

Mid State Trail from MD/PA Line to 2nd PA326 Crossing

This was an 18.8 mile backpacking trip that took place the weekend of August 12-13, 2000. Participants were Charlie Johnson, Bill Isham, his wife Chris and myself.

At right, Charlie, Bill & Chris @ beginning of hike.



On Saturday morning, August 12, 2000, I met Charlie J, Bill I and Chris at 9am at the Alpine House store in Flintstone, MD. Charlie said that there was a good church breakfast in Flintstone so we went. After a good country breakfast we shuttled the cars and got started around 11am at the northern terminus of the Green Ridge North Spur Trail at the Mason-Dixon line.

The weather was nice. Sunny and temperatures in the high seventies-low eighties. We road walked about half a mile and then turned right into Buchanan State Forest. We first "slabbed" Ragged Mountain. The trail there did not appear to be used very much at all. We then turned left onto Elbinsville Road. We would be road walking the next 4 miles. Next we turned left onto Covered Bridge Road, walked over Polish Mountain and then crossed Town Creek and the Hewitt Covered Bridge, which was under construction at the time. We took a break, went through "downtown Hewitt" and started walking south along PA326. It was a narrow road and we had to dodge some traffic. We then got to a house where we were supposed to tell the owners that we would



At left, Hewitt Covered Bridge, PA.

be crossing their pasture over the Karns Trail, which is a section of trail that the Mid State Trail utilizes. The owners were very nice to us, offering us water for our trip and some cold Cokes for now. I thought that trail magic only happened on the AT. We thanked them and then started the long, difficult up to the top of Tussey Mountain. There are no switchbacks on this section of trail. We went straight up for over three quarters of a mile.

At the 7.65 mile point on this hike we passed a spring. If you plan to do this hike, please stock up on water at this point because the next time you will pass

water will be at the 12.65 mile point. The maps and guide books make references to Big Pond, Little Pond and Alder Spring. However, we could not find water at any of these places.

There was a darkening of the clouds and thunder on the way up Tussey Mountain. We did get a thunder storm which lasted about 45 minutes and then cleared up. Once on top of the mountain the Tussey Mountain Trail, which the Mid State Trail utilizes, was wide, well graded and had that forest service

At right, MST along Tussy MTN, PA.



grass that only grows 3 or 4 inches on it. This trail is also utilized for cross country skiing in the winter. We went a couple more miles and camped at the intersection with the Johnson Trail, which is around the 10.27 mile mark. We had to really stretch our water supplies that night and the next morning. The campsite was nice and we had a good night's sleep. The next morning we had breakfast and went the additional 2 miles to a very nice springhouse along Beans Cove Road at around the 12.65 mile mark, about 350 feet left of the trail. We then started a gradual up along Martin Hill Road. We then turned left and were stunned to see a power line corridor again going straight up a huge mountain, which we had to follow. We did it, eating wild blueberries along the way.

Once on top of this mountain we could see Sidling Hill to the east. Since it was cloudy, we could not see the I68 cut through. We then passed a fire tower and the tallest point on the Mid State Trail.

Then the trail got interesting. We had a very, very, very steep down along the Basin Trail. Our ankles were burning after that one. We then had a



At left, Springhouse around mile 12.65.

series of downs and slight ups along the Verbal, Tar Kiln and Sweet Root Trails through some of the most beautiful and pristine forest that I have ever seen. There were streams and huge trees as well as alot of "Pennsylvania Rocks" and a few blowdowns that were difficult to navigate. Our last trail was the Garlic Trail, which led us back to our vehicle around 3pm on Sunday, August 13, 2000.

This was a great hike. The trail was well blazed and well signed. It was not

crowded either as we did not see a single other hiker the entire weekend. For those experienced backpackers with the necessary shuttle vehicles the southernmost section of the Mid State Trail is a wonderful way to spend a weekend.

Mike C

Please note that between 2010 and 2012 the southernmost section of the Mid State Trail was rerouted so that it's southern terminus was north of the town of Flintstone, MD. It also became part of the Great Eastern Trail during that time. The current maps (as of 2020) show both the Flintstone, MD southern terminus and the Green Ridge SF southern terminus.

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