

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



02/14/2009 - [Hemlock Gorge](#) Valentines Day Hike: I haven't been back to "The Gorge" since '04. I scheduled this trip to see how the area was recovering from some eco-vandals. The selection of this holiday as the date was really a matter of scheduling conflicts but it ended up being a real Valentines Day Hike. There were sixteen of us in all: Ted E. Bear, Hungry Ted, Mary, Victor, Nina, Todd, Carrie, Connie, Ross, Keith, Stella, Dave and last but not least Richard and Chalandra.

The hike started under mostly clear skies with the high temps being in the mid-40s. If any one had a chill it was gone by the time we reached the top of the first hill. We set a good pace throughout most of the hike but were forced to slow down during the rock scramble through the gorge. Our overall moving speed was 2.6 mph according to my trusty Garmin. The first stop was at the original Hoffman Graveyard. To my surprise the old rail fence was replaced with a more durable [green steel fence](#) (I don't think the vandals will be messing with that.) and a brand new [historical placard](#). Walkers Run was flowing pretty good. It was still rock-hopable (I think I just made a new word.) but Hungry Ted and I took up positions in the stream and handed off hikers to each other as they crossed.

The subsequent climb and descent to Silver Run was accomplished rather quickly. We crossed the "bench " along the Gunpowder River formed centuries ago by the mill dam and entered into the confines of [Hemlock Gorge](#). Its beauty never diminishes no matter how often I visit it. It has to be the most picturesque stretch of trail in MD. It is also still the most difficult to follow, changing almost every time I visit it. We took in [the views](#)

at every bend in the river. In some places the small falls coming in from the sides were still frozen.

We stopped for [lunch at the Ol' Swimmin' hole](#), a large rock outcrop at the confluence of Walker Run and the river. Qs we ended the break we got a special treat as Richard got down on one knee, pulled out a pink ring box and proposed to Chalandra. Everybody including Chalandra was surprised. She accepted without hesitation and was greeted with a hardy round of applause. This was now truly a [Valentines Day Hike](#). Our usual visit to the gorge's [largest Hemlock](#) was slightly diminished by the obvious impact of previous events but everyone was still awed by its immenseness. The rest of the hike was completed in a celebratory fashion as we meandered through lesser Hemlock groves, crossed a shallow ridge of deciduous trees and descended back to the river again. We had completed the 6 mile hike by one o'clock and were heading back to Columbia in the Big Red Goose.