

Description: This 15.6 mile overnight backpack utilizes a series of old logging roads, active forest roads (during deer season) and footpaths. The highlights include the wonderful views from White Rocks and the out-and-back along the southernmost section of the Little Sluice Mountain Trail and numerous camping options. There is the option of making a more complete loop by following the latter to its end on FR92 but I advise against it. The descent is steep, the trail is sketchy and lined with briars and you will have to road hike for almost three miles, uphill, to get back your car. I have been told that a ninety foot rock scramble of Little Schloss offers a view of Big Schloss on Mill Mountain. We did not attempt it. Try it at your own risk.

The hike starts at the western end of FR92 at the metal gate.

Trail Notes: From the parking area follow the continuation of the gravel forest road and yellow blazes for the Cedar Creek Trail, for 0.6 miles. Pass the junction with the orange blazed Bread Road Trail on the left (your return route). The trail continues as an old road but gradually deteriorates into something less navigable by vehicles. In another 0.6 miles pass a small campsite and wildlife pond on the right. The trail veers to the left on a footpath, climbing a bit, leaving what little remains of the old woods road and arrives at a wide, grassy campsite and the turnaround point to a part-time road in 1.1 miles from the first campsite.

Continue to follow the road. During leaf-off you might catch glimpses of White Rocks through the trees to the left, especially near the end of this segment where the road curves to the right and then left again. Turn left onto the blue blazed Tuscarora Trail in 1.7 miles. Initially the climb is gradual but steepens considerably after crossing a reliable stream. Some switchbacks are short, steep and rocky while others are long and gradual, passing through pleasant pine groves. Pass yellow blazed Sulfur Spring Gap Trail on the right in 2.0 miles and pink blazed Old Mail Path, also on the right, in another 0.3 miles. If your intentions are to camp at the site across from the junction with the White Rocks Trail or the site at the base of White Rocks itself your last possible water source will be a seasonal spring to the left of the trail. Look for a thin stream of water flowing between two thin rocks placed in an attempt to channel the water for collection purposes.

In another 0.5 miles reach the previously mentioned trail junction and campsite. Turn left and follow the white blazes to a nice campsite. I would leave my pack and trekking poles here. Follow the white blazes on the rocks to the vista.

To continue the hike retrace your steps back to the Tuscarora Trail and turn left. You will still have a little climb to go before descending gradually and arriving at a 4X intersection with the orange blaze Racer Camp Hollow Trail to the right and the purple blazed Little Sluice Mountain Trail on the left. There are three large campsites in the vicinity. One is secluded in the south-west corner of the intersection. Although there is a wildlife pond there the best water sources are small stream 5 to 10 minutes down the Racer Camp Hollow Trail.

To continue the trek follow the purple Little Sluice Mountain Trail. The initial 0.5 miles is heavily rutted and might be wet/muddy after heavy periods of precipitation. The road improves after you cross Spruce Run, another good water source. In 1.4 miles you'll pass a nice campsite on the right and, in a few steps, a piped spring on the left. This is some pretty sweet water and also the last source on this hike. In another 1.0 miles arrive at the junction with the orange blazed Bread Road Trail on the left and a huge campsite on the right. This one has a reputation for being abused by hunters but as of this writing (04/2014) it was in excellent condition. Unless you wish to cap at one of the campsites along the next segment I would recommend stashing your packs, off trail, near this junction. Bring your camera, snacks and water as there are some nice views coming up.

Continuing on the Little Sluice Mountain Trail, pass a nice campsite with a view in 0.3 miles. In another 0.5 miles, just before an open field and giant spruce the old turnoff for the trail is on the left. You might see some old wooden signs on the trees. Ignore them and continue through the field. On the left there is a large campsite with a ten foot fire ring. After passing through this make a short rocky climb to a short knob with a wide open view of Massanutten Mountain and Shenandoah National Park. Starting at the northern end of the former you can easily make out Signal Knob, Kennedy Peak, Edinburg Gap, The Knob and , on a clear day, New Market Gap. Folks tell me that a 90 foot rock scramble of Little Schloss, just to the south, will reward you with a nice view of Big Schloss on Mill Mountain to the west. At my age I declined to attempt it.

After taking in the views retrace your steps back to the Bread Road Trail, recover your packs and make the 1.3 mile descent back to the Cedar Creek Trail. The trail is a wide, dirt access road for hunters and has little in the way of esthetic value to a hiker except that it serves as a means to an end – a quick route back to your car. Turn right onto the gravel road and follow your initial steps back to the parking area.