

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



01/23/2010, Pulpit Rock-Pinnacle Loop: Precious and I set out for the 2.5 hour drive to Hamburg at 8:00. We arrived at 10:30 to find a crowded parking lot at the water treatment plant. Today definitely was not going to be one of those solitude days. We geared up quickly and began hiking up the watershed road to join the AT. The E.G. for the first 1.5 miles was barely perceptible and mostly on old haul roads. Then we climbed about 500 feet over the next 0.8 miles through some of the rockiest terrain in PA. The view from Pulpit Rock was well worth it. There were already several hikers there and I could hear more coming up through the rocks. We took a nice series of photos to make a panorama out of, slugged down some water and continued on. Although most of the climbing was behind us the rocks didn't stop. We hiked along a miniature "Devil's Racecourse" for the next 1+ miles. I was afraid to let go of Precious for fear that she would either hurt herself or tear up her paws on the sharp rocks. We took our time and made it through OK. On our way to the Pinnacle we passed the largest cairn I've ever seen ... so large that some folks started building a retaining wall to buttress it.

The Pinnacle was as advertised. It was crowded but everybody was spread out. We took a short break and ate some snacks and watered up before moving on. The remaining 1.8 miles were a nearly effortless stroll on a flat woods road. This was the only place we encountered ice. We turned off of the AT at the Helicopter Landing Pad and descended through Hemlocks and Rhododendron as Furnace Creek gurgled far below us. Precious and I took this easy return leg to work on our commands "off lead" and I and everyone who saw us were impressed. We passed the reservoir and soon found ourselves back at the truck a full hour ahead of schedule. We would make it home just as the sun set.