



# Ten Great Hikes Near Virginia Tech

## **1 & 2 — Cascades and Barney's Wall**

Head out of Blacksburg on US-460 West toward West Virginia. After approx. 15 miles, you will be in Pembroke. Turn right onto Route 623. There will be a Forest Service sign that says "Cascades". Follow this road until its end. There are restrooms there, but you must pay \$3 per car to park.

There are actually 2 trails. There is a flat trail that is about 2 miles and can be traveled in about 30 min. The other trail is about 3 miles and can take up to an hour, but is significantly more beautiful. After you get to the main waterfall, if you head up a little further, you can get to the Upper Falls.

## **3 — Kelly's Knob**

Head out of Blacksburg on US-460 West. After approx. 5 miles, on your right you will see Route 42. There is a small gas station at the corner. Head through Newport and after about a mile you'll see Route 601, also called Clover Hollow Rd. The sign that says 601, is on the right hand side of the road, and is somewhat hidden. If you find yourself driving on Route 42 for more than a few minutes, you probably missed it. Head out on Route 601 for several miles through farms. You will eventually reach a T-intersection with a road sign that says "Appalachian Trail". Head up the dirt road for several miles until you see a sign that says "ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY" and "GILES CO." That's where you park, and the trail is on your right.

The trail itself takes about 45 minutes to get to the knob. It starts out very steep, but only for about 20 min. before it levels off. Follow the white blazes on the trees to make sure you are going the correct direction. After 45 minutes, there will be a really small sign on a tree to your right that says, "OVERLOOK", and a camping area is on your right as well. The knob is there.

## **4 & 5 — War Spur and Wind Rock**

Take US-460 West. After approx. 10 miles, you will see a sign for Mountain Lake on Route 700. Follow the signs to Mountain Lake. You will drive through the resort and past the actual lake and onto a dirt road. After approximately 2 miles, you will see a parking area with a sign that is War Spur. If you continue for another mile to 2 miles, you will reach another parking area with another sign that is for Wind Rock.

War Spur is an approximately three mile loop hike that overlooks a valley in the Jefferson National Forest. Wind Rock is a quarter mile hike that can be done in 10 minutes that goes up to a much more significant overlook into the Jefferson National Forest. It is, as the name implies, extremely windy on the overlook, so bring a coat regardless of the season. There is a very large camping area by Wind Rock.

## **6 — Dragon's Tooth**

From Blacksburg, take North Main St. towards US-460. After the road goes from 4 lanes to 2, you will see Mount Tabor Road on your right. This is a very twisty road, so be very careful and pay attention to the signs warning of corners. Mount Tabor road will turn into Newport Rd. eventually. Just stay on this road until it ends, which should be after about 25 minutes of driving. The road will end at Route 311. Take a left and continue down it for approximately 1/4 mile, there will be a sign for Dragon's Tooth and the Appalachian Trail on your left. There is an outhouse at the parking lot and plenty of space to park.

The trails is 5 miles up and down. It is very rocky toward the top. It will take you about 1.5 hours to get up the trail. Follow the blue blazes until you reach a flat area where there is a camping area. This is where the trail intersects with the Appalachian Trail. There is a sign that points in the direction of Dragon's Tooth, and you are halfway there. Continue up the A.T. following the white blazes now. At the very top the trails gets very rocky and steep, but when you reach the top of the ridge, there will be a sign directing you to Dragon's Tooth with blue blazes showing the direction.

## **7 — McAfee's Knob**

From Blacksburg, take North Main Street toward US-460. After the road goes from 4 lanes to 2, you will see Mount Tabor Road on your right. This is a very twisty road, so be very careful and pay attention to the signs warning of corners. Mount Tabor road will eventually turn into Newport Road. Just stay on this road until it ends, which should be after about 25 minutes of driving. The road will end at Route 311. Take a right onto Route 311. After approx. 2.5 miles, you will pass Route 785, also called Catawba Creek Road and you will come up on a hill. At the top of the hill is a parking lot on your right and a trailhead on the left and right. After parking, cross the street and this is the start of the trail to McAfee's Knob.

There are two trails you can take up to the peak. The first is a fire road is a quick way to get up or down and crosses the main trail after about 2 miles. The other trail is more scenic and actually follow the Appalachian Trail. It will take you between approx. 45min. to an hour to reach the top, and it is a slow and steady incline, especially near the top.

## **8 — Angel's Rest**

From Blacksburg, take US-40 West toward Pearisburg. After approx. 25 miles, you will see a sign for Route 100 toward Pearisburg. Route 100 only goes in one direction, so take it. After you cross the bridge over US-460, you'll see a Dairy Queen on your right, with a road on either side of it. The first road you approach is North Main Street, and you don't want to take that. The next road, immediately after the Dairy Queen, is Johnston Avenue, and you want to take a right. Once on Johnston Ave., take the bear right onto Morris Avenue. The Appalachian Trail crosses this road after about a mile. Take it slow because it is a twisty road that people like to speed down, and you need to look for the small sign that says AT on your right. There is limited parking on the left hand side of the road, and the trail begins on the left hand side of the road, when you are coming from Pearisburg.

The trail itself is only a mile and a half, but you do ascend 1500 feet in that mile and a half. Angel's Rest itself is clearly marked at the top and you will know that you are there when you start to be surrounded by Rhododendrons. You can see the New River and Pearisburg from the top for quite the view. The better view, however, is another 0.6 miles of flat hiking down the Appalachian Trail on your left. If you already make the hike up to Angel's Rest, you might as well get the second view as well.

## **9 — Devil's Marbleyard**

Devil's Marbleyard is located in the James River Face Wilderness Area. The Devil's Marbleyard is the featured attraction on the Belfast Trail, which can be reached by following Route 759 south of Natural Bridge for 1.7 miles, then turning left on Route 781 for 1.3 miles. The trailhead is on the left along a section of road that has houses to the right.

The Belfast trail passes through the remains of an old Boy Scout camp and follows Belfast Creek gradually uphill to the Devil's Marbleyard, which is an unmistakable jumble of huge white boulders to the left of the trail. Climbing onto the boulders opens up some good views of the area, but it is the boulder field itself that is the star of the show. It's only 1.4 miles to the Devil's Marbleyard, or a 2.8-mile round trip. Add a little more for climbing up and down and all around the "marbles".

## **10 — Rice Fields**

From Blacksburg, follow Rt. 460 West. Cross the New River on Senator Shumate Bridge near the Celanese industrial site. Turn right on Route 641 ( Stillhouse Branch Road). There is a small parking lot within one half mile, where the Appalachian Trail crosses Route 641. total travel distance: 23 miles.

Rice Fields is reached by the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail ascends Peters Mountain and follows the ridge line. The crest of the Peters Mountain ridge is the West Virginia—Virginia state line. The ascent to the ridge is steep and rocky. Once on the ridge the trail crosses many saddles and peaks featuring sweeping westward views. The Rice Fields are extensive open pastures with rock outcroppings and are located on the southern end of Peters Mountain.

**Feel free to contact us if you have any questions:**

**(540)-231-4982    [ventureout@vt.edu](mailto:ventureout@vt.edu)**