

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



01/01/2009 - [Hogback Mountain Loop](#) (10 mile version): This is the fifth consecutive year that we've hiked on New Years Day. Despite the cold weather (10 degrees at start time) we had a good turnout. I was joined by the Mad Hatter, .Com, Fe2O3 (AKA the Ol' Rust Bucket), Clark Kent, Sixteen Penny, Youness, Ellen, Mike, Lenny, Fred, Barb, Todd and Nina.

Needless to say, with the temps being below freezing for most of the trek we maintained a quick pace. First we headed north on the AT. The views were exceptional at all of the vistas but we dared not linger long as the frosty wind caused our faces to become numb. We were better protected during the remainder of the hike as we descended to the headwaters of Piney Branch and then gradually climbed up to the AT again. At that point Mike and Lenny opted to shorten their trip and hiked back to their car on the AT. The rest of us continued on to the Range View Cabin for a brief lunch in the sun.

From the cabin we continued southbound on the AT to the junction with the Elkwallow Tr (One that I have never hiked before). At this point we turned north onto it and followed it across the headwaters of Jeremys Run to the day use area parking lot of the Matthews Arm Campground. After taking our last break we began a steep climb, first up the Trace Tr, and then the Tuscarora Tr to its northern terminus on the AT. From there it was a quick downhill jaunt on the AT to our awaiting cars. We were back by 3:00, plenty of time to exit the park before the Rangers closed the gates!