

Hull School Tr/Thornton River Loop

Description: This is a moderate 8 mile circuit in the north district of SNP. The loop is formed using Hull School, Thornton River and Appalachian Trails. The highlights are the north fork of the Thornton River (with a pair of small falls as a lunch spot), an abandoned old car and the views from Byrds Nest # 4. In the winter and early spring views of the surrounding peaks are available on the initial descent. The first couple of stream crossings can be challenging during periods of high water.

Directions from the park entrance at US Route 211:

1. Enter the Shenandoah Park (\$15.00 per vehicle) and proceed north on Skyline drive past mile post 29 and Beahms Gap Overlook on the left.
2. Just before mile post 28 turn right into parking area for Hull School Trailhead.

Trail Notes: All trail intersections are marked with concrete posts. Trails are well blazed. The trailhead for the Hull School Trail is just north of the parking lot. Follow the yellow blazes down into Thornton River Hollow. The tread is mostly an old fire road. There is a couple of places where the trail leaves the grade on a footpath. At 2.11 miles ford Thornton River. In a few more yards arrive at a 4X intersection with blue blazed Thornton River Tr. Turn left onto it. You will cross the river several times as you hike up the valley.

In a little more than a mile arrive at a pair of small but nice waterfalls. This is a great lunch spot.

Continue up the river. The trail will soon leave the valley and begin switchbacking up to Skyline Drive. Shortly after leaving the river pass the hulk of an old car on the right. In three miles from the last trail intersection arrive at Skyline Drive and the parking lot for the Thornton River Trail.

Turn left onto SLD and walk a few yards south on the shoulder. Cross the drive and climb steeply up the remainder of the Thornton River Tr for 0.25 miles to the junction of the AT.

Turn left (south) onto the AT. You'll walk under the Jeremy's Run Overlook. In 1.16 miles from the last trail junction pass a spur trail that leads out to Skyline Drive.

In 0.28 miles arrive at a 4X trail junction. Yellow Neighbor Mt Tr is to the right. The AT goes straight. Turn left onto a yellow blazed spur trail that takes you to Byrds Nest # 4. Soon pass another yellow spur trail on the left that also goes to SLD. Continue on the Byrds Nest # 4 spur for 0.5 miles.

After taking in the view finish the last 0.4 miles on a wide road which will initially be grassy and arrive back at you car(s).

