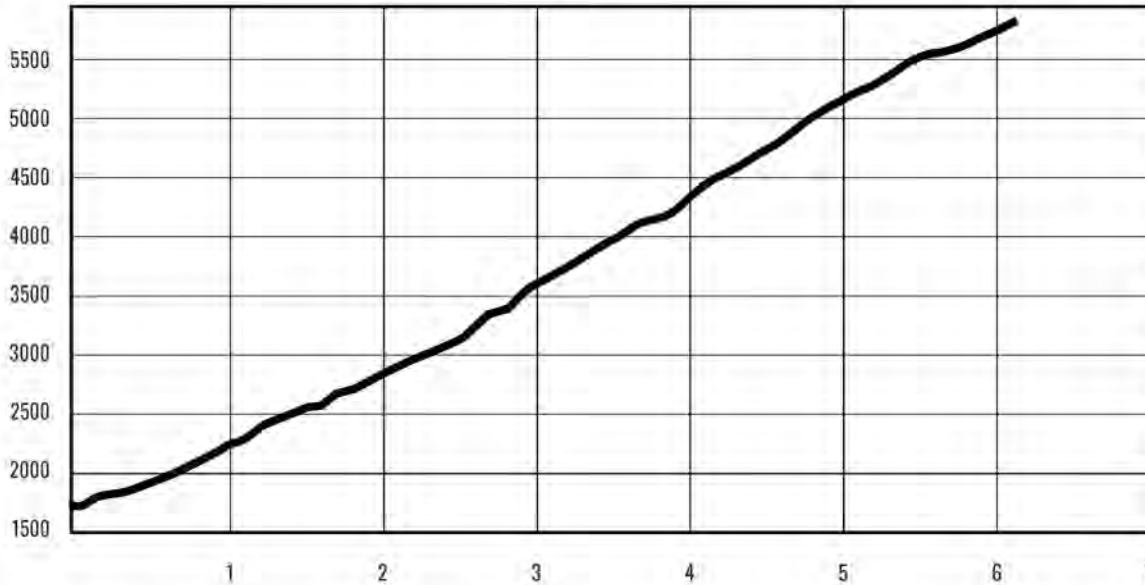


Baxter Creek Trail (6.1m)



- side trail on the right 0.3m to large stone chimney at creek bank
- clubmoss (troll trees) first vascular tissue in plant evolutionary history, covered the earth 300 mil years ago
- CCC stonework on side of trail in first mile
- Adam & Eve orchid grows between boulders
- 2nd cliff at 2.0 mile marker before rhododendron tunnel
- look for double trunked chestnut at a switchback
- 4.0 mile marker trail moves around the nose of a ridge and then climbs to an open saddle with a switchback, followed by 3 more switchbacks through boulder fields and blackberry patches
- trail straightens at ridge with massive overhanging and cave to the left
- fire tower at 5,820 feet: "Clear days offer views of Mt. Cammerer, Max Patch, Clingmans Dome, Mt. Pisgah, and Mt. Mitchell"
- national park first noticed the infestation of balsam wooly adelgid atop Mount Sterling in 1963
- US geological survey marker at base of fire tower

"The mountain itself gets its name from a 2 foot streak of lead in the Pigeon River discovered by early settlers in the Big Creek area. These settlers mistakenly thought the lead was silver. The valleys surrounding Mount Sterling's 7 mile ridge were popular hideouts for both Union and Confederate deserters during the Civil War. The CCC built the 60 foot fire tower at the summit in 1933 for traditional fire detection methods."