

Shenandoah National Park

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide



Trip Name: Paine Run, Riprap, and Moormans River

Description: Excellent views, geology, swimming holes; side trail to a waterfall

Entry: Paine Run Boundary (South District; West side; Route # 661)

Exit: Paine Run Boundary (South District; West side; Route # 661)

Map(s): PATC #11 South District

Level: Advanced

Total Length: 27.2 to 29.2 miles

Day One

Campsite: Riprap Trail - backcountry

6.2 to 7.2 miles

Park at the turnaround without blocking the driveways or gates.

Ascend along Paine Run Trail, picking up water before you leave the stream.

At 3.7 miles, reach the AT, turn right and hike south for 2.5 miles.

Turn right on Riprap Trail and find a place to camp in the next mile. You may be able to capture an excellent sunset at Chimney Rock.

Day Two

Campsite: North Fork Moormans River - backcountry

11.6 to 13.6 miles

Retrace your steps on Riprap Trail (0 to 1 mile).

Turn right and hike south on the AT for 5.4 miles.

Turn left onto Turk Branch Trail and descend for 2.1 miles.

Turk Branch Trail ends at South Fork Moormans River Fire Road.

Turn left; the road leaves the park. Proceed 2.1 miles and cross the river near the Charlottesville Reservoir.

Follow the gravel road to the left, and then upstream on North Fork Moormans River Fire Road (NFMR), re-entering the park.

Hike up NFMR past Big Branch, then start looking for a place to camp (2 to 3 miles).

Day Three

8.4 to 9.4 miles

Continue hiking north on NFMR back to the AT (total NFMR is 5.2 miles).

The trail leaves the park again at 1.5 miles north of Big Branch and becomes a gravel road. About a mile further the road takes a sharp left, crosses the stream, and ascends to the AT after re-entering the park.

Turn right onto the AT and hike 1.3 miles.

Turn left onto Blackrock Spur Trail for 0.1 mile.

Follow Trayfoot Mountain Trail, hiking 4.5 miles total.

Reach Paine Run Trail, turn right, and return to vehicle in 0.3 mile.

Notes

Potential high water on NFMR and on SFMR above reservoir: knee- to waist-high stream crossings in the spring before green-up, and after heavy rains. The good news is that there are great swimming holes, even during a drought.

Parking at the boundary is limited to about three cars or one horse trailer. You might not find a place to park on the weekends, but during the week there is usually plenty of room.

Emergency Phone: 1-800-732-0911

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