

**Directions from the intersection of US 340 and US 55 in Front Royal, VA:**

- 1. Take VA 55 West.**
- 2. Turn left onto Rt. 678.**
- 3. Pass Fisheries road on left and parking lots for Signal Knob on the right.**
- 4. Turn left into Elizabeth Furnace Picnic Area. Park on left before concrete bridge.**

**Trail Notes:** From the parking area, cross the bridge over Passage Creek and immediately turn left onto the Massanutten/Tuscarora Trail. It will be blazed in blue and orange with a residual yellow blaze here and there from when this was part of the Shawl Gap Trail. Follow the Creek for about 1/3 of a mile, passing the ruins of Elizabeth's Furnace on your right. Witch Hazel blooms here in the under-story in November.

Turn away from the creek and begin to climb, crossing a part-time tributary on a footbridge. A series of short and long switchbacks bring you to the top of the ridge at about 2.43 miles from the start of the hike. The intersection of white-blazed Buzzard Rock Trail is to the left and yellow-blazed Shaw's Gap Trail straight ahead.

Turn right, staying on the orange/blue-blazed Massanutten/Tuscarora Trail. Soon pass a large campsite. There is no water on this portion of the mountain so bring plenty if you intend to spend the night.

Climb up and down three peaks with alternating views to the east of the Shenandoah Valley, River and SNP and to the west of Fort Valley.

At 2.07 miles from the last intersection arrive at the intersection of pink-blazed Sherman Gap Trail on the right. If you wish to shorten your hike by 1.4 miles turn right here and skip the walk out to the view of "The Point".

To obtain more sweeping views of the Shenandoah stay on the Massanutten Trail and head south. Here the woods look like an urban blight area as the trees are blazed in alternating orange, pink and blue stripes. For a short distance, The Massanutten, Tuscarora and Sherman Gap Trails share the same tread. As you drop into a slight saddle the Sherman Gap Trail turns left and descends from the ridge leaving you on the orange and blue-blazed Massanutten/Tuscarora Trail. It is in this area where a thicket of Fringe Trees grow. In June and possibly early July the fragrance can be noticed well before you get to this point.

Climb out of the saddle and walk out to the edge of the knob. At about 0.7 miles from the first Sherman Gap Tr junction, arrive at a close up view of "The Point" on the Shenandoah River and a good place for lunch.

**Retrace your steps, passing the Sherman Gap trail on the right, to the first pink-blazed Sherman Gap Trail, now on your left, that you encountered earlier.**

**Turn left and descend, steeply at first, watching for more views of Fort Valley on the left.**

**At 2.53 miles from the last intersection, come to white-blazed Bots Trail. Turn right. Soon you will again be walking along the banks of Passage Creek.**

**In about 0.92 miles from the last intersection the official white-blazed trail bears right and enters the upper picnic area. I recommend staying along the creek a bit longer, following an obvious but un-blazed fisherman's trail (shown as red on the map) to the lower picnic area. The bridge is at the end of this section.**