



Forks of Red Creek - Dolly Sods, WV

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
10.6 mls	3	5	5	3	3
Hiking Time: 6.5 hrs plus a half hour for lunch					
Elev. Gain: 1,590 ft					
Parking: Park at the Blackbird Knob trailhead, next to the Red Creek Campground on FR75. 39.03348, -79.31424					

Arguably one of the most unique, and beautiful hiking areas on the East Coast. The high plateaus of Dolly Sods are made up of wind carved sand stone, stunted red spruce, grassy meadows, and sphagnum bogs. The characteristic meadows are the result of logging that took place from 1899 to 1924. During the Second World War the U.S. Army used the area for artillery and mortar training, and at the trailheads the Army Corp of Engineers still displays signs warning hikers that there may be unexploded ordinance in the area.

The name Dolly Sods derives from a combination of Dahles, a local 18th century family, and Sods, meaning an open mountain top or meadow. After WWII the area fell into neglect, and was threatened by multiple construction and mining project proposals. Then in the early 1970's concerned environmentalists, along with The Nature Conservancy, began purchasing the land for preservation and recreational use. Today the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area comprises 17,371 acres.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** - From the parking area, just past the Red Creek Campground, start the hike on the wooden walkway at the beginning of the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511, and shortly enter a wooded area thick with spruce. In 0.3 miles leave the wooded area and get your first glimpse of the majestic plains in Dolly Sods. Continue down to the first creek crossing in 0.7 miles. After crossing the creek, it will be another 0.7 miles to Red Creek. Pass a side crossing to a small island, and in 50 yards arrive at the Red Creek crossing.
- ▶ **Mile 1.7** - Cross Red Creek. Note that Red Creek can run high and require fording instead of rock hopping, so make sure to bring river shoes. After crossing Red Creek there are several camping sites on the right. Climb through a small gully then enter the first of many meadows and reach the intersection of the Upper Red Creek Trail TR509.
- ▶ **Mile 1.9** - Stay straight on the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511 passing through a wooded area, then arriving at the intersection of the Red Creek Trail TR514 on the left in another 0.4 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 2.3** Continue straight on the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511 through another meadow, crossing a stream, then climb to the intersection of the Harman Trail TR525.
- ▶ **Mile 3.2** - Stay left continuing on the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511 for another 1.2 miles then veer left, and in 0.1 miles reach the terminus of the Rocky Ridge Trail TR524.
- ▶ **Mile 4.5** - Stay on the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511 continuing downward for 0.2 miles to the 4 way intersection of the Breathed Mountain Trail TR553, Big Stonecoal Trail TR513, and Forestry Road that leads down to Canaan Valley.
- ▶ **Mile 4.7** - Turn left on the Breathed Mountain Trail TR553 and pass through a wooded area before the trail becomes boggy, passes through a meadow, then descends steeply to the Red Creek Trail TR514 in 2.6 miles.
- ▶ **Mile 7.3** - Turn left on the Red Creek Trail TR514 and arrive at the Forks of Red Creek in 0.1 miles. There are numerous campsites at 'The Forks' but note that this area is an extremely popular camping area, especially with the college set. Explore many small waterfalls and swimming holes.
- ▶ **Mile 7.4** - Cross the Left Fork of Red Creek and stay to your left as the Red Creek Trail TR514 passes through a camping area then re-enters the woods on the left. From this point the Red Creek Trail TR514 becomes steeper until it enters the first of two large meadows. After passing through the second meadow the trail re-enters the woods and ends at the intersection of the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511.
- ▶ **Mile 8.3** - Turn right on the Blackbird Knob Trail TR511 retracing your route, passing the Upper Red Creek Trail TR509, re-crossing Red Creek, then hiking the back to FR75 and the parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 10.6** - Arrive back at FR75 and the parking area.