Shenandoah National Park

History & Culture

The first traces of humans within Shenandoah National Park are around 8,000 to 9,000 years old. Native Americans seasonally visited this area to hunt, gather food, source materials for stone tools, and trade. In the 1700s, European hunters and trappers explored the mountains of the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Valley. Soon after 1750, European settlers moved into the lower hollows near springs and streams. Over the next century and a half hundreds of families worked the land, planting orchards and crops, building homesteads and mills, using the mountains for logging and mining.

By the late 1800s an increasingly urban American society yearned for places of recreation and refuge. Enterprising spirits built vacation resorts, marketing the mountain views, healthy water, and cool breezes. As congress established National Parks in the west, a call arose for an eastern National Park accessible to large population centers. It would take two decades to authorize Shenandoah National Park. Another decade passed before the Park's establishment.

Learning about the history of Shenandoah means learning about the lives and communities of past mountain residents, the establishment of the Park, the Civilian Conservation Corps, segregation of early park visitors, the dynamic shifting role of parks in our society, and much more. All of these subjects have a lasting impact on what Shenandoah is today and what it may become in the future.

People

People have lived in the Blue Ridge Mountains for at least 9,000 years. American Indians hunted and gathered game, fruit, nuts, and berries on the upland slopes. Some constructed permanent villages at the lowest elevations in the Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley outside the Park.

The earliest European settlers moved into the foothills by the 1750s. These settlers moved upwards in a constant search for land on which to farm, graze livestock, and tend to orchards. In the mid to late 1800s people purchased mountain land for the extraction of resources: copper, lumber, bark for leather tanning, and water for powering mill operations. Others early saw the beauty of the Blue Ridge as a commercial product in itself, and built resorts catering to visitors from the cities.

There are some groups and individuals that have left a significant mark on Shenandoah National Park. The several hundred mountain residents who lived on the land that became the Park left behind their homes and communities, forced to start anew. The Civilian Conservation Corps employed hundreds of young men to build roads and trails, to re-establish

wilderness and create a park that people would come to see.

George Freeman Pollock saw a business opportunity in the clean air and mountain views and established Skyland Resort, a getaway from the industrial cities nearby. Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover built their own getaway here, Rapidan Camp, as a retreat during Hoover's often tumultuous Presidency.

Park managers and visitors have played a role in Shenandoah National Park's history. Park managers initially established segregated facilities. Black visitors could picnic and camp in Lewis Mountain, but nowhere else. Desegregation occurred officially in 1950, yet the impact of separate facilities did not vanish overnight.

People from Shenandoah's past can be found all around. If you pay close attention you may walk past the foundations of an old home site or through a cluster of apple trees that were once an orchard. You may stop at an overlook and stand on a rock wall that a young man from the CCC built years ago. Every trail and campground, every overlook and bend on Skyline Drive has been travelled before.

Mountain Settlements

Hunter C. and Mrs. Dodson (Mountain Couple) NPS Photo

Survey of Rural Mountain Settlement

Archeological Investigations in Nicholson, Corbin, and Weakley Hollows Central District, Shenandoah National Park by Audrey J. Horning, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Three hollows in the central district of the park—Corbin, Nicholson and Weakley hollows—are presently under examination in the National Park Service-sponsored study designed to inventory the material remains of the park's human past. Located on the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge, in the shadow of Old Rag Mountain in Madison County, Virginia, the three hollows were home to approximately 460 persons when Shenandoah National Park was created in the 1930s, having been continuously occupied by settlers of European descent since the late eighteenth century. Eighty-eight sites have been located in the three hollows, which cover approximately 2500 acres. The archaeological evidence from these hollows, the most apparently uniform of Blue Ridge communities, tells a story of adaptation, alteration, cultural retention, and individual agency throughout the period of settlement.

These three hollows are also best known as the subject of a 1933 sociological study entitled Hollow Folk which described the Blue Ridge dweller as "unlettered folk, sheltered in tiny mud-plastered log cabins and supported by a primitive agriculture," in communities which were "almost entirely cut off from the current of American life." Written by journalist Thomas Henry and University of Chicago sociologist Mandel Sherman, Hollow Folk left a lasting impression on the historiography of the region, and specifically upon interpretations of the park's recent past. The negative attention paid to these three hollows by Sherman and Henry, and others, makes the present examination of the material culture of Nicholson, Corbin, and Weakley Hollows a critical starting point for a revised history of the entire Shenandoah National Park region.

"... ate their meals off of a variety of imported and domestic ceramics" NPS Photo

Intensive surface collection of 15 sites in the hollows has provided a wealth of information which refutes the caricature of isolated and primitive mountain lifeways. The discovery of watches and calendars provides an obvious and visual contradiction to romantic notions about the medieval nature of the inhabitants, just as the finding of automotive parts puts the lie to statements about the isolation of mountaineers. The material record reveals that, contrary to the images promulgated by Thomas Henry and others, Blue Ridge residents did, in fact, wear shoes, cured their sore throats not only with cherry tree bark but with patent medicines, were as likely to purchase

bonded liquor as homegrown products, ate their meals off of a variety of imported and domestic ceramics, listened to records on the phonograph, slept in fancy brass beds as well as on cheap metal cots, and served beverages in containers ranging from enameled tinware cups to fancy pressed glass pitchers. In short, the 'hollow folk' of the immediate prepark period owned the same types of goods which are found on archaeological sites of the same era throughout the United States—many no doubt originating from the Sears and Roebuck Company. The material record from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century serves as more than a mere refutation of the Blue Ridge caricature, revealing the choices faced and the choices made by rural people in an industrial age.

Of all the pre-park communities, Nicholson, Corbin, and Weakley Hollows probably came closest to fitting the traditional image of mountain subsistence farming. Yet subsistence strategies, and settlement patterns, differed between each hollow, and no hollow farm was entirely self-sufficient. Weakley Hollow is in reality a valley which separates the geologically distinct Old Rag or Ragged Mountain from the main Blue Ridge. Archaeological evidence suggests that Weakley Hollow, a long valley separating the geologically distinct Old Rag mountain from the Blue Ridge, was first settled in the 1770s, to eventually grow into the village of Old Rag, complete with a post office, two stores, two churches, and a school by the twentieth century. Residents during the previous century had capitalized upon their proximity to a through road by operating commercial sawmills, gristmills, and distilleries, all part of the hollow's archaeological heritage.

Historic Corbin Cabin in fog. NPS Photo

Documentary and archaeological sources indicate that nearby Nicholson Hollow was settled in the 1790s, with the fertile bottomland along the Hughes River inviting intensive farming. As settlement density increased, farmers engaged in extensive landscape engineering, clearing and terracing slopes to create fertile land. Nineteenth-century agricultural censuses indicate that hollow farmers produced significant surpluses, which provided the cash necessary to purchase the diverse consumer goods evidenced in the archaeological record. While relatively rare, some hollow dwellers were also slaveholders, according to the documentary record. One house ruin in Nicholson Hollow has been tentatively identified as a slave quarter from the 1820s.

Steep and rocky Corbin Hollow did not evolve into a distinct community until the establishment of the nearby Skyland resort in 1886. Families relied upon wage labor and craft sales at Skyland, leaving themselves wide open for disaster when the Depression struck, and the cameras of park promoters began clicking. The poverty in Corbin Hollow spoke for the entire park as stark photographs circulated through the media and politicians were dragged to the hollow to gawk at the dismal condition of the natives. Yet the recently examined material record indicates that even in Corbin Hollow, popular descriptions of mountain isolation and degeneracy were overblown. Typical assemblages range from decorative tableware, pharmaceutical bottles and automobile parts to mail order toys, furniture, shoes, and even fragments of 78 rpm records. Far higher percentages of commercial food containers are recovered from Corbin Hollow sites than on Nicholson or Weakley Hollow sites, indicative of wage-labor subsistence. Not only did Blue Ridge residents actively participate in the national consumer culture, they made choices regarding their subsistence and economic lives, choices and decisions that changed over time and were tempered and shaped—but not determined by—the natural environment.

Tract records which were compiled in anticipation of land acquisition for the national park serve as an invaluable source in examining variation within and between the hollows by the early twentieth century, describing both the extent of landholdings and the types of buildings present on the properties when surveyed in the late 1920s. Outside of the tract records, there are numerous descriptions of the housing of mountain dwellers, presumed to hold true for the entirety of hollow settlement. One journalist penned a rather more creative description of housing in Old Rag:

> **"The rustic charm of the Shenandoah cabins is very, very rustic. Most of them are made of roughly hewn logs; the chinks are filled, somewhat nonchalantly, with mud, and the interior, in happy instances, is whitewashed. Since one rarely encounters a straight line or a true angle in the walls or ceilings, there are likely to be conspicuous**

discrepancies between walls and doors or window frames. No matter, says the mountaineer, and fills up the space with mud."

Historic photo of front porch of homestead. NPS Photo

Both archaeological evidence and the data from the tract records instead indicate that houses in the three hollows employed stone, frame, and brick as well as log. In fact, twenty-five percent of dwellings described in the tract records for the three hollows were built entirely of frame. Fifty-four percent were constructed wholly of log, while the remaining twenty-one percent employed a combination of log and frame.

The current archaeological examination of Nicholson, Corbin and Weakley Hollows makes it clear that the local cultures found in the Blue Ridge prior to the establishment of Shenandoah National Park were not the product of geographic, cultural, and familial insularity Rather, they were the result of the conscious choices made by residents throughout the period of settlement in a dynamic and continual process of borrowing, sharing, retaining, and adapting of traits between a variety of culture groups during the history of the colonial and post-colonial settlement of the region, tempered by the environment, and punctuated by economic success and failure. As elsewhere in the southern mountains, the Blue Ridge regional culture of the early twentieth century was a complex and ever-changing heritage with a multiplicity of roots.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

CCC Reunion

Shenandoah holds an annual CCC reunion to celebrate the members of the CCC and the work that they accomplished in Shenandoah.

What would prompt an eighteen-year-old to leave home, work 5½ days a week of manual labor, in all seasons and all weather, just to earn $30 per month, out of which only $5 he could keep for himself? Answer: the Great Depression, one of the longest-lasting, most profound economic downturns in the history of the Western industrialized world. Part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's response to these dramatic events was for the government to adopt a variety of programs, together coined the New Deal. New Deal programs came in three categories: relief, recovery, and reform.

The CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps, was a relief program funded from 1933-1942. FDR formed the CCC as a part of his First 100 Days legislation. The program was designed for the immediate relief of families with unemployed young men. Enrollment in the CCC was originally limited to unmarried, healthy men with families aged 18 to 23. The men would agree to a minimum of a six-month term of service, focusing on soil conservation and reforestation with vigorous, disciplined outdoor labor. The CCC provided uniforms, shelter, three meals a day, and training. They got paid $30/month, $25 of which was sent directly home to their parents. They got $5 for their own use!

Much of the work that the Civilian Conservation Corps accomplished was located in national, state, and local parks. In 9 years the CCC planted nearly 3 billion trees and developed more than 800 parks across the United States. This work included

building shelters, stocking rivers and lakes with nearly 1 billion fish, clearing beaches, digging canals and ditches, restoring historic battlefields, and countless other projects.

Between May of 1933 and March of 1942, 12 CCC camps in 9 different locations opened in and around what was to become Shenandoah National Park. Each camp was home to around 200 boys at any given time. The U.S. Army controlled the camps and regimented the lived of those who lived there. During the nine years the Civilian Conservation Corps existed in Shenandoah, they helped build the infrastructure for the future national park. Their achievements included the instillation, construction, and landscaping of areas all along Skyline Drive, overlooks, picnic grounds, and developed areas. In their cumulative accomplishments are some impressive statistics:

- 28 sewage systems
- 136 miles of phone lines
- 1,145 miles of fire trails
- 101 miles of trails
- 4001 signs and markers
- 147,595 trees and shrubs planted
- 361 acres of land seeded

These numbers do not reflect the high school diplomas earned, work skills taught, and lives saved through the CCC. An unanticipated consequence of work in and with the CCC was preparation for the massive call-up of civilians to military service during World War II. The more than 6,500 boys who came to Shenandoah not only created the park as we know it today, they became men who have left their legacy for our future generations to enjoy.

Shenandoah: Not Without the CCC

Civilian Conservation Corps Camp N.P.-1 located at Skyland in Shenandoah National Park. NPS Archives

by Reed Engle, Cultural Resource Specialist, 1994-2008

During the President's brief stop at Camp Nira [S.N.P. CCC Camp #3], he was treated to a brief pageant entitled "The burial of old man depression and fear and the return of happy days."... two C.C.C. members, one with a banner "C.C.C." and the other with the symbol "NIRA" [National Industrial Recovery Act], marched toward a covered object labeled "fear." As the torchbearers set fire to "fear"... The covering destroyed, [and] "Old Man Depression" was revealed in effigy. This too was fired and the President happily commented, "that's right, burn him up."...The bugler played "Happy Days Are Here Again" as the President...applauded.

This article appeared just five months after Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office during the depths of the Great Depression, and three months after the first two Civilian Conservation Corps camps located in the national parks were established at Skyland (N.P.-1) and Big Meadows (N.P.-2). Although Shenandoah National Park's official establishment was over two years in the future, Washington saw the future park's proximity and virginity as the ideal setting for the demonstration of Roosevelt's depression cures.

The President took a whirlwind tour through the Shenandoah Valley and along the developing Skyline Drive to bolster public confidence in his public works programs. Followed by "three newsreel photographers and a corps of newspaper cameramen,"[3] Roosevelt ensured that the uplifting image of Shenandoah's CCC camps was flashed around the world. Shenandoah National Park, long before it was born, was officially baptized by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Two Civilian Conservation Corp boys stand next to erosion control work on hillside.

Between May 11, 1933 and March 31, 1942, ten CCC camps were established within, or on leased land adjacent to, Shenandoah. At any one time, more than 1,000 boys and young men lived in these camps supervised by the Army and worked on projects directed by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads.

Until the park was established officially on December 26, 1935, the bulk of CCC activity took place on the narrow 100 foot right-of-way of the Skyline Drive, in the few areas of purchased or donated land transferred to the federal government by the Commonwealth of Virginia, or on leased lands. Thus, the earliest park development was concentrated at the existing 6,400 acre 19th century resort Skyland, at the lands adjacent to Herbert Hoover's Rapidan River fishing camp, and at Big Meadows, where the Commonwealth had purchased most of the existing land. The earliest CCC projects were concerned with the building of trails, fire roads and towers, log comfort stations, construction projects associated with the Skyline Drive, and picnic grounds within this narrow corridor.

By the close of 1934, and after the settlement of a Supreme Court suit challenging the constitutionality of Virginia's blanket condemnation of lands to create the park, the Commonwealth took title to the 176,429 acres that would be accepted by the federal government once Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes was satisfied that the park would be cleared of residents. However, from this time on, by letter of authority from Virginia, the National Park Service initiated CCC projects throughout the future park area. These projects fall into the broad categories of facilities development, roads and trails construction, and landscape architecture and engineering.

To accomplish these objectives, by 1935 the CCC had in place a sawmill that produced the materials to construct park buildings (most often from chestnut cut from trees killed over a decade earlier by the blight), a shingle mill to produce the characteristic hand-made concrete tiles simulating wood shingles used on many of Shenandoah's buildings, a blacksmith shop turning out hinges, latches, sign brackets, and tools, and a sign shop producing the hand-routed chestnut signboards emulating the standards established for the western parks. The CCC established plant nurseries in the camps at Front Royal and Big Meadows to grow seeds collected from trees within the park and to "heel-in" plants purchased from commercial nurseries or obtained from other parks – materials to be used to revegetate areas disturbed by construction.

Supervised by Harvey Benson, landscape architect for the Skyline Drive and subsequently for Shenandoah National Park, the CCC boys returned to correct initial design failings of the 100-foot right-of-way of the Skyline Drive. They flattened cut and fill slopes, adjusted horizontal and vertical curves, constructed overlooks (which was not possible in the earlier design), and built guardrails, guard walls, and stone gutters. They then landscaped all disturbed areas with trees, shrubs, and herbaceous materials – some from park nurseries, some from commercial sources, and many transplanted from other developed areas.

Recent research suggests that no area within immediate view of the Skyline Drive is natural. The CCC sought to improve the Skyline Drive corridor by removing dead chestnuts, thinning the understory and removing deadwood for fire control, removing the vectors for pine bark blister rust, attempting to eliminate Ailanthus altissima (a largely futile eight year campaign) and trying to reestablish what they termed “relic” or "vestigial" plants (in some cases today's rare, threatened, and endangered species). These efforts all were part of Benson's careful creation of natural vistas and varied topographic features along the length of the Drive and within the developing visitor use areas.

The impact of CCC projects within Shenandoah on the then extant natural and cultural resources may be gauged in review of the projects undertaken by a single camp during the autumn and winter of 1934-1935:

Reduction of fire hazards Pinnacle Mtn. 300 acres...roadside cleanup Skyline Drive 3 miles, campground clearing [of trees and shrubs] Sexton [Pinnacles] 40 acres , horse trail Pinnacle[s] to Marys Rock 3 miles, Trailside cleanup same 3 miles; landscaping, fine grading Skyline drive 200 cubic yards., sodding 2 acres, moving and plant trees Skyline drive 1,000 trees and shrubs; telephone line Thornton Gap to Stony Man 7 miles, other campground facilities and park area signs, boundary, etc....

After the official establishment of the park in 1935, CCC activities were expanded to include the entire expanded acreage. Except on the few dozen properties where residents were given life estates, the charge of the CCC boys was to remove all evidence of human occupation in spite of official policy that some of these homes were to be preserved and restored for interpretation. They dismantled houses and outbuildings to be used as salvage materials for resettlement community structures or to be burned. They removed fences, obliterated gardens and orchards, and replanted, seeded, or sodded the land afterwards. Many known occupation sites in Shenandoah are invisible today due to the CCC's mandate to return the land to what park managers viewed as a more natural state.

Serious examinations of the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps within Shenandoah National Park challenge us to reevaluate our traditional definition and understanding of natural processes and natural parks.

Skyland

Decades before Shenandoah National Park was established, vacationers traveled to Skyland Resort seeking respite from urbanized, mechanized city life. The resort was created in the late 1800s and grew in popularity among middle class business people in nearby urban areas.

George Freeman Pollock, dynamic and gregarious, managed Skyland with a showman's flair. His ever-present bugle awoke guests each morning, summoned them to meals and elaborate entertainments, and announced the departure of the daily mail.

George Freeman Pollock, developer and manager of the 19th century resort Skyland. NPS Photo

Skyland Resort History

In 1854 Samuel and Maria Williams of Brooklyn, New York purchased 21,371 acres of land in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia for $4,750. One year later the land was passed on to the Virginia Cliff Copper Company for $1,000,000, although only $7,000 was ever actually tendered. Soon 5,371 acres of the tract were sold to the newly incorporated (January 1858) Stony Man Mining Company for $550,000 of stockholder funds. In 1866 the Miners Lode Copper Company (incorporated in NYC in 1865) purchased the property--its principal stockholders were Stephen M. Allen and George H. Pollock.

Although copper did exist in the area and was mined, it was not commercially successful. By 1889 Pollock and Allen were forced to obtain a $52,000 mortgage to pay their debts. The following year, convinced by Pollock's son George Freeman that the property had value for resort development, Pollock Sr. and Allen incorporated as the Stoneyman Park Preserve Lands, Inc.

and began selling mortgage bonds guaranteed by building lots at the new Stoneyman Park Preserve. By the time Pollock Sr. and Allen died in 1893 over thirty building lots (at the future Skyland) had been sold. The lot sales, however, were to no avail for in 1896 the Albemarle County Courts ordered the entire property sold at public auction to satisfy the 1889 mortgage.

Stony Man Mining Co. Stock Certificate 1858 and a copper ore example.

George Freeman Pollock convinced the Chancery Court to allow him to buy the Blue Ridge land on credit although he had no real occupation and little money. He was back before the judge again in 1900, 1902, and 1904, in each case gaining approval to sell off part of the assets to bring his debt current. By 1906 he was able to borrow, mortgage, and mortgage again enough to finally retire the 1889 mortgage and, theoretically, to gain title to the resort. In actuality Pollock never owned the Stony Man Camp/Skyland property. At the time of the establishment of Shenandoah National Park he had $67,107.22 in outstanding liens against a property ultimately appraised at less than $30,000. He received nothing for almost four decades of work on the resort and many of his creditors, as the copper stockholders years earlier, received nothing.

Pollock was not a businessman, but he was a promoter. Over the years he sold lots for and developed cabins on almost fifty lots and established the rustic architecture still seen at the resort. He established dining and recreation halls for which there were no alternatives and did guarantee some regular income, but most of all he planned and engineered elaborate balls, costume parties, teas, jousts and tournaments, musicales, pageants, and bonfires. Many of the cabin owners first came for the three-month season, but as automobiles became ubiquitous, shorter stays of a few weeks or just a few days became more common. With the advent of the Skyline Drive, day-tripping was the norm and the "old" Skyland became a thing of the past.

The Skyland Resort became the core of the new Shenandoah National Park after the National Park Service awarded the new concession contract to Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc. in 1937. The Richmond-based company immediately began to build new facilities and to rehabilitate the earlier ones. Twelve historic Skyland structures remain and allow modern visitors to experience life at the turn of the 20th century.

Pre-Park Resort Life

Geology

Current geological activity in Shenandoah National Park is a result of natural and man-made forces acting on the surrounding mountains and valleys. Freezing and thawing can result in rockfalls and spalling from cliff faces. Severe thunderstorms and rain events can cause flooding and associated erosion. In extreme cases, large amounts of rain can cause landslides. Some forces act together to produce geological change. A wind storm may bring down trees that were killed in a wildland fire on land where, in turn, severe rain could cause significant erosion. Most often these events are relatively small, but over millions of years, these small events produce sizable changes in the land. The result is a landscape undergoing constant change. From ancient tectonic collisions to the rolling Appalachians of today, the geological story of Shenandoah is old and unfinished.

Basement rocks, left over from a mountain range even older than the Appalachians, form the foundation upon which the Shenandoah Blue Ridge rises. Over one billion years old, they can still form dramatic topography, creating the rounded, boulder-strewn summits of Old Rag Mountain, Hogback Mountain, and Marys Rock.

Greenstone lava flows, 570 million years old, now form the sheer, jagged cliffs of Stony Man, Hawksbill, and many other peaks within the park. These flows, stacked one atop the other, create a staircase-like topography of sheer cliffs and flat benches that produce many of the most distinctive landscapes in Shenandoah. Most of the park's major waterfalls are located where streams cut through these layers of lava and plunge into steep-walled canyons.

Chilhowee metasedimentary rocks, from the shores of an ocean predating the Atlantic, now create the steep slopes and rugged topography of the park's unique South District. Fused together and altered in the heat and pressure of mountain-building, the white quartzites form the great cliffs and boulder fields of Rocky Mountain, Calvary Rocks, and Blackrock South.

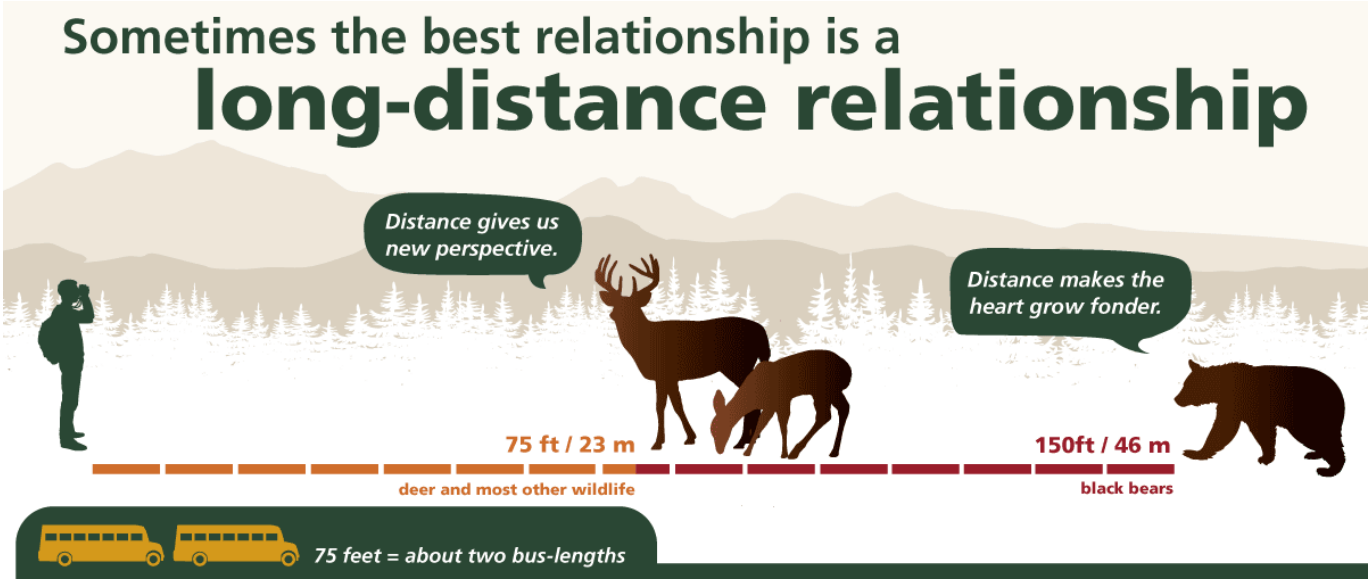
Hiking in Shenandoah

A hiker on the Appalachian Trail.
NPS

Safety Tips:

- Carry water, at least 20 oz (.6 L), and more on warm days. Do not drink water directly from any streams without boiling or purifying it first.
- Wear appropriate clothing including sturdy hiking shoes and layers. Temperatures on the mountain can be 10 to 20 degrees cooler than in the valley. Follow trail blazes and use a map. Blue blazes indicate a hiking trail, white blazes indicate the Appalachian Trail, yellow blazes indicate horse trails.
- Know the difficulty level of the trail and evaluate your physical abilities and limitations. Different people experience hikes at different difficulty levels.
- Follow Leave No Trace principles including staying on trail, carrying out all trash, and leaving what you find.
- Never walk around the top of a waterfall. Wet rocks are slippery and can lead to dangerous falls, potentially causing serious injury or death.

Wildlife Viewing Safety



It can be hard to believe that a safe distance is as much about the animal's welfare as it is about yours, but it's true. Getting too close, feeding, and touching are all things that can put you and your furry, feathered, or scaled counterpart in grave danger. While Shenandoah National Park is a conscientious partner for visitors, it also remains continuously committed to the protection and preservation of nature and wildlife.

Despite their good intentions, some visitors love park animals to death. As wildlife become used to humans and lose their natural fear, the animals become aggressive and may be destroyed. Although they may appear harmless and even curious about you, wildlife do injure visitors every year. That's partly why approaching, harassing, or feeding any kind of wildlife, no matter how small or familiar, is illegal in all national parks.

We want all visitors to create lasting memories, so be safe and remember that distance always makes the heart grow fonder.

How close is too close?

Stay at least **75 feet (23 meters)** or **about two bus-lengths** away from all wildlife. With black bears, keep at least **150 feet (46 meters)**or about **four bus-lengths** away from black bears. Stay safe and **never assume you are the one that can get away with a close encounter.**

What if I really want the perfect photo?

The popularity of selfies and capturing any moment through photographs or video is posing a new threat to wildlife and humans. Trigger-happy tourists have started to provoke animals, and in some instances, alter their behaviors as a result. Quietly watching from a distance can be even more rewarding than getting the perfect shot. Perhaps you even came here to "get away" from a busy lifestyle and technology. So, **use your zoom or a telephoto lens**, or put your camera down and take a moment to really appreciate what you see.

What if I want to get an animal's attention?

Calling, clicking, whistling or making noises of any kind to attract wildlife is illegal. The same applies to any kind of behavior that harasses wildlife or changes their behavior. Animals deserve to enjoy the park without disruption just as you do.

If there's a group of people, is it safer to be near wildlife?

Traveling in groups can help keep you safe, but that does not mean you are safer to get closer to animals. Whether it's just you or 20 people, keep the long distance. **As crowds gather (as they often do), wildlife can quickly feel threatened and, in their panic, harm people.** This is especially the case as people start to surround the animal(s), even if they are at the proper distance, because the wildlife may feel trapped. If people around you stop maintaining the safe distance, don't be afraid to speak up and remind your fellow visitors of the safe distance rules. **Sometimes, in the moment, anyone could use a gentle reminder that long-distance relationships with wildlife are better for everyone.**

What if an animal approaches me?

Wildlife may not know better, but YOU do. Although it may feel flattering, if any kind of wildlife approaches you, **back away and maintain that safe distance.** It's your responsibility and your safety —help us keep wildlife wild.

Bear Safety

One of the many highlights of visiting a National Park is the opportunity to observe and photograph wildlife. Shenandoah is certainly no exception: visitors find white-tailed deer, a wide variety of birds, and butterflies, and, with some frequency, black bears. In most cases these wildlife encounters are events that visitors enjoy and that have no impacts on park wildlife. On the other hand, there are some instances when the encounters pose risks to both the visitor and the animal. This web page provides information that will greatly improve your chances to enjoy seeing a black bear in the wild.

Almost every year, park staff members are involved in taking steps to separate people from wildlife (hazing animals or relocating animals). Every once in a while, staff is forced to destroy an animal because risks have become too great. This usually involves animals that have received food from people and are habituated to being in very close proximity to us. **You can help us avoid these situations.**

For general information on how visitors should behave when viewing or photographing wildlife, please see the Viewing and Photographing Wildlife web page.

Keeping Bears and People Separated

When visiting the park you may spot a bear anywhere (while hiking, camping, on a nature walk, or simply walking between your car and a lodge or restaurant).

If you spot a bear:

- Maintain your distance from the bear. Park regulations require at least 50 yards to safely view a bear.
- Make noise to make sure the bear knows you are present.
- If the bear moves closer to you, move away slowly but do not turn your back to the bear.
- Make noise and stay in groups
- Keep children close by.
- Take a detour in your route of travel but do not surround the animal.
- Consider retreating to your vehicle (if it is nearby) until the bear moves on.

Bears may be attracted to your food or garbage when you are picnicking or camping.

To reduce the opportunity for bears to obtain food or garbage:

- Never try to feed a bear (What would you do if you run out of food before the bear runs out of appetite?)
- Only take out food you will be using.
- Be prepared to pack up quickly.
- Do not leave food or garbage in the open and unattended.
- Store food and trash in appropriate hard-sided facilities.
- Use food storage lockers or bear poles in campgrounds.
- Dispose of garbage in bear resistant trash cans and dumpsters.
- Do not leave garbage (bagged or not) outside of a full trash can - find another one.
- If the bear gets to food or garbage anyway, do not attempt to get it back.

Compliance with these simple rules will go a long way to prevent trouble with bears. You will find reminders of these rules at park campgrounds and picnic areas.

Photographing Bears

- General rules listed above apply.
- Never approach a bear for that "perfect shot". Use telephoto lenses.
- Never entice an animal into a preferred pose with food or garbage.
- Never deliberately move or position yourself in order to alter a bear's movement or behavior.
- Be considerate of the interests of others who may be observing or photographing the animal.

Avoiding Bears While Hiking

- Stay alert to your surroundings and the presence of wildlife while hiking.

- If possible hike in groups.
- When you spot a bear, make noise to ensure that the bear is aware of your presence.
- If the bear doesn't leave the area, take a detour or slowly backaway. Making noise during your retreat is appropriate. Keep children close to the group.
- Do not pursue and **NEVER** surround a bear. Give it room to escape.
- **DO NOT run from a bear**. Bears will pursue prey and flight is a signal to them to start pursuit.
- If a bear approaches and you have no escape route, stand tall, wave your arms, yell, clap, and throw rocks to deter the bear.

Most of the time, avoidance or making noise will result in an uneventful encounter. There are circumstances when the bear perceives that the threat is more significant such as when you have simply startled the bear. For information on bluff charges or real charges, see below.

From: https://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm

Skyland Resort

Skyland is nestled along mile 41.7 & 42.5 at Skyline Drive's highest elevation - 3,680 feet. Rooms are located in 28 separate buildings along the ridge and in the wooded areas on over 27 acres..

Lodging accommodations range from small, rustic cabins to comfortable preferred room to newly renovated premium rooms, some with suites and fireplaces. Pet-friendly rooms are available at an additional cost of $25 per pet per night. A maximum of two pets (dogs or cats only) allowed. While there are no in-room phones, cell service is available depending on your provider.

An ATM, gift shop, and the Mountain Taproom are located in the dining room building. Free, family-friendly entertainment is presented nightly in the Mountain Taproom.

From: https://www.goshenandoah.com/lodging/skyland

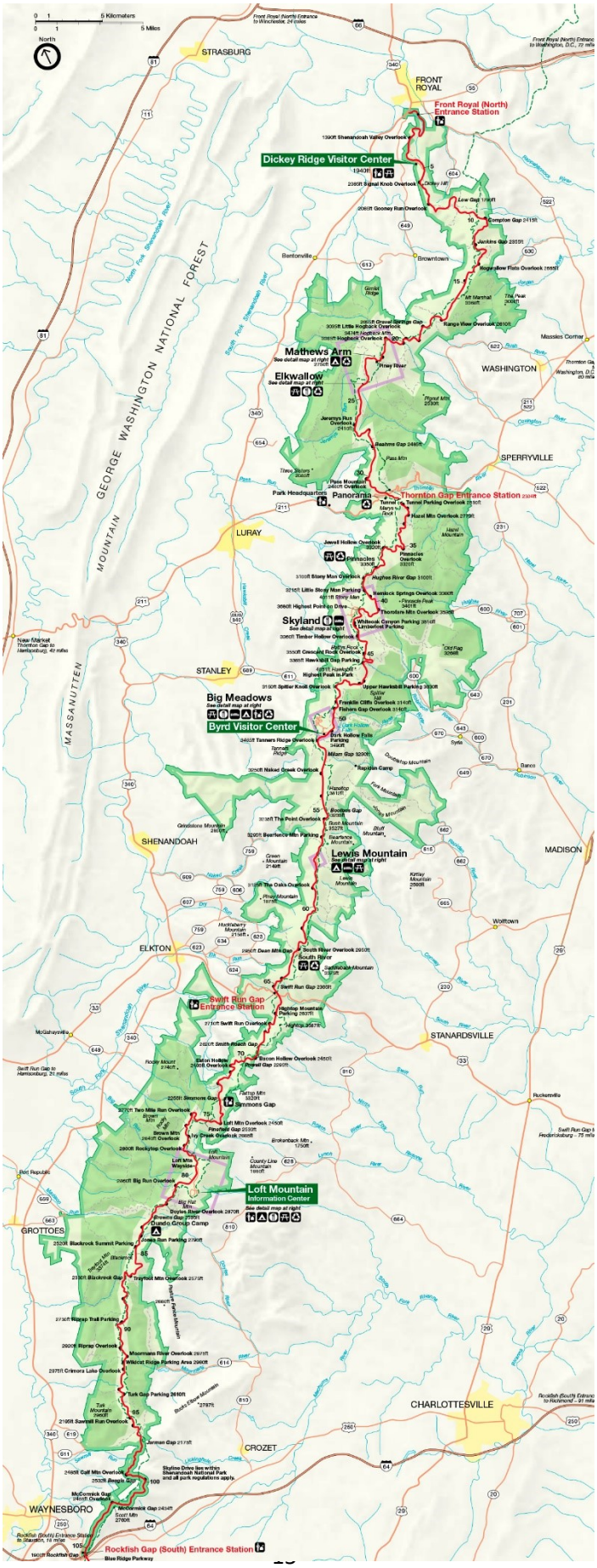
Skyland Resort is a hotel and resort in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia.

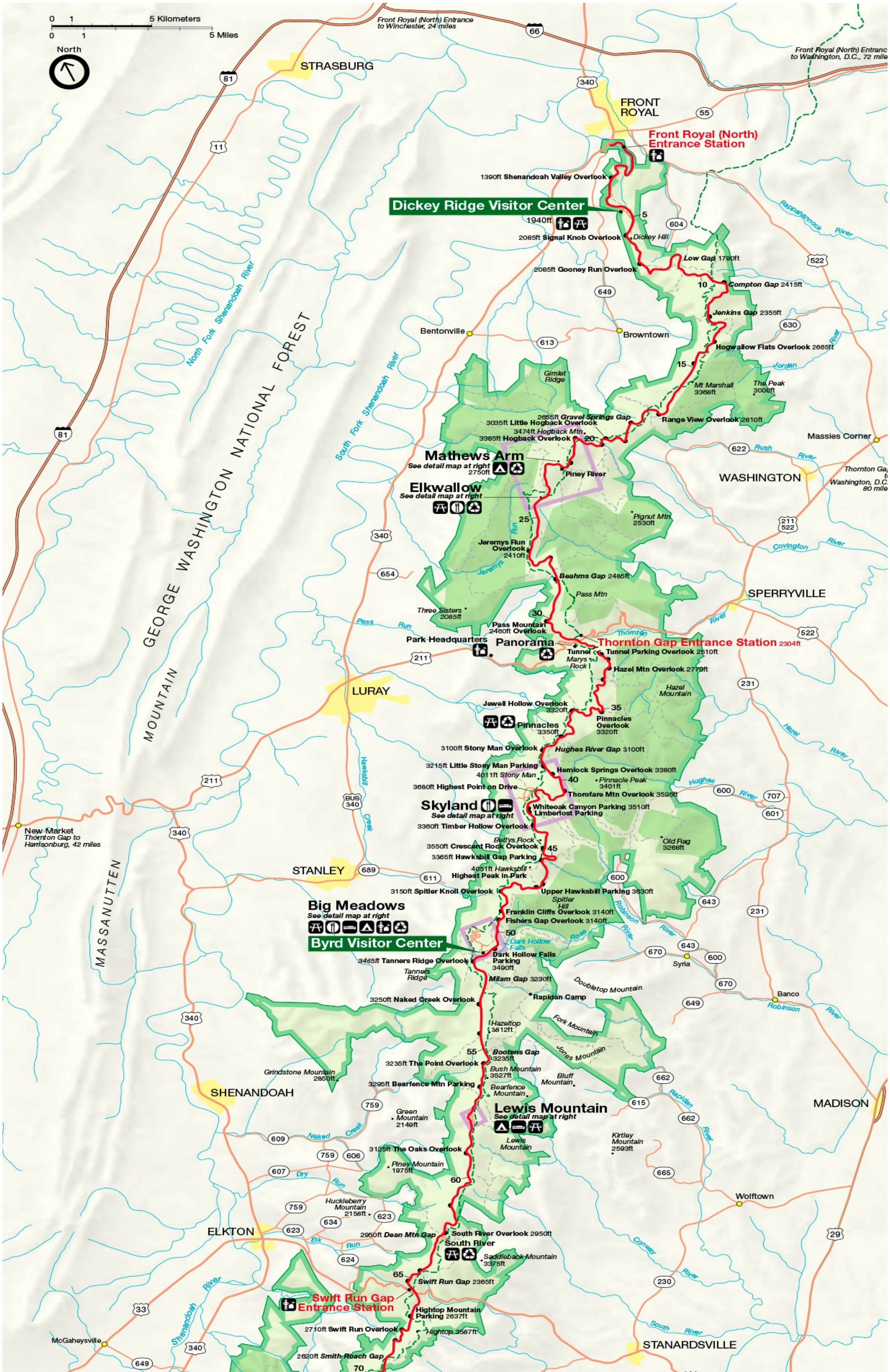
The Skyland Resort, originally called Stony Man Camp, was built in 1895 at what later became the highest point on the Skyline Drive, with a sweeping view of the Shenandoah Valley at 3,680 feet. It was built in 1895 by George Freeman Pollock, a young Washington, DC man whose father owned a great deal of the land surrounding the resort. Skyland was intended to be a place where the affluent people from major cities would come to relax and recreate. Early in its life, it was advertised as a dude ranch. When it opened, transportation was by horse or wagon. It competed with the nearby Panorama Resort, which opened in 1924.

Around 1931, it was taken over by the Shenandoah National Park, and the Skyline Drive was built past it. Rather than destroying the improvements to restore the natural environment as was the practice in most parts of the Park as it was established between 1924 and 1936, Skyland's accommodations were expanded, and are available to visitors today.

From: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skyland_Resort


Skyland
Registration
Stables
Sodas/Ice
House Phone
Gift Shop
Appalachain Trail
Room Numbers
Tap Room
Dining
Restrooms
One-way Road
All rooms and public areas are smoke-free environments including 25 feet from buildings.
Shenandoah 69 - 74
Raven's Nest 75 - 88
Winship 89 - 94
Laurel 95 - 114
Birmingham 115 - 120
Craigin 121 - 136
Appledore 137 - 152
New Market 153 - 158
Canyon 159 - 172
Fell 173 - 175
Winchester 188 - 192
Hazeltop 182 - 187
Miller's Head Trail
Franklin 35 - 42
Bushytop 43 - 48
Massanutten Lodge
Ash 49 - 50
Wildwood 53 - 54
Hemlock 51 - 52
Dogwood 55 - 56
Maple 57 - 58
Conference Building
Path to Lower Level
Pine Grove 59 - 60
Trout 61 - 64
Voilmer 65
Whispering Pines 66
Peak View 67
Byrd's Nest 68
Peak View Stage
Playground
Amphitheater
To Rooms 35-48, 182-192
Whiteoak 25 - 34
15 - 24
Stonyman
Pinnacles 1 - 14
Terrace
Back entrance to Dining Room
Dining Room
To Rooms 49 - 175, Historic Conference Building and Massanutten Lodge
To Skyland Stables and Skyline Drive 9 miles to Big Meadows
Stony Man Trail Parking
To Stony Man Nature Trail and Skyline Drive 10 miles north to US 211
Appalachain Trail


Front Royal (North) Entrance Station
Dickey Ridge Visitor Center
Mathews Arm
Elkwallow
Thornton Gap Entrance Station
Panorama
Skyland
Big Meadows
Byrd Visitor Center
Lewis Mountain
Swift Run Gap Entrance Station
Loft Mountain Information Center
Rockfish Gap (South) Entrance Station
GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST
MASSANUTTEN MOUNTAIN
STRASBURG
FRONT ROYAL
WASHINGTON
SPERRYVILLE
LURAY
STANLEY
SHENANDOAH
MADISON
ELKTON
STANARDSVILLE
GROTTOES
CHARLOTTESVILLE
CROZET
WAYNESBORO



0 1 5 Kilometers
0 1 5 Miles
North
Front Royal (North) Entrance to Winchester, 24 miles
Front Royal (North) Entrance to Washington, D.C., 72 miles
STRASBURG
FRONT ROYAL
Front Royal (North) Entrance Station
1390ft Shenandoah Valley Overlook
Dickey Ridge Visitor Center
1940ft
2085ft Signal Knob Overlook
Dickey Hill
Low Gap 1790ft
2085ft Gooney Run Overlook
Compton Gap 2415ft
Jenkins Gap 2355ft
Hogwallow Flats Overlook 2665ft
Bentonville
Browntown
North Fork Shenandoah River
South Fork Shenandoah River
GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST
Gimlet Ridge
Mt Marshall 3368ft
The Peak 3000ft
Range View Overlook 2810ft
2665ft Gravel Springs Gap
3035ft Little Hogback Overlook
3474ft Hogback Mtn
3385ft Hogback Overlook
Massies Corner
Mathews Arm
See detail map at right
2750ft
Piney River
WASHINGTON
Thornton Gap to Washington, D.C. 80 miles
Elkwallow
See detail map at right
Pignut Mtn 2530ft
Jeremys Run Overlook 2410ft
Beahms Gap 2485ft
Pass Mtn
SPERRYVILLE
Three Sisters 2085ft
Pass Mountain 2460ft Overlook
Park Headquarters
Panorama
Thornton Gap Entrance Station 2304ft
Tunnel
Tunnel Parking Overlook 2510ft
Marys Rock
Hazel Mtn Overlook 2770ft
LURAY
Hazel Mountain
Jewell Hollow Overlook 3320ft
Pinnacles 3350ft
Pinnacles Overlook 3320ft
3100ft Stony Man Overlook
Hughes River Gap 3100ft
3215ft Little Stony Man Parking
4011ft Stony Man
Hemlock Springs Overlook 3380ft
Pinnacle Peak 3401ft
3680ft Highest Point on Drive
Thorofare Mtn Overlook 3595ft
Skyland
See detail map at right
Whiteoak Canyon Parking 3510ft
Limberlost Parking
3360ft Timber Hollow Overlook
New Market
Thornton Gap to Harrisonburg, 42 miles
Bettys Rock
3550ft Crescent Rock Overlook
Old Rag 3268ft
3365ft Hawksbill Gap Parking
STANLEY
4051ft Hawksbill
Highest Peak in Park
3150ft Spitler Knoll Overlook
Upper Hawksbill Parking 3630ft
Spitler Hill
Franklin Cliffs Overlook 3140ft
Fishers Gap Overlook 3140ft
Big Meadows
See detail map at right
Byrd Visitor Center
Dark Hollow Falls
Dark Hollow Falls Parking 3490ft
3465ft Tanners Ridge Overlook
Tanners Ridge
Syria
Milam Gap 3230ft
Doubletop Mountain
Rapidan Camp
Banco
MASSANUTTEN MOUNTAIN
3250ft Naked Creek Overlook
Hazeltop 3812ft
Fork Mountain
Jones Mountain
Bootens Gap 3235ft
3235ft The Point Overlook
Bush Mountain 3527ft
Grindstone Mountain 2850ft
Bluff Mountain
3295ft Bearfence Mtn Parking
Bearfence Mountain
SHENANDOAH
Lewis Mountain
See detail map at right
MADISON
Green Mountain 2149ft
Lewis Mountain
Kirtley Mountain 2593ft
3125ft The Oaks Overlook
Piney Mountain 1975ft
Huckleberry Mountain 2158ft
Wolftown
ELKTON
2950ft Dean Mtn Gap
South River Overlook 2950ft
South River
Saddleback Mountain 3375ft
Swift Run Gap 2365ft
Swift Run Gap Entrance Station
Hightop Mountain Parking 2637ft
2710ft Swift Run Overlook
Hightop 3587ft
McGaheysville
STANARDSVILLE
2620ft Smith Roach Gap
Rappahannock River
Rush River
Covington River
Thornton River
Hughes River
Robinson River
Rose River
Rapidan River
Conway River
South River
Naked Creek
Hawksbill Creek
Pass Run
Jeremys Run
Dry Run
Elk Run
Jordan River
Shenandoah River
5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70