

# WATERFALL HEALING



## DISCOVERING THE HEALING POWER OF WATERFALLS

Our mission at Waterfall Keepers of North Carolina is to advocate for the waterfalls and for the people who visit them. Waterfalls deserve our care simply for their unique and special place in the ecosystem, but we also want everyone to know how they contribute to our betterment, not only as tourist destinations, but also for our health and general well-being.

[waterfallkeepersofnc.org](http://waterfallkeepersofnc.org)



# Waterfall HEALING

Life is full of challenges. There may not be one simple remedy to cure our problems, but there are ways to find some peace among the struggles. Waterfalls can provide some of this healing power. We know those who have overcome substance abuse, body image issues, anxiety, and depression in large part because of visiting waterfalls. We wish to harness the power of falling water and help bring healing to those in need. And we want everyone to experience the sense of peace and tranquility that waterfalls provide.

There is "magic" in that water!

**"If there is magic on this planet,  
it is contained in water."  
Loren Eiseley**



# The MAGIC of Falling Water

Many things in nature appeal to us, but few affect us the way waterfalls do.

What is it about waterfalls that draws us to them in a different way than looking at trees or landscapes?

Waterfalls engage all our senses at once. We feel the spray against our skin, hear the sound of the falling water, smell and taste the moisture in the air, and of course, we see the sublime beauty.

A waterfall is its own entity. It takes up a place in the environment all its own, and when we visit it, we experience it as something different. It's jarring and exciting. We call that the "shock effect." It jolts us out of our typical passive existence.



Waterfalls have healing properties; no prescription required. Just visit, engage, and enjoy!



# HEALING PROPERTIES ..... ..... of Waterfalls

A healing property is the benefit a therapy provides to help us heal. The healing properties listed on the next page address human needs that, when unfulfilled, result in much of our discomfort.

When people relate their experiences and rewards from visiting waterfalls, they report finding satisfaction and healing through one or more of these benefits that waterfalls can offer. See if any of these healing properties resonate with you!



## 1 ADVENTURE

Discovery, risk, anticipation, curiosity, and stimulation.

## 2 RELATIONSHIPS

Bonding, teamwork, connection, sharing secrets, creating memorable moments.

## 3 REJUVENATION

Relaxation, play, escape, comfort, and cleansing.

## 4 NATURE

Reconnecting with the natural world, respite from technology, and living authentically.

## 5 ALTRUISM

Inspiration to perform acts of service, stewardship, selflessness and empathy.

## 6 SPIRITUALITY

A rekindling of personal introspection, meditation, ceremony, celebration, and worship.

## 7 COLLECTING

Purposeful pursuit evoking ancient elements of hunting/gathering through photos, lists, challenges, and more.

## 8 INQUIRY

Problem-solving, intellectual curiosity, benefiting from in-person vs. virtual learning.

## 9 CREATIVITY

Art, craft, music, poetry, writing and other expressions of aesthetic imagination.



# Harnessing the

# MAGIC



How exactly do we make the “waterfall magic” work for us?

The short answer is to visit a waterfall. That’s all it took for some people. For whatever reason, they visited a waterfall. Maybe they loved it, or maybe they just tolerated it, but at least it piqued their interest enough to visit another waterfall, and then another. At some point, they were hooked.

This is how it worked for someone we’ll call Dawn, who was struggling with alcohol addiction and other habits that were negatively impacting her health. The first waterfalls were really tough for her, but she liked them enough to keep at it. She had started working on a checklist of waterfalls. The difficulties she experienced at the outset gradually diminished, and by the time she was halfway through, she was in much better shape and drinking less. When she finished the checklist, she had lost nearly 100 pounds and had stopped drinking.

We are not suggesting that all you have to do is hike to a waterfall and your problems will be solved. That’s not how it works. The waterfalls didn’t stop Dawn from drinking. Dawn did. But hiking to waterfalls gave her something she needed to take that extra step that she hadn’t been able to make before.

Everyone needs something. The wonderful thing about waterfalls is that they provide more “somethings” than virtually any other experience in nature.

For some, just the act of visiting a waterfall is enough to make a difference, but for most people, there needs to be a stronger connection with the experience. In Waterfall Connections, we’ve presented ideas for experiencing waterfalls deeply.





# Waterfall CONNECTIONS

Being outdoors and hiking to waterfalls is good for the body and soul. But if you just walk up, snap a picture, and walk away, you're missing out! Here are some ideas to help you immerse yourself in the experience:

## 1 APPRECIATE THE WHOLE JOURNEY TO THE WATERFALL .....

One of the most captivating aspects of visiting a waterfall is the approach. Hear the sounds of falling water in the distance, take in the first glimpse through the trees, enjoy the falling spectacle!

## 2 BE CURIOUS AND EXPLORE .....

Investigate everything you see. Use an app to identify plants or animals and learn something new.

## 3 CREATE YOUR STORY .....

Write stories or journal your thoughts on the falls you visit.

## 4 USE ALL YOUR SENSES .....

Feel the spray. Smell the water as it hits the earth, rock, and moss. Listen to it crashing over the rocks. Taste the moisture in the air. Dip your hands or feet in the pool.

## 5 TRACK THE PERSONALITY OF A WATERFALL THROUGH THE SEASONS .....

What does it look like after a heavy spring shower? The dry summer? How about decorated with autumn leaves or after a winter snow? In winter, you may see a view that was blocked during the summer.

## 6 FIND THE "RAINBOW" .....

Some falls can produce a spraybow in their mist when the sunlight hits the right way. Visit at different times of day and see if you can discover one. Learn a little about the physics behind their formation so you'll know where and when to look.

## 7 ADOPT A WATERFALL .....

Take pride in "your" waterfall. Keep it free of litter, graffiti, and anything that distracts from the natural beauty. Visit often and bring others.

## 8 JOIN A COMMUNITY .....

Find others who enjoy caring for waterfalls. Engage in social events, cleanups, and be part of the waterfall community.

## 9 MEDITATE .....

Play a recorded meditation or just use the sight and sound of the water to lead you to a calm place. Try sitting in different places to get a new perspective each time.

## 10 WRITE A POEM OR HAIKU .....

Allow the water to inspire you and engage your creative mind.

## 11 PRACTICE YOGA .....

The waterfall is blessing you with an experience. Blend your movements and consciousness in response.

## 12 FOCUS ON ONE DROPLET .....

Follow one droplet bouncing down the falls from rock to rock, to eventual peace in the pool below.

## 13 READ A BOOK .....

Read a new book or an old favorite in a new element.

## 14 FIND WAYS TO KEEP THE FALLS WITH YOU .....

Paint, sketch, photograph, or video your favorite falls. Jot down thoughts to bring you back to that headspace.

## 15 LISTEN TO MUSIC .....

Use headphones with the falls as visual background to your favorite songs.

## 16 MAKE YOUR OWN MAP .....

Draw your own personal map of your favorite fall. Add special features and creatures you see along the way.

## 17 GET A CLOSER LOOK .....

Bring a magnifying glass and pay attention to details along the trail and at the falls.

## 18 SPOT A SALAMANDER .....

Keep an eye out for these indicator species, which can signal the health of the nearby streams. Always remember they are extremely sensitive and be sure to leave their homes as you found them.

## 19 CONTINUE TO LEARN .....

Find out as much as you can about waterfalls, the streams that flow through them, and the surrounding forests. Share this knowledge to inspire others.

## 20 BRING BINOCULARS .....

Some parts of a waterfall can be too remote or inaccessible to fully experience. Binoculars will allow you to explore it all from a safe distance.



- 21 EXPERIENCE A WATERFALL AT NIGHT** .....  
A night hike can be exhilarating and will open up aspects of the falls you may overlook during the day. Visit during both the new moon (when the sky is darkest) and the full moon (when you may not need a flashlight).
- 22 CHALLENGE YOUR COMFORT ZONE WITH NEW TRAILS** .....  
There is satisfaction in navigating to remote falls on a more difficult trail. Make sure you go with someone familiar with the area.
- 23 PEOPLE WATCH** .....  
It's wonderful to visit a waterfall alone but if others are there, watch how they react to the spectacle.
- 24 EAT MINDFULLY** .....  
Take something delicious to savor at the waterfall. If you go with others, have everyone bring something to share.
- 25 NURTURE YOUR INTELLECTUAL SIDE** .....  
Assemble a group of others who enjoy nature and share thoughts on various issues in a peaceful environment.
- 26 FIND METAPHORS IN THE FALLS** .....  
Look for metaphors for self-discovery in the falling water, slippery rocks, peaceful and turbulent sections. Deep insights may await!
- 27 VISIT A ROADSIDE WATERFALL** .....  
Sit by the falls and notice the interplay of nature and modern life. Might this be a metaphor for life situations?
- 28 DANCE** .....  
In a safe space, dance at the falls (and find a way to include the falls as a "partner"). This can be a very moving experience, literally and figuratively.
- 29 CREATE A CHILDREN'S BOOK** .....  
Collect story ideas, take pictures, and make sketches to create a book to share and treasure.
- 30 WRITE A LETTER** .....  
Write a letter you've been meaning to write, letting your thoughts flow onto the paper.
- 31 LOOK UP** .....  
Embrace your surroundings. Notice the wind in the trees.
- 32 JUST BE** .....  
Waterfalls give us an ideal opportunity to sit and just exist. Let them be a place where you are willing to give yourself that space.



## HELPING a Loved One .....

### DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS A LIFT? WHY NOT GIVE WATERFALL HEALING A TRY?

Here are some ways to give someone you care about the most beneficial healing experience possible and help them want to continue visiting waterfalls on their own.

**CHOOSE A SUITABLE WATERFALL.** Make sure the first falls they visit is very scenic and one they can get to easily and safely.

**MAKE THE FIRST VISIT AS REWARDING AS POSSIBLE.** Bring food and drink, plan the route to see other sights along the way, stop at a favorite restaurant or pub after the visit.

**RESEARCH THE WATERFALL PRIOR TO VISITING.** Learn as much as you can about the cultural and natural history of the waterfall so you can be an interpreter. Even if they aren't overly impressed with the waterfall, they may enjoy learning about it.

**DON'T PREACH.** Let them figure out for themselves that hiking and being in nature is good for them.

**THANK THEM.** Tell them how much you appreciate them going with you. Help them see that they are helping you as well with companionship and security. Give them a purpose that isn't tied to their own struggle.





# **WATERFALL KEEPERS**

• OF NORTH CAROLINA •

Want to help or learn more about  
Waterfall Keepers of North Carolina?

Visit our website to see all the exciting  
ways you can support waterfalls.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

“To promote and advance the cultural, economic, ecological,  
and historical significance of North Carolina waterfalls; to serve  
as an educator and advocate; and to preserve waterfalls and  
facilitate their enjoyment in perpetuity.”

**[WATERFALLKEEPERSOFNC.ORG](http://WATERFALLKEEPERSOFNC.ORG)**

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