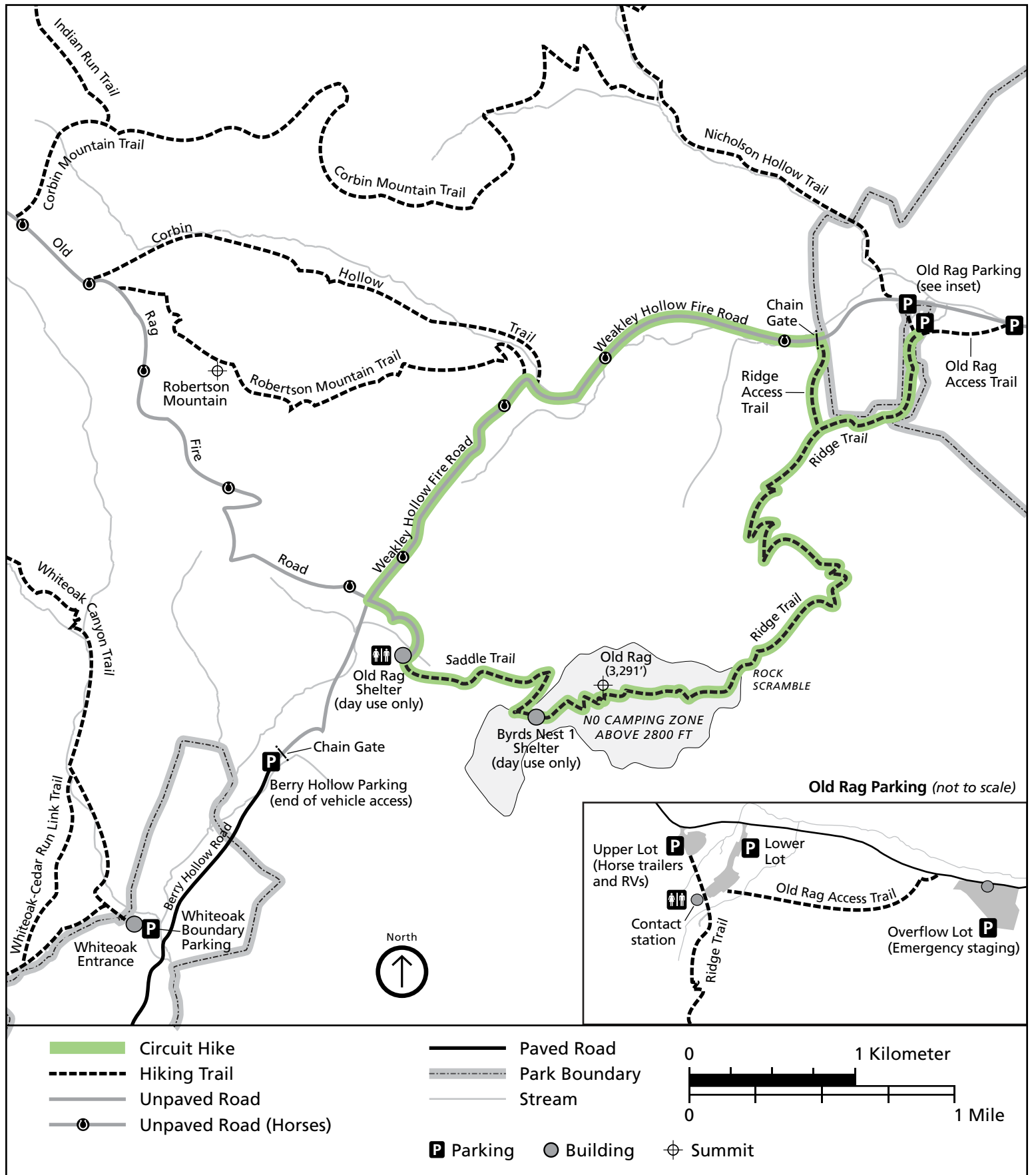


# Old Rag Area - Shenandoah National Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



6/2020



## Old Rag Circuit Hike

- 🔄 9.4-mile circuit      ⌚ 7.5-hours hiking time  
⚠️ Very Strenuous      ⚡ 2,348-foot elevation gain

From the Old Rag parking area, take the blue-blazed Ridge Trail. Continue along the Ridge Trail, across the rock scramble and descend on the Saddle Trail (blue-blazed), which becomes a fire road after you pass Old Rag Shelter. At the T-intersection\*, go right and immediately right again at the fork onto Weakley Hollow Fire Road (yellow-blazed). Turn right onto the Ridge

Access Trail and then left onto the Ridge Trail to return to your starting point. **Pets are prohibited on the Ridge and Saddle Trails.**



\*Watch for this sign at the T-intersection. Be sure to go right at the fork onto Weakley Hollow Fire Road towards the Old Rag parking area.

## Berry Hollow Parking – Old Rag Summit Hike

- 🔄 5.4-mile round trip      ⌚ 6.25-hours hiking time  
⚠️ Strenuous      ⚡ 1,760-foot elevation gain

This hike allows you to get to the summit without having to navigate the rock scramble. From Berry Hollow parking area, take the Berry Hollow Road 0.8-mile to the junction with Old Rag Fire Road. Turn right and continue 0.4-mile to the Old Rag Shelter. Turn left onto the Saddle Trail and continue the remaining 1.6 miles to the summit. Return by the same route to avoid the very strenuous and often crowded Ridge Trail rock scramble. Pets are prohibited on the Ridge and Saddle Trails.

## Robertson Mountain Trail

- 🔄 8.3-mile round trip      ⌚ 6.5-hours hiking time  
⚠️ Strenuous      ⚡ 2,353-foot elevation gain

From Old Rag parking area, take the Ridge Trail and turn right onto Ridge Access Trail. Turn left onto Weakley Hollow Fire Road. Take Weakley Hollow Fire Road to Robertson Mountain Trail. Follow to the summit and descend to the Old Rag Fire Road. Turn left, then left again onto Weakley Hollow Fire Road. Turn right onto Ridge Access Trail, then left onto the Ridge Trail. Return to the Old Rag parking area. **Alternate route for pets:** Walk along Rt. 600 to Weakley Hollow Fire Road. Follow to its intersection with Robertson Mountain Trail. Continue as above.

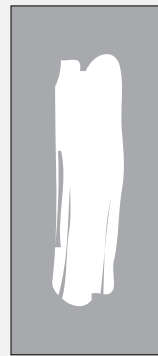
## Nicholson Hollow Trail – Alternate Hike for Pets

- 🔄 8-mile round trip      ⌚ 7-hours hiking time  
⚠️ Moderately Strenuous      ⚡ 1,240-foot elevation gain

From Old Rag parking area walk along Route 600. Look for the Nicholson Hollow Trail (concrete marker) on the right. Follow the Nicholson Hollow Trail to Corbin Cabin and return. You'll cross several streams along the way.

## 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



## Directions to Parking Areas

**Sperryville to Old Rag Parking** - From Route 211, turn onto Route 522 and follow it south for 0.8 mile. Turn right on Route 231, follow 8 miles, turn right onto Route 601 and follow signs to the Old Rag parking area, approximately 3 miles.

**Madison to Old Rag Parking** - From Route 29 Business, turn onto Route 231 and follow it for 12.8 miles. Turn left onto Route 602. Follow signs for the parking area. Old Rag parking is approximately 3 miles from the turn onto Route 602.

**Sperryville to Berry Hollow Parking** - Start by taking Route 231 South past the turnoff for Nethers. From Madison, start from Route 29 Business, turning onto Route 231. Once on Route 231 (from either Sperryville or Madison), turn onto Route 670 near Banco. Turn right at Syria, then left onto Route 600. Go past the Whiteoak Canyon parking area to Berry Hollow parking area. Parking is extremely limited.

## Need to Know

- Pets are prohibited on the Ridge and Saddle trails.
- Be prepared: bring sturdy footwear, flashlights, extra layers of clothing, and food. Bring plenty of drinking water. **No water is available at Old Rag.**
- Do not attempt this hike unless you are physically able.
- Be sure you know what time it gets dark and plan for extra time. There can be a significant wait to navigate certain portions of the trail.
- Do not attempt to hike Old Rag when rocks are wet or icy.
- Cell and GPS services are unreliable.
- Even if you are hiking from the boundary, you must have an entrance permit or annual pass. Please be prepared to self-pay (correct change or credit card) at the Old Rag parking area.
- Backcountry camping sites are very limited in this area, and camping is prohibited above 2,800 feet. If you plan to camp, be sure you have a permit and that you understand the regulations, particularly those pertaining to site choice.
- Parking isn't permitted along the road or on private property.

## Old Rag Mountain - SNP, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
9.1 mls	★	★	★	★	★
<b>Hiking Time:</b>	5.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch				
<b>Elev. Gain:</b>	2,348 ft				
<b>Parking:</b>	Park at the main lower parking lot on SR600/Nethers Rd. 38.57135, -78.29359				
	<b>Note:</b> There are now three parking areas on SR600/Nethers Rd: 1. Main lower lot. 2. Upper lot for horse trailers and RV's 3. Lower overflow lot				

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



The Old Rag Mountain hike in the Shenandoah National Park is one of the most popular hikes in the mid-Atlantic region. With many spectacular panoramic views, and one of the most challenging rock scrambles in the park, this circuit hike is a favorite of many hikers. But be prepared for the crowds. This hike gets a ★ star rating for solitude, so the best time to enjoy Old Rag is during the week when there are significantly fewer people. In 2020 the Saddle Ridge Trail was re-routed to the main parking area on SR 600 Nethers Road.

The circuit hike listed here follows the popular clockwise loop, however many hikers prefer to do this loop counterclockwise, thereby tackling the rock scramble at the Ridge Trail on the downhill. Either way, the rock scramble can be challenging, being both steep, and requiring climbing through cracks in the rock. If hiking on the weekend, the best time to arrive is by 7 a.m. beating the crowds.

**Note:** As of 2020, there are now three parking areas on SR600/Nethers Rd: Lot 1 - Upper Lot for horse trailers and RV's, although cars can also park here, the entrance for this one is about 100 yards beyond the entrance to the Lower Lot. Lot 2 - Lower Lot, this is now the main parking lot for Old Rag. Lot 3 - Overflow Lot, only used now when the new Lower Parking Lot is full.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** - The hike begins on the Ridge Trail (blue blazed) to the left of Ranger Station at the new Lower Parking Lot. Pass an Information Kiosk and cross a small bridge to begin the climb (gaining 460') to the intersection of the Ridge Access Trail
- ▶ **Mile 0.8** - At the intersection of the Ridge Access Trail, bear left staying on the Ridge Trail. The trail will gradually increase in grade and make nine switch backs before reaching the first of many view points. From this first vista to the west, the Ridge Trail will become more rocky.
- ▶ **Mile 2.5** - Arrive at the main easterly vista on the ridge. From here the trail becomes a rock scramble with narrow passages and several spots requiring hand over hand climbing. From the easterly vista on the ridge start up the rock scramble, with the first obstacle a 12ft deep small crack in the rock. At the bottom of the crack continue out to the left. Follow the blue blazes passing around the easterly side of the ridge and through another crack where the trail meets a small cliff. From here, the trail will become increasingly steep going through a small cave, then arriving the minor summit where the trail turns left. Be careful to follow the blue blazes, as there are several false trails that lead to overlooks. After passing around the minor northerly summit, the trail is less steep but still requires rock-hopping for most of the remaining 0.3 miles to the true summit where there are several points with 360° views.
- ▶ **Mile 3.6** - Arrive at the Old Rag Summit, elevation 3291'.
- ▶ **Mile 4.2** - Descend south along the Ridge Trail for 0.6 miles to the intersection of the Saddle Trail and Byrd's Nest Shelter. Turn right descending on the blue blazed Saddle Trail. In 1.0 miles reach the Old Rag Shelter.

### **Byrd's Nest Area Scrambling:**

For some additional rock scrambling, consider a side trip near the Byrd's Nest Shelter to see the Balance Rock that you can see from Old Rag and the Saddle Trail. About 20 yards from the shelter is a series of rocks worth climbing and to get a bearing (about 300 degrees with our compass pegged on North) to the Balance Rock, about 0.2 miles away. This will involve some bushwhacking, follow a visible path for about 50 yards or so beyond the first set of rocks and it will bear to the right near a campsite and take you below a cliff and the Balance Rock will be visible to the North West, mostly bushwhacking from this point to the Rock. We did not see an easy way to climb Balance Rock but with a little bit of effort we were able to get on the rock just below it for some great views. The coordinates for Balance Rock: N38.5505 W78.3236, the coordinates for the Byrd's Nest Shelter: N38.5501 W78.3211

- ▶ **Mile 5.2** - Old Rag Shelter, both shelters are available for day use only. From the Old Rag Shelter the trail widens and follows a forestry road for the 0.4 miles to the intersection of the Berry Hollow Fire road (left), Old Rag Fire Road (straight), and Weakley Hollow Fire Road (right).
- ▶ **Mile 5.6** - Turn right downhill on the yellow blazed Weakley Hollow Fire Road. In 1.2 miles pass the Robertson Mountain Trail, then in another 200 yards the Corbin Hollow Trail. Continue along the Weakley Hollow Fire Road back to the intersection of the Ridge Access Trail
- ▶ **Mile 8.0** - Arrive at the Ridge Access Trail. This intersection has a small parking area that has been closed for many years. Turn right uphill on the Ridge Access Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 8.4** - Turn left on the Ridge Trail back towards the Lower Parking Lot.
- ▶ **Mile 9.1** - Arrive back at the new Lower Parking Lot on Nethers Road.