

## ***M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure***



**03-07-2009; Rocky Knob-Quarry Gap (Short version):** It was a nice warm, 72 degree day, a pleasant prelude to spring. I was joined by fourteen other hikers: The Mad Hatter, Everybody Loves Raymond, The Traveling Gnome, Indiana Moser, Sixteen Penny, Single Malt, Mark, Nina, Todd, Stella, Two Daves, Karen and Judy. We were on the trail by 10:00. The hike down to and around the Long Pine Run Reservoir was pretty effortless. Along the way we passed a vernal pond we must have passed 5 times before and never saw. It was teeming with life: newts, spring peepers and aquatic grasses. On the final descent to the still-frozen reservoir we spotted a flock of Black-throated Blue Warblers and a Downy Woodpecker. Spring is definitely coming!

We took a break along pretty Knob Run before we attacked a steep, albeit short, climb to get above the rocky drainage. The rest of the climb up to the saddle between the two ridges was pretty gradual and the tread was soft and smooth. We took a short lunch break in a grove of large pines and spruce before completing the rest of the hike.

We descended to the PATC Milesburn Cabin and proceeded to make a quick climb back up to a ridge. We had one other more gradual climb to jump over to the next ridge before we turned and started our descent into Quarry Gap. We took a final break at that most excellent shelter of the same name before descending through a dense Rhodo tunnel and returning to our vehicles.

Although everyone was pretty tired from hiking 12 miles at a relatively brisk pace one could tell they had thoughts of more spring hikes in their heads.