

Burgess Falls State Natural Area



Burgess Falls State Natural Area is a beautiful park with magnificent cascading waterfalls located southwest of Cookeville, TN. The Area has more waterfalls in the shortest distance than any other park around. It is an awesome day trip destination to hike down some easy to moderate trails and see some of

the most beautiful waterfalls and spectacular overlooks on the Falling Water River. The Burckhard family loves to come here for the day with a picnic lunch in the backpack to hike down to the granddaddy of falls - the 136 ft. high waterfall - where you can stand at the bottom and feel the mist on your face. On a recent excursion with the Jordan family, the expectations were high and the excitement accelerated every step down the trail to see the wonder of God's hand in this beautiful setting. With four active boys running down the trail and the parents following behind, the crescendo of reaching the bottom of the falls was nothing less than awesome. (Please take note that the Tennessee State Park system classifies the hike to the bottom of the falls as very strenuous.) We took lots of pictures on this mild February day and stopped to enjoy our picnic lunch on some rocks next to the river. The park is home to over 300 species of trees and plants. Even during the winter, I saw some wonderful ferns that I hadn't seen before, luscious moss growing everywhere, and the signs of impending spring in the air were exhilarating. This park also has a historical and cultural significance that we discovered while walking along the edge of the river and along the trail. We tried to guess what the old, rusted out motors and the signs of pulleys and piping systems were used for. We guessed right -

electricity, logging and a gristmill. One of the first white settlers to the area was Thomas Burgess, a Revolutionary War veteran. He settled in the area in the late 18th century when he received a land grant for payment for his service during the war. By the late 19th century a gristmill and sawmill were in operation on the river. This area was rich in logging and the Falling Water River played a key role in providing electricity to the many loggers, farming families, and citizens of nearby Cookeville. Today, Burgess Falls is just a marvelous place to come and let the children play on the playground while the family enjoys the picnic pavilions with 16 open sites with tables, grills and bathroom facilities. The park also boasts of a spectacular Native Butterfly Garden. The Native Butterfly Garden was the winner of the 2006 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award in Excellence in Parks and Recreation. The overlook to the first waterfall is just a short walk from the parking lot. For those that find walking a bit of a challenge, this is a great opportunity to enjoy the area. Due to the proximity to Center Hill Lake, this is a perfect trip for the family on a slightly rainy day or first thing in the morning before hitting the lake. The park opens at 8:00AM and closes ½ hour before dark each day. The park is closed when the river is high or when ice or snow is on the roads and/or trails. Be sure to stop at the nearby **MMKM Family Produce** on your way in to pick up some delicious fresh produce to make the most of the picnic you are sure to want to bring. Take time to stop to enjoy nature by listening to the sounds, smells and sights of God's beautiful creation. The park is located at 4000 Burgess Falls Drive, Sparta, TN 38583. You can reach the park office at 931-432-5312 or visit their website at www.tn.gov/environment/parks/BurgessFalls/. Happy Trails!

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1 mile outside Burgess Falls State Park... "Worth the trip from anywhere"
Open Everyday March-November from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm

931-432-FARM