

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



01/29/11, Hashawha Environmental Education Center: This was supposed to be an easy 6-8 mile circuit over mostly rolling terrain. That was until Mother Nature dropped 10 inches of snow on us. Ann, Ted E. Bear, Rosy Bear, one of the Daryl brothers, Dianne, Dave and I sank our feet into the nearly virgin snow a little after 9:00. The trail had been somewhat broken by a cross country skier but kicking the wet snow was still pretty tough. A mile into the hike we decided to keep the hike "inside the park", leaving the exploration of the Union Mills trails for another day. That would put the distance at a more doable 4.3 miles. Even with all of the snow the trails were pretty easy to follow. The highlight for me was our visit to the Raptors' Muse with its Bald Eagle, Red Tailed Hawks, three kinds of owls, an American Kestrel and, I believe, a Sharp-shinned or Coopers Hawk. About halfway through our out bound trek the cross country ski tracks took a shorter route and we found ourselves busting really virgin snow. It was a lot harder. We soon found ourselves descending on an old road to yet another old road that followed a nice stream from high above. A steep but short climb soon led us to a rendezvous point with the Bears who had taken a shortcut earlier

Shortly after that we once again picked up the ski tracks and followed them to a wetlands viewing area. We took the snow covered boardwalk across it to the main park road. Although we could have stayed in the woods until we arrived back at the car it felt really good

to walk on dry pavement. I don't know about the rest of the crew but my calves were sore for the next three days. I will make a point of it to return when there is no snow and explore the Union Mills trail system.