

Trail Notes for the Lost Pond Circuit

Description: The Belair Road area of Gunpowder Falls State Park is a very popular hiking venue. There are two parking lots at the main entrance and an overflow lot about 0.10 miles further north on Belair Road with a footpath that leads back down to the river. If you visit the park in the winter or during the week you might find some degree of solitude.

This easy 5.1 mile circuit features the always pleasant Gunpowder River, the remains of an old sawmill, the beautiful stream that used to supply the power for the mill, an area in the river known as Pot Rocks (You'll understand why when you visit it.) and the Lost Pond which is now just a grassy meadow with a stream flowing through it. Spring flowers include, but are not limited to, large clusters of Marsh Marigolds, Periwinkle, Bloodroot and Virginia Blue Bells.

If this hike is a bit lacking in length consider adding the 5.0 Sweathouse Branch-Wildlands Loop also found on this site.

Trail Notes: From the back parking lot look toward the river. In the right corner will be a break in the railing. Descend on dirt and wooden steps to the blue blazed Lost Pond Trail. Turn left. The trail splits and rejoins itself several times to either get better views of the river or to avoid wet spots. In 0.18 miles a blue spur trail coming from the overflow lot will come in on the left. In 0.31 more miles pass the junction with the yellow blazed Sawmill Tr on the left. (You will be coming back this way at the end.) In another 0.30 miles pass the other end of the Sawmill Tr and ford a wide stream.

In another 0.33 miles the trail splits. Take the left fork and climb to a vista overlooking Pot Rocks. For the next 1.66 miles you will be skirting large open fields until you arrive at Lost Pond. Circle the pond and in 0.57 miles, shortly after crossing a stream, keep a keen eye out for a sharp right turn off of the wide trail onto a narrower footpath. There is no sign here but once you step over a fallen log (there as of 04/02/2009) you'll see fresh blue blazes. I believe this is a recent relocation of the trail. If you miss this turn you will descend and cross a stream to end up back on the river a little further down stream. Either way turn right and hike up river for 0.97 miles to Pot Rocks. You can usually find a way to rock hop out onto the large boulders to examine the deep holes bored into them by the combination of spinning smaller, harder cobbles and the hydrostatic force created under a sheet of ice as the river flowed over the rocks during the ice age.

Continue on, passing the trail split that leads to the vista and Lost Pond. Continue up the river for 0.33 more miles, re-ford the wide stream you crossed earlier but this time turn right onto the yellow blazed Sawmill Tr. This is a particularly beautiful stream with mini-falls throughout its length. You'll see the ruins of the sawmill and mill race near the beginning of the trail. In 0.77 more miles descend back to blue Lost Pond Tr. Turn right and retrace your earlier steps back to your vehicle.