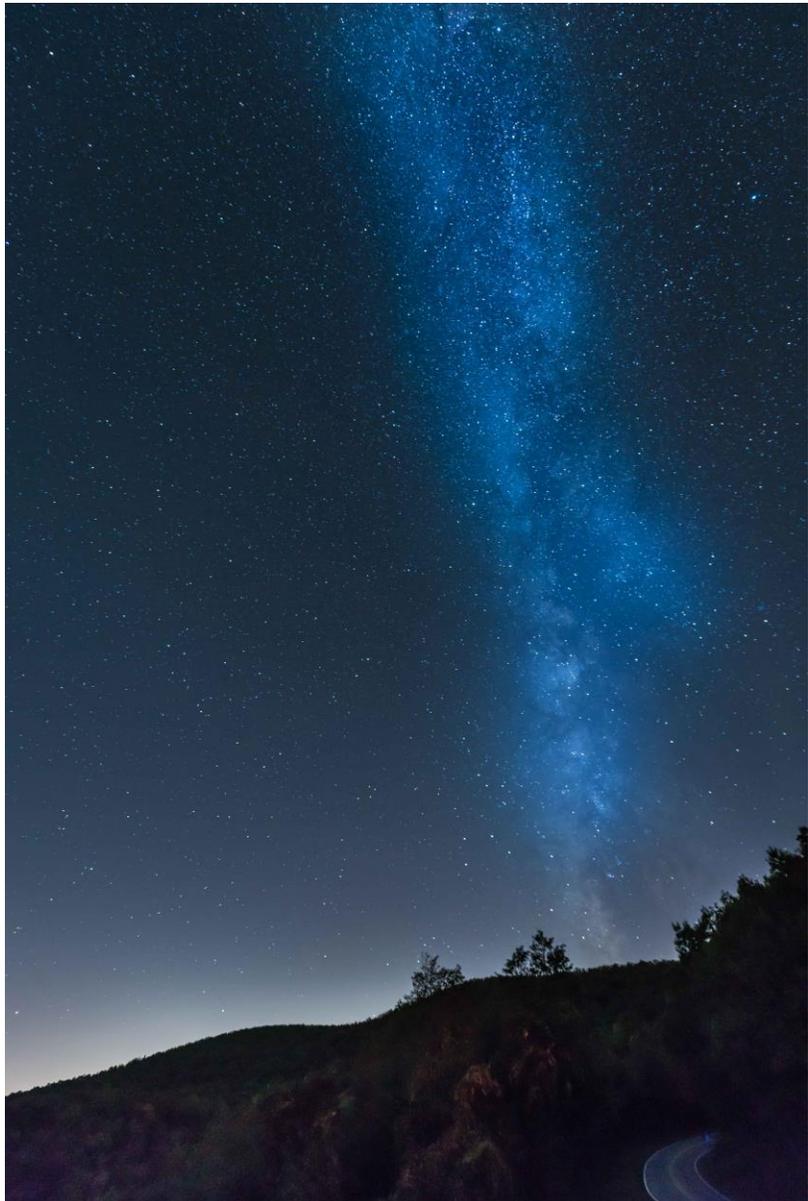


## Milky Way

Why, you ask, is a photo of the Milky Way in this collection of photography sites in North East Georgia? It is because you can't see - much less photograph - the Milky Way unless you are in a very dark place and have good access to the sky. Such a place exists on the Richard Russell Highway just north of Helen.

Notes for the photographer: If you have photographed the night sky you won't need this but...if you haven't, these tips will get you started. It is important that the sky be as dark as possible. To get this you will want to wait a few hours after sunset AND pick a night when the moon has already set. You can see some lights in Helen some six miles to the southeast. Get your sharpest focus on one of those lights and set your lens to manual. I lock my focus with a piece of tape so that it doesn't accidentally change. Your mileage may vary but I consider these things: Always use a tripod, use a short lens if you have one, turn the aperture to wide open (2.8 or similar), and make an exposure of about 30 seconds.



Directions: From Helen, Georgia, drive northward on State 75 to Robertstown. (It's less than a mile.) Take a left onto State 75A. Travel for 2.2 miles where you will turn right onto Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway, a.k.a. State 348. You will drive 6.9 miles to an unpaved pull-off on your left. If you reach the place where the Appalachian Trail crosses the roadway at Hogpen Gap you've gone about 300 yards too far. GPS Coordinates: 3443'33.3" N 8350'12.3"W

Interesting Fact: You may have noticed that the trip from Helen was mostly uphill. This is the course of the annual Hogpen Hill Climb, an 18K (11.2 miles) road race. It is reportedly one of the toughest races in America – but advertised as “...only one hill...”.