

Tuscarora Trail/Paddy Run Shuttle

Description: This is a moderate 7.8 mile shuttle hike in the GWNF on the VA/WV border. I've given it this name to lessen confusion with a circuit hike that utilizes the south west segment of this same ridge and the same Vance's Cove Tr used here except you follow it upstream. Here you proceed downstream to finish the hike. The trek features an initial 400 ft climb over the first mile and then rolling hills followed by a deep descent to the bottom of the cove and a nice walk along Paddy Run, crossing it three times, as you return to your cars.

Note: In order to hike this shuttle as described the front gate on FR93 has to be open to vehicular traffic. Call the Lee Ranger District of the GWNF to find out open dates. For 2005 the gate is open:
March 18th through May 14th.
July 1st to January 9th

If the gate is closed and you still want to do the shuttle add 2.3 miles of forest road walking to the hike.

Directions From the junction of I-81 and VA 55:

1. Take the VA Rt55 exit. At the end of the ramp turn right onto Rt55.
2. FR93 is not signed and very hard to find. Proceed by driving 12.7 miles to Rt609 on the right.
3. In another 0.9 miles, as you begin going uphill look for a small, unmarked road on the left that is angled sharply back behind the trees. This is FR93. Turn left here.
4. Shortly after you turn the road splits. The left fork is a private drive. Take the right fork.
5. Drive approximately 2.3 miles until you arrive at another fork. The forest road on the right may be open. Park some of your vehicles here at the fork regardless of the position of the gate.
6. Return the Rt55 and turn left. Drive up to the crest of the mountain and the well marked crossing of the Tuscarora Trail (Blue blazes and sign). Park on either shoulder.

Trail Notes: From Rt55 walk southwest on the blue blazed Tuscarora Trail. The trail will be rocky and steep in places. Climb 500 feet in the first mile.

At about 1.9 miles cross over a power line swath and begin partial views of Vance's Cove. Your other cars are somewhere down there. From here the tread will vary from rocky to grassy to a smooth carpet of pine needles and back again.

In another 2.0 miles arrive at the Gerhard Shelter. This is a nice place to take a break before the steep descent to the cove. From here as you face southeast along the ridge turn left down white blazed Gerhard Shelter Trail with a sign pointing to a spring.

Descend for 0.94 miles, crab-walking at times as you drop 750 feet in elevation, until you reach gravel FR 93.

Turn left on FR 93 and walk about 0.5 miles past a locked gate. Turn right onto a woods road that soon passes a campsite and ends at Paddy Run.

Cross Paddy Run and turn left onto yellow blazed Vance's Cove Trail. Follow it for 1.93 miles, crossing the stream two more times before arriving at a low water concrete bridge. Turn left and cross the bridge, following the dirt road to the intersection with FR 93.

Turn right onto FR 93 and in 0.4 miles arrive at your cars at the fork in the forest road. If you feel the need to walk a little more follow the other branch of the forest road down to the east branch of Paddy Run. Cross it and follow a forest road into Paddy Gap. You'll find more rocks, white water and Hemlocks here. This trail actually goes all the way through the gap, crosses through private property and ends at County Road 600. If you walk the entire stretch you'll add about 2 miles in both directions to the day's hiking. I'm currently studying the feasibility of adding this extra two miles to the current shuttle, starting as shown here but ending on County Road 600. I've been told that the land owners let fishermen use the trails along the run but this has to be confirmed.