

**Description:** This is a 10 mile moderate shuttle hike through some of the best that Dolly Sods has to offer: a mixture of deciduous and evergreen forests, a breathtaking view of Red Creek Valley, open meadows and heath bogs, swimming holes, thickets of wild flowers, Rhododendron and ferns and waterfalls. There are 5 water crossings. One Red Creek crossing is quite wide and can be deep at times. Water levels can be at the boot tops to butt high depending on the season and the latest heavy precipitation. Since this is probably the widest part of Red Creek the overall velocity of the water is greatly reduced and will be lower than at other narrower parts of the creek.

**Directions from WV28/WV55 and Jordan Run Road, north of Seneca Rocks:**

1. If heading south on WV28/WV55 turn right onto Jordan Run Road.
2. In 0.9 miles pass the first turn off to Dolly Sods on the left, FR19.
3. In 6.7 more miles turn left onto FR75 marked with signs for Dolly Sods.
4. FR75 soon becomes a gravel road. It has recently been graded but still has some bumpy parts.
5. As you reach the top of the mountain the large trees will disappear and the road will make a final sharp left-hand turn. Travel another 2.4 miles to the Black Bird Knob Trailhead which is marked with a kiosk. (If you come to the Red Creek Campground you went to far.) Leave some vehicles there and continue south on FR75.
6. In 5.1 miles come to the intersection of FR19. Bear right onto FR19 and drive to the Dolly Sods Picnic area on the left. This is your starting point.

**Trail Notes:** Because of it's wilderness designation all trail signs had been removed but in recent years the forest service realized that less damage was done to this fragile area when the trail intersections were posted. The signs have returned. Still take care as signs are often destroyed by bears, hunters and deer in rut. Some intersections are also marked by cairns.

Starting at the parking area cross the forest road and look for a narrow footpath in the trees. A few yard into the woods you'll see a forest kiosk. This is the Rohrbaugh Plains trailhead. First climb and then descend a small hill. Cross an old woods road at 0.49 miles. You'll cross a couple of small part-time streams and pass through a beautiful fern meadow. Little side trails will go off in every direction but the main trail should be pretty obvious.

Come to "The Un-named Vista" 1.55 miles from the woods road. The only other vista that is this good in the area, the Lion's Head, can be seen on the other side. There is a great camping spot nestled in the Rhododendron here and a spring a couple of yards further north on the trail.

The footpath will turn into an old woods road as it enters a hardwood forest. At 0.75 miles from the overlook watch for cairns and a sign on the left marking a footpath that leaves the woods road at a pretty sharp angle. It's easy to walk by regardless of the sign and cairns. This is the continuation of the Rohrbaugh Plains Trail. The woods road becomes the Wildlife Trail (Shown as the Nature Trail on my map). Take the Rohrbaugh Plains Trail. This will soon become a rocky rail road grade. The Rohrbaugh Plains Trail

ends at the junction with the Fisher Spring Run Trail in 0.37 miles. The way back up to FR75 is marked with 2 large cairns on the right. You want to go straight (left) and away from the cairns.

Fisher Spring Run Trail will descend a bit and then switchback sharply, crossing Fisher Spring Run and ending at Red Creek Trail in 0.93 miles from the last trail junction. (Just before coming to Red Creek Tr there is an unmarked trail on the right that descends to a railroad grade that follows Red creek with several good camping spots. Explore it if you wish. Going upstream on the grade takes you to Fisher Spring Run's confluence with Red Creek. A nice water fall further upstream can be seen from here. Going down stream takes you past the lunch spot waterfall and more good camp sites, finally arriving at the Red Creek ford you'll use after lunch.) If you did not partake in the above adventure turn right onto Red Creek Trail at that junction and descend to the creek.

Turn up stream on one of a couple of unmarked paths and find your way to the railroad grade that follows the creek. In less than 0.25 miles arrive at the lunch spot waterfalls. This falls can range in ferocity from a mere trickle to a rapid on a #1 kayak run. (See photos linked to other Dolly Sods hikes described on this site.)

After lunch and a refreshing dip/soak return to the ford (at a 3 foot tall narrow stump and usually marked with cairns) and cross Red Creek. It's usually best to cross on a slight downstream angle with a large rock and sandy beach on the opposite shore as points of reference.

The next part is probably the hardest. After the ford turn right onto the continuation of Red Creek Trail. Climb up the side of Breathed Mountain for 0.5 miles to a railroad grade. Rocky Point Trail comes in from the left. Note that several small logs are laid across the continuation of the rail road grade. Do not turn that way. Instead cross the grade and, following cairns, climb another 100-200 yards or so to another railroad grade. This was the steepest climb of the outing! There is more uphill towards the end but it is more gradual.

In 1.49 miles from the Rocky Point Trail pass Breathed Mountain Trail on the left and soon arrive at the Forks of Red Creek. I'm sure the falls, swimming hole and scenery will be quite compelling. Take a break and explore this wonderful area. Once you're ready to travel again, cross the left fork of Red Creek. The trail will follow the north bank a few yards upstream before turning right and climbing up to an open meadow and the scenery that Dolly Sods has become famous for: open grassy meadows, dispersed clumps of Red Spruce taking back the land, Blue Berry and Huckleberry bogs and St. John's Wort thickets.

Near the crest of the hill re-enter the woods and in 0.93 miles from "the Forks" arrive at the junction of Black Bird Knob Trail. Turn right here and in about 0.42 miles pass newly signed Upper Red Creek Trail on the left. Descend to and cross Red Creek at the island. You'll cross another stream and weave in and out of Red Spruce forest and open tundra-like plains with azalea, berry bushes, wild flowers and exposed rock; scenery more common in the Canada Shield. Take note that parts of the trail along this last stretch

**can be quite muddy and nearly impossible to avoid. Attempts to fill in the wet areas with rocks and logs have proved fruitless. The mud is so relentless. We refer to it as Dolly Sods Peas Soup! Thankfully this mess soon gives way to a boardwalk that soon delivers you to your awaiting vehicles!**