

Description: This is a 3 mile moderate loop in the SNP. If this hike was 2 miles longer or done in conjunction with the Rose River/Dark Hollow Loop also described on this site I would probably considerate it to be strenuous. It includes a couple of great viewing platforms along the Lewis Falls Trail, one along the AT at Black Rocks and spectacular Lewis Falls. If you follow the route as described you will descend gradually over a 1.5 mile distance and have to climb the same distance (Some of it steeply at the rate of 500 ft/mile) on the return. If you are short of time but really want to see the falls park at the Byrd Visitor Center and walk south, paralleling Skyline Drive to a small picnic area with a hitching post just on the other side of the southern most entrance to Big Meadows. (You'll walk past a gas station.) There you will find a concrete post directing you to the Lewis Falls Trail. Remember that one has to climb whatever he/she descends. The best time to view the falls of SNP is in the spring, just after ice out or a long period of rain.

Directions from U.S. 211 in Sperryville VA:

1. Continue west on US 211.
2. Exit onto Skyline Drive South (After paying entrance fee of \$10.00/car).
3. Enter the Shenandoah National Park (\$10.00 per vehicle) and proceed south on Skyline drive to Big Meadows (After mile 51 marker). Turn right into Big Meadows and follow the signs to the Amphitheater Parking lot.

Trail Notes: From the amphitheater take the spur trail on its left down to the AT.

Turn left onto the AT and in about .09 nine miles arrive at the junction with blue blazed Lewis Falls Trail on the right. Take the Lewis Falls Trail. At first the trail is easy to walk but as you get closer to the falls it becomes much rockier. Near the end you will have to walk over a couple of large boulders.

In 1.3 miles arrive at the falls spur trail straight ahead. Follow it, crossing the stream as you descend to the viewing parapet. A handrail has been installed to assist you should the rocks be slippery. After viewing the falls return to the junction with the main trail. Turn right and ascend steeply for about 0.5 miles.

The trail switchbacks up the side of the mountain and then widens into a gravel road. From this point walk another 70 yards, passing an enclosed pumping station on the left, to the junction with the AT. Turn left onto the AT, still ascending but on a much more gradual grade and reach Black Rock Overlook in another 0.72 miles. You'll pass a side trail to Great meadows Lodge on the right before reaching the overlook.

After taking in the view continue north on the AT and in another 0.36 miles arrive at the original junction with Lewis Falls Trail. Retrace your initial steps back to the car.