



Great Channels – Hayters Gap, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
6.6 mls		N/A			
Hiking Time: 4 hours with half hour for lunch. Elev. Gain: 1,219 ft Parking: Park at the Hayters Gap parking area. 36.86445, -81.94690					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)

By Trail Contributors: Christine and Adam



The Great Channels features a maze of slot canyons similar to what you may find in the southwestern United States. The hike is a hidden gem in southwest Virginia and you will find nothing else in Virginia quite like it. The Great Channels Natural Area Preserve is one of Virginia's most geologically fascinating areas. This 6.6 mile out-and-back takes you down into a network of maze-like crevices formed in soft sandstone.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – From the right side of the parking area, head past the entrance gate and continue uphill on the white-blazed Brumley Mountain Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 0.6** – Reach an opening created by power lines for an obstructed view.
- ▶ **Mile .75** – Reach a junction where the fire road turns to the right uphill, but stay straight on the Brumley Mountain Trail which now becomes a dirt path.
- ▶ **Mile 1.0** – On the right you will see some privately-owned cabins, but there is no trespassing on this private property.
- ▶ **Mile 1.5** – You reach Shallow Gap, which provides some obstructed views to the right of the trail through the trees. The trail begins to become steeper.
- ▶ **Mile 2.25** – Come to a small outcrop of sandstone, similar to what you will find at the Great Channels. Shortly after this, you will begin a couple of switchbacks, which take away some of the steepness of the terrain.
- ▶ **Mile 2.8** – Reach a junction with the Great Channels Trail. Take a left on this red-blazed trail to the summit. Go through a tunnel of rhododendren on your approach.
- ▶ **Mile 3.0** – Reach the summit of Middle Knob. Here you will find a rundown, abandoned shelter and see the fire tower about 50 yards ahead. Walk to the right of the fire tower and you will see a sign near the entrance of the woods noting the Great Channels is ahead. The trail is steep and down a slick grade, so be careful with your footing.
- ▶ **Mile 3.2** – Reach the entrance to the Great Channels. Explore the interesting rock formations before heading back the way you came.
- ▶ **Mile 3.5** – Return to the summit of Middle Knob and the fire tower.
- ▶ **Mile 3.7** – Reach the junction with the white-blazed Brumley Mountain Trail. Take a right to follow the trail back to your starting point.
- ▶ **Mile 5.75** – Reach the junction where the fire road takes a sharp left uphill. Stay straight.
- ▶ **Mile 6.6** – Pass through the gate and return to the parking area and the end of the hike.