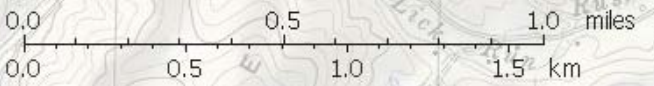


www.HikingUpward.com





## Cranny Crow/Big Ridge - Lost River State Park, West Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
11.1 mls	3	1	5	3	N/A
<b>Hiking Time:</b>	5.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch				
<b>Elev. Gain:</b>	2,150 ft				
<b>Parking:</b>	Either park across the road from the Howard's Lick trailhead, or continue 0.3 miles and park at the small bridge and chain gate at the entrance to the service road.				

West Virginia, renowned for its state park system, has another hidden gem in the Lost River State Park. The Cranny Crow/Big Ridge hike is a combination of a loop and out/back. With Cranny Crow, Cheeks Rock, and the Big Ridge vistas, as well as the ridge meadow, this hike has beautiful scenery around every corner in its trail system.

Note: As of October 2008 the blazes on several of the trails have become faded.

From the lower parking area at the Howard's Lick trailhead, cross the small suspension bridge and follow the blue blazed Howard's Lick trail 0.3 miles to the intersection of the state park service road and footbridge to the upper parking area. Turn right up the unblazed service road for 0.2 miles to the intersection of the Big Ridge Trail. Continue following the service road as it makes a sharp left continuing for another 0.5 miles to the intersection of the orange blazed White Oak Trail.

Turn right on the White Oak Trail as it continues to climb Big Ridge, then in 0.3 miles passes a small shelter and overlook. From here, the White Oak Trail will make several switchbacks before ending at the junction of the Millers Rock Trail and ridge. Turn right on the yellow blazed Millers Rock Trail, and arrive at Cranny Crow overlook in 200 yards.

Continue down the Millers Rock Trail, and pass several more overlooks of Lost River State Park, including Cheeks Rocks, before reaching the intersection of the orange blazed Virginia View Trail in another 0.3 miles.

Turn left on the Virginia View Trail for 0.6 miles to the junction of the yellow blazed Big Ridge Trail. Turn left uphill for 0.1 miles to the high meadow, large shelter, and intersection of the service road. Stay left on the service road and just after exiting the meadow pass the yellow blazed Millers Rock Trail that leads back down to the Cranny Crow Overlook. Continue downhill on the service road, and in 75 yards turn right on the continuation of the yellow blazed Millers Rock Trail.

From this point, the Millers Rock Trail will continue north along the ridge before rejoining the service road in 0.4 miles. Continue north on the service road and pass the old Big Ridge lookout tower, and caretakers cabin in 0.4 miles. From this point the Millers Rock Trail begins to descend along the ridge for 2.2 miles to first main vista to the east and south. Follow the trail another 0.1 miles to the main Big Ridge overlook.

Retrace the route back on the Millers Rock Trail past the lookout tower to the intersection where the Millers Rock Trail splits right, and the service road descends to the left. Follow the unblazed service road for 0.3 miles where the trail will pass a blue blazed trail leading to a spring. Just after passing the spring trail, the service road will enter the meadow and pass an old homestead. Continue through the meadow then start back down the yellow blazed Big Ridge Trail you ascended earlier.

In 0.1 miles pass the Virginia View Trail. Continue downhill on the Big Ridge Trail as it initially heads north, then makes a switchback back to the south. The Big Ridge Trail will continue for 1.7 miles where it ends at the service road you ascended earlier. Head down the service road for 0.2 miles to the upper parking area, then turn left back down the blue blazed Howard's Lick Trail to the lower parking area.