

NATIONAL PARK

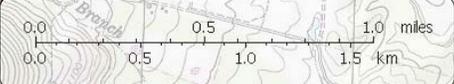
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SHENANDOAH

NATIONAL PARK

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## Chester Gap to Jenkins Gap - Front Royal SNP, Virginia

| Length                                                                                                                                     | Difficulty | Streams | Views | Solitude | Camping |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|-------|----------|---------|
| 8.5 mls                                                                                                                                    | ★          | ★       | ★     | ★        | ★       |
| <b>Hiking Time:</b> 4.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch<br><b>Elev. Gain:</b> 2,475 ft<br><b>Parking:</b> Parking on VA522 at Chester Gap |            |         |       |          |         |

Chester Gap to Jenkins Gap completes the last section of the Appalachian Trail in the Northern Section of Shenandoah National Park. This is a tough climb up from Route 522, gaining about 2900' but there are some great views at Possum Rest, Compton Peak and an awesome Basalt Column Rock formation on the east overlook of Compton Peak.

We did this as a shuttle hike but with a twist, one group started from Jenkins Gap, one from Route 522, and then we traded keys when we met on the trail. If you have a big enough group (we had 8), this is a cool way to get in a point-to-point hike. Park at Compton Gap for a short version to Compton Peak and the Basalt Columns.

Our group of 4 did the hike from Route 522 (Chester Gap) to Jenkins Gap (MP 12.5) so that is how we will describe the hike. The White-Blazed AT heading South begins directly at the rear of the Route 522 parking area.

- ▶ **Mile 1.4** – Head south from the Parking area to Joy Spring Rd. There will be a tall metal fence for about the first mile. Just after crossing the road you will cross a small creek.
- ▶ **Mile 2.0** – Intersection to 4H Center will be on the right.
- ▶ **Mile 2.6** – Intersection to Route 601 Harmony Hollow, blue blazed trail.
- ▶ **Mile 2.9** – Spur Trail to Tom Floyd Wayside Shelter. From Route 601 to the shelter are 2 separate trails leading to the same Spring and to a small campsite at the first sign.
- ▶ **Mile 3.6** – Possums Rest Overlook. Lots of work on this section of the trail up to the overlook, thanks PATC trail maintainers. This is a nice overlook, worth a stop just prior to entering the boundary to SNP.
- ▶ **Mile 3.8** – Intersection with Compton Gap Trail, Trail is both Yellow and White-Blazed. You can make good time on this section through to Compton Gap Parking as it is pretty level and wide.
- ▶ **Mile 5.0** – Intersection with Spring House Road on the right, yellow blazed trail bears to the right onto this.
- ▶ **Mile 5.3** – Intersection with Dickey Ridge Trail. Fort Windham Rocks are just up the trail a little ways on Dickey Ridge Trail, supposed to be nice, we did not go due to time.
- ▶ **Mile 5.5** – Compton Gap Parking - MP 10.5, cross Skyline Drive to head to Compton Peak on the AT.
- ▶ **Mile 6.4** – Compton Peak intersection, blue blazes. To the right is an overlook to the west, to the left is an overlook to the east with the Basalt Columns. These are out and back trails.
- ▶ **Mile 6.6** – West Overlook, Front Royal
- ▶ **Mile 7.0** – East Overlook and Basalt Columns, really wild rock formation. Search for "Giant's Causeway" in N. Ireland for a grander display of this same type of formation. Return to Intersection and bear left onto the AT
- ▶ **Mile 8.4** – Intersection to Jenkins Gap Parking spur trail, bear left.
- ▶ **Mile 8.5** – Jenkins Gap Parking