



Sand Spring Mountain - Todd Lake, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
11.0 mls	★	★	★	★	★
Hiking Time: Elev. Gain: Parking:	6 hours with 1/2 hour for lunch 2,670 ft Follow these directions from Stokesville Rd. and entrance to the GWNF: After entering the GWNF Paved FDR95 will veer left, stay straight on gravel road FDR101 2.2 miles, Parking area is on right at a sharp turn in FDR101 0.4 miles past Lake Hearthstone entrance				

There aren't any great views or waterfalls on this loop hike. But if your looking for solitude, and a great workout, this is the circuit for you. With an initial climb up Narrow Back Mountain, then a long steep ascent of Sand Spring Mountain, this hike is sure to get your heart pumping.

The hike start point, and yellow blazed Tillman Trail (439), is directly across Big Run from the small parking area. Cross Big Run and start along the yellow blazed trail, which initially passes through a section of old growth forest, before turning left and climbing steeply up a small ravine. After 0.4 miles, and at the top of the ravine, cross an unmarked trail. From this point the trail will continue to climb Narrow Back Mountain along a spur, then make two quick switchbacks before reaching the ridge and a forestry access road in another 0.5 miles.

At the ridge turn left on the access road towards the Cookie Trail (432A). In 0.2 miles pass around the back of a transmission tower and start down the yellow blazed Cookie Trail. 1.0 miles past the transmission tower the trail will veer left downhill, before arriving at the intersection of the Festival (432B) and Narrowback (432) trails. Turn left downhill on the yellow blazed Narrowback Trail and shortly arrive at a split in the trail. Stay right downhill on the yellow blazed trail as it descends the mountain for 0.4 miles, crosses a small wooded footbridge, then in another 0.1 miles ends at the Narrowback Trail parking area.

Turn right walking 25 yards up to FDR101. Turn right on gravel road FDR101 for 200 yards to the blue blazed Sand Springs Trail (423) on the left.

Note: The Sand Springs Trail follows an old forestry road and heads steeply uphill without any switchbacks. Make sure to bring plenty of water and a hat on warmer days. Also, the trail is both blue blazed and marked with yellow diamonds in places.

Start up the blue blazed Springs Trail passing a closed forestry gate, then in 1.0 miles pass two campsites. The trail will continue steeply uphill for another 1.8 miles before passing a pond, and in another 0.2 miles entering a clearing and summit of Sand Spring Mountain. The Timber Ridge Trail (431) junction is 25 yards after re-entering the forest on the other side of the clearing.

Turn left downhill on the yellow blazed Timber Ridge Trail as it descends Hearthstone Ridge for 3.7 miles where it crosses a small stream near the valley floor. Cross the stream and shortly arrive at a split in the trail. Stay left, and in 100 yards the Timber Ridge Trail ends at FDR101. Turn right on FDR101 and walk the remaining 0.3 miles back to the Tillman Trail parking area on the left.