THE EXPERIENCE

Silvermine Group Campground is nestled under a canopy of hemlocks and tall poplars. A rushing creek meanders 50 feet from the group campsite, which provides room for up to 50 people to set up tents.

WHAT'S OFFERED?

Visitors to the campground can explore two trails, including portions of the Appalachian Trail. Other outdoor activities to enjoy are whitewater rafting and canoeing on the French Broad River and soaking in the warm, mineral springs of the nearby town of Hot Springs.

Once you rent the site, you're given a key to gain access to the campground's gate. A half mile behind the gate, you can picnic, camp, and hike to your heart's content without the disturbance of other campers.

DATES OPEN: May 1 to October 31.
FEE: 0-25 people, $25 per night; 26-50 people, $40 per night.
FOR RESERVATIONS: Appalachian Ranger District, French Broad Station, at (828) 622-3202. (Please see addrees on near map.)
WHAT SITES OFFER: two large tent pads (15 by 30 feet); two grills.
OTHER AMENITIES: One picnic shelter with two tables; water pump; chemical toilets.

DIRECTIONS: From Hot Springs, go east on U.S. 25/70 across the French Broad River bridge. Just after crossing bridge, turn left onto SR 1304. Turn left at the first intersection and follow the road to the entrance gate.

DISCOVER VARIETY OF PLANTS

Two nearby trails—Lover's Leap and Pump Gap Loops—provide opportunities to visit a variety of contrasting habitats. Over 180 species of plants can be spotted along the trails that lead from the campground. Within a half mile from the Silvermine campground, hikers can find rhododendron-covered slopes, pine forests where brilliant fire pink blooms, cliffs covered with native cactus, and bluets flowering near the rushing French Broad River.

LOVER'S LEAP LOOP

This 1.6-mile loop can be accessed from the campground by following the pump gap loop trail downstream and then taking a left when it intersects with Lover's Leap Loop Trail.

After a half a mile, the trail—rated as "most difficult"—climbs steeply through several switchbacks to Lover's Leap Ridge. This rock outcrop offers many overlooks with vistas of the French Broad River.

4.2- MILE LOOP TRAIL

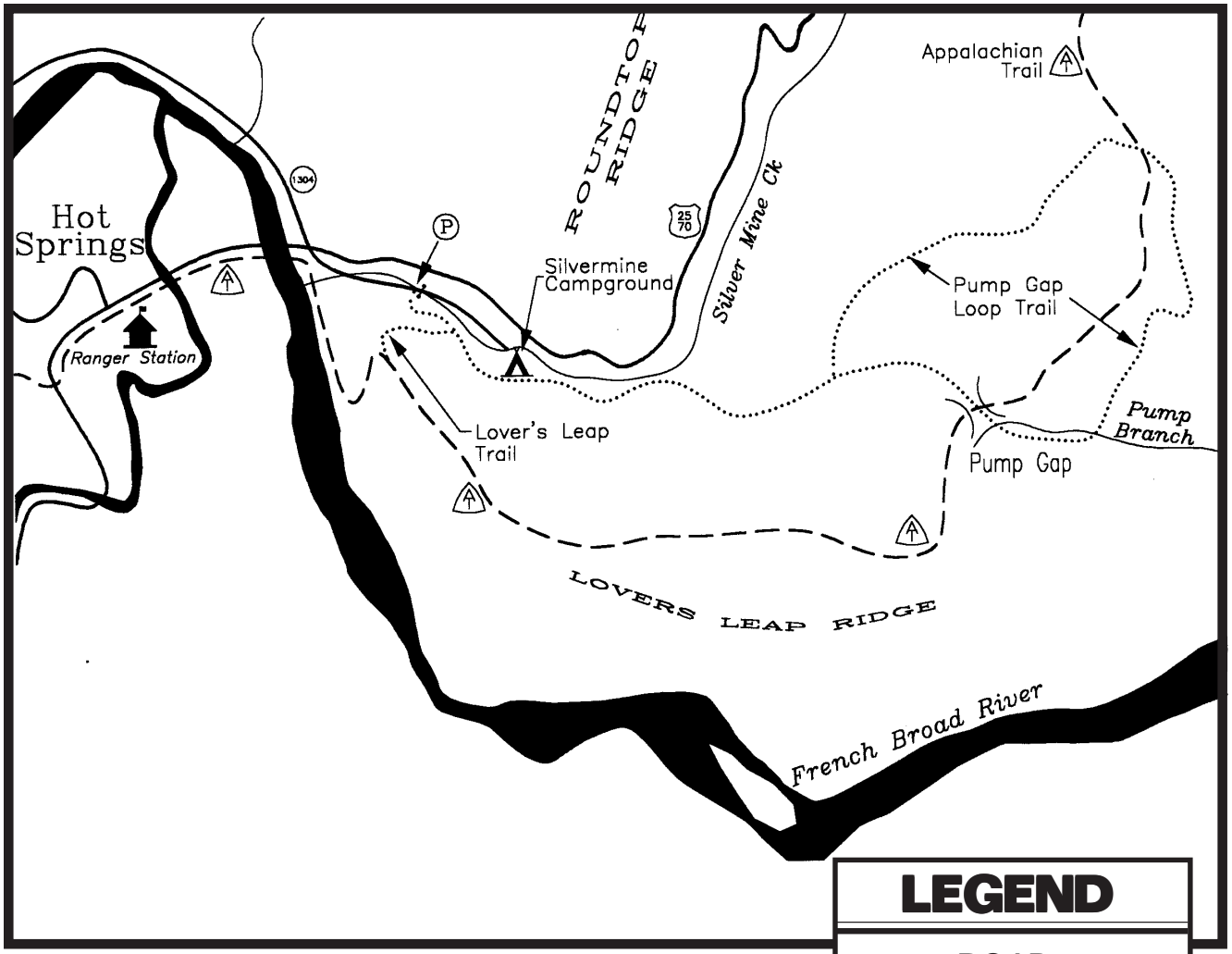
Pump Gap 4.2-mile loop can be accessed directly from the campground. The trail follows a stream and then forks. This is the beginning and ending point of the loop section, so either fork can be taken. If you take the right fork, the trail climbs to a ridge, crosses the Appalachian Trail, and descends along a creek. Along the creek, a side trail to the right follows an old road to Big Laurel Creek.

APPALACHIAN TRAIL

The Appalachian Trail meanders for some 2,100 miles along the backbone of the Appalachian Mountains, from Maine to Georgia. The trail is clearly marked with white blazes, and trail shelters are spaced 8 to 10 miles apart. The AT can be accessed by both Lover's Leap Loop and Pump Gap Loop Trails.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The campground is named after the silvermine that can be seen from the Pump Gap Trail. After hiking about 1.25 miles on the Pump Gap Loop Trail, you will find an abandoned silvermine shaft on your left. The creek near the campground is called Silvermine Creek, because people panned for silver in the creek's waters.



LEGEND

- ROAD
- TRAIL
- APPALACHIAN TRAIL

For more information:

Appalachian Ranger District
French Broad Station
P.O. Box 128
Hot Springs, NC 28743
(828) 622-3202
(On U.S. 25/70 in Hot Springs)

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SILVERMINE GROUP CAMPGROUND

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Appalachian Ranger District
Burnsville Unit
NORTH CAROLINA