

## Rail Notes for Ramsey's Draft-East Backpack

Description: This 17.1 mile moderate hike is the twin sister of [the Ramsey's Draft-West Loop](#). The entire first day is identical to that of the West loop ending at Hiner Spring for the night. The hike on the second day uses Hiner Spring Trail, Wild Oak National Recreation Trail, Bald Ridge Trail and the Bridge Hollow Trail to complete the circuit. Many more of the giant Hemlocks have succumbed to the Woolly Adelgid since I was last there in 2005 and many more have fallen across the trail in the draft making for very slow going in places. The trails and the trees are in much better shape along the ridge walk. Occasional "Window" views of Great North Mountain and other ridge lines can be had on a clear day. As with its sister this hike has 20+ water crossings so be prepared. Total elevation gain is 2900 feet.

### [Google Custom directions](#)

The hike begins at a kiosk at the end of a gravel road behind the Mountain House picnic area.

Trail Notes: Most, but not all, trail junctions are signed. Wilderness trails, shown as blue on the map, are not blazed. The Wild Oak NRT and trails outside of the wilderness are blazed.

From the kiosk proceed up the Ramseys Draft Trail soon passing the Road Hollow trail on the left and Bridge Hollow trail (your return route) on the right. For the most part you will be following an old CCC road that crosses the draft many times but twice leaves the road for a narrow path in areas where the road had been washed out by the draft or blocked by other obstacles. Keep an eye out for these diversions. We've noted all of the campsites along the route and the distances between them. All in the valley are on water. Those along Bald Ridge are all dry except one that has a small wildlife pond close by. (This water source becomes pretty skanky in the summer months.) After about 7.4 miles of crossing streams and negotiating blowdowns reach Hiner Spring, your home for the night. You have the choice of sleeping in an open grassy area or under one of the few remaining living giants. (I prefer the latter. I don't know why.)

The next day finds you returning to a trail junction you passed but probably didn't see just before Hiner Springs. There is an old Ramseys Draft sign on the ground propped up by some rocks. Turn left onto the unsigned Hiner Spring Trail. This dips down into a saddle and then climbs gradually to a junction with the white blazed Wild Oak NRT in 1.39 miles from last night's camp. Turn right here. In 1.24 miles arrive at a small wildlife pond on the right. The trail turns left into a campsite here. Immediately upon entering the site turn right onto un-blazed and un-signed Bald Ridge Trail, leaving the WONRT behind. In another 2.17 miles the trail, at a fire ring, turns abruptly to the left and descends a short distance to follow a narrow sidehill path below the ridge. At this point you are barely outside of the wilderness boundary and the trail is now blazed yellow. After a short distance the trail rejoins the ridge but remains outside of the wilderness. In 2.43 miles from leaving the wilderness, arrive at the junction with the yellow blazed Bridge Hollow Trail. Turn right onto to it. In 2.20 miles arrive back at the draft. (Take note of the hand constructed rock cribbing that supports the steps along the final descent. It's an amazing example of what manual labor can accomplish!) Ford the draft and soon arrive back at the Ramseys Draft Trail. Turn left and retrace yesterday morning's footsteps back to your vehicle.