



## Overall Run/Heiskell Hollow - SNP, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
12.7 mls	★	★	★	★	★
<b>Hiking Time:</b> 6.5 hours plus a half hour for lunch <b>Elev. Gain:</b> 2,390 ft <b>Parking:</b> Parking is at the end of graveled Chrisman Road (VA-697)					

Our first hike of the year in January proved to be a cold one, but due to the cold we saw the Big Falls at Overall Run mostly frozen, beautiful! This is a longer alternate route to its sister hike, Overall Run/Beecher Ridge. This hike has just about everything you would want in a hike: streams, swimming holes, falls, vistas, homestead ruins, etc.

Hiking this trail at any time of the year would be enjoyable. We pictured ourselves taking a dip in some of the huge swimming holes when the weather is warmer. If you have done Overall Run before, come back out and try this route, over half of it is on new trails, you will not be disappointed.

Parking is at the end of graveled Chrisman Road (VA-697) and is really just side of the road parking, if done well you could get 4-6 cars parked here. Do not block either of the farm gates. The trail begins at the first gate, there is a yellow blaze on the fence beside the gate, go through the gate (close it properly) and head to the left towards the brown Heiskell Hollow sign, the trail bears to the right of the sign.

You are on private property for 0.3 miles until you reach the Shenandoah NP Boundary gate, so please be respectful and stay on the trail. From the SNP boundary you will be following East Fork Creek, passing remnants of a homestead/fireplace and stone wall on the right, and in 0.4 miles from the SNP Gate you will reach a small falls and swimming hole (Mile Mark 0.7). Continue on the trail crossing the creek about 3 times for 0.8 miles and then bear to the left staying on the trail, DO NOT continue straight (MM 1.5). Note: All other intersections on this hike will have SNP concrete intersection posts. In 0.4 miles beyond this intersection reach the the first intersection with a post and continue straight on the Heiskell Hollow Trail (MM 1.9).

The trail to this point has been very gradual, but the next section you will start to climb, gaining 1100' feet in 1.7 miles reaching the next T-intersection MM 3.6. Go left onto the Weddlewood Trail. Continue climbing reaching the highpoint (2670') of the trail at the next intersection in 1.4 miles (MM 5.0), bear left onto the Mathews Arm Trail. Go 0.5 miles, passing the Beecher Ridge Trail intersection on the left (MM 5.5), bear right staying on the Mathews Arm Trail and in an additional 0.5 miles bear left onto the Overall Run/Tuscarora Trail (MM6.0). This trail will start to descend very steeply reaching some great overlooks of the falls in another 0.5 miles (MM 6.5). There is a side trail that gets you a little closer to the Falls, be careful, great stop for lunch. We did this hike in January and saw the falls frozen. There are some great views of the Page Valley with the Massanutten Range in the background. From June on the Falls can be barely a trickle without some sustained rains, so the ideal time to see the falls is January to May.

Continue to descend and in 0.3 miles off to your left is another small overlook with a possible campsite just below that. The trail continues to descend rapidly and reaches the Thompson Hollow Intersection in 1.6 miles, continue straight (MM 8.6). In about 0.10 miles after the intersection is a side trail on the left to a large swimming hole and slide. The next intersection is 0.7 miles from the swimming hole, bear hard left onto the Beecher Ridge Connector Trail (MM 9.4). The elevation is 800' at this intersection and besides the parking area, this is the low point of the hike. You will have a short but tough 0.7 mile hike up to the Beecher Ridge Trail Intersection (MM 10.1). Bear to the right, heading to the Heiskell Hollow Trail, reaching that in another 0.7 miles (MM 10.8). Turn right onto the Heiskell Hollow Trail reaching Chrisman Road parking in 1.9 miles (MM 12.6).

### Mile by Mile Directions:

**(Mile Marker 0.0)** – Parking is at the end of graveled Chrisman Road (VA-697) and is really just side of the road parking, if done well you could get 4-6 cars parked here, do not block either of the farm gates. The trail begins at the first gate, there is a yellow blaze on the fence beside the gate, go through the gate (close it properly) and head to the left towards the brown Heiskell Hollow sign, the trail bears to the right of the sign. You are on private property for 0.3 miles until you reach the Shenandoah NP Boundary gate, so be respectful and stay on the trail.

**(Mile Marker 0.7)** - You will be following East Fork Creek, passing remnants of a homestead/fireplace and stone wall on the right and in 0.4 miles from the SNP Gate you will reach a small falls and swimming hole.

**(Mile Marker 1.5)** - Continue on the trail crossing the creek about 3 times for 0.8 miles and bear to the left staying on the trail, we put 2 branches making an "X" at this intersection, do not go straight.

Note: All other intersections on this hike will have SNP concrete intersection posts.

**(Mile Marker 1.9)** - In 0.4 miles beyond the previous intersection you will reach the the first intersection with a post, continue straight on the Heiskell Hollow Trail. The trail to this point has been very gradual, almost a walk in the park, just over 300' feet in 1.9 miles.

**(Mile Marker 3.6)** – From the previous intersection you will start to climb, gaining 1100' feet in 1.7 miles reaching this T-intersection. Go left onto the Weddlewood Trail.

**(Mile Marker 5.0)** - Continue climbing reaching the highpoint (2670') of the trail at this intersection in 1.4 miles, bear left onto the Mathews Arm Trail.

**(Mile Marker 5.5)** - Go 0.5 miles, passing the Beecher Ridge Trail intersection on the left (MM 5.5), bear right staying on the Mathews Arm Trail

**(Mile Marker 6.0)** - Go an additional 0.5 miles, bear left onto the Overall Run/Tuscarora Trail (MM6.0).

**(Mile Marker 6.5)** - The trail will start to descend very steeply reaching some great overlooks of the falls in 0.5 miles. There is a side trail that gets you a little closer to the Falls, be careful, great stop for lunch. We did this hike in January and saw the Falls frozen. There are some great views of the Page Valley with the Massanutten Range in the background. We have heard that in the summer, the Falls can be barely a trickle without some sustained rains, so the ideal time to see the falls is probably Jan to May.

**(Mile Marker 6.8)** - Continue to descend and in 0.3 miles off to your left is another small overlook with a possible campsite just below that.

**(Mile Marker 8.6)** - The trail continues to descend rapidly and reaches the Thompson Hollow Intersection in 1.6 Miles, continue straight. In about 0.10 miles after the intersection is a side trail on the left to a large swimming hole and slide.

**(Mile Marker 9.4)** - The next intersection is 0.7 miles from the swimming hole, bear hard left onto the Beecher Ridge Connector Trail. The elevation is 800' at this intersection and besides the parking area, this is the low point of the hike.

**(Mile Marker 10.1)** - You will have a short but tough 0.7 mile hike up to the Beecher Ridge Trail Intersection. Bear to the right, heading to the Heiskell Hollow Trail

**(Mile Marker 10.8)** – Reach the Heiskel Hollow Trail in another 0.7 miles and turn right heading to the Parking area.

**(Mile Marker 12.6)** - Reach Chrisman Road parking in 1.9 miles.

#### **Flora** - by Julie Ables Chapin

Along this hike in March - June are many opportunities to see native Rue-anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), a delicate woodland perennial rising to 9 inches. At the top of the stalk is a lacy whorl of 3-parted, dark-green leaves above which rises delicate, reddish-brown stems bearing pink or white blossoms. This slender spring flower is easily cultivated in wildflower gardens and does well in part shade. Unfortunately, equally prevalent is the invasive non-native garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) plant, a known toxic decoy to the West Virginia white (*Pieris virginianensis*) butterfly, a delicate and rare spring-flying butterfly native to the region. Garlic mustardspreads rapidly in wooded areas, smothering native wildflowers, and native tree and shrub seedlings. It can overrun a forest floor in a few years, destroying a previously healthy ecosystem by eliminating many plant species.