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## Browns Hollow - New Market Gap, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
11.7 mls	★4	★3	★4	★4	★4
<b>Hiking Time:</b> 5.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 2,395 ft <b>Parking:</b> Park at the old Welcome Center. 38.64278, -78.61138					

The Browns Hollow hike is the big brother to the Emerald Pond circuit, adding 3.5 miles with the addition of the Browns Hollow and Roaring Run Trails. This 11.7 mile hike has 3 great features: 1. The climb through the gorge on Browns Run, with small pools and waterfalls. 2. Emerald Pond, with its spring fed swimming hole nestled in a small hollow off the Bird Knob Trail. The water has exceptional clarity, and in the summer months is surprisingly warm for a mountain pond. And 3. A spectacular vista to the west of New Market from the Massanutten South Trail.

There are several secluded campsites along Browns Run, including one just above a set of falls halfway up the gorge. On the west side of Big Mountain the best camping is right on the banks of Emerald Pond. Also, if you travel west homeward, make sure to stop at Pack's Custard Stand on US211 in New Market for some of the best frozen custard around!

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** - Start the hike near the front of the parking area on the white blazed Wildflower Trail, DO NOT go down the paved Nature Trail at the end of the parking area. Follow the white blazed Wildflower Trail downhill for 0.3 miles to the intersection of the orange blazed Massanutten South Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 0.3** - Stay straight continuing downhill on the now white and orange blazed Wildflower/Massanutten South Trail for 0.2 miles to a four way intersection at the old picnic ground. On the opposite side of the intersection is a shelter with multiple picnic tables.
- ▶ **Mile 0.6** - At the four way intersection turn right on the orange blazed Massanutten South Trail that now uses a section of the picnic ground loop road. In 375 feet stay on the orange blazed Massanutten South Trail by turning right off the loop road onto an old logging road. Follow the trail for 400 feet to an intersection where the orange blazed Massanutten South Trail turns left, and the pink blazed Browns Hollow Trail stays straight on the old logging road.
- ▶ **Mile 0.8** - Stay straight on the pink blazed Browns Hollow Trail to the next intersection in 0.5 miles
- ▶ **Mile 1.3** - Stay left on the now narrower pink blazed Browns Hollow Trail as the old logging road continues straight. Follow the trail as it winds around the ridge, then descends to Browns Run. Just before crossing Browns Run there is a campsite and small stream that falls of Big Mountain.
- ▶ **Mile 1.8** - Cross Browns Run and now start the ascent of the gorge. The trail gradually increases in incline and passes a small waterfall and several campsites. The last 1.2 miles to the saddle between Short Horse Mountain and Big Mountain becomes quite steep.
- ▶ **Mile 4.5** - At the saddle there is a campsite suitable for two tents on the right. The pink blazed Browns Hollow Trail now descends for 0.7 miles into Roaring Run Gap, then ends at the intersection of the Roaring Run Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 5.2** - Turn right uphill on the purple blazed Roaring Run Gap Trail. The trail steeply ascends to the ridge on Big Mountain with several switchbacks. At the ridge is a small campsite on the right. Descend Big Mountain for 0.4 miles where the Roaring Run trail ends at the Massanutten South Trail and Forestry Road.
- ▶ **Mile 6.2** - Turn right uphill on the orange blazed Forestry Road for 0.4 miles to a closed gate and the white blazed Bird Knob Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 6.7** - Turn left passing the gate onto the white blazed Bird Knob trail and follow it for 0.1 miles to a split in the old logging road. Take the unmarked road to the right for 0.1 miles then arrive at Emerald Pond. Pass along the left side of the pond following a small trail to a campsite on the opposite bank.
- ▶ **Mile 6.8** - Return to the white blazed Bird Knob Trail, turn right, and climb to a clearing near Bird Knob. Pass along the right side of the clearing where the Bird Knob Trail reenters the forest on the ridge of Massanutten Mountain. The Bird Knob Trail will gently climb, then descend past two unmaintained trails before ending at the intersection of the orange blazed Massanutten South Trail 1.8 miles from the clearing.
- ▶ **Mile 9.2** - Stay left on the orange blazed Massanutten South Trail for 0.8 miles to the panoramic vista west towards New Market.
- ▶ **Mile 10.0** - From the vista descend steeply for 0.4 miles where the trail passes through a rocky area on the west side of the mountain. From this point the trail is less steep, and turns back the east side of the mountain descending back to the intersection to the Wildflower Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 11.4** - Turn left upward on the white blazed Wildflower Trail for the reaming 0.3 miles back to the parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 11.7** - Arrive back at the old Visitor Center and parking area.