

## Allegheny Mt-Seneca Creek Loop

**Description:** This is a 12.7-mile moderate circuit hike through hardwood forest and along beautiful Seneca Creek. The length of the hike would lend one to rank this as a difficult outing but the minimal elevation "gain" (500 ft over 4 miles and then 900 ft over the last 5.5 miles) and excellent trail conditions make this a very moderate day hike. There are a couple of slick parts on the rapid 900 foot descent from the ridge to the creek at the mid-point. Approximately 6 wide stream crossings on the final 5 mile leg also adds to the adventurous nature of this outing. Alternative footwear should be considered here.

Make sure to stop and explore all of the waterfalls. Some are hidden behind Rhododendron thickets and require some bushwhacking to visit.

### Directions From the intersection of US 33 and US 55 in Seneca Rocks:

1. Take US 33 south through the town of Riverton.
2. Turn right onto Briery Gap Rd and climb up Spruce Mountain. In a few miles Briery Gap Rd will become gravel FR 112. Continue on.
3. At the intersection of FR 104 that goes to Spruce Knob continue straight on FR 112.
4. FR112 will descend and switchback a bit down the mountain. Pass the Lumberjack Trailhead on the right just past the switchback. In less than 0.5 miles come to the trailhead and parking lot for Seneca Creek Trail.

**Trail Notes:** All trails are signed at trail junctions. All blazes are blue plastic or metal diamonds. From the parking lot take the Seneca Creek Trail (TR515), through a rapidly growing Red Spruce forest, for 0.9 miles to the junction of Tom Lick Trail (TR559). Turn left onto Tom Lick Trail. Cross a meadow and then the headwaters of Seneca Creek on a footbridge.

Gradually climb up to the crest of the ridge on an old forest road. In about a mile, come to the junction of Allegheny Mountain Trail (TR552). Turn right.

Walk on a nearly level trail for the next 4 miles, first on a forest road and then a footpath towards the end. You will alternately walk through mature stands of deciduous timber and wildlife clearings. Shortly after turning onto Allegheny Mt. Trail you will pass North Prong Trail (TR528) on the left and at 0.7 miles Leading Ridge Trail (TR557) also on the left. In another 0.25 miles, walk through the 4-way intersection with Swallow Rock Trail (TR529), staying on the Allegheny Mt. Trail.

After 1.4 miles from the last junction, cross the intersection with Bear Hunter Trail (TR531). In about a mile arrive at a large clearing. The trail is a footpath at this point and may be hard to follow in summer months. The continuation of the trail is nearly straight ahead at about the furthest distance from where you entered the clearing. There will be a blue diamond blaze on a tree marking the trail.

Shortly after re-entering the woods you will pass Spring Ridge Trail (TR561- not highlighted on the map) on the left and arrive at the Horton Trail

**(TR530). Turn right onto Horton Trail and quickly descend to the valley below, there are a couple of slippery rocks on the trail that need special attention. Otherwise the descent to the valley floor is easy. At the bottom you will meet the first of 5 or 6 stream crossings.**

**Cross Seneca Creek and climb the opposite bank to reach an old abandoned railroad grade. This is Seneca Creek Trail (TR 515). Although it appears you could go either way, the northern part of the trail (downstream) has been closed due to storm damage and is not maintained. Turn right (upstream) here and in about 0.5 miles come to a great campsite and Seneca Falls, one of the best lunch spots in the Mon.**

**The trail back to the cars is rather obvious from here. For 5.0 more miles gradually climb out of the valley as you visit many falls, rapids, slides and wading pools. You'll cross Seneca Creek five more times on the way out. I tend to wear whatever is on my feet for the remainder of the hike. You could lose an hour of travel time changing boots at every stream crossing.**

**After the falls, continue upstream passing the junction with the Huckleberry Trail (TR533) on your left. Soon arrive at your next stream crossing. Cross and walk through another excellent camping area in a grassy clearing. The exact locations of the remaining crossings elude me but they are there.**

**In about 1.6 miles from the last trail junction look for a little unmarked side trail to the left that leads to another campsite across from a waterfall. This one is unique because it has an old grist stone from a mill long ago abandoned/destroyed as a functional tabletop.**

**Return to the trail, pass Bear Hunter Trail on your right, and soon arrive at the premier campsite in the valley, Judy Springs. It is not uncommon to find 10+ campers here at peak season. Above this clearing, Judy Springs Trail (TR512) crosses a footbridge on goes left. Don't cross the bridge but stay straight along the west bank of Seneca Creek.**

**In about another mile pass Swallow Rock Trail on your right and then in another 1.4 miles the familiar Tom Lick Trail that you traveled at the beginning of the trip, also on your right. In between take note of a large marshy area on your right. This used to be a large beaver pond but the dam ruptured a couple of years ago and the tenants never rebuilt it.**

**Retrace your first 0.9 miles back to the cars.**