



HAVENS STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



## North Mountain Trail - Catawba, VA

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
12.2 mls	4	1	2	4	5
<b>Hiking Time:</b> 7.0 hours with half hour for lunch <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 3,350 ft <b>Parking:</b> Park in the lot on Route 779 (Catawba Road). 37.45744, -80.01747					

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)

*By Trail Contributor: Jeff Monroe*



The North Mountain Trail was once an alignment of the Appalachian Trail, back when landowners did not give permission for the trail to approach McAfee Knob and before the National Park Service purchased land for the present route. The North Mountain Trail remains in use today, close to three of the top hiking destinations in Virginia (McAfee Knob, Dragon's Tooth, and Tinker Cliffs) and allows a backpacker to connect all three in a loop of about 37 miles. The North Mountain Trail has nothing of note along its distance when compared to its nearby superstar

destinations with few if any summer views, and there is usually no water to be found along its length. However, it does offer solitude and multiple campsites. And if you are backpacking the entire Triple Crown, this trail completes your loop.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – This trail description goes north to south. Use the parking lot on Route 779 (Catawba Road) that also serves as the starting point for the Tinker Cliffs hike. There is room for about ten vehicles here. Cross Catawba Road and look for the sign for the Catawba Valley Trail and a trail kiosk.
- ▶ **Mile 0.5** – The Catawba Valley Trail crosses a stream bed with seasonal water. Shortly after is a flat spot that has clearly been used as a campsite, on the left.
- ▶ **Mile 1.0** – Cross a seasonal stream. This is your last water source for the entire hike. Stock up if you did not bring enough!
- ▶ **Mile 1.8** – The trail passes a dry campsite and continues to ascend. Winter views of Tinker Cliffs are possible along the way.
- ▶ **Mile 2.3** – The Catawba Valley Trail ends at the North Mountain Trail. Take a left here, towards the Turkey Trail. Follow the North Mountain ridgeline for the rest of this hike.
- ▶ **Mile 3.8** – Pass a small campsite on the left.
- ▶ **Mile 5.1** – The route drops into a small wind gap where the Turkey Trail comes up from the right and ends at the North Mountain Trail at a point marked by Forest Service signs. Continue straight on the North Mountain Trail
- ▶ **Mile 5.4** – Pass a small campsite on the right, and another on the left shortly afterward. Winter views of McAfee Knob can be seen on the left.
- ▶ **Mile 6.5** – Small Campsite on the left. Winter views, though a gap, to downtown Roanoke.
- ▶ **Mile 7.3** – Pass small campsite. Trail continues along ridge, climbing occasionally steeply for short sections.
- ▶ **Mile 8.1** – The blue blazed Grouse Trail comes up from the right and ends at the North Mountain Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 8.2** – Pass a campsite that is larger than most others along this trail.
- ▶ **Mile 9.6** – The blue blazed Deer Trail comes up steeply from the right and ends at its intersection here with the North Mountain Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 9.8** – Pass another campsite.
- ▶ **Mile 10.3** – Pass the final campsite before descending to the Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot. Over the next 1.5 miles, the trail drops 1200 feet at a 15 percent grade.
- ▶ **Mile 11.8** – The trail switchbacks next to a signpost containing a map before coming out at Virginia State Route 311. There is a sign marking the trail for hikers starting from the south. Walk along the side of Route 311 for a short distance in the same direction as the trail took you, before crossing the road with care and entering the Dragon's Tooth Parking Lot.
- ▶ **Mile 12.2** – Return to your vehicle in the parking lot. There are privies next to this parking lot, and it is likely crowded with vehicles that brought folks to hike Dragon's Tooth.