



Bucks Elbow Mountain - Crozet, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
6.1 mls	5	N/A	4	3	N/A
Hiking Time:	4.0 hours plus a half hour for lunch				
Elev. Gain:	2,380 ft				
Parking:	Park at the Mint Springs Valley Park 2nd parking area.				

Do you need a trail with a good work out that has a great payoff at the top? Then this hike in Mint Springs Valley Park should fit the bill. There aren't many switchbacks on this out & back hike, as it's a direct assault on the mountain. About 1.4 miles into the climb it's marked only by pink survey ribbons with an occasional yellow or orange blaze, and is primarily bushwhacking with no discernable trail. Due to this, we strongly recommend using a GPS and downloading either the GDB or GPX files. For more leisurely trails, view the entire park trail map.

The payoff at the end of the trail is a great overlook and great place to have lunch. Just prior to getting to the overlook you will pass some scattered wreckage of Piedmont Flight 349 DC3 that went down in 1959. Be respectful of this site as 26 people lost their lives in the crash located about 500 feet below the summit of Bucks Elbow Mountain. Near the entrance to the park is a memorial to this crash commissioned by the sole survivor, Phil Bradley.

We parked at the lot area near the swimming lake. The Fire Trail begins just to the right of the information kiosk, visible in the parking lot photo. Stay on the Fire Trail for 0.8 miles until you reach the intersection of the Big Survey Trail. Take a right and go another 0.3 miles looking for an unmarked trail on the right, located very close to a sharp bend in the trail. Just after turning right onto this trail you will pass under a high voltage powerline. Follow the trail just below the tower, bearing to the left onto a fire road in about 10 yards.

Stay on the fire road looking for an orange-blazed trail where you will turn left uphill in 0.3 miles. The trail becomes steep at this point. Continue on the trail ignoring an intersection on the left in 0.2 miles. After passing the intersection in 0.1 miles the trail will bear right over Mad Run as it passes towards the north. In 0.8 miles, and 0.25 miles before the hike high point, you will start to notice the debris field of the DC3 with the largest piece being the wing at the top. To continue to the overlook bear to the right just prior to where the wing is, going 0.2 miles and follow near the edge of a steep drop off/cliff. There are actually 2 good overlooks, with the 2nd one being a great place for lunch and the turn-around point. Retrace your steps to return to the parking area.