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Goshen Pass/Jump Rock - Goshen, VA

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
9.1 mls	1 star	2 stars	1 star	1 star	N/A

Hiking Time: 4.5 hours with half hour for lunch
Elev. Gain: 1,600 ft
Parking: Park at a gravel lot on the north side of Virginia Route 39. 37.94834, -79.46026

[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



By Trail Contributor: Jeff Monroe

IMPORTANT NOTE: Several parts of this hike, including the parking area, are located in a Virginia Wildlife Management Area, which requires a permit. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) requires an Access Permit for visitors to department-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and public fishing lakes for anyone age 17 and older, unless they possess a valid Virginia hunting, freshwater fishing, or trapping license, or a current Virginia boat registration. All hikers who are age 17 and older who do not possess one of these permits will need an access permit for this hike. You can find information on obtaining a permit [here](#).

This is one of the best but underused hike loops in Virginia. Perhaps it is due to the access permit, but this hike is well worth the current \$4 daily fee. It could be because it is a tough trail and the directions are sometimes confusing – hopefully this description will help. Or maybe it is because the scariest part of the entire loop is at the beginning and end: crossing the appropriately named Swinging Bridge over the Maury River – can't help you there! But this hike features three different vistas with wonderful views that would each be worth hiking to on their own, and each view is in a different direction. For these reasons, Jump Rock is one of the best day hikes in central Virginia.

Note: This trail description was revised, effective March 2018

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** – Park at a gravel lot on the north side of Virginia Route 39. This lot is unmarked from the road, but if you are coming from the east through Goshen Pass (highly recommended, as it is arguably the prettiest 5 miles of driving in the state) you can see the swinging bridge crossing the Maury River just before the gravel entrance to this lot. The river swings away from the road just before the lot entrance.
- ▶ **Mile 0.1** – What hike sports the scariest part right at the beginning? Some may claim this one does, as the Swinging Bridge over the Maury River – a steel suspension bridge that has quite a bit of movement to it. But it is improved over several years ago! Follow the instructions, though: no more than three on the bridge at a time. After the bridge, take a right onto the Maury River Trail, which parallels the river for its entire distance. The trail enters the Goshen Pass Natural Area Preserve, managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- ▶ **Mile 0.7** – Turn left onto the Chambers Ridge Trail, which ascends to the left. It should be marked by a sign, but keep an eye out for it in case the sign is gone.
- ▶ **Mile 0.8** – After several switchbacks, the trail climbs along a large cliff that rock climbers use.
- ▶ **Mile 1.0** – Check out the small waterfall to your right.
- ▶ **Mile 1.4** – The trail passes an apparent campsite, but camping is not allowed inside the boundaries of Goshen Pass Natural Area Preserve.
- ▶ **Mile 1.7** – The trail climbs onto Chambers Ridge and continues across the ridge. At the top of the ridge, you will be hiking along the border between the natural area and the wildlife preserve.
- ▶ **Mile 2.2** – After dropping off Chambers Ridge and turning east, the Chambers Ridge Trail ends where it meets the Little Peak Trail. Turn right here and climb. (Going left would loop you back to your vehicle, as long as you keep taking left turns at every intersection.) This portion of the trail is the steepest part of the hike.
- ▶ **Mile 2.6** – After climbing steeply, the trail levels off briefly, and it might be confusing which way to go. Head straight ahead.
- ▶ **Mile 2.7** – Ahead of you lies a rock face. There is a fissure in the face to the left of straight that gives relatively easy access to the next level. It becomes more obvious as you get closer, but is a short, steep ascent.
- ▶ **Mile 3.0** – Once on top, to your right is a large rock. Do not pass by this! Take a right and go out onto the rock for a short distance to get a wonderful view to the southeast, including Route 39 as it weaves through Goshen Pass next to the Maury River. After enjoying this view, retrace your steps, and then follow the ridge north. At this point, you leave the Natural Preserve and re-enter the state hunting lands. The ridge elevation drops slightly, then climbs again through mountain laurel. It may sometimes be hard to follow the established trail, but head for the top of the ridge. After climbing over a high point on the ridge, Jump Rock is visible to the right during the winter, and it looks like a much tougher climb than you will actually experience.
- ▶ **Mile 3.5** – After you drop off from the ridge's high point, look for a break in the rocks to your right. The trail is not marked here, but it drops off from the ridge, sometimes steeply and without a clear route, towards Jump Rock. What you need to know is that you will descend into a gap separating the ridge you just hiked from Jump Mountain. Keep heading in the generally northbound direction as you descend. There is a visible trail on the northern end of this gap, marked by white blazes, and you will likely find signs for Jump Rock along this trail placed by Boy Scout troops or Cub Scout packs that camp at the nearby Goshen Scout Reservation.
- ▶ **Mile 3.6** – Look for a campsite on the northeastern end of the gap between the ridge and Jump Mountain. There are likely to be several trees with yellow or gold paint on them in a line, as this marks the boundary of the hunting lands. If you see these, head to the right (east). A clear trail ascends Jump Mountain from that campsite. Follow the trail to the summit.
- ▶ **Mile 4.3** – There are several viewpoints from the top of Jump Rock, with views that include six different federally designated wilderness areas, as well as Elliot Knob (the highest point in the George Washington National Forest), Massanutton Mountain, Shenandoah National Park, and south along the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- ▶ **Mile 5.0** – Follow the trail back down into the gap, but stay on the trail as it rides the ridge to the right of where you came down. Follow the white blazed trees onto the next ridge, north of where you dropped off.
- ▶ **Mile 5.5** – When the ridge turns north, the trail continues on the ridge. This is the Tuscarora Trail and is regularly marked with white blazes.
- ▶ **Mile 5.8** – Continue on the Tuscarora Trail until you come across a double white blaze and possibly a sign facing the opposite direction. This is the intersection with the Viewing Rock Trail. Take a left here and descend for a short time.
- ▶ **Mile 5.9** – Take a right where the trail splits. There is probably a trail sign here, created by a Boy Scout troop or Cub Scout pack. This will take you to Viewing Rock, which looks west over Lake Merriweather and the Boy Scout summer campgrounds at Camp Goshen (hence the scout signs). Behind the lake is Knob Mountain and the gap that Virginia Route 39 uses to head west towards the town of Goshen and Warm Springs. This is the last of three wonderful views on this hike, so soak it in before descending the mountain. When you are ready to go, head back a few feet to the fork that brought you here, take a right, and continue descending on the Viewing Rock Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 6.6** – The trail levels off and ahead looks to ascend slightly. Here you intersect with the Hunter's Trail. Take a left here onto the Hunters Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 6.7** – The Hunters Trail seemingly ends after a very short distance, when the Round Knob Trail comes in from both the left and the right. Turn right onto the Round Knob Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 7.3** – The Shale Pit Trail comes in from the right. Avoid that, and stay to the left.
- ▶ **Mile 7.5** – Shortly after crossing a stream the trail comes to an intersection with the Anderson Trail. Take a left on the Anderson Trail, paralleling a gravel road about 100 yards away. The Boy Scout camp is on the other side of the gravel road.
- ▶ **Mile 7.9** – Take a left on the Little Peak Trail. (Note: if you missed this intersection, take a left on the trail right after crossing the streambed, as it will take you to the same place.)
- ▶ **Mile 8.0** – Cross a small bridge spanning a streambed, then merge into the Little Peak Trail. Stay left, paralleling the streambed.
- ▶ **Mile 8.1** – The Hunters Trail reappears (remember it from earlier in the hike?) and is marked on a tree with several signs. Take a right onto the Hunters Trail. (The Little Peak Trail heads upslope to connect with an early portion of this loop.) The Hunters Trail takes you back to the Swinging Bridge.
- ▶ **Mile 9.0** – Exciting times at the end of the hike as you cross the Swinging Bridge to return to your vehicle.
- ▶ **Mile 9.1** – Return to the parking lot.