

Day Hike of Blue Ridge Tunnel near Waynesboro, VA

This was a 3 mile easy linear hike that occurred on 11/16/2022. It was 1.5 miles in, then 1.5 miles out. Again it was just me on this one.

I left Manassas, VA around 7:00 AM. Traffic wasn't bad until I got to Charlottesville. But I got through it. There was a lot of fog along the way but it miraculously cleared up once I hit I64 westbound. I got to the eastern trailhead of the Blue Ridge tunnel around 9:15 AM. I then hit the trail by 9:30 AM. There were portapotties at the trailhead. The trail was dual track all the way through the tunnel and had a 2% grade going east to west. The signing and quality of the trail was first rate. Thanks Nelson County, VA!

It was about a .75 mile hike before I even got to the tunnel. It was in the 40's and breezy when I got to the eastern tunnel entrance. There were massive amounts of water cascading over and around the eastern entrance. I thought "Oh, oh. What did I get myself into? But the water drained away from the entrance almost magically. All the rain that we got last night probably contributed to this display. Since I saw no other vehicles in the trailhead parking lot I was pretty sure that I had the entire tunnel to myself.

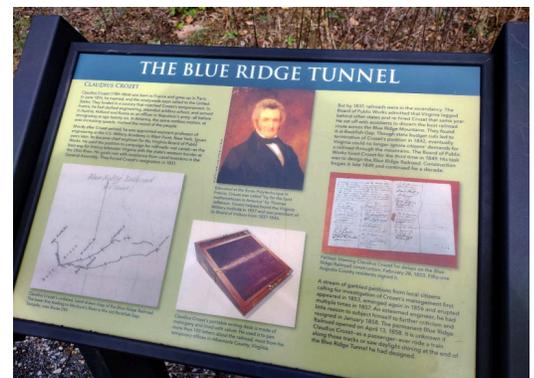
I was scared the day before this trip about going into the tunnel. "What happens if it caves



*BRT East Trailhead.
By Mike Calabrese*



*Blowdown on approach trail.
By Mike Calabrese*



*Plaque.
By Mike Calabrese*

in while I'm there?", I thought. But it didn't. I actually felt a sense of peace walking through this tunnel all by myself. I thought about all the men that built it and how some lost their lives doing so. I heard the dripping of water while walking. It seemed like the eastern side of the trail was wetter than the western side.

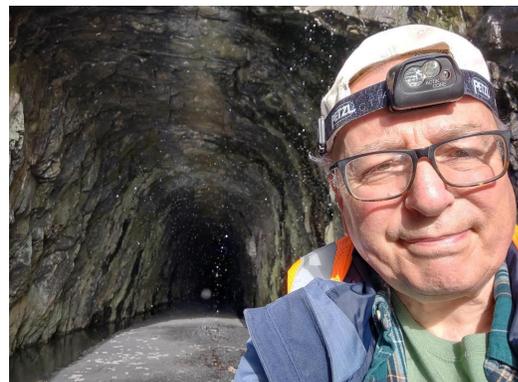
The east side of the tunnel was all rock. I could see the marks on the walls at some points where they either used pick axes or drilled holes so that they could blast the tunnel through I'm not sure which. There were some sections of the tunnel that looked like either concrete or waterproof paint was applied to the walls. The tunnel trail had gullies on each side of it so it drained well.

At the halfway point the tunnel became brick lined. I'm not sure why they did this but it seemed to leak less on the western side. I made it to the other side of the tunnel at around 10:10 AM. I ate an energy bar, drank some water and then started back through. On the way back I thought I heard children's voices. It sounded like they were having a good time and yelling and screaming. But there was no one in the tunnel but me. The only explanation that I could think of was that sound tends to carry in the mountains. I experienced this a number of times while section hiking the AT. But maybe it was something else...

I made it back to the eastern entrance by 10:45 AM. I did not see anyone else here until I was half way back to my vehicle. I passed a lone female hiker, a couple on bicycles and a couple and their dog that were getting out of their vehicle just as I was pulling out. So hiking during the week is the way to go at this trail. I



*East end of tunnel.
By Mike Calabrese*



*Selfie.
By Mike Calabrese*



*About half way through.
By Mike Calabrese*



*West end of tunnel.
By Mike Calabrese*

chose to start at the east trailhead because it was more level and shorter to the tunnel. If you start at the western trailhead there is less parking and the approach trail is over a mile and has a few ups on it.

Now for the best part. I took US250 back to Charlottesville as it was slower going and I got to see more of the country. On the way home I stopped at Yoders Country Market in Madison, VA. They have a huge selection of bakery goods, spices, candy and all things food. They make hot and cold sandwiches as well. I got a Reuben. Excellent! I made it home around 1:30 PM and had the rest of the day to do stuff.

This was a neat trail. I think that one could even push someone in a wheelchair through this tunnel. If you have two vehicles and stage them at each trailhead, you can walk through the tunnel just once. But I enjoyed walking through the tunnel twice. And I had it all to myself each time!

Mike C



*Yoders!
By Mike Calabrese*

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