



View Near Angel's Rest

## MAPS AND HIKING INFORMATION

From the Outing Club of Virginia Tech, P.O. Box 538, Blacksburg, VA 24060 or Appalachian Trail Conference.

"Trails in Southwest Virginia, James River to New River," \$4.95 reduced topographic maps and trail descriptions.

From the US Forest Service, Blacksburg Ranger District, on US 460, 1 mile north of Blacksburg.

Map of the Jefferson National Forest, about \$2.

Map of the Blacksburg Ranger District, about \$2.

From the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, Box 3667, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

**Topographic maps**, \$2.65 each. An index of the maps and a description of topographic maps is free. The Tech Library has a collection of these maps. They can also be purchased at Blue Ridge Outdoors.

From the Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 236 Harpers Ferry, W. VA. 25425. Phone (703) 544-7388.

"Guide to the Appalachian Trail in Southwest Virginia." A detailed description of the Trail near Blacksburg. About \$12.

From the Virginia Department of Transportation, Christiansburg Residency Office, Cambria Street (behind WVV near US 460)

**Free Map** of Giles, Pulaski and Montgomery Counties giving good detail of secondary roads.

From Recreation equipment (address under hiking equipment) or local bookstore

**Backpacking, One Step at a Time,** by Harvey Manning. Describes hiking equipment. Available in paperback.

From the Montgomery County Planning Department, P.O. Box 806 Christiansburg, 24073

**Topographic Map** of Montgomery County, about \$3 including postage.

Information in this guide has been compiled by the Outing Club of Virginia Tech and published with funds provided by the Student Budget Board. The map was drawn by Mr. Edward Henson under the direction of Prof. Alan M. MacEachren of the Geography Department of Virginia Tech. We hope that the information will prove useful. Comments regarding new trails or other suggestions will be appreciated.

David Jenkins  
Outing Club of Virginia Tech

March, 1991

## HIKING ADVENTURES AROUND VIRGINIA TECH



COMPILED BY  
OUTING CLUB OF  
VIRGINIA TECH

## HIKING EQUIPMENT

Firms listed below for information only:

**Back Country Ski and Sports**, 3710 S. Main St., Blacksburg.

**Blue Ridge Outdoors**, 211 Draper Rd., Blacksburg, and Tanglewood Mall, Roanoke.

**Eastern Mountain Sports, Inc.**, One Vose Farm Road, Peterborough, New Hampshire 03458. Catalog for mail order can be obtained for \$1.

**Recreation Equipment, Inc.** 1525-11th Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98122. A co-operative store which offers membership to all persons upon written application and payment of a \$5 fee. Members receive dividends on purchases and catalogs for mail order.

**University Union and Student Activities**, Outdoor equipment rental. Located at South recreation area on VA Tech campus. Call 231-4982 for info.

## HIKES NEAR VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech lies in the midst of a mountain system which offers a variety of hikes within a one hour drive of campus. This mountain system, called the Appalachian Mountains, extends from eastern Canada to Alabama. Included in the Appalachians are the Allegheny Mountains to the west of Blacksburg and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east. "Many beautiful forests, cascading streams and broad vistas await those with a few hours of time to seek them out. The Appalachian Trail, which begins in Maine and follows the Appalachians to Georgia, passes within ten miles of campus. The purpose of this folder is to describe hikes near campus and provide information which will assist in the enjoyment of our outdoors areas.

There is no best season for hiking in Virginia since each season has its unique advantage. In the spring the hills become alive with wildflowers and migrating birds. The summer hiker experiences the forests in their full splendor. Fall colors, beginning in October, create scenes which change each week as the season progresses. And in winter, views from mountain tops are expanded by the disappearance of foliage.

With proper preparation, a hike can be very enjoyable. As a first step, select a sturdy pair of comfortable shoes or boots with non-slip soles which will offer adequate ankle and foot protection against mud and rocks. In the cooler parts of the year an extra sweater or jacket is recommended.

Dehydration is one of the most common and least recognized sources of discomfort in the mountains. Streams away from inhabited areas are usually safe for drinking, however, the purity of any unsupervised water source cannot be guaranteed; to avoid uncertainty, carry a canteen of water from an approved public source.

Litter on trails can ruin the enjoyment of our natural areas. Each hiker should be considerate of those that follow by carrying out leftover food, wrappers and so forth. It is a good habit to carry out more than is carried in so as to reduce the litter in our outdoor areas.



Pandapas Pond in winter

## THE JEFFERSON NATIONAL FOREST

Most of the trails in this guide are within the Jefferson National Forest which covers 575,000 acres in southwest Virginia. Except where posted, camping is allowed anywhere within the Forest. A fee is charged at some developed recreation areas and these are marked with signs. The Forest is open for hunting and fishing under state regulations. Some of the game species to be found are deer, black bear, turkey, ruffed grouse and fox squirrels while native brook trout are found in the high headwaters, and stream-raised brown and rainbow trout are at lower elevations. Larger streams are stocked throughout the season.

## THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

The Appalachian Trail is a continuous, marked footpath which passes thru the mountains of the eastern Atlantic States. It extends along the crest of the ranges generally referred to as the Appalachians; hence the name of the Trail. The trail begins in the north at Mount Katahdin, in the central Maine wilderness, and reaches south more than 2,000 miles to Springer Mountain in northern Georgia. Eventually the trail will be located, as far as possible, within the National Park and National Forests Systems. A track of land extending on both sides of the Trail will be created in which there will be no roads or other development incompatible with the existence of the Trail. Sections of the trail are being relocated as new land is acquired to meet this goal.

The Appalachian Trail traverses fourteen states of which Virginia has the longest section with about 500 miles, approximately one-fourth of the total trail mileage. A system of simple shelters is provided along the Trail. It is marked by white paint blazes and side trails are marked by blue paint blazes. Two superimposed blazes, one above the other, constitute a warning sign of a change in the Trail route. Trail markers should appear at least every quarter mile along the Trail, however these marks can be obliterated by local usage and lumbering operations. A guide (see hiking information) can be purchased which gives an exact description of the trail.

The Trail can be reached by taking a Trailways Bus to Pearisburg, the point where the Trail crosses US 460. The cost is about \$6. Since the bus drivers will stop at passengers request, the bus can be used for transportation to other starting points for hikes.

## EASTERN WILDERNESS

The Wilderness Act, passed by Congress in 1964, establishes a National Wilderness Preservation System. The purpose of the act is to set aside land in which the evidence of the past activities of man are "substantially unnoticeable." In these areas nature will be dominant and man will come only as a visitor so that the processes of nature can continue without interference by man. The act recognizes man's need for wilderness, ranging from scientific study to conservation of all forms of life, soil and water and to refreshment of the human mind, body and spirit. Wilderness assures a genetic reserve of plant and animal species which elsewhere we are altering or destroying in a wholesale way.

Two areas near Virginia Tech have been designated as wilderness. The Appalachian Trail passes through both of them. The Mountain Lake Wilderness, 8200 acres in size, can be seen by following the directions to the Mountain Lake Scenic Areas as given in the description of trails on the reverse side of this brochure. The Peters Mountain Wilderness is 3300 acres in size and can be visited by following the directions for the Peters Mountain Trail.

Camping, hunting and fishing are allowed in wilderness areas. However, to minimize man's impact on these areas, roads and off-road vehicles are not allowed.



Outing Club members working on relocation of Appalachian Trail

## ORGANIZATIONS

The Outing Club of Virginia Tech is organized to promote the enjoyment of wilderness activities. It is a member of the Appalachian Trail Conference and has the responsibility of maintaining a section of trail near Blacksburg. Meetings on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in Robeson Hall on the Virginia Tech campus offer programs about the outdoors and an opportunity to exchange information and organize trips.

Call 231-6712 or write P.O. Box 538, Blacksburg 24060.

The New River Group of the Sierra Club is part of the national organization which seeks to protect and conserve our natural resources. Membership includes a subscription to the Sierra Club Bulletin and a local newsletter. The club meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Blacksburg Library. Call 552-4897 for further information.

The YMCA conducts afternoon hikes every Sunday. They meet at 1:30 p.m. in the parking lot in front of the Donaldson Brown Center of Continuing Education at College and Otey Streets. Call 231-6448 for a hike schedule.



## HIKES NEAR BLACKSBURG

### 1. Ellet Valley Nature Trail\*

The Blacksburg Department of Parks and Recreation has set aside 106 acres of woodland in the Ellet Valley for a trail system which includes two self-guiding nature trails and a hiking trail. Information about the trail system and a map can be obtained from the Recreation Department at 725 Patrick Henry Drive. To reach the trail system, go south on Main St. and make a left turn onto Ellett Rd (VA 603). Drive 2.1 miles on VA 603 and turn right at the railroad crossing onto VA 642. In 0.3 miles you will come to a parking area on the left. The trail system begins at the parking lot. The Ellet Valley Nature Trail is one mile in length. 1 hour round trip from parking lot.

### 2. Montgomery County Park\*

A nature trail is included in the county park. Drive south toward Christiansburg on US 460 for about two miles to reach County Street near the Corning Plant. Turn left, drive 0.2 miles and turn right to enter the Montgomery County Park. The trail is about two miles in length. The park includes a swimming pool and picnic area.

### 3. Brush Mountain\*

A mountain northwest of campus just beyond the Blacksburg town limits. Drive out Prices Fork Road and turn right, one block past University City Blvd., onto Glade Road. After 0.6 miles turn right onto Shadow Lake Road and go 1.2 miles to Meadowbrook Drive.

Turn left, drive 600 feet and park along road. Hike on Old Farm Road to the right from Meadowbrook Drive for about 1,000 feet, passing a green building, and finally reaching a trail which leaves the road on the right. Follow this trail up to the ridge. At the top turn left to follow the ridge toward the New River or turn right to reach trails which descend to Pandapas Pond.

### 4. Pandapas Pond\*

Pandapas Pond is an eight acre man-made impoundment on the headwaters of Poverty Creek. There are many trails in the area. A one mile trail loops around the lake, a trail follows Poverty Creek to a beaver pond and another goes to the top of Brush Mountain. Take US 460 west 6.4 miles and turn left onto VA 808 which leads to the parking area at the pond. The turn from US 460 is 0.3 mile beyond VA 621.

### 5. Fool's Face/McCoy Falls\*

The closest and one of the most popular rock climbing areas in the vicinity. A scramble to the top of the rock formation provides a beautiful view of the symmetry and line of the McCoy Falls. **Warning:** The rock in the area is loose which makes poor footing. Follow Prices Fork Road (VA 685) across the US 460 bypass 5 miles to the town of Prices Fork. Bear right at the A&J Quick Shop onto VA 736 and then VA 652. Follow VA 652 for 7.4 miles to the New River and turn right onto VA 625. Cross train tracks and continue 1.7 miles on VA 625 to McCoy Falls and Fool's Face on the right above the tracks.

## APPALACHIAN TRAIL

### 6. Tinker Cliffs\*\*\*

A three mile climb up Tinker Mountain along the yellow blazed North Mountain Trail providing a view of Catawba Valley. Follow Harding Avenue (VA 785) out of Blacksburg to VA 311. Turn right onto VA 311 into Catawba and turn left onto VA 779. Follow VA 779 for nine miles until it crosses the North Mountain Trail. Parking is available 300 yards to the left. Follow the North Mountain Trail north through a forest, a meadow and across the Catawba Creek to the base of Tinker Mountain. The trail climbs steeply up to Scorched Earth Gap and 0.3 miles on the Appalachian Trail up to the cliffs. A five hour round trip.

### 7. McAfee Knob\*\*

Follow Harding Avenue (VA 785) out of Blacksburg for 20 miles to VA 311. Turn right onto VA 311 and continue to top of the mountain. Hike begins at parking area where the Appalachian Trail crosses 311. Follow signs north 3.5 miles to McAfee Knob. The last mile is a moderately steep climb to the top, where a spectacular view of Catawba and Roanoke valleys present itself. This hike is one of the best around and comes highly recommended.

### 8. Dragon's Tooth\*\*\*

A jagged rock pinnacle which, at a distance, resembles a gigantic tooth. On a clear day the Peaks of Otter near the Blue Ridge Parkway can be seen. Take Main Street north, turn right onto Mt. Tabor Rd. (VA 624) for about 24 miles to VA 311. Turn left onto VA 311, go ¼ mile to the parking lot on left. Take the blue blaze trail from the parking lot to the Appalachian Trail (about ¼ mile). Turn right onto the Appalachian Trail. Total distance from the parking lot to Dragon's Tooth is 2.8 miles.

An alternate return route is to continue walking the ridge top along the Appalachian Trail past the blue blazed trail. The Appalachian Trail comes out to the Mt. Tabor Rd. about ½ mile from the parking lot. 3 hrs. round trip from parking lot.

### 9. Sinking Creek Mountain\*\*

Trail follows the ridge of Sinking Creek Mountain with good views of Sinking Creek Valley. Take US 460 west 6.1 miles and turn right onto VA 621. Drive 14.3 miles to the point where the Appalachian Trail crosses the road. Park here and follow the trail on the left to the top of the ridge. Reach Niday Shelter at 1.5 miles and Cabin Branch Campsite at two miles. Round trip, 3.5 hours.

### 10. Kelley's Knob\*\*

A good view of the surrounding valleys and the Virginia Tech Campus. Take US 460 west 9.5 miles to Newport, turn right onto VA 42 and, after 1 mile, turn left onto VA 601. Follow this road for 6.8

miles to the intersection with the Appalachian Trail. Take the trail to the right which passes over Kelley's Knob and reaches blue-blazed trail in 2.1 miles. Take short blue-blazed trail to the right to reach view. Continue past view down Kelley's Knob 1 mile to Laurel Creek shelter. Round trip, 3 hours from parking area.

### 11. Wind Rock\*

A breathtaking view over Stoney Creek Valley and Peters Mountain into West Virginia. Follow the directions for Kelley's Knob, but continue 2.3 miles on VA 601 to VA 632. Turn left and go ½ mile to the point just beyond a bridge where the Appalachian Trail enters the woods to the right. Park here and follow the trail past War Branch Shelter steeply up Salt Pond Mountain. After 3.5 miles the Appalachian Trail runs into an old road and turns left. To the right White Rocks can be reached in 1.3 miles, near the top of the first uphill climb. And to the left, following the Appalachian Trail 1.3 miles, is Wind Rock on the right of the trail. Salt Sulphur Turnpike (VA 613) is ¼ mile beyond Wind Rock. This point can be reached by continuing on VA 613 beyond the Mountain Lake Scenic Area (see description below). 6 hours round trip from parking area.

### 12. Butt Mountain\*\*

A good view of the New River from a firetower on a 4100 foot peak. Take US 460 west from Blacksburg for 19.5 miles, turn right onto VA 635 and drive 11.3 miles to the edge of Interior, Virginia where the Appalachian Trail crosses the road. Park here and follow the Appalachian Trail up Big Mountain on right for 1.8 miles where it turns left onto a fire road in Bailey Gap. Instead of turning left to follow the AT, turn right and follow the fireroad for about 4.5 miles to the firetower on Butt Mountain. The firetower can also be reached by driving on the fireroad from Pembroke, but the road is not recommended for passenger cars. Round trip, 8 hours from parking area.

### 13. Peters Mountain/Symms Gap Meadow\*\*

A hike on the Appalachian Trail along the ridge of Peters Mountain with excellent views into West Virginia. Take US 460 west from Blacksburg for 20.3 miles to Va 635. Turn right onto Va 635 and continue for 9.8 miles to trail marker. Park here. The trail is to the left of the road and ascends 1.8 miles to Symms Gap. A bald area beyond the gap provides excellent views.

### 14. Peters Mountain/Rice Field\*\*\*

Take US 460 past Pembroke and Pearisburg, crossing the New River on Shumate Bridge. Turn right on Stillhouse Branch Road (VA 641) immediately before car dealership. Trailhead is located 200 yds. on the left. Follow the Appalachian Trail 2.3 miles to crest of Peters Mt. Follow level trail along ridgeline 2.1 miles to Rice Field, with panoramic views. Approximately 5 hours round trip.

### 15. Angel's Rest\*\*\*

A hike along the Appalachian Trail with outstanding views of the New River Valley and the town of Pearisburg. Drive about 25 miles west on US 460 to Pearisburg and take the 2nd exit from the 460 bypass into Pearisburg. Turn right off N. Main Street in Pearisburg at the Dairy Queen onto Johnston Avenue. Drive about 500 feet, turn right onto Morris Avenue and drive 1 mile to Appalachian Trail Crossing and park at the trash dumpster just past the crossing. The Appalachian Trail leaves the road at this point to the left and ascends steeply for three miles to the top. Follow blue-blazed trail to View Rock for a view of Pearisburg. The trail continues to the crest of Angel's Rest and follows the edge of Pearis Mountain passing by a rock ledge which overhangs the Wilburn Valley giving a spectacular view of the New River to the east.

### 16. Ribble Trail\*\*

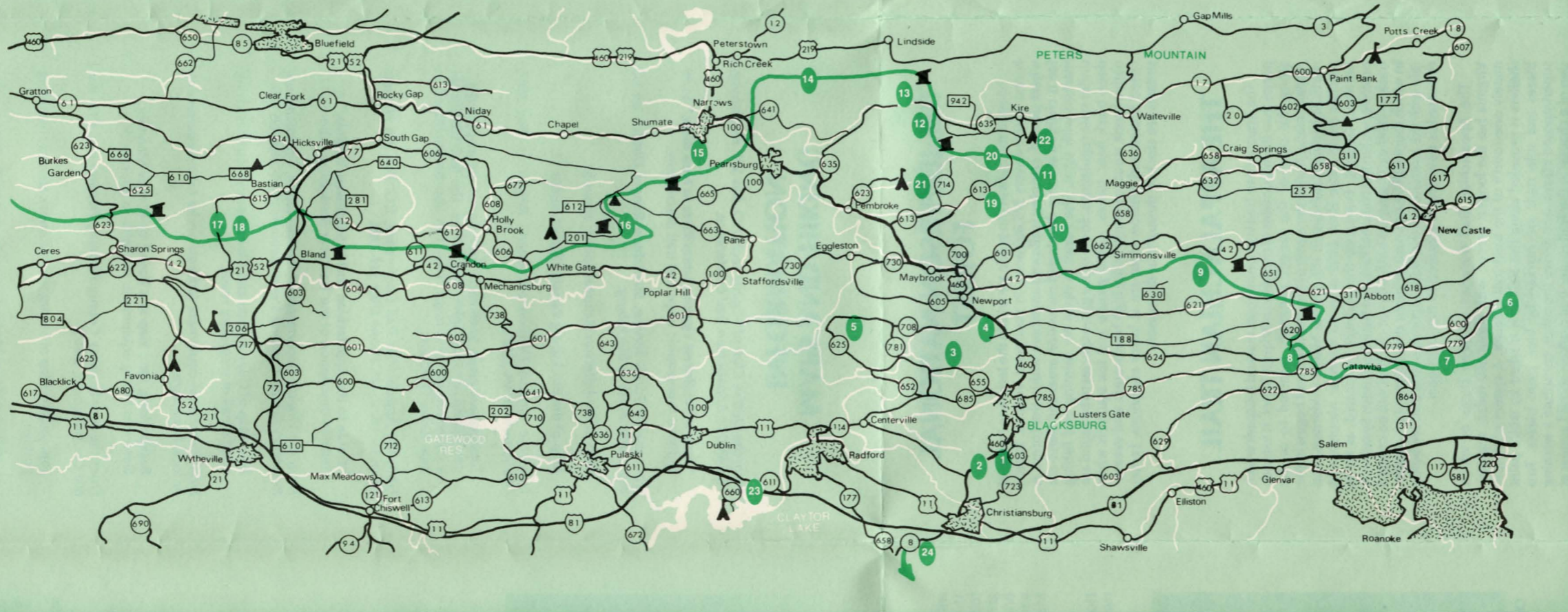
A loop trail up Flat Top Mountain on slopes which rise 1300 feet. Take US 460 west for 12.4 miles, turn left onto VA 730 toward Eggleston and drive 11.8 miles to the intersection with VA 100. Turn left (south) and go 3.1 miles to Poplar Hill, turn right at Poplar Hill onto VA 42 and drive 10.3 miles to VA 606. Turn right onto VA 606 and drive 1.0 miles passing Trent's Grocery and crossing Dismal Creek. Just after Dismal Creek, turn right onto Forest Service Road 201, drive 4.6 miles to parking place where wooden steps on left bank of road lead to the Wapiti I Shelter. From this point take blue-blazed trail on right of road and cross Dismal Creek. Turn left onto jeep trail which joins the Appalachian Trail going north. Continue to the Honey Springs Cabin which is just below the crest of Flat Top Mountain. Return along blue-blazed trail down Flat Top Mountain to starting point. Water is available from the spring at Honey Springs Cabin. Thirteen miles round trip, 6 hours.

### 17. Little Wolf Creek/High Water Trail Loop\*\*

This hike runs along a section of trail maintained by the Outing Club and follows a beautiful mountain stream for several miles. Take I-81 south to 1-77 north. Go north on I-77 and take the Bland exit after the Big Walker Mt. tunnel. Turn left on VA 42. Go 3 miles and turn right onto VA 615, continuing 2.5 miles to the AT crossing. Park on the left just past the trail crossing. Take the AT across the footbridge and follow it up Little Wolf Creek approx. 3.5 miles to crest of Brushy Mt. Turn right on blue-blazed High Water trail. Follow High Water trail 3 miles back to VA 615. Turn right on 615 back to parking area. About 4 hours round trip.

### 18. Brushy Mountain Loop\*\*

This hike begins on a recent relocation of the Appalachian Trail maintained by the Outing Club. Follow instructions to the parking area on VA 615, same as Hike #17. Take the AT north, not across the foot bridge. Follow the AT 2.1 miles to the top of Brushy Mt. where the trail intersects with an old road bed. Turn left on blue-blazed Trail Boss trail leading 2.0 miles back to Va 615. Turn left upon reaching 615 back to parking area. About 3 hours round trip.



## OTHER AREAS

### 19. Mountain Lake\*

Mountain Lake is one of the few natural lakes in the Appalachian Mountains below New York. Unfortunately private land surrounds the entire lake and a day use pass must be purchased when the Mountain Lake Lodge is open. Take US 460 west 9.9 miles to VA 700, turn right and follow the scenic mountain road for 6.5 miles passing a covered bridge on the left. The road then levels off and enters a basin which contains Mountain Lake at an elevation of 3875 feet. A map of trails in the area can be obtained at the desk in the lodge. Good views can be enjoyed from Bear Cliffs and Bald Knob, a 4363 foot peak which is the highest point in the mountains near Blacksburg.

### 20. Mountain Lake Scenic Area\*

A loop trail to an overlook which affords a view of the upper John's Creek Valley. Follow the directions to Mountain Lake and continue north about two miles past the lake on VA 613 to the Chestnut Trail. Walk about 1.3 miles through a forest which remnants of the old American Chestnut to the War Spur Overlook. From the overlook continue through a virgin hemlock stand to an intersection with the War Branch Trail. At this point the Appalachian Trail can be reached in 0.3 miles by turning right (north). The parking area on VA 613 is to

the left. Camping is prohibited within the Mountain Lake Scenic Area. Continue on VA 613 for about one mile to reach the Appalachian Trail and Wind Rock Overlook (see description above).

### 21. Cascades/Barney's Wall\*\*

The most popular trail in the area. A four mile loop trail follows Little Stony Creek upstream to the Cascades Falls, a magnificent sixty foot waterfall which tumbles into a large pool at its base. Take US 460 West 17.5 miles into Pembroke. Turn right at the sign pointing to the Cascades Recreation Area onto VA 623 and drive four miles north to the parking lot at the end of the road. Drinking water and restroom facilities are available in the picnic area at the beginning of the trail; camping is not allowed. An unmarked trail leads from the Cascades to Butt Mountain fire tower (see description above) and a side trail leads to viewpoint at Barney's Wall.

Barney's Wall is a rock face with a great view overlooking Little Stony Creek valley, the New River Valley and beyond. It is a continuation of the Cascades trail. Total round trip distance from the Cascades parking lot is 7½ miles, 4 hours, moderate grade. From behind the lower observation deck at the falls a small trail leads up steeply to the left to a jeep trail. Follow the jeep trail uphill turning left at the next 5 junctions. The second one is immediately after the first. The fifth left is at a sign for Butt Mt. and leads in about ½ mile to a campsite where a small path to the right descends to the overlook.

### 22. The Virginia Forest Walk\*

A 1.5 mile stroll along an easy, well-maintained loop trail through a forest of maples, oaks and birches. Take US 460 west 20.8 miles, and just before crossing the New River, turn right onto VA 635. Drive 16.4 miles to VA 613 on right. Signs point to the White Rocks Campground, about two miles away. Upon entering the campground, bear right to reach the trail head. The trail passes along the north slope of Potts Mountain, entering the state of West Virginia (hence its name). It crosses White Rock Branch, a native trout stream. Drinking water, restroom facilities and 49 campsites are available at the campground, which is open from about April 1 to December 1. A camping fee is charged. One hour round trip from the campground.

### 23. Claytor Lake State Park\*

Claytor Lake was created when the Appalachian Power Company built its Claytor Dam on the New River to generate electricity. Swimming, boating, camping and a few short hikes are available at the park. Take US 460 east into Christiansburg. Turn right on US 11 and VA 8 and follow VA 8 one mile to I-81 south. Continue and follow signs to the park. A map of trails is available at the park headquarters.

### 24. Rock Castle Gorge\*\*\*

A magnificent loop trail which follows the Blue Ridge Mountains with good views of the surrounding area and then returns through scenic Rock Castle Gorge. Take US 460 to Christiansburg, turn right at the stop light in the center of Christiansburg onto VA 8. Drive 27 miles passing through Floyd and continue to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Turn right onto the Parkway and drive 2 miles to the Rocky Knob Campground. A map can be obtained from the ranger at the campground for the Rock Castle Gorge Trail which begins across the road and follows south along the ridge of the mountains. About 11 miles round trip with an 1800 foot elevation change. 7 hours from campground.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a 469-mile scenic motorway connecting the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. It follows the crest of the Blue Ridge at elevations ranging from 649 to 6053 feet. The road is open all year, but sections may be closed in icy or snowy weather. There are many trails and scenic vistas along the road.