

Description: The Hilton Area provides easy access to the outdoor enthusiast. It provides a campground, picnic pavilions, playground and a small but well maintained trail system. This hike covers all of the trails with the exception of the purple blazed Pigs Run Trail. Highlights include scenic Saw Mill Branch, the view from Buzzard Rock, a lesser view at Ilchester Rocks, the Patapsco River and the old Bloedes Dam.

You can access the trail system through the main entrance of the park on Hilton Avenue. There is a \$2.00 fee per car during the week and a \$3.00 fee per person on the weekends and holidays. Such being the case, we provide directions and trail notes starting at a free parking lot on Hilltop Road.

Trail Notes: As you look down the power line right-of-way turn left to pick up the yellow blazed Buzzard Rock Trail. It parallels Hilltop Road for 0.2 miles before meeting the red blazed Saw Mill Branch Trail. You will be returning to this junction later. For now turn left onto the Saw Mill Branch trail. It will descend for 0.4 miles to the stream of the same name. Turn left onto the white blazed Santee Branch Trail and cross the stream. The trail climbs slightly for 0.3 miles to reach the orange blazed Charcoal Trail. It is a loop trail. Straight ahead both trails share the tread (orange and white blazes). To get the most distance turn left onto the Charcoal Trail (orange blaze only) and cross the power line right-of-way. The trail circles the campground, crosses its access road and arrives back at the Santee Branch Trail in 0.5 miles. Turn left, following the white blazes, crossing the campground access road two more times. Pass the purple blazed Pigs Run Trail on the right (a shortcut should you decide to truncate the hike) in 0.3 miles. In 0.1 miles arrive at the campground access road again. Turn right onto it. Pass through the power line parking area, a picnic pavilion and restrooms, another parking lot and then the far end of the park loop road to pick up the blue blazed Forest Glen Trail.

As the trail descends pass a circle intersection in 0.3 miles. To the right will be the western terminus of the previously mentioned Pigs Run Trail. It is not signed but carries its purple blazes. The trail descends to and parallels Saw Mill Branch for 0.2 miles before arriving at a tunnel that travels under an active railroad track. You'll pass through it later to complete the hike but for now cross the stream and climb steeply but just for a few steps before turning right onto the red blazed Saw Mill Branch Trail. Overall the stream is particularly scenic with large boulders cast about but there is one tranquil pool that invites you to take a break, moisten your bandana and wipe the

perspiration from your face. In 0.6 miles from the tunnel return to the junction of the white blazed Santee Branch Trail that you hiked earlier. Continue on the Saw Mill Branch Trail, retracing earlier steps for 0.4 miles to the intersection with the yellow blazed Buzzard Rock Trail. Turn left onto it, an easy to walk gravel road. As it crosses the power line it becomes packed dirt. Arrive at Buzzard Rock in 0.5 miles from the last trail junction. The best view is to the left of the boulder. In 0.2 miles the trail descends quickly over rocky tread before arriving back at the tunnel. This time pass through it and turn right onto the paved Grist Mill Trail. Watch out for bikers, runners and strollers as you enjoy occasional views of the river. A few social trails will get you up close and personal with it. In 0.5 miles arrive at the Bloedes Dam. Turn right onto the continuation of the Buzzard Rock Trail. Initially the climb is very steep but the grade lessens soon enough. In 0.2 miles pass a spur leading to Ilchester Rocks to the left. Here you'll get a view of Ilchester Road across the valley and a site where a factory once stood. It was demolished in recent years. Another 0.2 miles of relatively flat walking returns you to your vehicle on Hilltop Road.