



## Sand Flat/Salamander Trail, MD

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
9.3 mls	★	★	★	★	N/A
<b>Hiking Time:</b> 5.0 hours plus a half hour for lunch <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 1010 ft <b>Parking:</b> Park on Gambrill Park Rd. at the trailhead.					

This section of the Frederick Municipal Forest, just north of Gambrill State Park, is a virtual labyrinth of interconnecting trails. This circuit hike combines a section of the blue blazed Catoctin Trail, as well as the the Salamander Trail. The highlights are the two ponds on the Catoctin Trail, and the overlook near the junction of the Salamander Trail.

This area is also very popular with mountain bikers, with the Catoctin Trail having the highest density of our two wheeled friends. A map, and GPS are a must for this hike because of the number of interconnecting trails, especially on the Salamander Trail, where intersections show up every couple of hundred yards in places. Special thanks to Mike with [www.midatlantichikes.com](http://www.midatlantichikes.com) for recommending this circuit.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Pass the closed gate and walk through a clearing, then pass a pond on the right and arrive at the first trail intersection.
- ▶ **Mile 0.2** - Turn right and follow the trail to the next intersection in 0.2 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 0.4** - Stay left and in another 0.2 miles arrive at the intersection of the blue blazed Catoctin Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 0.6** - Turn left following the Catoctin Trail as it passes through several areas of Mountain Laurel and arrives at a four way intersection in another 0.2 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 0.8** - The old Catoctin Trail is to the right and blocked with blowdowns, directly ahead is the new section of the Catoctin Trail, and to the left is an unmarked trail. Stay straight on the new blue blazed Catoctin Trail. The blue blazed trail will switchback down the first ridge, pass through a section of fern, then cross a small stream before arriving at the next intersection in 1.3 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 2.1** - Turn right remaining on the Catoctin Trail and shortly cross a gravel road. Pass through the closed gate on the other side of the road and continue on the blue blazed Catoctin Trail for 0.9 miles to the next intersection.
- ▶ **Mile 3.0** - Turn left staying on the Catoctin Trail for 0.8 miles to the first of the two ponds.
- ▶ **Mile 3.8** - In 0.4 miles the the second pond will be on the left of the trail.
- ▶ **Mile 4.2** - From the second pond it's 0.3 miles to gravel Gambrill Park Rd. Cross the road then in 0.1 miles reach the intersection of the Salamander Trail. For now continue on the Catoctin Trail for 0.1 miles to the best view on the hike. Return to the intersection of the Salamander Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 4.8** - Turn right on the Salamander Trail north (this would have been a left turn on the Salamander Trail when you first past the intersection on the way to the overlook). Follow the Salamander Trail for 0.6 miles to the next intersection. This trail connects on the right and is easy to miss. If you do miss it you'll end up back on Gambrill Park Rd.
- ▶ **Mile 5.4** - Turn right and for the next 0.3 miles pass three more intersections. Use the map and GPS route to navigate. This section of the Salamander Trail is a labyrinth of small interconnecting paths.
- ▶ **Mile 5.7** - Intersection 12 on the GPS Track - Turn right on the less obvious trail. If you pass the 'Mo's Cut' sign you have missed the turn! In the next 1.6 miles pass 3 more intersections staying straight/right at each.
- ▶ **Mile 7.3** - Intersection 16 on the GPS Track - Turn right as the trail climbs past the Salamander Rock high point and arrives at a old stone house in another 0.3 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 7.6** - Turn right on the gravel road for 25 yards to the utility clear cut. Turn left down the utility clear cut for 0.2 miles at which point the trail veers left back into the forest. From the the clear cut to the next intersection it is less than 0.1 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 7.8** - Turn right at the intersection and follow the trail for another 0.7 miles passing two more minor intersections before reaching gravel Gambrill Park Rd.
- ▶ **Mile 8.5** - Turn right following Gambrill Park Rd. to a parking area and trailhead on the left in 0.1 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 8.6** - Turn left off Gambrill Park Rd. passing the closed gate and follow the trail for 0.2 miles to the next intersection. Be on the lookout for this trail intersection as it's easy to miss.
- ▶ **Mile 8.8**- Turn right for 0.2 miles to the pond and beginning of the hike loop.
- ▶ **Mile 9.0** - Turn right following the connector trail back to the parking area in 0.2 miles
- ▶ **Mile 9.3** - Parking area.