

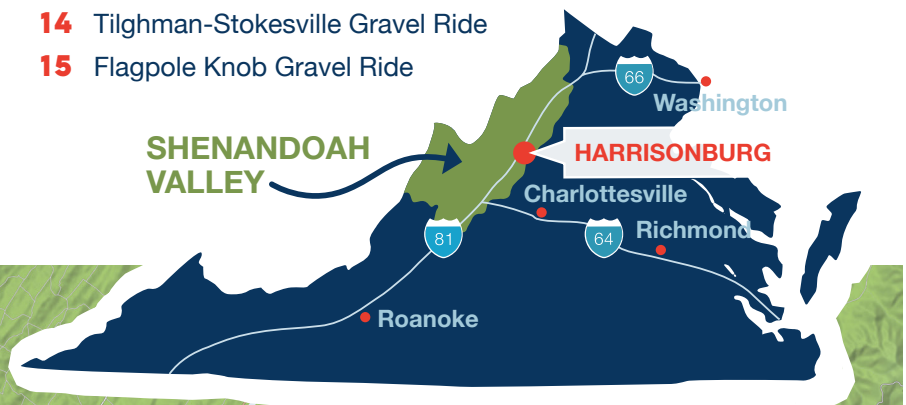
TRAIL GUIDE OVERVIEW

The Harrisonburg & Rockingham Trail Guide provides a collection of 15 of the most beloved trails in the area, from scenic gravel roads and peaceful wooded pathways, to challenging vertical climbs and heart-pumping mountain bike trails. With over one million acres of forest land, hundreds of miles of trails, and access to pristine waterways, the region has earned its distinction as the adventure hub of the Shenandoah Valley.

- 1 High Knob Fire Tower
- 2 Hone Quarry Cliff Trail
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- 8 Paul State Forest
- 9 Elk Run Trails
- 10 Western Slope Trails
- 11 Narrowback Mountain
- 12 Hillandale Rocktown Trails
- 13 Bridgewater Gravel Ride
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- 15 Flagpole Knob Gravel Ride

TRAIL KEY

	HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING
	HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING
	GRAVEL BIKING
	HIKING
	TRAIL RUNNING
	MOUNTAIN BIKING
	GRAVEL BIKING



GPX and navigable files available at
VisitHarrisonburgVA.com/trails

VisitHarrisonburgVA.com
VisitRockingham.com

BEST PRACTICES & TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Hiking, biking, and other outdoor activities carry inherent risks. You can reduce much of this risk with careful planning, good communication, and by following local laws and regulations. Carefully consider which trail to undertake based on your personal fitness, weather concerns, and time constraints. Trails in this guide all include distances, elevation gain, and relative level of challenge.



BEFORE YOUR TRIP



GEAR & TRAIL ESSENTIALS

- Wear suitable footwear for the trail surface. Note potential stream crossings on your route and recent rainfall.
- Bring an extra layer of clothing and a waterproof jacket in the event of rain, snow, or temperature changes. The temperature can be much cooler at higher altitude and at dusk or nightfall.
- Helmets are required by law for all cyclists ages 14 and under.
- Wear adequate sun protection such as UV protection clothing, a hat or visor, and sunscreen.
- Bring a daypack with trail essentials, including:
 - Plenty of water and extra food
 - Basic first aid supplies
 - Flashlight or headlamp in case you are not able to complete the trail before nightfall
 - Familiar navigation method (maps and/or GPS). It's wise to have a paper map or trail description in addition to a phone app or GPS device. Phone service is not present on many trails in this guide.



COMMUNICATION

- Many rural areas do not have reliable cell phone service, make sure you tell someone your plans and let them know when you plan to return so they are aware if you are late due to a trail emergency.



WEATHER

- Check the weather carefully and be prepared for temperature extremes and foul weather. Trail conditions can change and will vary depending upon the season and weather conditions.
- After heavy rain, trail surfaces will be soft and muddy. Avoid mountain bike trails to reduce damage to trail surfaces.

DURING YOUR TRIP



RULES & REGULATIONS

- Obey all posted rules and regulations. Do not trespass on private property. Pay all relevant fees for Shenandoah National Park and the Western Slope Trails prior to hiking or biking.
- Some trails have restricted use during hunting season November – January.



PLANTS & WILDLIFE

- Do not approach wildlife. This region is home to a wide variety of fauna including black bears and venomous snakes, including rattlesnakes and copperheads.
- Wear insect repellent and check your body thoroughly for ticks. Tick-borne illness is common.
- Learn to identify unsafe plants such as poison ivy and stinging nettles.



TRAIL COURTESY

- Show courtesy and respect for fellow outdoor adventurers. On multi-use trails, cyclists yield to hikers. Hikers and cyclists both yield to horseback riders. Those walking downhill should yield to those walking uphill.
- Keep your noise level low and allow the sounds of nature to prevail.



TRASH

- Follow all Leave No Trace® principles closely. Deposit all trash in proper receptacles, or pack it out with you when you leave the trail.

LEARN MORE AT:
visitharrisonburgva.com/trails

DISCLAIMER AND TERMS OF USE

Trail conditions may have changed since the printing of this guide. User assumes all risk and liability for any action in relation to usage of information and routes, including if actions result in injury, death, loss or damage of personal property or other complications. The City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County and Village to Village Press, LLC, its partners, associates, and contributors accept no liability. Route information and advice is provided as a planning resource only, and is not guaranteed to be accurate or complete, and in no way should replace your own due diligence, research, and safety precautions. All users are advised to check current conditions before embarking on any route, including weather, surface conditions and closures. Users should obey all laws including public and private land usage restrictions and guidelines and carry adequate safety and navigational equipment.



PHOTO BY LORI MIER

1

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

HIGH KNOB FIRE TOWER

Located in the George Washington National Forest

This moderately-strenuous hike rewards with some of the best views in the George Washington National Forest from the historic High Knob Fire Tower. After it was restored from 2001-2003, the tower now lends expansive, 360° views to visitors, with sunset vistas of Spruce Knob, West Virginia's highest mountain on the Eastern Continental Divide, and sunrise views over the slopes of Shenandoah Mountain, Switzer Dam, and the Blue Ridge which are visible in the distance. Plaques on each side of the tower catwalk show the names of these peaks. The area also offers excellent bird watching.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *High Knob Trailhead*



Driving: 30 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: From the trailhead at the parking area, follow the trail blazed yellow on trees.



Parking: Large gravel parking area on the left/south side of Rt. 33 immediately after cresting the pass on the VA/WV state line. Space for 20+ cars. Trailhead/parking not signed from the road, but is very visible.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None, grassy clearing at the top of the mountain around the fire tower



Food & Water: None



Phone Service: There may be service at the parking area and on top of mountain, depending on the carrier

MORE INFORMATION

NATIONAL HISTORIC LOOKOUT

The High Knob Fire Tower was constructed by World War I veterans in 1939 and completed by members of the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in 1940. Fire marshals utilized the tower to monitor the area for fires. While most fire towers were built out of metal or wood, this tower was uniquely constructed out of stone. Many of these fire towers were taken down after fire detection technology improved. High Knob Fire Tower was added to the National Historic Lookout Register due to its scenic location and unique stone construction.



TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1.5-2.5 hours
Distance: 2.5 miles
Elevation: +/- 643 ft.

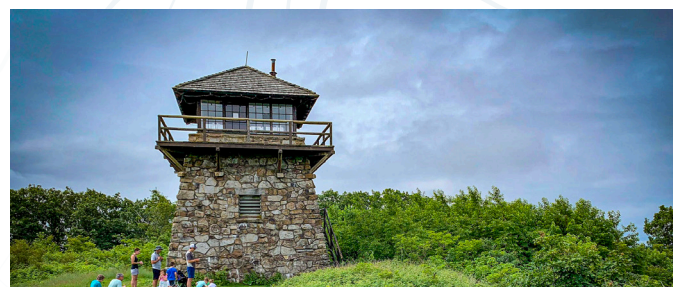
Terrain: Mostly singletrack footpath, with a short section on a wider dirt road
Preferred direction: Out and back

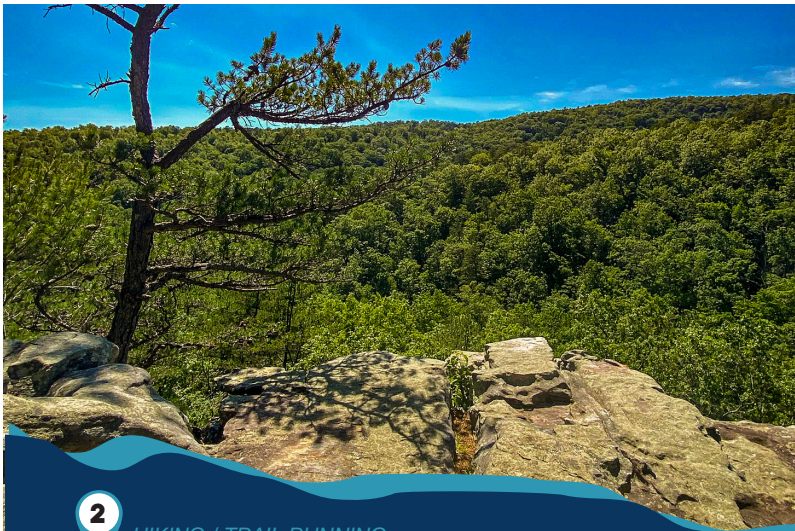


NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the parking lot, the trail starts with a short, rocky descent from the guardrail down to a yellow-blazed trail through the forest, which gradually climbs in elevation. After 0.8 miles, turn left on the High Knob Trail which climbs steeply up to a dirt road at 0.9 miles. (The trail to the right is 2.4 miles long and leads to Brandywine Lake). Then, at the point where the trail levels out, turn right on the dirt road, and walk 0.1 miles. Turn left on a grassy road that leads uphill to the fire tower (1.3 miles). Return via the same path.

Be sure to stay on the trail to avoid entering private property, which is well signed. Note that temperatures can be significantly cooler at this elevation than in Harrisonburg, and the area is exposed to wind. It's wise to bring a jacket. Take caution when climbing the fire tower, especially with young children. Hunting season is most of November through January each year. During this time, be aware hunters may be more active on national forest lands. Wear bright clothing to make yourself more visible and consider a brightly colored hat or vest. Whistle, sing, or carry on a conversation to alert hunters your presence. For more information, visit the Virginia DWR website.





2

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

HONE QUARRY CLIFF TRAIL

Located in the George Washington National Forest

The short-and-sweet Cliff Trail follows a path to two clifftop lookouts, with views of Shenandoah Mountain to the west. While the trail is relatively steep, the distance is short and can be accomplished by most reasonably fit people and motivated children. This hike can be combined with other nearby trails or hikes for longer day experiences if desired. Trail runners have great hill training opportunities climbing up from Hone Quarry to the surrounding ridges. The mix of water, forest, and field attracts a variety of local wildlife and is ideal for bird watching.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Hone Quarry Campground*



Driving: 30 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: Look for the brown hiker sign across from the parking area. Double yellow trail blazes show the hike up to overlook.



Parking: Approximately 1.6 miles from the base of Hone Quarry Road lies a large parking area on the left side of the road. Next to the parking area are a vault toilet and a campground. Space for 15+ vehicles.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: Vault toilet and picnic pavilion near parking area. None along the trail.



Food & Water: None



Phone Service: None or very limited. Possible signal at top of hike near the overlook.

MORE INFORMATION

RECREATION AREA

Hone Quarry Recreation Area is located in the George Washington National Forest and centered around a 5.5-acre reservoir. The recreation area features a camping area, picnic area, hiking and biking trails. A paved road reaches the main parking and camping areas. Be mindful of potholes and other vehicles. Beyond the campground, the road turns to gravel and leads to a small reservoir that is popular among anglers. While rough, it should be passable for most vehicles.



TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1-2 hours
Distance: 1 mile
Elevation: +/- 350 ft.

Terrain: Hiking trail uphill and downhill, well built but some small rocks on the path
Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

Starting from the main parking area by the hiking symbol sign, follow the Cliff Trail 0.5 miles to a rocky lookout. The trail follows a path uphill to two clifftop lookouts. Take your time and be cautious of your footing on the rocky surfaces, especially if it has recently rained and the trail is wet.





3

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

HIDDEN ROCKS

Located in the George Washington National Forest

The Hidden Rocks Trail leads to a local rock climbers' haven and a secluded spot for viewing the peaks of the George Washington National Forest. If you're lucky, you may see some in action on the cliffs. The trail includes several crossings of Rocky Run Stream as well as creek access for wading. In early summer, a tunnel of rhododendron and mountain laurel put on a colorful show.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Hidden Rocks Trailhead*



Driving: 30 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: yellow blazes



Parking: Navigate to "Hidden Rocks Trailhead" within Hone Quarry Recreation Area. The small parking area is soon after turning right off of Rt. 257 into Hone Quarry. Space for 7-8 vehicles.

PRACTICAL

PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None



Food & Water: Stream crossings offer water if needed, be sure to filter/purify



Phone Service: None at parking area, possibility on top of cliffs



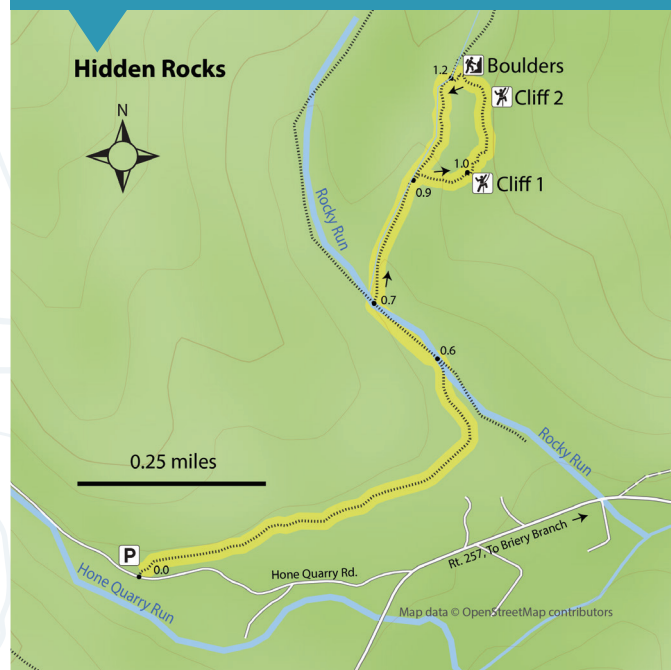
TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1.5-2 hours
Distance: 2.2 miles
Elevation: +/- 315 ft.

Terrain: Mostly singletrack with some sections wider than others. The trail rolls up and down to reach the first stream crossing, then climbs gradually uphill to loop around the cliff areas.

Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

After the turnoff from the larger paved Rt. 257 from Briery Branch, follow the Hone Quarry Access Road 0.4 miles. On the right side of the road, find the small parking area.

Follow the trail markers to the first stream crossing (0.6 miles), where you will turn upstream at the junction. Then, at the next junction, find another marking to continue in the correct direction. Do not go downstream. Reach the second stream crossing (0.8 miles). Just past the fourth stream crossing (0.9 miles), head uphill towards the first set of rock cliffs. The cliffs are somewhat visible in the winter. The trail will bring you to the base of the cliffs, which is a nice spot for a break or picnic. Then, the trail will then continue to the left to a second set of rock cliffs. To reach the top of the rock formation, circle around the left side of the crag. The ascent to the rocks is steep and rocky but short. Be careful not to throw anything off the cliffs or disturb rocks as they could land on hikers or climbers on the path below. After you have enjoyed your time on the cliffs, descend down the rock formation and continue following the trail to the stream. Walk along the stream and retrace your route back to the parking area.

Water can be high after heavy rain, making the streams difficult to cross in winter and early spring. Sandals can be helpful. In the summer, the trail can become overgrown, so pay special attention to the yellow blazes on trees.



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4

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

HIGHTOP MOUNTAIN

Located in Shenandoah National Park

If you've ever wanted to explore the iconic Appalachian Trail, the Hightop Mountain Trail is a more accessible and moderate section that will give you a taste of this 2,200 mile trek. The rocky viewpoint stands at 3,296 feet, making it the highest peak in the South District of Shenandoah National Park.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Hightop Mountain Parking Area*



Driving: 35-40 minutes east of Harrisonburg, 10 minutes east of Elkton



Signs and Marking: White blazes follow the Appalachian Trail



Parking: A fee will be collected at the Swift Run Gap Entrance Station of Shenandoah National Park on Route 33. One mile south of the entrance station, a paved parking lot will appear on the west side of Skyline Drive. The lot has only 8 parking spots.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None



Food & Water: None



Phone Service: Signal at parking lot and along higher elevations.

MORE INFORMATION

TALES OF EXPLORATION

John Lederer, German explorer, credited himself as being the first European to cross the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1669. He crossed the mountain range with the help of four indigenous guides. Historians are not sure where he crossed the mountain range, but Hightop Mountain is one of the possible places that match his written description.

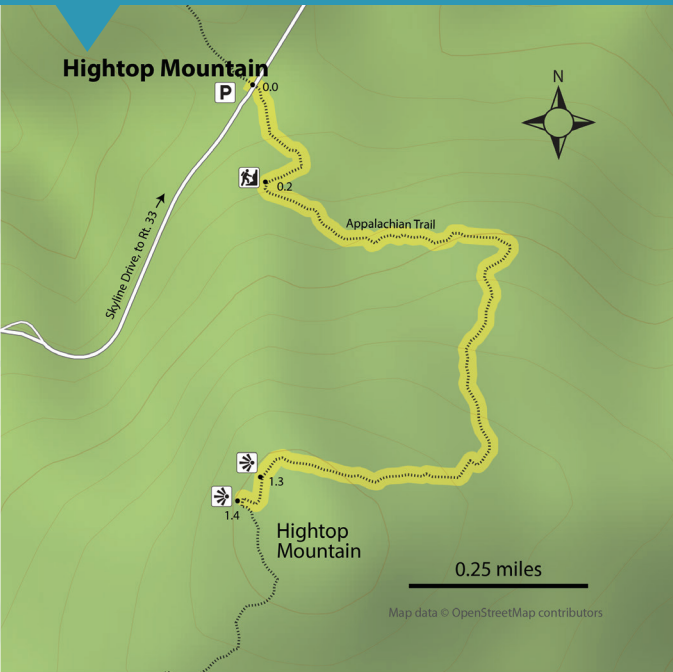


TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 2-3 hours
Distance: 2.8 mile
Elevation: +/- 900 ft.

Terrain: Hiking trail with some sections having rocks and roots. Grades are moderate and steady.
Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the parking area, cross the road to access the trail. The trail is well-defined and marked with white blazes and a cement marker with the AT symbol. It ascends gradually through the forest and passes large boulder pileups. The young and young-at-heart will have fun clambering about these rocks. The trail will then become steeper near the top, with several switchbacks. Then, it will follow along the ridge with a series of lookout areas, the first being more obscured and the last offering dramatic, 180 degree views to the south and west (1.4 miles). Enjoy the views before retracing your steps back to the parking area. If you continue downhill after the lookout (2.4 miles), you can visit an Appalachian Trail shelter.





5

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

FURNACE MOUNTAIN

Located in Shenandoah National Park

This challenging hike climbs Furnace Mountain to reveal expansive views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Skyline Drive from the rocky summit and overlook. The summit's other-worldly rock formations are perfect for scrambling. It also provides a nice spot for a rest and refreshment before descending back down the mountain to Madison Run.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Hidden Rocks Trailhead*



Driving: 30 minutes southeast of Harrisonburg, 24 minutes south of Elkton



Signs and Marking: light blue paint blazes on trees



Parking: Plentiful roadside parking is available at the end of Browns Gap Road just before Madison Run Fire Road. The fire road is gated. The trail is within the National Park boundaries, but there is no formal park entrance station for fee collection at the trailhead. Be prepared with a Shenandoah National Park pass.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None.



Food & Water: Stream at beginning/end of hike, be sure to filter/purify.



Phone Service: Limited service throughout hike.

MORE INFORMATION

MOUNT VERNON FURNACE

Furnace Mountain is named for the Mount Vernon Furnace, which was constructed at the base of the mountain in 1830 for smelting iron ore. It was destroyed during the Civil War. It was later rebuilt and used briefly as iron production shifted to other areas. Madison Run is named for John Madison, first clerk of court of Augusta County, and uncle of famous Founding Father and fourth President of the United States, James Madison.

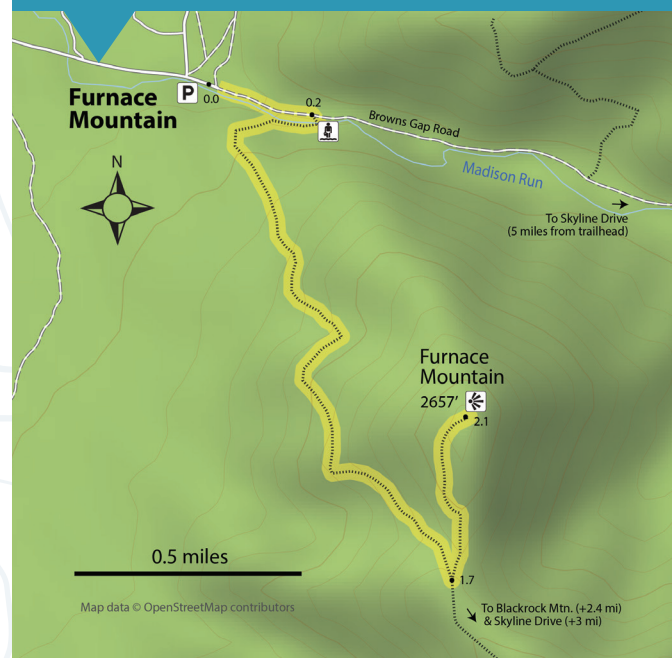


TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 2-3 hours
Distance: 2.8 mile
Elevation: +/- 892 ft.

Terrain: Well-maintained dirt footpath with some rocky sections, steady up and down hill
Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

Park along Browns Gap Road and walk through the gate at Madison Run Fire Road. In 0.25 miles, turn right at the cement marker onto the Furnace Mountain Trail. The trail is marked with light blue paint blazes. Cross over Madison Run creek on steppingstones. Be aware that the steppingstones may be under water if the water is high. Then, follow the trail as it turns right along the creek and ascends the hillside. As you ascend, the vegetation will become more scrubby and shorter as views of the Shenandoah Valley open up behind you. The trail will pass through a talus slope over a field of boulders. At 1.7 miles, you will come to a marker for the Furnace Mountain summit to the left. A 0.5 mile trail will lead you to the summit. After enjoying the views from the summit, descend along the same trail back to the parking area. For a longer loop of 12 miles, return to the marker for Furnace Mountain and ascend up the mountain towards Blackrock Mountain. Then, descend back to the parking area.





6

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

FRIDLEY GAP

Located in the George Washington National Forest

This shaded hike along Mountain Run stream leads to an idyllic swimming hole fed by a small waterfall. An informal camping spot overlooks the swimming hole and small waterfalls. The trail is ideal for hot summer days. Mountain laurel and other native flowering plants bloom along the trail in the early summer.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Mountain Run Swimming Hole*



Driving: 20-25 minutes east of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: The Fridley Gap Trail is blazed purple



Parking: Follow signs for "Camp Overlook" most of the way if arriving from Rt. 11. A large dirt parking area and end of Airey Lane sits on edge of National Forest. There is plenty of parking.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None.



Food & Water: None, but access to Fridley Run along most of the way. Be sure to filter/purify.



Phone Service: Limited to none



6 TRAIL GUIDE

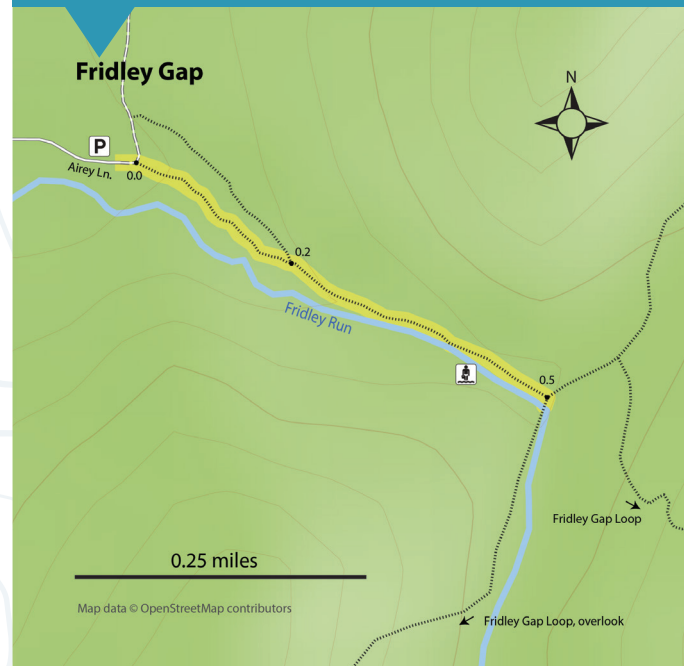


TRAIL INFORMATION



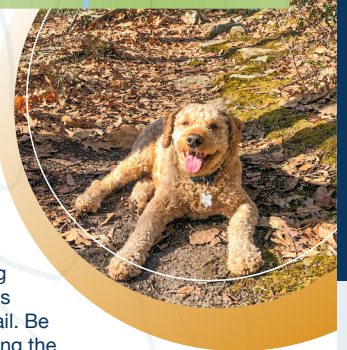
Time: 1 hour
Distance: 1 mile
Elevation: +/- 153 ft.

Terrain: Dirt footpath with some rocky sections along the creek
Preferred direction: Out and back



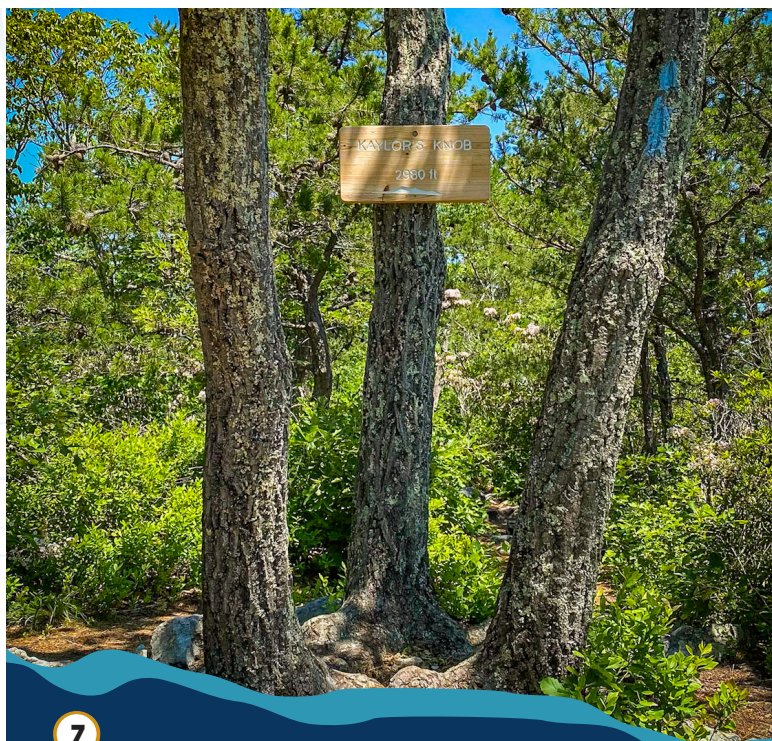
NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the parking area, follow the Fridley's Gap Trail east. When you reach the junction (0.2 miles), stay to the right and follow the trail along the side of Mountain Run. The trail is rocky and can be slippery. Water shoes or sandals are recommended. Alongside the trail, the rocky stream has many areas suitable for wading and water play. The main swimming hole will become accessible within 0.4 miles and is just a few steps to the right of the trail. Be aware that snake sightings are frequent along the trail.



This short hike can be extended into a challenging 6-mile loop with 2000 feet of elevation gain. Ample time should be allowed if undertaking this challenging hike. After 0.45 miles, cross a small creek over steppingstones. Then, at 0.5 miles, turn right at the junction of the Fridley Gap and Massanutten South Trails. Cross Mountain Run over steppingstones and ascend up the Massanutten South Trail. This trail is very hilly and rocky. Continue for 1 mile where the trail reaches the top of the ridge on Fourth Mountain. A narrow path on the right will lead to an overlook of Harrisonburg and the Shenandoah Valley below. Descend down the same trail to the parking area.

Hunting season is most of November through January each year. During this time, be aware hunters may be more active on national forest lands. Wear bright clothing to make yourself more visible and consider a brightly colored hat or vest. Whistle, sing, or carry on a conversation to alert hunters your presence. For more information, visit the Virginia DWR website.



7

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING

KAYLOR KNOB

Located on Massanutten Mountain on Massanutten Resort Property & the George Washington National Forest

This hike along the ridge of Massanutten Mountain affords pleasant views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east. The views are more visible in the late fall and early spring when the leaves have fallen off the trees. In late spring, mountain laurel blooms along the trail. In the summer, refreshing breezes can be felt along the ridge. Be sure to check out the viewpoint of Massanutten Resort and the Blue Ridge Mountains at the parking area. Free public access.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Massanutten Overlook*



Driving: 10 minutes from within Massanutten Resort, 35 minutes east of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: Blue blazes



Parking: From Route 33, turn into Massanutten Resort via Route 644, and turn left onto Massanutten Drive. Then, turn right onto Del Webb Drive and follow the road through the golf course to the top of the mountain. At the top of the mountain, signage on the left hand side of the road will mark the Massanutten Overlook paved parking area on the ridge above the resort. 20 parking spaces.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None



Food & Water: None



Phone Service: Good service along ridgeline throughout the trail

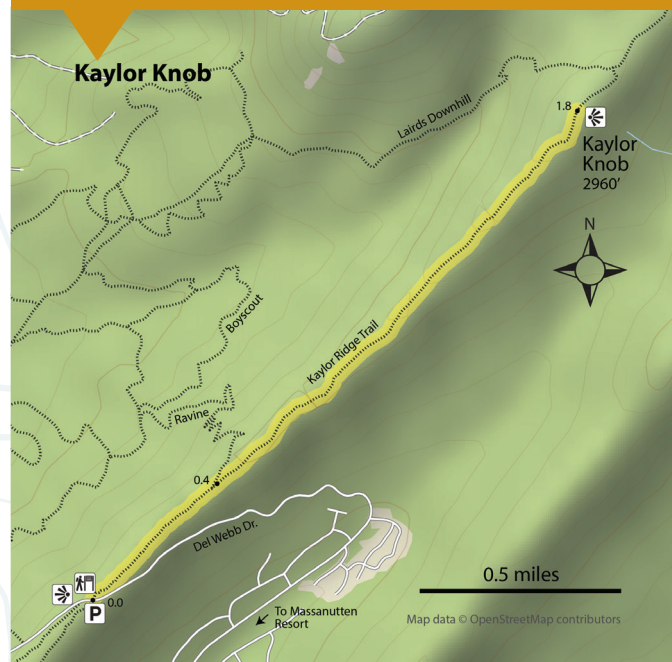


TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 2-3 hours
Distance: 3.6 miles
Elevation: +/- 429 ft.

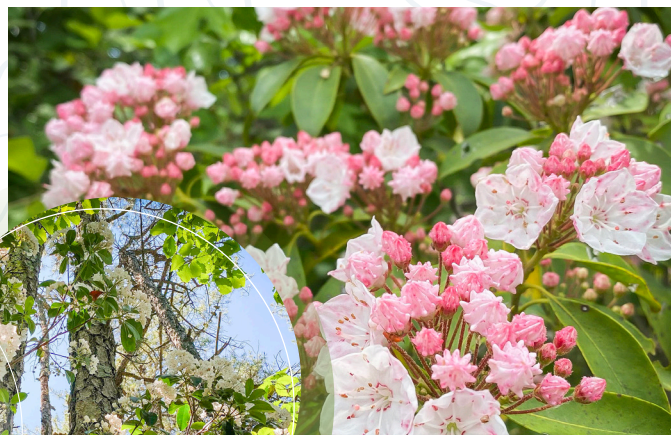
Terrain: Rocky singletrack following the ridge line, gradual grades
Preferred direction: Out and back

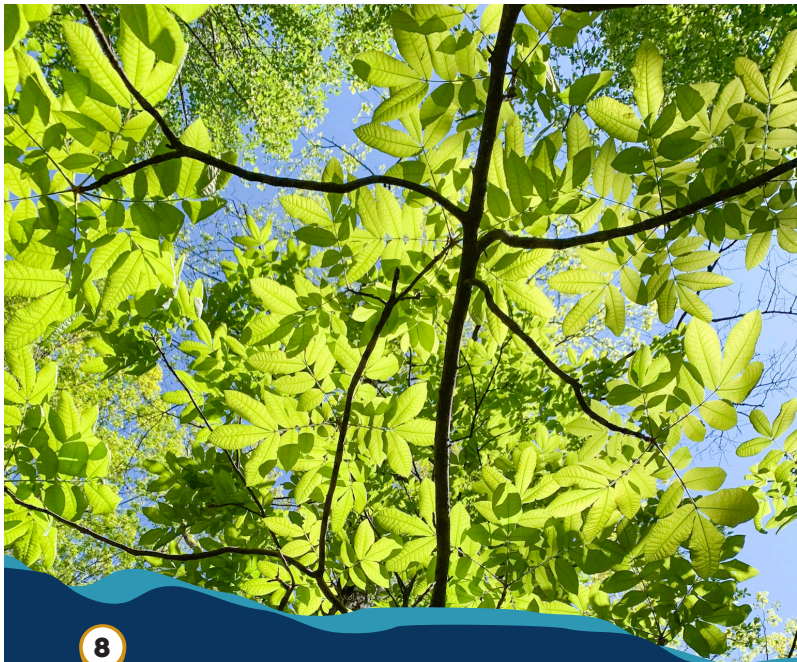


NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

The parking area and trail are easily accessible from within Massanutten Resort, even if you are not staying there. There is no fee to enter the resort. Directly across the road from the parking area, head north along Kaylor's Knob Trail. The trail is quite rocky, but the grades are gentle. The trail is very challenging for cyclists. Modest viewpoints will be visible at rocky outcroppings along the way. At 1.8 miles, you will reach Kaylor's Knob, noted by a wooden sign on a tree. At this point, turn around and descend down the trail to return to the parking area.

Note that the trails in this area, including Kaylor's Knob, will be closed for hunting season for most of November through January each year. The trail will remain open on Sundays.





8

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING


PAUL STATE FOREST

Located in western Rockingham County


Paul State Forest provides an oasis of forest amidst rolling farmland. The trail is great for walking in the summer when shade cools the path and offers a pleasant and easy course for trail runners. At the trailhead, a set of picnic tables provide a lovely spot for a picnic. The tables were donated by the Turner Ashby High School chapter of the Future Farmers of America (FFA).

DIRECTIONS & PARKING


GOOGLE: *Paul State Forest*

 **Driving:** 15-20 minutes west of Harrisonburg


 **Signs and Marking:** Minimal, but wide path is easy to follow

 **Parking:** Public parking lot on Clover Hill Road, just north of the Ottobine junction (Routes 257/613/742)

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION

 **Services Along Trail:** picnic tables and benches, no bathrooms at parking area

 **Food & Water:** None, country store nearby in Ottobine

 **Phone Service:** Good service along trail, although service may be poor at the Ottobine junction

MORE INFORMATION

FLORA AND FAUNA IN THE FOREST

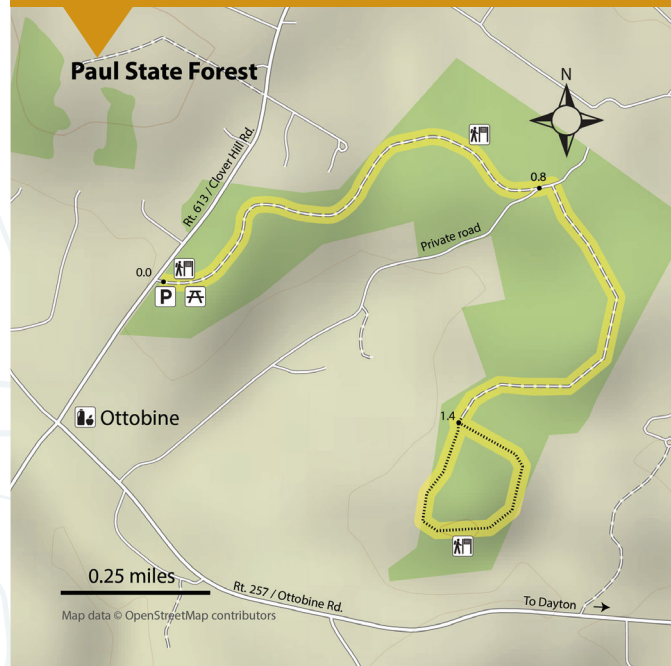
Paul State Forest was designated as a state forest in 1962 after it was donated by Federal Circuit Judge John Paul. The 173-acre forest contains a variety of tree species, including a distinctive “cove hardwood” area with cucumber trees, American hornbeam, and black birch trees, as well as 192-year-old oaks. A variety of birds frequent the area. Keep your eyes peeled for raptors such as Cooper’s hawks and kestrels. An additional 154 acres of forest is used for timber and research.

TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1-2 hours
Distance: 3.4 miles
Elevation: +/- 282 ft.

Terrain: Wide dirt/gravel path, with some more rugged sections toward the end
Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

This gentle path leads into a wooded area on a wide, mostly level trail. The trail is suitable for all-terrain strollers and ideal for an ambling stroll with good conversation. Benches are present at 0.7 miles and at the far end of the route (1.5 miles), where the trail loops around to return to the trailhead. Be mindful of private property signs and stick to the main path through the forest.





9

HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING

ELK RUN TRAILS

Located in Elkton

The Elk Run Trails offer a variety of options for walking, trail running, or biking at any distance. The most-used trail parallels Elk Run, with ample opportunity for wading or fishing in the creek. Although some loops are designated for mountain bikes, all are suitable for foot and bicycle travel. The terrain is mostly flat, with areas of dense hemlocks and pine trees. Most of the area is protected from sun and wind.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Elkton Area Community Center*

Driving: In Elkton, 30 minutes east of Harrisonburg

Signs and Marking: Signs are marked with a variety of colored arrows and paint marking the various loops shown on the trailhead map

Parking: Plentiful parking in the large parking lot behind the Elkton Area Community Center

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION

Services Along Trail: None

Food & Water: None on the trail, but a gas station and various restaurants are located near the parking area and in the town of Elkton

Phone Service: Good service throughout trail network

MORE INFORMATION

BUILT BY HAND

What began as a 1/3 mi trail built by a scout group in 2012 has blossomed into over 18 miles of trail network along Elk Run Creek in Elkton, VA. Much of the trail has been designed and cleared by Woody, a local veteran. The trail network was officially recognized by the town of Elkton in 2021 and is utilized in cross-country running meets, fishing activities, fun runs, and for general recreation.

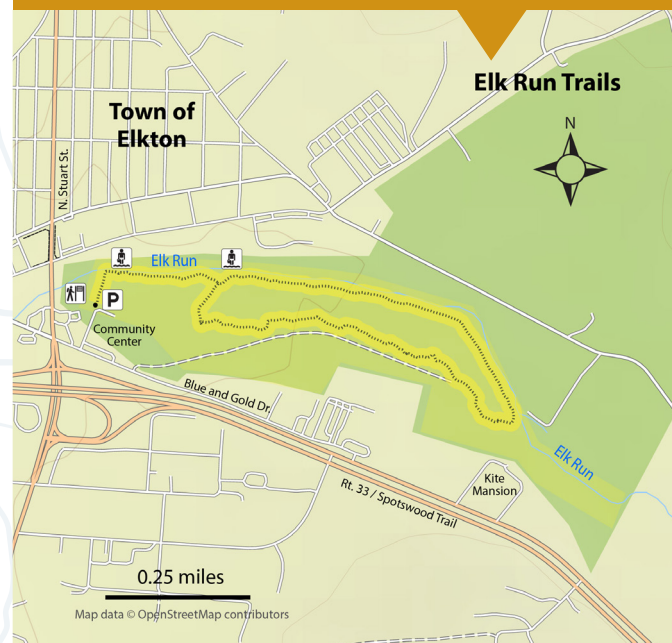
The red trail of the Elk Run Trails system passes near the historic Kite Mansion, a historic home built in 1948. The home was named for the architect, William Edgar Kite, a descendent of early settlers to the Elkton area who was inspired by Early Classical Revival style. The Kite Mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007 and is now privately owned.

TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 0.5-3 hours
Distance: Many trails present with options starting from <1 mile
Elevation: None

Terrain: Mostly dirt paths in the woods, some roots, and rocky areas throughout
Preferred direction: Starting from the main gate, head east along Elk Run and follow the signs for the orange loop



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

Park at the Elkton Area Community Center to access the trails. At the trailhead, a large, hand-painted signboard shows a map of the trail system. It is recommended that you take a photo of this map on your mobile phone before entering. You can also pick up a paper copy of the map in the Elkton Area Community Center during its regular hours (Monday - Friday 8:00am-9:00pm, Saturday 9:00am-1:00pm).

Enter the network through the signed gate at the trailhead and choose a trail color to follow.

The trail indicated in this guide is the orange loop and does not include the other trails as the network. The network is dense and interconnected.

For a shaded loop in the forest that works well for walking, running and easy mountain biking, start on the green trail along Elk Run. This is a short, rocky section of trail. Then, turn left onto the wide and flat orange trail to continue walking or riding along the creek. The orange trail will eventually return outside of the forest along the grassy edge of the road to the parking lot.





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HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING

WESTERN SLOPE TRAILS

*Located on Massanutten Mountain
in Rockingham County*

The Massanutten Western Slopes boast over 30 miles of well-maintained mountain bike trails on 800 acres of forested mountain slope. The network is famous for its technical rocky trails, including “the Puzzler” and “2,000 Hours,” named for the number of volunteer hours invested in its design. Views from the top of Massanutten Mountain are well worth the climb. The network also makes for pleasant hiking, trail running, and cross-country skiing in the winter. A small pond with picnic tables provides a restful break. Day or annual passes are required to use the trails. Passes are \$10 per day and \$50 per year for SVBC members. To purchase a pass, visit the SVBC website.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Western Slope*



Driving: 15-20 minutes east of Harrisonburg to Western Slopes parking lot near Keezletown, <10 minutes from Massanutten Resort to overlook parking on ridgeline.



Signs and Marking: Trails, junctions and loops are marked throughout the network and align with detailed trail map.



Parking: Large gravel lot at the base of the Western Slopes with space for over 50 vehicles. Paved parking area on the ridge within Massanutten Resort with space for 20 vehicles.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: Bathroom, changing area and bike tool stand in the parking area



Food & Water: None



Phone Service: Good service throughout most of the trails



TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1-5 hours
Distance: 0.5-30 miles
Elevation: +/- 2,000 ft.

Terrain: Variety of trails from dirt roads to beginner singletrack, to challenging technical and rocky terrain across various grades
Preferred direction: See suggested loops at trail head



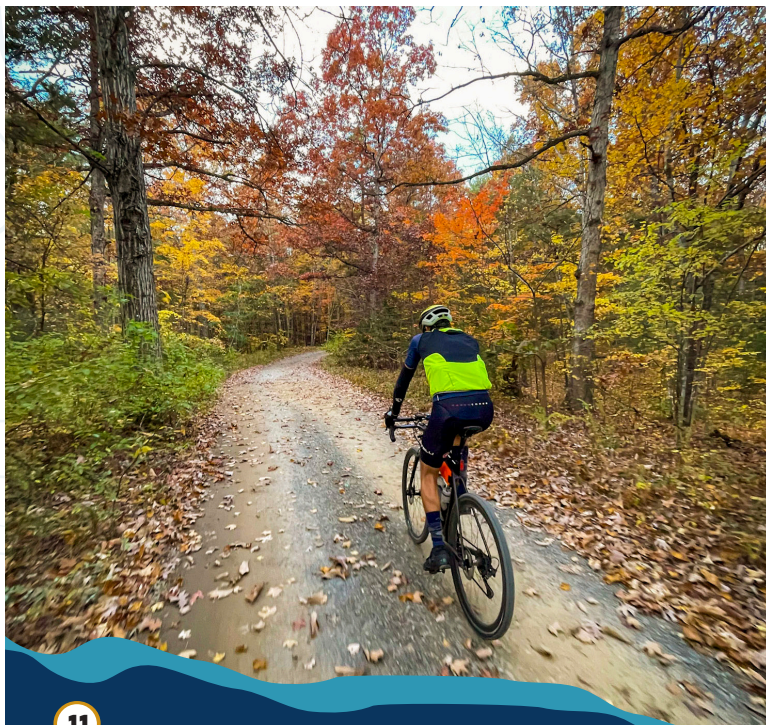
NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

At the Western Slopes parking area at the base of Massanutten Mountain, there is a large gravel parking area, bike tool stand, pit toilet and changing area. After getting ready for your ride, explore one of the highlighted loops shown on the overview map. The Green loop is great for beginners and can easily be combined with the Blue and Gold loops for longer, more advanced experiences. In addition to these trails, the network also includes a new Skills Kitchen area, which is popular with riders of all ages. The Skills Kitchen can be used to practice various mountain bike skills and the pump track and jumps are popular with riders of all ages. Trails are open daily year-round, except during hunting season for most of November through January each year. At that time, the trails are only open on Sundays. Keep your eyes and ears open for speedy mountain bikers on downhills and narrow trail areas.

MORE INFORMATION A LOCAL TREASURE

The Western Slope of Massanutten mountain bike trails are a public-private partnership between the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) and Massanutten Resort. All trails were built and are maintained by volunteers coordinated by the SVBC, with new sections being added annually. To support these efforts, an access pass is required for use, which can be purchased on the SVBC website. Passes are \$10 per day and \$50 per year for SVBC members.

Massanutten Resort offers a shuttle to the upper reaches of the Western Slope area, allowing you to ride downhill from the top of the mountain. The resort also offers bicycle and equipment rental, as well as a lift-accessed bike park within the eastern slope of the mountain in the summer. These trails connect to the trails on the Western Slope. Inquire at the rental office about shuttles to the Western Slope area.



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HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING

NARROWBACK MOUNTAIN

Located in the George Washington National Forest

With its ridgeline riding, rocky trails, and a memorable descent from the top of the mountain, this mountain biking route has something for everyone. Many sections may be navigated by wide-tire gravel bikes and are perfect for trail running and training as well. The trails featured on this route were built and improved through the efforts of the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition and North River District of the George Washington National Forest. The new, machine-built Narrowback West Trail features smooth switchbacks, while the Tillman West Trail features newly graded berm turns, rollers, and a variety of jumps. The route also passes by an old dog graveyard that can be seen and accessed directly from the trail.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: Wolf Ridge Parking



Driving: 30 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: This ride is comprised of the Narrowback West Trail, Tower Trail, and Tillman West Trail, as well as two unpaved roads. Trail junction signs are present at all key intersections. Follow the trail signs closely to make your turns onto the next trail.



Parking: The parking area is on the west side of the road and has space for 15-20 vehicles. Alternative parking spots are available along Tilghman Rd. at mile markers 5.4 and 6.5.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None



Food & Water: None on route. Two streams are available 2.2 miles south of the parking area. Bring a water purification method.



Phone Service: None at parking lot. Some service is available upon starting the route.



TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1-2 hours

Distance: 10 miles

Elevation: 1,199 ft

Terrain: Singletrack, doubletrack and dirt roads. Most grades are newly constructed moderate trails. A few sections of the Tower Trail

along the ridge have technical rocky features.

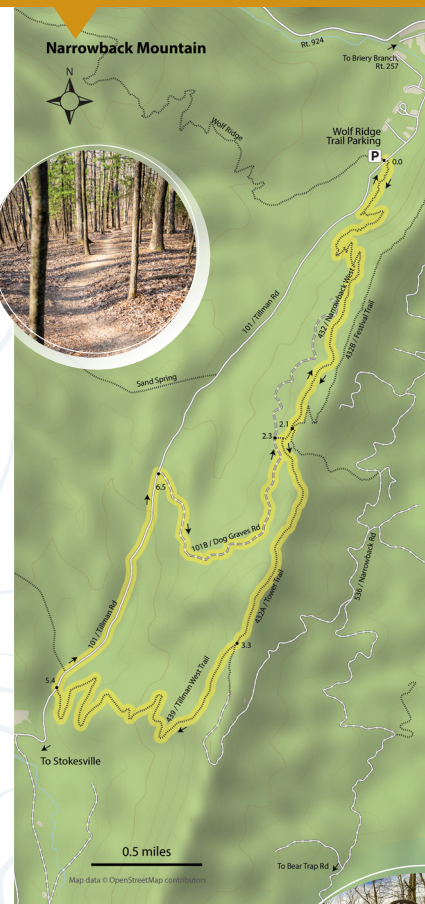
Preferred direction: Ride south, then continue clockwise on the southern loop until it intersects with the main trail. Head north to return the way you came.

NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

Drive along Rt. 257 through Briery Branch, passing the entrance to the Hone Quarry Recreation Area. Turn left onto Tilghman Rd. After crossing a bridge, the road will turn to dirt. Within 0.5 miles, a large parking lot will be visible on the right side of the road.

Ride the Narrowback West Trail up a series of smooth switchbacks to a four-way junction (2.1 miles). Continue on the Narrowback West Trail. Follow signs to the Tower Trail – 432A and ride along the ridge through rocky areas. Turn right onto the Tillman West Trail – 439 (3.3 miles) a two-mile, flowy track. Cross Big Run Creek at the bottom of the mountain and turn right onto Tilghman Rd (5.4 miles). Head north and turn right onto Dog Graves Road. A dog graveyard with headstones can be seen from the trail. Climb the mile-long doubletrack back up to the Narrowback West Trail. Turn left onto the trail and enjoy its smooth grades. Return to the parking area.

For more of a challenge, extend the loop to the west via the Festival Trail or Narrowback Rd.





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HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN BIKING

ROCKTOWN TRAILS

Located in Hillendale Park

At 74 acres, Hillendale Park is the largest park in the City of Harrisonburg. The park features a dense network of paved, gravel, and dirt trails, including four miles of mountain bike trails with varying difficulty. The trails, known collectively as the Rocktown Trails, were designed in conjunction with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) volunteers. Through their work on this trail system, Harrisonburg earned its designation as an IMBA Bronze Level Ride Center. A downhill jump track along the powerlines, as well as a small pump track, are popular locations to practice mountain bike skills. The trails, jump track, and pump track are open year-round during daylight hours along with the normal Hillendale park hours.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *Hillendale Park*



Driving: 5 minutes from downtown Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: Trails are marked with colored signs indicating challenge level and specific names.



Parking: Various public lots are available within the park. The parking lots closest to the trails are located at the end of the paved park road before the circle turnaround. Park in the parking lot across from Shelter #11. Additional access points are available to foot and bike traffic at the dead end of South Avenue and Circle Drive.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: indoor restroom facilities (mid-April through late October), a bike tool stand, picnic areas and a playground



Food & Water: Water fountains are available near the trailhead parking area



Phone Service: Good coverage within Harrisonburg

MORE INFORMATION

HARRISONBURG'S LARGEST CITY PARK

In addition to the trails mentioned in this guide, Hillendale Park also offers many picnic shelters, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, and a playground as well as bathroom facilities and water fountains. A 1.4 mile gravel fitness loop is ideal for walking and running and connects to the Friendly City Trail, a two-mile paved multi-use path.



TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 0.5-2 hours
Distance: Up to 5 miles
Elevation: Minimal

Terrain: Dirt singletrack with a variety of surfaces, scaled from smoother easy options to technical challenges with rocky surfaces

Preferred direction: Check out suggested loop directions to get started



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

Use the trail maps and key to choose a trail that is appropriate for your skill level. Trails of varying difficulty wind through the network, from easy green trails and moderate blue trails at the edges of the park to more challenging red and black trails towards the center. Take it Easy and Let it Flow are two great introductory loops, while Buck Jam and Seeing Red present opportunities for more advanced riders. Follow the location markers to stay on the loop you have chosen. If you find that you are lost in the trail network, follow the powerlines or head westward downhill to return to the parking area.

Avoid the trails after rainfall, as they become quite muddy and slick. Watch out for poison ivy along the trails, especially when the vegetation grows in the late spring and summer.





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GRAVEL BIKING

BRIDGEWATER GRAVEL RIDE

Located in western Rockingham County

Cruise through gentle gravel roads and explore the county's picturesque farm country in the Dry River area. This flat road ride is perfect for beginners with a mix of smooth dirt and paved country roads. Share greetings on roads with friendly Mennonite cyclists and their families in horse-drawn buggies as they travel between their farms and small towns. Take a dip in a cool swimming hole and soothe sore muscles on warm summer days. Enjoy drinks and snacks at a local country store or visit the restaurants and shops in the quaint, charming town of Bridgewater.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: Edgebrier Park, Bridgeview Park

Driving: 15-20 minutes south of Harrisonburg

Signs and Marking: Roads are signed with names and numbers, as shown on the route map

Parking: "Edgebrier Park" or "Bridgeview Park" have public parking on the southwest side of town near the North River

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION

Services Along Trail: At parks and private businesses

Food & Water: Food and water are available for purchase in the town of Bridgewater and the Dry River on route 613 in Lilly

Phone Service: Good service throughout the route

TRAIL INFORMATION

Time: 1.5-2.5 hours
Distance: 16.5 miles
Elevation: +/- 337 ft.

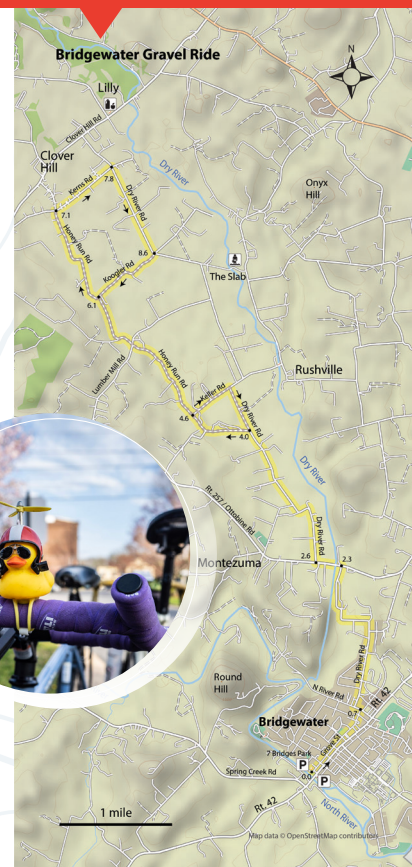
Terrain: Mixture of state-maintained gravel roads and quiet paved roads through farm country on a very flat route
Preferred direction: Out and back with a clockwise loop on the north end and a small option for variety on the return at mile 10.5

NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the southern end of the town of Bridgewater, park in the parking lots of Edgewater or Bridgeview Park. Head northeast on S. Grove St. and turn left onto N. River Rd. Immediately turn right onto Dry River Rd. After 1.6 miles, turn left onto the busy Rt. 257. Cross the bridge over Dry River and turn right onto Rt. 738 to continue onto W. Dry River Rd. The road will eventually turn to gravel (4 miles) as you continue north and turn left onto Honey Run Rd. The uphill grade on this road is hardly noticeable. Circle back in Clover Hill by turning right onto Morris Pottery Rd - Rt. 731, and right onto W. Dry River Rd. Enjoy the easy ride back to Bridgewater!

At 7.8 miles, it is possible to detour up to the Dry River Store in Lilly on Rt. 613 for supplies or drinks. From Kerns Rd. (Rt. 731), turn left onto W. Dry River Rd. (Rt. 738). When you reach the fork in the road, turn right onto Clover Hill Rd. (Rt. 613). After 0.3 miles, the Dry River Store will appear on your left.

At 8.6 miles, it is possible to detour to the "Slab," a local swimming hole on Dry River. From the intersection of Koogler Rd. (Rt. 739) and W. Dry River Rd. (Rt. 738), continue down W. Dry River Rd. for 0.7 miles until it becomes Slab Rd. (Rt. 734). The road will become a cement slab as it crosses the river. When you reach the cement slab, park your bike in the grassy area next to the river and take a dip in the water. Take precaution and do not swim in the river if the water level is high and the current is fast.



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GRAVEL BIKING

TILGHMAN-STOKESVILLE GRAVEL RIDE

Located in the George Washington National Forest

This gravel ride starts from the Wolf Ridge Trail parking area and heads south along Tilghman Road through the George Washington National Forest. The road is well-maintained. After 2 miles, the route reaches its high point and then rolls mostly downhill. After passing the Heathstone Lake Reservoir, a short climb gives way to more downhill riding through forest glades.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: Wolf Ridge Trail Parking



Driving: 30 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: Roads are marked with signs



Parking: The parking area is on the west side of the road and has space for 15-20 vehicles. Alternative parking spots are available along Tilghman Rd.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: Stokesville Campground and Lodge



Food & Water: Stokesville Market



Phone Service: Intermittent service is available on Tilghman Rd.

NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

Ride south along Tilghman Rd. Turn around when you are ready and return the way you came. Note: Tilghman Road becomes Tillman Road when it crosses from Rockingham County to Augusta County.

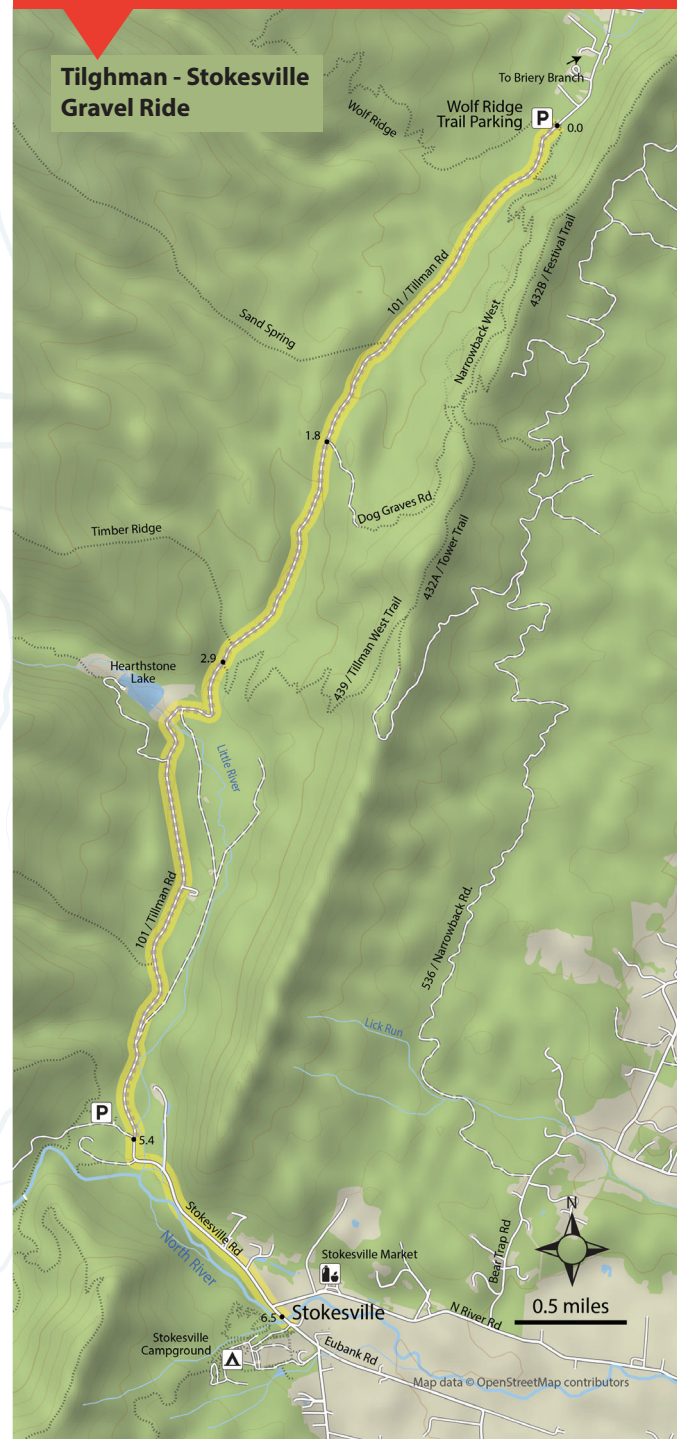


TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1-2 hours
Distance: 13.1 miles
Elevation: +/- 909 ft.

Terrain: Well-maintained gravel road with a short section of quiet paved road
Preferred direction: Out and back





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HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING / MOUNTAIN & GRAVEL BIKING

FLAGPOLE KNOB GRAVEL RIDE

Located in the George Washington National Forest

Ride through lush forest roads up to Flagpole Knob, the highest point in Rockingham County. At 4,360 feet, riders can enjoy cooler temperatures and stunning views along the ridgeline. A fire ring and log benches invite riders to rest on top of the mountain. In the fall, thousands of migrating birds can be seen along the ridge. In the spring and early summer, warblers sing from the trees lining the road.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: Briery Branch Gap



Driving: 40 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: Some forest service roads and trails are labeled. Stay on the main road.



Parking: Unmarked pull-off parking is available along the right side of the road.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None



Food & Water: Natural spring at 2 miles on the left (west) side of the road. Bring a water purification method.



Phone Service: Limited service along the route. Better coverage is available at open views along the ridge and at Flagpole Knob.

MORE INFORMATION

OFF-ROADING & OVERLANDING ENTHUSIASTS

Watch for 4x4 tracks alongside FS85. The route is often intersected by off-roading vehicles, especially near Brother Knob and Flagpole Knob. Flagpole Knob has become a popular destination for overlanders, who use high clearance 4x4 vehicles to climb the mountain via rugged Union Springs or Dunkle Hollow. These vehicles are usually move at low speeds. However, you should take care around blind corners and listen for sounds of approaching vehicles.

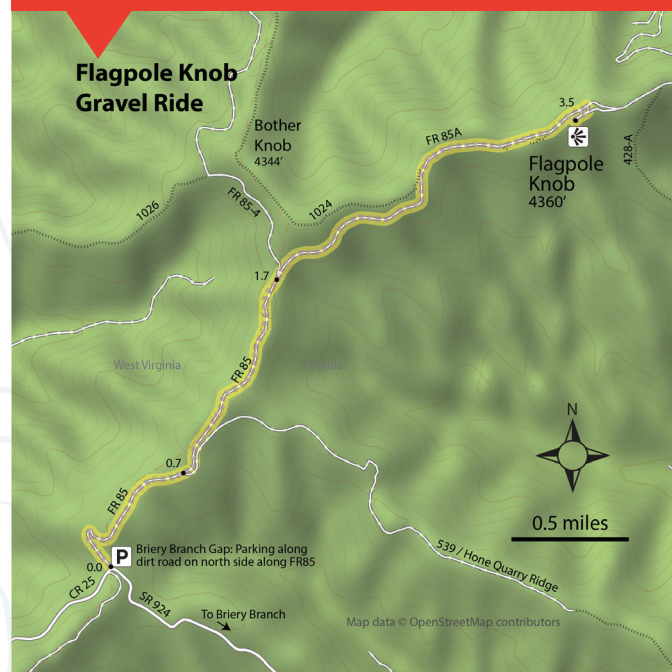


TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1 hour
Distance: 7.1 miles
Elevation: +/- 809 ft

Terrain: Dirt and gravel road.
Some mud after recent rain
Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the community of Briery Branch, drive up Rt. 924 past the sign for Hone Quarry Recreation Area on your right and up the mountain to Briery Branch Gap. Turn right onto Forest Service Road (FS) 85 and park in the unmarked dirt pull-off area just after the intersection. Additional spots can often be found further up the road near FS539, Quarry Ridge Trail. Ride north on FS85 and stay on the main road. Within 2 miles, spring water is available through a small pipe coming from the northwest side of the road. After 3.5 miles, a clearing will emerge through the trees to the south. Take the 4x4 tracks on the right to connect to Flagpole Knob. Flagpole Knob is marked by a large grassy area and a circular dirt track. When you have rested, return to Briery Branch Gap the same way you came.

Note that temperatures are 10-15 degrees cooler in the mountains than they are in the valley. Be prepared for greater weather exposure as well as increased wind and rain on the mountain. In winter and shoulder seasons, snow and ice can remain on the trails.



HARRISONBURG & ROCKINGHAM CO.
TRAIL GUIDE

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