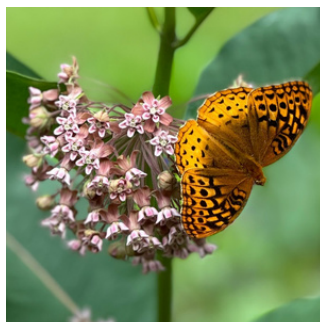


JACKSON COUNTY GREENWAY, NC

CERTIFIED FOREST THERAPY TRAIL



**AN ALL ACCESSIBLE FOREST THERAPY TRAIL
LOCATED BETWEEN SYLVA & CULLOWHEE, NC
ALONG THE TUCKASEGEE RIVER**



WHAT IS FOREST THERAPY?

Forest Therapy is a research-based practice which has demonstrated a variety of physical, mental, and emotional benefits. These include stress reduction, better sleep, enhanced immunity, increased feelings of energy, joy, and connection. Forest Therapy is inspired by the Japanese practice of “Shinrin Yoku”, which translates to “Forest Bathing”. Forest Therapy is a sensory immersion experience which invites participants to “bathe” in the essence of nature. You walk slowly, stop and observe, sit quietly, and notice things. The pace is relaxed, not fast. The focus is on connection and relationship with the natural space around you.

This self-guided experience is best done at a leisurely pace, allowing time for exploration and reflection. Use the variety of invitations in this brochure to help guide your journey along the greenway. Each invitation is designed to support a sensory experience.

HOW TO “FOREST BATHE”?

This brochure is your personal guide as you wander along the Jackson County Greenway from any trailhead. During your exploration, select from the invitations in this brochure to help you connect with the land, water, air, plant, and animal beings. Mile markers are posted every ¼ mile with benches and picnic tables where you may pause. There are covered and uncovered pavilions where you may also linger for an invitation. For an alternative path, you can explore the soft surface nature trail which branches off from the main paved pathway and follows close to the river.

You can choose invitations that fit the places where you pause. Use your senses to guide you as you connect with the natural spaces along the trail. Take your time and lean into whichever invitations you choose. You are invited to explore a small section of the greenway or wander the entire length.

The Jackson County Greenway is a natural space. Be mindful and considerate of the beings who call this space their home. As you travel along the Greenway you may encounter the following hazards, so be aware and take precautions.

- Poison Ivy
- Stinging insects and bees
- Slippery surfaces, rocks, and roots
- Snakes
- Changes in the weather



SUGGESTED FOREST BATHING INVITATIONS



BEING PRESENT

Provide yourself with time and space to be fully present. Put your phone away. Use your senses to experience the greenway and enjoy what nature offers you. Go slowly, take your time. Invite your body and mind to relax. Stay with each invitation for about 10 minutes or more. Let go of expectations, let nature guide you.



FOCUS ON BREATH & HEART

Focus on being here, right now. Take a few gentle breaths. Perhaps close your eyes or soften your gaze. Notice the sensation of breathing and how your breath travels through your body. Breathe in rhythm to this space. Place your hands over your heart. What does it feel like to be alive in this moment? When you feel ready, travel slowly and silently until you want to pause again.



PATTERNS-DETAILS-MOTION

As you wander, pause from time to time to explore the variety of colors, textures, patterns, or small details in this space. Perhaps stop to touch tree bark, rocks along the trail, plants or wildflowers. Feel the air on your skin. Notice the feel of the ground beneath you. Allow your gaze to drift from the tops of the trees to the ground, focusing on whatever interests you. Notice what is in motion here. Perhaps your attention is drawn to a leaf, insect, or bird. Let your senses guide you to notice who and what is in motion as you wander to another spot to pause.



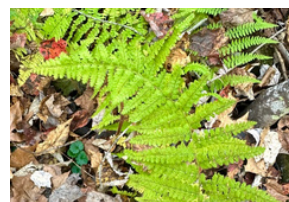
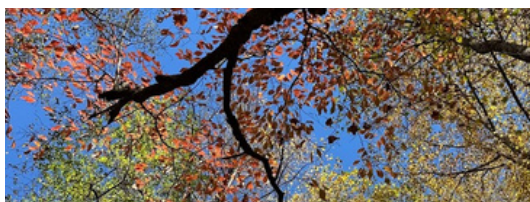
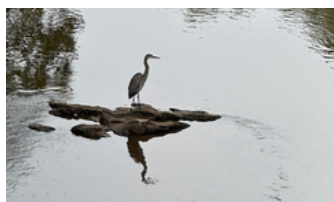
SOUNDSCAPE

Find a comfortable resting spot. Perhaps close your eyes and simply listen. Notice the sounds here. What sounds are far away, and what sounds are closer to you? Which sounds repeat or have a rhythm? What does your own breathing sound like? Are there certain sounds that resonate with you? As you continue along the trail, notice the sounds here and how your presence is part of the soundscape.



ART IN NATURE

Within nature, there is a variability of colors, lines, patterns, and textures. Where do you see art on display in nature? Perhaps you can use a small collection of found objects (twigs, fallen leaves, rocks, seed pods) to create a piece of artwork along the trail for someone else to discover or experience.



SUGGESTED FOREST BATHING INVITATIONS



BE WITH A TREE

Find a tree that you feel drawn to. Stand next to it, or sit with it, or just observe from a distance. Be in its presence. Consider how you would like to spend time together. Perhaps:

- Gently touch different parts of the tree.
- Imagine how its roots connect with other trees and plants.
- Wonder how old the tree may be and what it has experienced in this place.
- Breathe with the tree, exchanging gifts of oxygen and carbon dioxide.
- Thank the tree for what it offers to help the forest.
- What wisdom might the tree offer you?
- Does the tree have a message for you?
- Would you like to offer gratitude back to the tree?

When your time with the tree feels complete, travel slowly until you want to pause again.



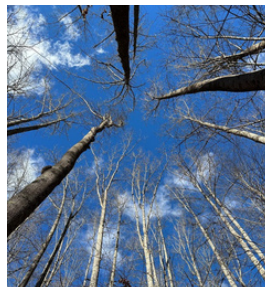
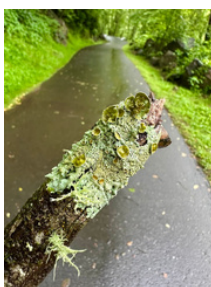
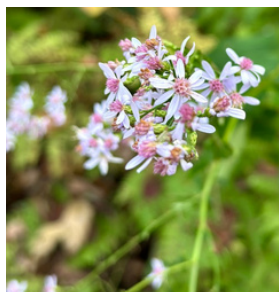
SKY GAZING

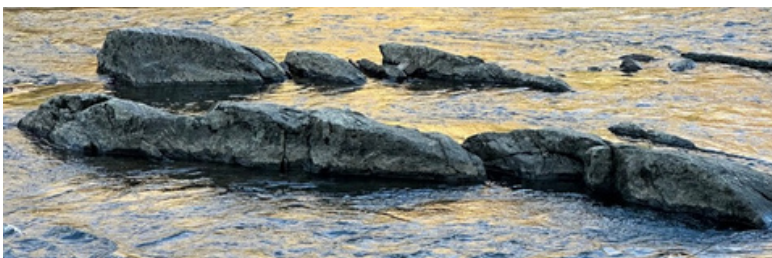
Find a spot in a place where you are comfortable. Settle into the space. Take a few gentle inhales and slow exhales. Notice what is around you and then slowly turn your gaze to the sky. Perhaps you will notice the trees, or leaves, or sky, or clouds, or other beings in the forest canopy above you. Spend some time gazing at this view above you. Take breaks as you need them. Imagine how the forest is interconnected here. What might this connection be to you?



SCENT SENSE

In a spot of your choosing, inhale a deep breath through your nose. Do you notice any scents in the air? Try again. Turn your head to one side and then the other, or up and down. What smells does this place hold today? What do these smells remind you of? As you continue along the trail, give yourself permission to stop and explore other scents which may capture your attention.





SUGGESTED FOREST BATHING INVITATIONS



WATER REFLECTION

The Jackson County Greenway follows the Tuckasegee River. Water is always around us. Take a deep breath and welcome the presence of the water. Notice the sounds and smells. Spend as much time with the water as you like. Take some time to gaze upon the water in the river. Perhaps notice the shapes, patterns, colors, and textures of the river as it moves by. Perhaps close your eyes and notice if that changes your experience with the water. If you have a thought that you need to set free, let the river take it downstream. When you are ready, wander on until you want to pause again.



SIT SPOT

Find a space where you feel comfortable to be present in for at least 15 minutes. Settle into this space in a way that best meets your needs. Take time being present, observant, quiet. Perhaps give yourself permission to do nothing or take some moments to notice the textures, colors, shadows, scents, patterns, and sounds that the space is offering. Who are you sharing this space with? Before you leave this sit spot, what do you notice with your awakened senses and heart? Reflect upon how you are feeling and what you are noticing.

RECONNECTION & CLOSING

As you complete the self-guided forest therapy experience, take a few moments to notice how you are feeling in this moment. Reflect on your experience in your own way or by answering some of these questions:

- Is there a memory I would like to take with me?
- What invitations felt right to me today?
- Which invitations will I repeat here, or at home, or in another natural space?
- How am I feeling now compared to the start of the walk?
- How am I feeling connected to myself, the greenway, and the beings I encountered today?
- The greenway offered me this space to experience Forest Therapy. What can I offer the greenway in return?
- What do I need to do, say, or feel to complete this Forest Therapy Walk today?

Thank you for being present.





BE CURIOUS. CONNECT WITH NATURE.



- **Are you interested in experiencing a Forest Therapy walk with a certified guide?**

Scan the QR code below to connect with Friends of Jackson County Greenways to learn more about upcoming programming with certified guides. Or check out the Association of Nature & Forest Therapy to find a certified guide in your area: <https://anft.earth/>

- **Begin a regular practice.** Take this brochure home with you. Consider trying some of these invitations around your home or a natural space you enjoy.

- **Benefits of Forest Therapy**

A plethora of research studies since the early 1980's have explored the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and environmental benefits of humans spending time in the natural world. The benefits documented include:

- Decrease in blood pressure, resting heart rate, tension, anxiety, fatigue, confusion, and rumination.
- Increase in immune system function, quality of sleep, cognitive fuel, concentration, relaxation, awareness and respect for spaces in nature.

Some of these benefits are linked to chemicals which some trees release, called phytoncides. These chemicals help trees protect themselves from invading insects, bacteria, or fungi. Humans also benefit from phytoncides as we breathe them in or absorb them through our skin. The chemicals help increase the production of natural killer (NK) cells in our immune system. They also help decrease stress hormones and provide a calming effect. Spending time with trees can boost our immune system and decrease our stress response.



Friends of Jackson County Greenways website

The Jackson County Greenway Certified Forest Therapy Trail and this Self-Guided Brochure were made possible by the Jackson County Parks & Recreation Department, Friends of Jackson County Greenways, and Debby Singleton (ANFT Certified Guide & Trails Consultant).



342 Old Cullowhee Road • Sylva NC 28779



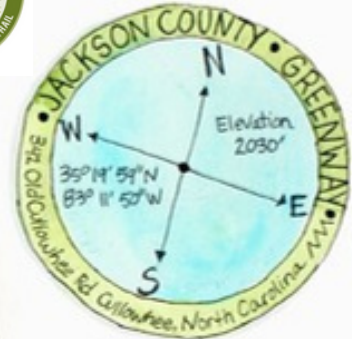
Photos & Brochure Design by: Debby Singleton



Jackson County Greenway

Managed by: Jackson County Parks & Recreation Department

Supported by: Friends of the Jackson County Greenways



MAP KEY

- Tuckasee River
- Greenway-paved
- Gravel path
- Nature Trail
- Parking Lots- Paved Gravel
- Restrooms
- Rotary Club Learning Pavilion-n- Fitness Area
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Kids Bike Trail
- Open Grassy Area
- Boat Ramp
- Houses -n- Buildings
- Trees- Shrubs
- V4 Mile Markers
- Future Expansion

Map Created April 2025 by
Deby Singleton

Total current mileage
between trailheads
= 1 Mile
One way