

Trail Notes for the Golden Eagle Trail

Description: Tom Thwaites, author of the "Fifty Hikes in ... Pennsylvania" series of trail guides, suggests that "This may be the best hike in Penn's woods" and he is not far off the mark. The trek includes two beautiful streams nestled in Hemlock covered gorges in Bonnell and Wolf Runs, a couple of steep climbs, four vistas and some very interesting sandstone wind sculptures. With the relocation of the trailhead due to the extension of the Pine Creek Rail Trail the hike is now a tad longer than when Tom wrote of it. It is 9.7 miles in length. The steep climb out of the Bonnell Run drainage and then the even harder climb up to the Raven's Horn earn this one a strenuous rating. The rest of the trek is pretty moderate in difficulty. The old trailhead can still be used as a bailout point should you decide not to climb up to one of the best vistas in the area.

[Google Custom Directions](#)

The parking area is just north of an old barn on the west side of PA Route 414. It looks like [this](#).

Trail Notes: From the parking area cross Rt 414 and climb steeply for a short distance to an old woods road and follow the orange blazes along Bonnell Run. At first you will be high above it. In 0.37 miles the return leg comes in sharply from the right in the form of another woods road. Continue straight ahead. After a while the trail will become more of a footpath and crosses the stream several times. In most cases these are mere rock hops. Keep a keen eye as there is one or two places where the trail will climb up to a sidehill position to avoid some serious erosion. In 3.12 miles from the last junction the trail will bear to the right and climb steeply out of the drainage. As the trail bears to the left the climb moderates considerably and soon deposits you onto a grassy woods road. Straight ahead is the Hillborn Tr. Turn right onto the woods road and in 0.25 miles arrive at a vista on the right overlooking the Bonnell Run Drainage.

The trail then bends to the right and in another 0.28 miles brings you to the grand Beulah Land Vista on the left. In another 0.15 miles the road ends but the trail continues as a footpath to the left. In 0.45 miles from the last vista arrive at the final view on this ridge. It also overlooks the Bonnell Run drainage. Descend to Wolf Run. Here again you will cross the stream a few times and make use of some sidehill trail high above the stream. You'll pass through some interesting rock formations with some evidence of quarrying remaining if you look closely. Closer to your next turn you'll pass a section of the stream that has one solid 50 yard piece of flat rock as its bottom. In 2.95 miles from leaving the ridge the trail forks. Going straight, following the run, will lead you to the Pine Creek Rail Trail. If you opt not to complete the circuit follow this and turn right on the rail trail for an easy route back to the car. Bearing to the right will take you on a steep, rocky climb to one of the best vistas in PA, the Raven's Horn. There are several switchbacks but these do little to ease the physical exertion required to reach the vista. Take your time and stay hydrated! The view will be worth.

In 0.68 miles from the trail split you'll reach the nearly 270 degree view. Take a nice break here as a little more climbing awaits you. As you approach the top you will pass an unmarked spur on the right that lends a view of the Wolf Run Drainage. The summit is a little grassy opening in the woods. From here the rest of the trek is downhill and very steep at first. The descent will moderate soon enough and eventually join an old woods road. In 0.81 miles from the Raven's Horn the road will switchback sharply to the right. Stop here and turn around for a good view up Pine Creek Valley. Continue along the old road for another 0.29 miles before arriving at the initial trail junction of the trek. Turn left here and retrace your steps back to your vehicle.