

## Hafren Forest: Cascades Trail

### Distance and time

Allow 30–40 minutes for the Cascades Trail, but if the weather is fine and you have taken a picnic, why not enjoy several hours in this quiet and relaxing corner of mid-Wales. 1 km in distance.

### Brief description of the walk and path conditions

This is an all-ability circular walk on well surfaced forest paths and a long boardwalk passing a series of cascades where the infant River Severn tumbles down the wooded hillside. Other short walks may be enjoyed in Hafren Forest, including easy strolls along broad forestry tracks. The Wye Valley Walk itself is stile-free in Hafren, as far as the viewpoint of the source of the Wye, *but it covers some uneven ground.*

### Start point for the walk and facilities

Rhyd-y-Benwch Forestry Commission picnic and forest sites approached along narrow country roads, 7 miles west of Llanidloes (signposted). Parking is free and plentiful. There are 4 disabled parking bays with tarmac surface (the rest of the car park having a stone surface), close to the toilet block, which has separate WC facilities (Radar key not needed). There are pleasant picnic facilities close by and an interpretation panel about the forest.

### Relevant OS Maps

Explorer Map 214 – Llanidloes and Newtown

Outdoor Leisure Map 135 – Aberystwyth and Machynlleth

### Detailed Walk description

The Forest takes its name from the Afon Hafren (River Severn) which begins quietly in a squelchy peat bog on Pumlumon, Mid Wales' highest mountain about 3 miles (as the crow flies) to the west of the car park. In no time at all, the river becomes a torrent with falls and cascades, plunging headlong through the forest. This waymarked walk allows you to enjoy a short part of this beautiful river.

Leave the car park along a tarmac path keeping left of the toilet block and follow the path gently downhill through a conifer wood to reach a ford crossing of the infant River Severn. The Cascades Trail continues along a timber boardwalk along the right bank of the river; there are stopping places with seats at 50m intervals. In 250m approx, reach a small picnic area overlooking the cascade, which is an impressive sight after heavy rainfall.

To return to the car park either retrace your route back along the boardwalk or else turn right off the end of the boardwalk onto a tarmac path which meanders gently uphill through dark conifer forest, to return you to the car park.