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Goshen Pass/Jump Rock - Goshen, Virginia

| Length | Difficulty | Streams | Views | Solitude | Camping |
|---------------------|--|---------|-------|----------|---------|
| 8.2 mls | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | N/A |
| Hiking Time: | 6.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch | | | | |
| Elev. Gain: | 2,480 ft | | | | |
| Parking: | The parking for the trailhead is located on an unmarked gravel/dirt road located approximately 1.6 miles upriver from the Virginia Wayside rest area on Route 39 West. | | | | |

About halfway through this hike, a 150 yard bush-whack is required, in other words there is no discernible path as you head down to a saddle to catch the Jump Rock Trail up to Jump Rock. There are also a quite few places throughout the hike where the trail is over-grown, faint and poorly marked. You will have to pay attention on this hike but if you go, you will cross a swinging bridge, walk by a beautiful river, see some great vistas, and spectacular views of Lake Merriweather (GPS download highly recommended for this hike).

The parking for the trailhead is located on an unmarked gravel/dirt road approximately 1.6 miles upriver from the Virginia Wayside rest area on Route 39 West. Keep your eye on the river on the right, looking for the Swinging Bridge. The road goes back about 200 yards to the parking area. The majority of trails will be white blazed, but not always easy to see. Hunting is allowed on this property and the adjoining Wildlife Mgmt Areas, so be careful and wear orange during hunting season. This is a very strenuous hike, 4 liters of water recommended. I had 3 and ran out with 1 mile to go.

The hike begins by crossing the swinging bridge over the Maury River and immediately taking a right off the steps onto the Goshen Pass Trail. Follow the river down-stream for an easy stroll for 0.8 miles. The trail is over-grown in some places. There are a few spots for good views of the river. At the intersection, take a left onto the Chambers Ridge Trail. You will now start to climb reaching a small waterfall on your right in 0.2 miles. This is a good place to soak a bandana and tie around your neck to keep cool if hiking in warm weather. The climb will continue steadily for 0.4 miles, finally reaching the ridge part of this trail. In 0.5 miles there is a small pond on the right (may dry up in the summer) and in another 0.3 miles you will reach the intersection of the Little Peak Trail.

Bear right onto the Little Peak Trail and be prepared for a few "breather" stops along the way as you climb 800' in 0.6 miles, even requiring a little scrambling!! At the 0.5 mile mark there is small set of rocks just off the trail on the right giving you a first good view of Lake Merriweather (you will not see Lake Merriweather again until later in the hike). Continue 0.1 miles more for a larger set of rocks with views of the Goshen Pass and the Maury River Road to the west, a great place to stop for lunch. The Maury River is not visible at this vantage point.

After taking in the views at the rocks, head back to the trail and take a right continuing to climb for about 0.6 miles. Where the trail takes a sharp right and heads down hill the markings and trail will end in just over 110 yards with one last white blaze. From this point, bush-whack East-North-East down into the saddle for about 150-160 yards and you should intersect Jump Rock Trail. Take a right onto the trail, heading east towards Jump Rock, over-grown in some places with intermittent yellow-blazes and finally reaching it in 0.6 miles. At Jump Rock there are great views of the Little North Mountain to the north, the Shenandoah Valley to the north-east, east, and south with the Blue Ridge Mtns clearly visible for miles. This is another great place for lunch or a rest.

Retrace your steps back down the same path (there is another path at the east end of Jump Rock, not sure where that goes) to the saddle for 0.5 miles where you will see some trees with yellow-blazes which we did not see coming down earlier. Follow these yellow blazes for 0.1 miles and you will intersect a trail, take a left onto the trail which we believe is the Tuscarora Trail, heading almost due north. In about 0.5 miles you will see a sign pointing you back to Jump Rock/Tuscarora Trail but we saw no other trails intersecting at this point (a sign from nowhere but it gave us confidence we were on the Tuscarora trail and not lost). The Tuscarora Trail is not well marked but you will see many trees with red markings on them which may be boundary markings between the Preserve and the WMA. 0.4 miles beyond that sign you will reach the intersection of the Viewing Rock Trail, bear left and in 150 yards you will reach a short spur trail to Viewing Rock. There are spectacular views of Lake Merriweather from Viewing Rock.

HU Note: There are no more views from this point back to the parking lot and you should make excellent time as it is either downhill or fairly level for the remaining 2.7 miles.

Continue downhill on the Viewing Rock Trail for 0.4 miles and at the next intersection bear hard left onto an unnamed trail. There is a sign on the opposite side of this intersection that reads "To Camp PMI". If you are reading that sign, ignore it and back up to the trail you came down and bear hard left. You will very quickly come to another trail/fire road, take a right towards Camp Bowman on the Round Knob Trail. In 0.7 miles you will cross a small creek and then reach a gravel road 0.1 miles after the creek. Take a left onto the gravel road for 0.5 miles passing Camp Bowman on your right, a sign to Anderson Trail on your left (ignore) and finally reaching a green Swinging Bridge sign, turn left here. You will reach the Swinging Bridge and parking lot in 0.8 miles.