



Otter Creek GWNF, Lynchburg VA

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
7.4 mls	★	★	★	★	N/A
Hiking Time: 3.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch Elev. Gain: 640 ft Parking: Parking at the Visitor Center. 37.55543, -79.36547					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



Otter Creek Trail is a nice little out and back that meanders alongside its namesake creek. It is part of the James River/Otter Creek Recreation Area/George Washington National Forest. At the south end of the trail is the James River Visitor Center (BRP MP 64) with some great descriptions of the canal locks on the other side of the James River that made it navigable during the 18th century, a quick walk across the river and you can see some of the restored locks as they would have been in the 18th century.

At the north end of the trail is the Otter Creek Campground (BRP MP 61) with 45 tent sites and 24 RV/Trailer sites with facilities. Very rarely does the trail wander out of hearing distance of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Trail of Trees is included as part of this hike as you will not want to miss some great views of the James River. Note: Although the hike is rated 'N/A' for trail camping, there is a campground next to the hike trailhead.

To begin the hike, follow the path to the rear of the James River Visitor Center (BRP MP 64).

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Stay on the path and head under the James River Bridge to walk the short Trail of Trees circuit. Near the first intersection is an overlook for a view of the James River as it works its way through the mountains. Bear right and head up hill, counter-clockwise, keeping your eyes open to see the name plaques of the various trees.
- ▶ **Mile 0.3** – Reach the 2nd overlook of the James River, looking to the west you will see the rock cliffs of Big Rocky Row.
- ▶ **Mile 0.5** – Continue on, completing the circuit, going under the bridge again, heading downhill on the path just before reaching the Visitor Center, toward Otter Creek
- ▶ **Mile 0.7** – Cross Otter Creek on the concrete round steps. Note: High water may cause problems crossing the creek, use good judgment and detour as necessary.
- ▶ **Mile 0.9** – Just before the Otter Lake Dam, cross the creek again. This is also the intersection of the Otter Lake Loop Trail. Note: You could go straight but where it hooks back in to the Otter Creek Trail has been dammed up by some industrious beavers and the trail is virtually impassable.
- ▶ **Mile 1.3** – After crossing the creek, continue up past the dam, walking through the Otter Lake parking area and finally crossing a small bridge to get back on the trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.4** – Intersection with the Otter Lake Loop Trail, bear left to stay on the Otter Creek Trail. Note: If you went straight for just a short distance you will see the work of the beavers.
- ▶ **Mile 1.7** – Reach the Lower Otter Creek Overlook parking area, passing over 2 very sturdy bridges.
- ▶ **Mile 2.9** – This next section takes you the farthest away from the creek but eventually you will see the creek and will cross it again just before going through 2 tunnels that go under Route 130 and the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- ▶ **Mile 3.4** – Continue following the beautiful creek and then cross the BRP.
- ▶ **Mile 3.6** – Cross the creek to head towards the Otter Creek Campground Restaurant. Note: There are quite a few of the round concrete crossings and most all of them will get you to the Restaurant.
- ▶ **Mile 3.7** – Reach the now closed Otter Creek Campground Restaurant.
- ▶ **Mile 7.4** - Retrace your steps to the James River Visitor Center to complete the relatively gentle 7.4 mile out and back hike.