

South River Falls Observation Point Hike

- 2.6-mile round trip 1¼-hrs hiking time
Moderate 850-ft elevation gain

From the South River Picnic Grounds (near the comfort station) Take the blue-blazed South River Falls Trail. You'll cross the Appalachian Trail, but stay on the South River Falls Trail to the stone-walled observation point. Retrace your steps to return. 1 stream crossing.

South River Falls Hike

- 3.3-mile circuit 2¼-hrs hiking time
Moderate 910-ft elevation gain

Follow the directions to the observation point (above). From the observation point, continue on the South River Falls Trail to the trailpost. Go left onto the yellow-blazed South River Falls Road. The trail joins the South River Fire Road. Continue on the fire road to its intersection with the Appalachian Trail. Turn left and follow it (white-blazed) to its intersection with the South River Falls Trail and go right to return to your starting point. 1 stream crossing.

Hightop Summit Hike

- 3-mile round trip 3-hrs hiking time
Moderate 935-ft elevation gain

From the Hightop Mountain parking area at mile 66.7, cross skyline Drive and take the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (A.T.) As you climb, the trail winds its way up the ridge and then right. You'll swing left around the summit, then look for a side trail on your right that leads to a rocky viewpoint. Retrace your steps to return.

Hiking Difficulty Scale

Easiest: Generally suitable for anyone who enjoys walking. Mostly level or with a slight incline. Generally less than 3 miles.

Moderate: Generally suitable for novice hikers seeking a bit of a challenge. The terrain will involve a moderate incline and may have some steeper sections. Generally 3 to 5 miles.

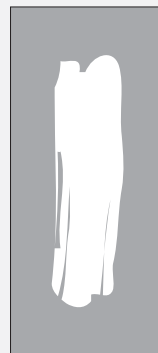
Moderately Strenuous: Generally challenging for an unconditioned person. The terrain will involve a steady and often steep incline. Generally 5 to 8 miles.

Strenuous: Will challenge most hikers. The hike will generally be longer and steeper, but may be deemed strenuous because of the elevation gain. Generally 7 to 10 miles.

Very Strenuous: Only well conditioned and well prepared hikers should attempt. Generally long and steep, and may include rock scrambling, stream crossings, and other challenging terrain. Generally 8 miles and over.

Markers & Blazes

Trail markers are at trailheads and intersections. The metal bands are stamped with directional and mileage information.



Trail blazes are found on trees and rocks throughout the Park. The color identifies the trail type:

- Blue** - Hiking trail
- White** - Appalachian Trail
- Yellow** - Open to horses



Need to Know

- Pets must be on a leash no longer than 6' at all times.
- Do not attempt to cross streams during icy conditions or flooding.
- Be sure you are physically able to complete the hike you've chosen.
- Take plenty of water—at least a quart per hour.
- When you return from your hike, check for ticks.
- Be sure someone knows where you are and when to expect your return.
- Filter or treat water from streams before drinking.
- Be aware that you are in snake habitat..

Good to Know

South River is a hike for all seasons, but especially spring! Look for a profusion of wildflowers, especially trillium. Returning migrant songbirds are a treat then as well! When we've had plenty of rain, the falls are impressive, but be careful on the stream crossing. It's also particularly important to stay on the trail—there's quite a bit of poison ivy in the area

Leave No Trace

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.