

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



04/18 to 20/09 – Loyalsock-Link Loop: First I would like to thank Pat Roberts and Jeff Mitchell for the valuable information they contributed for this trip. It made planning a lot easier.

I was joined on a beautiful spring day by Doc, Ted E. Bear, Bubbles, Single Malt, Sparky and .Com. Immediately after getting out of the van at the World's End State Park Visitor Center I took my long sleeve shirt off. Temps were going to be in the high 60s to low 70s with clear skies. After registering with the park office we threw on our packs and headed down the park cabin road and were soon on the LT/High Rock Trail. Our first stop was the pretty High Rock Run. After snapping some pictures we started our steep climb up to the vista of the same name. Near the top .Com found a cave. As hard as I prompted her I couldn't get her to go in. The view at the overlook was just like what I've seen in the many photos on the net. From that point on the climb was more gradual. It became even easier when we joined a grassy grade. We then crossed Loyalsock Rd for the first of four times and skirted the edges of a couple of mountain bogs. They seemed out of place for some reason.

Then it was on to Ken's Window and then the Alpine Falls for lunch. It was an ideal location. We continued up Tom's Run and crossed above the upper falls. After a steep climb it was an easy walk across a plateau, crossing Loyalsock road again and crossing a small stream at Ann's Bridge. We arrived at camp at the back of Sone's Pond by 4:00 and found all three sites empty. Since the first one was the largest we settled in there for the night. Since the fire band was still on we called it an early night.

The next day was cooler and overcast. You could almost taste the incoming rain. We had a leisurely breakfast and broke camp by 8:30. I thought that maybe it would be a little later but everyone was eager to continue our little adventure. We walked around the Hemlock lined pond for a while before veering away and climbing up to another plateau. Before long we found ourselves descending through a huge rock garden. Ken found another cave.

Portions of the descent were pretty steep. The hike along a small tributary was more gradual and pretty scenic. We crossed Loyalsock Creek on the Rock Run Road bridge turned left and climbed steeply to a railroad grade. We stashed our packs and walked down to the Haystacks for an early lunch. This spot on the creek is truly incredible with its eroded rocks and currents going every which way. Even though the water was running high and fast some of us made it out onto the rocks. After about a half hour we returned the way we came. (In after thought, since we were going to now be getting to camp real early, we should have hiked to the eastern terminus of the trail, visit another water fall and returned on the RX-7 Tr.) Shortly after recovering our packs a large group of Sierra Club hikers came through heading to wear we just came from. We descended to Rock Run Road and picked up the Link Trail to camp #2. It was a pretty scenic walk through Hemlocks with frequent views of the creek except for one short portion when we had to climb steeply to Rt154 to avoid a narrow part of the valley where it would be impossible to put a trail. Before climbing out we could have sworn we saw an ice waterfall on the south side of the canyon but we couldn't get close enough to confirm it. It seemed awful late to be seeing ice.

We reached camp by 1:00 o'clock and the threatening clouds gave way to a beautiful afternoon. After setting up camp we explored the area some and laid around on the rocks for the rest of the day. I personally did my best imitation of a water turtle sunning on a nice flat rock for about an hour. With the short day and the continued fire band we retired early, hoping for another quick start on our final day.

That night a light rain began. As planned we arose early and Sparky set up a tarp for everyone to get under. It worked out pretty good. I personally wasn't hungry and had my mind set on a warm meal and some cold Yuenglings at a local pub so a Power Bar and some water was all I needed at the moment. We were back on the trail by 8:30 again. We started with another steep climb (but also short) to avoid another narrow area. After passing a cabin we descended to the creek again and followed its edge to Pole Bridge Run. The water was too fast and the rocks on the other side looked too slippery to attempt a crossing here so we scrambled back up to the road and used it to reach our next turn. We took a short break before we began the last of our really steep major climbs. Once near the top we found ourselves walking on a series of old, grassy woods roads, one of which passed through a marvelous Hemlock forest. We then crossed Cold Run Road and made another steep but short climb. The next short segment was kind of unattractive as we walked along a deer enclosure that was protecting a recently burned out area from grazing deer.

The walk out to the Canyon Vista was pretty easy and, believe it or not, we still had a reasonable view despite the rain. Next came a steep descent on a very narrow trail with a constant drop-off on our right. We crossed Mineral Spring Road and began the rock scramble along the very beautiful east branch of Double Run with all of its waterfalls, chutes and pools. When we got below the last major slide I slipped on a perfectly flat rock but fortunately landed on my pack. After getting over my embarrassment I got up and we continued on. We crossed both branches of Double Run on foot bridges built by Eagle Scouts, crossed Rt154 and continued toward our end

point. Initially it looked like we would be walking on a flat, wide and smooth trail until it stopped abruptly at creek's edge. The rain made the last section along a rock ledge above the creek pretty dicey but we all made it across without falling in. we made it back to the vehicles by 1:00. It was nice to have warm restrooms to change in before heading out to the Barn Tavern and Restaurant for warm food and cold beer.