towards the lower end of the parking area to resume the Mountain Loop Trail. (Note this GPS track contains an extra 0.3-mi of wandering around the summit.)
- ▶ **Mile 4.9** – Follow the Mountain Loop Trail downhill to the left away from the road.
- ▶ **Mile 5.0** – At the end of loop follow the Morrow Mountain Trail down the steep slope of the mountain.
- ▶ **Mile 6.0** – Turn left on the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail (*orange diamond blaze*) at the T-junction.
- ▶ **Mile 6.2** – Cross Morrow Mountain Rd.
- ▶ **Mile 6.6** – Sugarloaf Mountain Trail ends at the horse trailer parking lot. Walk to the end of the lot to pick up the Bridle Long Loop Trail (*red circle blaze*).
- ▶ **Hike 7.3** – Hike ends at the park entrance gate.