

Description: I always thought this was a 6 mile hike. My software tells me it is only a little over 4 miles. It must seem longer because of the bushwhack! I still recommend it because of the view at the overlook and the solitude found along Otter Creek. The Holtwood Recreation area has such beautiful streams.

Warning: This hike includes a 1.1 mile bushwhack along a section of Otter Creek and one wide stream crossing. Originally this was mostly considered an "open Woods" bushwhack but the presence of recent large blow-downs will require a bit more work for this one segment!!!

Directions from I-95 near Aberdeen, MD:

1. Take MD RT 543 North (Exit 80). Turn left at the end of the ramp.
2. Turn right on MD 165. MD 165 becomes PA RT 74.
3. Pass PA RT 372 on the right.
4. Turn right onto PA RT 425 (North). The road makes a hard left at the bottom of a hill. Follow it past Otter Creek Campground (left side) and pull into public parking (right side) before you cross the bridge.

Trail Notes: From the parking lot, Cross the bridge over Otter Creek and immediately proceed up the blue blazed Mason Dixon Trail. At the top of the hill come to an intersection. Turn right to stay on the Mason-Dixon Trail. Pass through some tall evergreens and in 0.48 miles cross RT 425. The continuation of the trail is a few yards downhill behind a forest gate.

Follow this old forest road until you reach a small stream. The woods road goes straight and eventually will reconnect with the trail. At this point you want to turn right and follow the blazes along and across the stream. Climb steeply to Urey Overlook (0.44 miles from the last RT 425 crossing).

From here follow the trail until it reconnects with the woods road. Follow it out to RT 425 again and cross the road for the final time. Continue to follow the Mason-Dixon Trail around private property until it descends quickly through a series of switchbacks to Otter Creek (0.75 miles from the last road crossing).

This is where the bushwhack begins. Because of high valley walls and rocky ledges you have to cross here or a little further upstream. After crossing turn downstream, staying as close to the creek as possible. At times you will have to climb over or scoot under blow-downs and at other times it will be better if you climb up the hill just a bit and go around them. Just keep the creek in your sight. In a couple of places you might come close to walking in the creek but there is a narrow tread across rocks that will preclude this. At about 0.4 miles from the crossing you will notice that the creek and valley make a sharp right turn. At this point it is not necessary to follow the stream. Cut across the point of land and regain the creek on the other side. In about another 1/3 of a mile you will find yourself on a pretty decent footpath. I think this is an unofficial extension of the Otter Creek Trail.

Soon arrive at another sharp left turn in the creek. Here you should start to see sporadic red blazes. At about 0.4 miles from this point the trail goes up a small stream a few yards, crosses it and follows the stream from a slightly higher elevation. A green blazed Gamelands trail follows the stream.

Continue following the creek. As you reach the campground look for a series of sharp switchbacks on the left that takes you back down to the creek and then out to your cars. If you miss this turn-off just walk through the campground, stop at the camp store, buy some ice cream and follow the blue blazed Mason-Dixon Trail (to the left of the store) back to your car.