



▲ = Appalachian Trail

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G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area - Paris, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
7.9 mls	2	1	1	2	2
Hiking Time: Elev. Gain:	4 hours with a half hour for lunch 1,670 ft				

This hike loops around the entire G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Area and is one of our favorites in the winter months. Almost 8 miles in length and with an elevation remaining under 2,200 feet, you can still have a great hike when the daylight hours are shorter.

The one thing to keep in mind is that this area is very popular during hunting season, so make sure you wear some blaze orange if you are hiking anytime from late November to the end of January.

If you do this hike in nice weather a great way to top this hike off is to stop for lunch at Maxwell's Pub in Middleburg on the way back and grab a seat on their outdoor deck, which is dog friendly.

Start by walking up the dirt road to Lake Thompson. Turn right walking beside the lake and then veer right uphill. You will run into several large blow downs from tropical storm Camille obstructing the trails.

After .8 miles come to the intersection of Lake Trail that turns to the left. Continue straight on the smaller Stone Wall Trail for the steepest portion of the hike. In .5 miles the Appalachian Trail (AT) will enter from your right.

Continue straight (which now becomes the AT) for 1.2 mile where the trail branches, stay left on the white blazed AT until crossing the Lake Trail in another .3 miles.

In another .6 miles the AT will cross a dirt road. Rejoin the white blazed AT on the opposite side of the dirt road. In .3 miles pass a side trail on your right. Start descending and in 1.1 miles you will reach the junction of the Vernon Smith Trail (VST).

Turn left on the VST (the AT is part of this) and in 70 yards the AT will turn to your right. Continue straight on the VST for 1.2 miles as it winds around Wildcat Hollow before passing some ruins and a small trail on your left. Continue straight on the VST for another .7 miles where it reaches a small shed and intersects a dirt road.

Turn right on the dirt road for .1 miles until the road branches, veer left as you continue downhill for another .9 miles. This section of the trail runs alongside a fence and private property as it descends the mountain.

A trail will intersect from the left (private property with a red barn on your right). Turn left downhill for 100 yards. Then turn right at the four way trail junction. In 150 yards, you will arrive back at Thompson Lake. Continue straight back to the parking lot.