

Judd's Peak

Driving Directions: From the Saluda Library turn right on Greenville St. (The road name changes to Mt. Page Road when it enters Henderson County.) Go 1.5 and turn right on Pace Mountain Road. At Judd's Peak Road turn right. Stay right on to Orchard Hill Dr. Left at sign for Judd's Peak.

Hiking Directions: Car shuttle. Leave a car at the Fire Station. Park the other car at the top, entering left of the Saluda Nature Park. Look for the bench and you will see stairs below it. After descending stairs and coming to a level area, go left and then right, down toward the spring. Next there will be a slight climb to the trail head at the other entrance. Go down the road and past Sullivan Temple to Saluda Fire Station. Follow the green arrows.

Alternative Hiking Directions: Park at what remains of Sullivan Temple, past the Dog Park on Chestnut Street. This is a 2-mile hike to the top and back down with a slight loop on the Galax trail. (498 ft. elevation gain)

Walk up the gravel road to the right of the temple. What remains of the Sullivan house is under Kudzu to the right of the road.

When you reach the no trespassing signs and the old red farm gate, look left and go on the path that follows a fence enclosing the old town dump. (It has been capped with a flat, grass top.)

Keep going and cross the stream on the left. Take a right up the Switchback Trail until you reach the Judd's Peak summit. There is a bench at the top.

Return down by the same stairs and Switchback Trail. Take a left to go back down the same way OR take a right and walk a short distance to the Galax Trail sign where you turn left. This will take you on a short loop

through sections of Rhododendron, Galax and English Ivy. The first two are native. English Ivy is not and has become invasive.

When you loop around to the left, you will see the spring water again. Cross at the same place as before and walk up to the gravel road. Descend on the gravel road back to Sullivan Temple.

Educational Information: Judd's Peak is an acre look-out spot at the end of Judd's Peak and Orchard Hill roads. It was purchased in 2014 with the combined funds of several organizations (Saluda Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist Church, City of Saluda, Polk County Community Foundation and Community Foundation of Henderson County) to ensure that this beautiful spot would never be further developed. This high peak overlooks the mountains which surround Saluda. Many Saluda folks gather at this spot for an Easter Sunday sunrise service.

SCLT volunteers have cleared Kudzu from the top and planted milkweed and blueberries. They have installed 6 bluebird boxes.

In 1800 Dr. Goulet, the first local doctor, owned this land and had an orchard on the peak. He built a tower with a 360-degree view. Dr. Goulet hired Will Moore, an ex-slave, to take care of the orchard. Will Moore owned the land that Sullivan Temple is on. Phoebe Sullivan bought the land for the church from Will Moore. The City of Saluda bought a piece of the land which in Henderson County in 1913 for a dump. The Wilkes family bought some of the land in the 1950's and sold off lots in Orchard Hill.

On the way down the road you will pass what remains of Sullivan Temple Missionary Baptist Church. It was founded in 1947 by Phoebe Sullivan, a black woman who was said to have divine powers and was a leader in Saluda's black community. She often held grand celebrations on the church grounds, where a bounty of food was served and all were welcome. She never preached, as it was not her calling, but her son, James Sullivan became the assistant pastor. Phoebe claimed to receive her inspiration for healing from the book of Psalms. She died in 1956.

A restoration and memorial of Sullivan Temple are in the planning stage by SCLT.