

Trail Notes for Dolly Sods Circumnavigation – mod1

Description: This is a 24 mile modification of the [Dolly Sods Circumnavigation](#) found on this site. It differs by:

1. Adding a few sections of new trails while subtracting others.
2. Making the optional trip to the Lion's Head a part of the main loop and not a side bar out-and-back.
3. Adding a new secluded campsite for the first night.
4. Eliminating 3 major crossings of Red Creek (Something to consider when hiking this marvelous place when water levels are high.) as well as a few hundred feet of elevation change.
5. Providing an un-official by-pass route eliminating the perpetually wet slog up Dobbin Grade.

Most of the original route is shown on the provided map, giving the hiker the ability to mix and match the trails.

[Google Custom Directions](#)

As you reach the top of the mountain the large trees will disappear and the road will make a final sharp left-hand turn. Park here on either side of the road. The Bear Rocks trailhead is about 100 yards further down the road. There is limited parking there but these spots are often full.

Trail Notes: There are no blazes in either Dolly Sods North or Dolly Sods Wilderness. Most of the trail junctions are signed in DSN but signs seem to come and go in the Wilderness area.

Day 1: From the cars walk south on FR75 for about 100 yards and turn right onto an old jeep trail named Bear Rocks Trail (Tr522) and blocked by boulders. You will gradually descend to Dobbin Grade, passing a seriously eroded section of the jeep trail (A footpath to the left gets you around this.) and a mini-bog sheltered in a hollow. You'll climb out of the hollow and descend to Dobbin Grade (TR526) at 1.02 miles from the forest road. The jeep trail is also badly eroded here. There are optional trails on either side.

Cross Dobbin Grade and descend further through a grassy area to Red Creek. There are a few good campsites here. Cross the creek. Climb to the first rise. You'll end up on an old ATV trail. Do not take the ATV trail but turn right onto a footpath at the USFS "Trail" marker. As you enter the woods you'll pass through a small wet area. Cross a drainage and immediately turn right (uphill). Follow the drainage for about 15 yards and turn left. Walk through the woods until you pick up another trail that goes uphill. Turn right. Soon you'll arrive at the grassy slopes of Raven Ridge although, at this point, you are still on Bear Rocks Trail. Follow the Trail stakes for another 0.4 miles until you arrive at the junction of Raven Ridge Trail (Tr521). Turn right onto Raven Ridge Trail.

It may be possible at certain spots to climb to the northern edge of the ridge for views of Dobbin Slashing and distant ridges. At about 0.17 miles from the last trail junction pass Beaver View Trail (Tr523) on the left. Soon reach a large grove of mature Red Spruce to your left (South). As you look at it there is a lone deciduous tree to its left, possibly a fruit tree. This approximates an opening in the grove and the front door of a fantastic but dry campsite protected from the elements.

Continue west passing an unsigned trail on the left that eventually connects with Beaver View Trail that you passed earlier. At 0.86 miles from the Spruce Grove turn left onto a footpath cut through some small Red Spruce. In another 0.44 miles arrive at Rocky Ridge Trail (Tr524). Turn left here.

Continue south on Rocky Ridge Trail. At about 1.08 miles the trail veers slightly to the right and crosses Rocky Knob. Weather permitting this is a great lunch spot with views of Canaan Valley and Mountain. You have to rely on several cairns and short patches of footpath to get through this area.

In about 0.3 miles from Rocky Knob you'll pass a trail intersection in a wet area with a large boulder. The trail to the left is marked with cairns and leads to a dead end and a possible small emergency campsite should a backpacker need to get off of the ridge. By-pass this trail, pass another dry campsite, and in 0.2 miles arrive at a jeep trail. This is the junction with Dobbin Grade Trail (Tr526). Turn right to stay on Rocky Ridge Trail. Climb up a wide woods road to Harmon Knob in 0.51 miles. The actual knob is marked by a very tall cairn. The viewpoint is across a large rock field along the edge of the ridge.

Continue south a little further and turn left onto the Harman Tr. In 1.53 miles turn left onto Blackbird Knob Tr. Cross the Left Fork of Red Creek and turn left onto a footpath. Follow it into a large grove of Red Spruce. There are 2 nice campsites on this side and another on the west bank which can be reached via a rock hop. This is camp for the night. (Note: there are a ton of blue berries behind the west bank site in season.)

Day 2: Return to the junction of Blackbird Knob Tr and the Harman Trail and follow Blackbird Knob Tr back to the ridge. In 1.89 miles from the last trail junction Rocky Ridge trail will come in from the right.

In 0.25 miles arrive at a large gray kiosk. Breathed Mt Tr is on the left side of it and Big Stonecoal Tr is on the right. Head down Big Stonecoal Trail. WARNING: right at the edge of the woods there is a sink hole. Stay on the logs or circle this area. If you step in it you will find yourself in mud up to your knees!!! Continue downhill, at times walking in a stream. Soon you will be walking on a railroad grade with Big Stonecoal Run coming in from the left and a tributary coming in from the right. At about 0.97 miles from the trail junction with Breathed Mt Trail you will pass a campsite on the left. In another 0.14 miles ford Big Stonecoal Run. There are 2 more campsites right after the ford on the left. The trail then veers east, away from the run and travels roughly along the edge between bogs and grand Pine plantations. These are popular camping spots but I think the closest water source is the run you just crossed. The trail will then turn south for a short

distance. Before reaching the southern most edge of the plantation the trail will jog left and uphill through the plantation. A faint trail continuing south (to the right) here will take you out to yet one more great view of highland meadows with a backdrop of mountains. Stay straight on the main trail uphill to continue. The trail will go east for just a little bit before turning south and then bending westward again.

Cross to the west bank of Big Stonecoal at about 1 mile from the previous crossing and head down stream to the junction with Dunkenbarger Trail. Perhaps the greatest campsite in the area is immediately to your left in a splendid stand of Spruce. This supposedly used to be an old lumber camp. It's also a great lunch spot.

Continue down the Big Stonecoal Tr. Ford the run and scramble up to an old railroad grade. Visit the waterfall on your right. In 0.56 miles or so Big Stonecoal trail will veer to the right and downhill at the junction with Rocky Point Trail. You want to go straight on Rocky Point Trail, crossing through a rocky area marked by cairns and a very small part-time stream that crosses the trail. At 0.58 miles from the last trail junction and about 5 minutes from the small stream, look for a large cairn on your left. There is a labyrinth of trails here. All will eventually get you to the top but the best one is to the right. You'll have to step up onto the rocks from the trail. Watch out for the crevices and snakes as you explore the area. On the eastern edge of the rocks you'll find cairns that will lead you down through a large fissure in the rocks and reconnect you to the unofficial trail. Follow it back down to Rocky point Tr.

Turn left onto the Rocky Point Trail to continue your trek. Soon you will realize why the trail is so named as you begin walking on the old rock ballast used for the logging railroad. In 1.91 miles arrive at what appears to be a four way trail junction. The continuation of the RR grade straight ahead will eventually peter out. Instead turn left onto Red Creek Trail and climb steeply to yet another railroad grade. In 1.36 miles pass the junction with Breathed Mt Trail on the left and in another 0.2 miles ford the Left Fork of Red Creek to arrive at an area popularly known as "The Forks". There is great camping, a waterfall and Olympic size swimming hole here. This is your camp for the night.

Day 3: Continue following Red Creek Tr. It will follow the Left Fork for a while before veering away from it and climbing steeply through a rocky area. You will then pass through alternating open meadows and dense Red Spruce groves. At 0.91 miles from camp arrive at the junction of the Blackbird Knob Tr. There is no sign but it is quite obvious. Turn right and in another 0.31 miles turn left onto Upper Red Creek Tr. Most of this segment is through open meadows with sweeping views. In another 1.26 miles descend to Dobbin Grade. Turn right onto Dobbin Grade but in a very short distance turn left onto Raven Ridge Trail. Gradually climb the ridge for 0.8 miles where you will pass through some nice shade trees and then enter a small grassy area surrounded by trees. Look for 2 stumps to the right of the trail. The first will be about 18 inches tall and 3-4 inches across. The next one is much wider. Turn right between the 2 stumps and walk into the woods. There you will find an obvious footpath. Follow it down to another

huge meadow. (Note: A couple of enterprising hikers traced a route near the bottom of the woods with thin fallen logs to mark the way.) Shortly after entering the meadow cross a small stream and begin a gradual climb up a "mini-Raven Ridge". There is one rut through the grass which tends to disappear at times but once you reach the crown of the hill it is a straight line shot to reach the Bear Rocks Tr. Keep an eye out straight ahead for a clump of Red Spruce that has a swath cut through it and aim for that. Soon you will find yourself on a double track ATV trail that goes through that swath and joins the trail you hiked at the beginning of the first day. retrace those earlier steps back to your car.