

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure(s)



10-09 to 12-10, Car camping at Coopers Rock SF and day hiking: Coopers Rock is the largest State Forest in WV. Its 12,713 acres are bisected by Interstate 68. While the vista from whence it gets its name is a real tourist magnet much of the trail system is much less visited except in the general vicinity of the parking lots. Janet, the dogs and I were joined at the small but well maintained campground (Thanks to Ranger Matt and his staff!) by Cognac Jack (back from touring the U.S.), The Mad Hatter and Alan. Ann (AKA Doc), a good friend and hiking companion from Morgantown, along with Tracy and her husband, visited our campfire that night to discuss the route she would be leading us on the next day. She had spent the day searching for something special for us and man did she find a good one.

The next day Paula joined the crew as we set out on a 11.2 mile trek. The first stop was Raven Rock. Although the vista is shared by a high power line the view is at least equal in beauty to that as seen at the main overlook. Add to it a greater amount of solitude I consider it even better. We backtracked on the Raven Rock Road/Trail for about a mile to a small cairn Ann had built the day before. An unofficial footpath led us to an old grade which shortly led us to an unofficial extension of the Sunset Wall Trail. I don't think I have walked along side of such a long length of massive rocks in my entire hiking career. We wove through a labyrinth of rocks which I immediately named Ann's Hall and soon hooked up with the official trail. Here we stopped to give directions to a large group who were apparently hiking w/o a map before watching a rock climber ply his art. We by-passed a short hike to Haystack Rock and ascended to the main vista. After taking in the view and discussing the origin of the name of the rock we descended to follow the Underlook and Rattlesnake trails to a giant shelter constructed by the C.C.C. of American Chestnut for lunch. From there we visited an extension of the Sunset Wall called Rock City. This place has got to be the region's heaven for Bolderers. One could spend days exploring it! From there we descended on the Ridge Trail and then an un-named but maintained trail down to Cheat Lake. The view was nice but a bit narrow. I don't know if I would do the descent and subsequent climb back up again. After a snack we climbed back up and followed pretty Clay Run the Henry Clay Iron

Furnace. From there it was a casual walk of about three miles on the Clay Run Road and Laurel Run Trail back to camp. Although it didn't feel like it we had gained and lost 2100 feet in elevation. Paula and Alan had to leave us but the rest of us gathered for another campfire.

The next day Cognac, the Hatter, Precious and I drove 35 minutes to the southern trailhead of the Quebec Run Wild Area in PA. This was a totally different hike from yesterday's. There were a few interesting rock outcrops that in their own context were quite nice but when compared to Sunset Wall, Rattle Snake trail and Rock City they were mere marbles. This hike was more about pretty streams and dark Hemlock Groves ... and too many nice campsites to mark on a map. We were surprised by the number of bridges over the streams. We weren't expecting to see them in a wild area. The route we followed included Quebec Run Road, Tebolt Trail, West Road, Mill Run Trail, Rankin Trail and Hess trail. We closed the loop with the western segment of the Tebolt trail. In all we hiked a bit over 10 miles and gained and lost about 1400 feet of elevation. My original plans called for hiking more of this venue but after seeing the first Hemlock grove on Mill Run I decided to save some for a backpacking trip next year. We will be back!

Cognac broke camp upon our return and headed home. Ann and Gary returned that night to share our campfire until a brief shower drove everyone back to their abodes. The next morning found us breaking camp and heading to Little Sandy's in Bruceton Mills for a down home breakfast before the three hour drive back to our home. I must say I was pleasantly surprised by both hiking venues and plan to return.