





## Spruce Knob/Seneca Creek - Seneca Rocks, West Virginia

| Length                                                                                                                                             | Difficulty | Streams | Views | Solitude | Camping |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|-------|----------|---------|
| 16.5 mls                                                                                                                                           | 4★         | 5★      | 6★    | 5★       | 6★      |
| <b>Hiking Time:</b><br><b>Elev. Gain:</b> 2 Days. 6 hours 1st day, 3 hours 2nd day<br><b>Parking:</b> 2,310 ft<br>Parking area at the Spruce Knob. |            |         |       |          |         |

Easily in the top 5 backpacking routes in the mid-Atlantic. The Spruce Knob/Seneca Creek circuit has beautiful meadows, mountain vistas, waterfalls, and the best camping to be found. Starting at Spruce Knob, the tallest peak in West Virginia, the hike also has a short 1/2 mile circuit at the summit with beautiful panoramic and views of the valley.

The best time of year to enjoy this hike is July-September when the temps are almost spring like at these 5K foot altitudes. If you hike this circuit in September, you'll also get to enjoy the fields of blackberries on the High Meadows Trail.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Start at the Spruce Knob parking area heading down the Huckleberry Trail TR533. In the first 2.0 miles, the trail passes a number of nice campsites located under canopies of Spruce. The trail will then open up passing through several small meadows before descending to another campsite where the trail makes a sharp right. Follow the trail for another 0.2 miles and turn left, followed shortly by another left. At this point the Huckleberry Trail crosses through one more small meadow then begins a steep descent to the intersection of the four way intersection with the Lumberjack Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 4.7** - Turn right on the Lumberjack Trail TR534. The Lumberjack Trail is an old forestry road with poor drainage, very muddy, and can take some time to navigate depending on the conditions. At 1.0 miles on the Lumberjack Trail is the wreckage of a Piper PA-23 that crashed in 1973 with the loss of 2 souls. The wreck site (video) is located 75 yards below the trail at N38.76409 W79.49852. If you decide to visit the site please do not disturb any of the wreckage out of respect for the lives lost here. Continue on the trail for another mile reaching the intersection of the High Meadows Trail. The unmaintained portion of the Lumberjack Trail veers right uphill, and the High Meadows Trail veers left.
- ▶ **Mile 6.7** - Veer left onto the High Meadows Trail TR564. The trail will soon make a left and descend towards the meadows. Be careful as the High Meadows Trail is inundated with stinging nettles. After entering the first meadow look for the trail marker directly on the opposite side of the meadow. Here you will pass through the thickest blackberry section. Re-enter the forest before once again passing through the last of the mountain meadows on the trail. At the end of the second large meadow cross a small creek and arrive at the intersection of the Horton Trail and end of the High Meadows Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 8.6** - Turn right downhill on the Horton Trail TR530 for 0.5 miles where the Horton Trail joins the Seneca Creek Trail TR515.
- ▶ **Mile 9.1** - Turn right downstream on the Seneca Creek Trail for 75 yards to view Seneca Falls (video). Now return up up the Seneca Creek Trail passing the Horton Trail you just descended, then cross Seneca Creek for the first time. Pass the first of many wonderful campsites (video). Follow the Seneca Creek Trail crossing Seneca Creek two more times, pass the Bear Hunter Trail, and reach the meadow at Judy Springs. Note: 0.2 miles before reaching Judy Springs is the prettiest campsite in the Monongahela. This campsite is on the banks of Seneca Creek with a waterfall directly across from it. Don't worry if it's occupied, every campsite on Seneca Creek is excellent!
- ▶ **Mile 10.9** - At Judy Springs turn left crossing a wooden footbridge over Seneca Creek onto the Judy Springs Trail TR512, then begin the steepest section of the hike climbing back up Spruce Mountain. After 0.3 the Judy Springs Trail passes through the largest of the mountain meadows with a panoramic view back towards Seneca Creek. The trail will then reenter the forest at the top of the meadow ending at the intersection of the Horton Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 11.6** - Turn right uphill on the Horton Trail TR530. Soon pass a vista through a gap in the trees, and continue for another 0.2 mile where the Horton Trail reaches the intersection of the Lumberjack Trail you took earlier.
- ▶ **Mile 11.8** - Continue uphill on the Huckleberry Trail retracing your steps the 4.7 miles back to the hike start point.
- ▶ **Mile 16.5** - Arrive back at the parking area on Spruce Knob.