

# Shenandoah

National Park  
Virginia

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Photo by Ed Cooper

## The Park Beyond the Drive

Shenandoah National Park lies astride a beautiful section of the Blue Ridge, which forms the eastern rampart of the Appalachian Mountains that run from Pennsylvania to Georgia. In the valley to the west is the Shenandoah River, from which the park gets its name, and between the north and south forks of the river is Massanutten, a 40-mile-long mountain. To the east is the rolling Piedmont country. Providing vistas of the spectacular landscape is Skyline Drive, which runs along the Blue Ridge through the length of the park.

Most of the rocks that form the Blue Ridge are ancient granitic and metamorphosed volcanic formations, some exceeding one billion years in age. By comparison, humans have been associated with this land only about 9,000 years. Primitive food gatherers and, later, Indian hunters used the land for centuries but left little evidence of their presence. Settlement of the Shenandoah Valley began soon after the first expedition crossed the Blue Ridge in 1716. Many of the settlers came "up river," north to south, from Pennsylvania. By 1800, the lowlands had been settled by farmers, while the rugged mountains were still relatively untouched. Later, as valley farmland became scarce, settlement spread into the mountains. The mountain farmers cleared land, hunted wildlife, and grazed sheep and cattle. By the 20th century, these people had developed a culture of their own, born from the harsh-

ness and isolation of mountain living. However, the forests were shrinking, game animals were disappearing, the thin mountain soil was wearing out, and people were beginning to leave.

In 1926 Congress authorized the establishment of Shenandoah National Park. The Commonwealth of Virginia then purchased nearly 280 square miles of land to be donated to the Federal Government. More than half of the population had left the mountain area, and the remaining residents sold their land or were relocated with government assistance. In dedicating the park in 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated a novel experiment in returning an overused area to its original natural beauty. Recreational facilities were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and in 1939 Skyline Drive was completed. Croplands and pastures soon became overgrown with shrubs, locusts, and pine; these in turn were replaced by oak, hickory, and other trees that make up a mature deciduous forest. Now, more than 95 percent of the park is covered by forests with about 100 species of trees. The vegetative regeneration has been so complete that in 1976 Congress designated two-fifths of the park as wilderness. The largest remaining open area is Big Meadows, which is being kept in its historically open condition by management fires. Here, the abundance of wildflowers, strawberries, and blueberries attract both wildlife and humans.

Deer, bear, bobcat, turkey, and other animals that were formerly rare or absent have now returned. Deer and such smaller animals as chipmunk, raccoon, skunk, opossum, and gray squirrel are frequently seen. Bear are found mostly in backcountry areas but are occasionally spotted elsewhere. About 200 species of birds have been recorded. A few, such as ruffed grouse, barred owl, raven, woodpeckers, and junco, are permanent residents. Many more are seen during the warmer months. These include flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, and 35 species of warblers. The park is home to several species of salamanders, and two poisonous snakes, the timber rattlesnake and the copperhead, are occasionally reported, as are several harmless species.

The park is a place of changing scenes, changing moods, changing opportunities. The differences are especially dramatic as the seasons change. Spring begins in March with the blooming of red maple, serviceberry, and hepatica. Chipmunks and groundhogs appear. The weather may change quickly. The green of leafing trees moves up the ridge at the rate of about 100 feet a day and does not reach the peaks until late May. Many wildflowers come into bloom during April and May, when the large-flowered trillium carpets the forest floor. Pink azalea blooms in late May followed by mountain laurel in June. Migrating birds in their breeding plumage are numerous. The park visitor encounters new sights,

colors, sound—everywhere. Summer brings a mantle of deep green to the ridges and hollows. Many birds are nesting, and the catbird, chestnut-sided warbler, indigo bunting, and towhee abound. Fawns are often seen. The variety of wildflowers increases as the summer progresses, and by late summer many species cover the roadsides and open areas. Fall is the season of brilliant colors and clear, crisp days. Many people come to the park to see the fall color, which usually is at its best between October 10 and 25. The southward migration of birds is highlighted by large numbers of hawks moving along the ridge. Most facilities close about November 1, but Skyline Drive remains open. Winter, with its many clear days and lack of leaves, offers the best opportunities for distant views and finding evidence of the people who once lived here. Skyline Drive is closed during and after periods of bad weather, because of the buildup of ice and snow on the road.

Whatever time of year you are here, many new sights and discoveries await you. Between Skyline Drive and the park boundaries are ridges and valleys, hills and hollows, laced with sparkling streams and waterfalls. Trails take you into the forest of Shenandoah where you can see plants and animals and experience the beauty and peace of this vast recycled land. This is your park; please take time to enjoy it and to discover some of its many secrets beyond the Drive.



Shenandoah is more than a pretty drive. We invite you to leave the roadway, hike its many trails, and meet nature up close, whether it be in the form of mountain creeks, wild strawberries, whitetail deer, or toadstools. Alone, with a group of friends, or with the family, you can find plenty to do in the national park in every season of the year.



## Visiting the Park

By far the greatest number of people enjoy Shenandoah's scenic beauty from the 105-mile long Skyline Drive along the Blue Ridge. Numerous parking overlooks present panoramas of the Piedmont to the east and Shenandoah Valley to the west. See the map and guide on the other side for information about specific sites.

Headquarters of Shenandoah National Park is 4 miles west of Thornton Gap and 4 miles east of Luray on U.S. 211. Information and backcountry permits may be obtained here; publications on the park are on sale. Questions or comments about the park may be sent to: Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park, Luray, VA 22835.

For park information, telephone 703-999-2266. In emergencies only, call 999-2227.

Park visitor centers provide information services, interpretive exhibits, and illustrated programs. Dickey Ridge Visitor Center (Mile 4.6) is open from about April 1 to November 1. Byrd Visitor Center at Big Meadows (Milepost 51) is open daily from early March through December and on an intermittent schedule during January and February. The sale of books, slides, postcards, posters, maps, and other materials on the park is handled in both visitor centers by the Shenandoah Natural History Association. The association, whose address is Luray, VA 22835, will furnish a list of items and prices upon request. The visitor centers are here for your convenience. Don't hesitate to use them.

Naturalist programs, consisting of evening programs and campfire talks, hikes, and demonstrations, are offered at several locations during the summer and at a few sites during spring and fall. Activity schedules are posted on bulletin boards throughout the park and in "Shenandoah Overlook," a park newspaper that is available free at most visitor contact stations. Self-guiding nature trails, with signs or leaflets, are at five locations. Watch for interpretive signs at overlooks along Skyline Drive.

Family campgrounds are at Mathews Arm (Mile 22.3), Big Meadows (Milepost 51), Lewis Mountain (Mile 57.6), and Loft Mountain (Mile 79.5). Hookups for electricity, sewage, and water are not provided. A 14-day limit is in effect from June 1 to October 31. Advance reservations are

accepted for an organized youth campground at Dundo (Mile 83.7). For campground reservation information, telephone 703-999-2282. A free camping permit, required for all backcountry camping, can be obtained at entrance stations, visitor centers, and park headquarters, or by mail from the chief park ranger.

Picnic grounds are located at seven locations (see chart and map). They have tables, fireplaces, drinking fountains, and comfort stations.

Accommodations include overnight lodging, restaurants, and riding stables at Skyland Lodge (Mileposts 41-43) and at Big Meadows Lodge (Mile 51.2), plus cottages that can be rented at

Lewis Mountain (Mile 57.6). Food service, gift shops, service stations, and facilities for campers—such as grocery and camping supply stores and laundry, and ice and wood sales—are at various points along Skyline Drive (see chart and map). All facilities are open in summer, some are in spring and fall, and most are closed during January and February. Information on concession facilities may be obtained by writing to ARA Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc. Box 727, Luray, VA 22835.

Another park concessioner, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, operates six trail cabins for hikers and maintains huts for Appalachian Trail hikers. The club also publishes maps and other materials about the park.

Trails totaling more than 500 miles make much of the park accessible to hikers. The trails vary in length from short leg-stretchers to a 95-mile segment of the Appalachian Trail that runs the entire length of the park. Many of the trailheads are located on Skyline Drive and in the developed areas. Do not use the map in this folder to hike by. Detailed hiking maps may be obtained at all contact stations; using them will help you enjoy more of the park—safely.

Fishing for native brook trout provides a challenge to those who are willing to hike to streams in the park. A State of Virginia license is required; a 5-day license is available at wayside facilities and camp stores in the park.



With every day-to-day or moment-to-moment change in the weather, the mood of the Blue Ridge Mountains changes, too. Low-lying clouds, snow, mist, autumn colors, and the sun's rays at dawn and dusk, all affect our perceptions of the place. No wonder some early settlers left the valley to hack out a living on the ridge. The views alone were worth the struggle. Big Meadows attracted settlers, as it did the Indians before them. Remnants of farms can still be seen in parts of the park.



## Park Resources Need Your Help

Shenandoah National Park was established to preserve all natural resources, including wildlife, forests, and fish. Visitor activities may unintentionally damage them. Please help us preserve these resources by heeding the following regulations.

Wood fires are permitted only in fireplaces in developed areas, for fires built on the ground may sterilize the soil or cause forest fires. For this reason, too, wood fires are not permitted in the backcountry. Extinguish all smoking materials completely. A match or cigarette carelessly tossed in loose dry leaves has started too many forest fires.

Feeding of any wild animal can result in human injury, so you must properly store food while camping in the backcountry or in the campgrounds. This precaution is important in preventing bears from being attracted to campsites. Animals that become accustomed to unnatural foods lose their ability to forage.

The park is a nature sanctuary. All plants and animals are protected. Leave them alone for others to enjoy. Please do nothing to injure or disturb them. Hunting with any kind of weapon is prohibited. Before entering the park, firearms must be made inoperative and packed away. Carry out your trash and that left by others. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times.

Bicycles and motor vehicles are prohibited on trails. They must be used only on public roads. Commercial trucking is restricted to park business only.

Park rangers are here to protect the resources and to provide for your safety. Report all injuries, motor vehicle accidents, or violations of the law to them immediately.

## Words of Advice and Safety Tips

Skyline Drive is a narrow, mountainous road providing beautiful vistas, but please do your sightseeing from the overlooks and not from behind the wheel. The speed limit of 35 miles per hour allows a casual opportunity to enjoy the sights. Wild animals frequently are seen along the road shoulders; drive carefully, for they often dart across the road when you least expect them to do so.

Mountain weather is quite changeable. Come prepared for cold, wet conditions at any season. Summer days may be warm, but nights are cool. Fog may occur at any time. Drive slowly and carefully during inclement weather. Fees are not refundable because of weather conditions.

Most injuries in the park are caused by falls, so watch your step. Wear proper footwear when hiking. Do not take shortcuts, for many persons fall when doing so in this steep, rocky terrain. Shortcuts also cause erosion and result in damage to the trails.

There are several waterfalls in the park, and many injuries occur around them. Playing at the top of the falls and climbing on the nearby rocks should be avoided. The rock surfaces are usually wet and always slippery. In the spring, streams run full. Crossing them during high water can be dangerous.

Avoid the heavily used trails. Lesser used trails often have equally fine scenery and views and offer better chances for observing wildlife. At the park boundary, many accesses to trails cross private property. Please respect the rights of private landowners. Failure to honor the private owner's wishes may jeopardize future access.

All water, except that from developed systems, must be vigorously boiled for one minute before use.

Selecting backcountry camping sites out of sight of the trails is required and will enhance your wilderness experience.

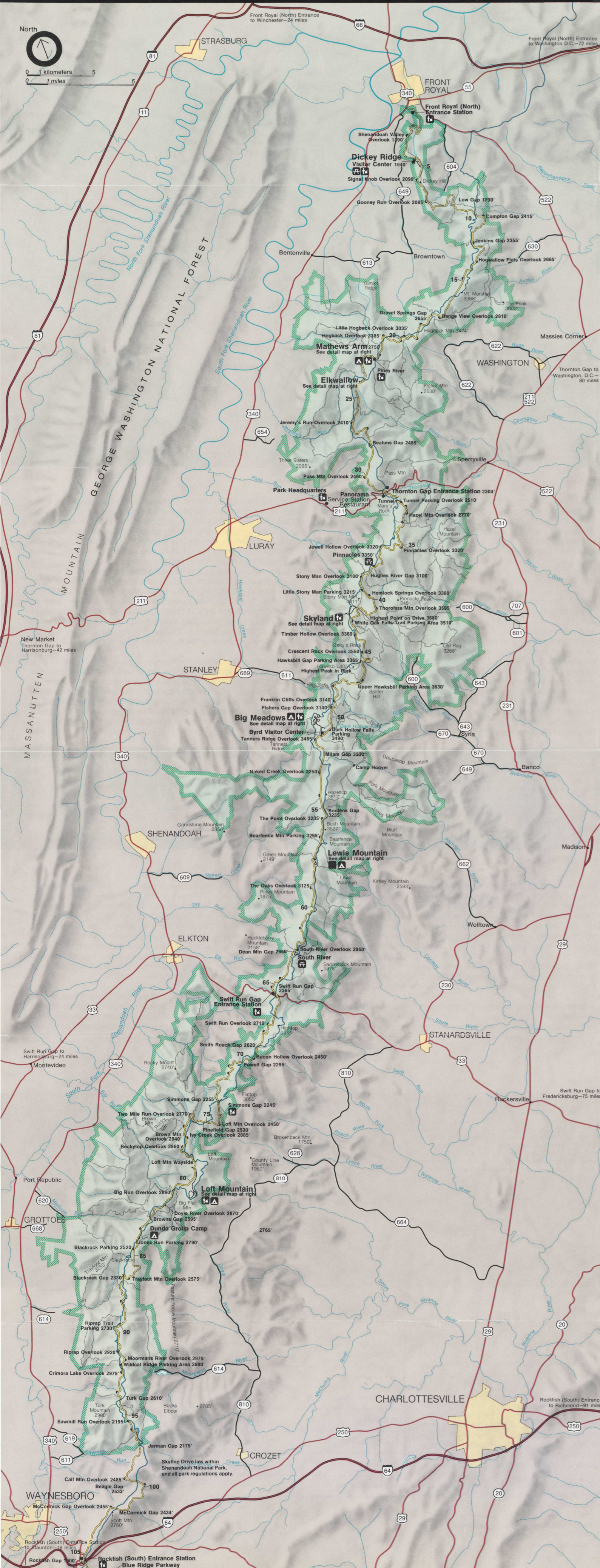
## Major Facilities and Services

|                     |                |          |      |         |            |                     |              |         |        |
|---------------------|----------------|----------|------|---------|------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|--------|
| 4.6 Dickey Ridge    | ●              |          |      |         | ●          | ●                   | ●            | ●       |        |
| 22.3 Mathews Arm    |                |          |      |         |            | ●                   | ●            | ●       | ●      |
| 24.1 Elkwallow      |                | ●        | ●    |         | ●          |                     |              |         | ●      |
| 31.5 Thornton Gap   |                | ●        | ●    |         |            |                     |              |         | ●      |
| 41.7 Skyland        |                |          |      | ●       | ●          |                     | ●            | ●       | ●      |
| 51.0 Big Meadows    | ●              | ●        | ●    | ●       | ●          | ●                   | ●            | ●       | ●      |
| 57.6 Lewis Mountain |                |          |      | ●       | ●          |                     | ●            | ●       | ●      |
| 79.8 Loft Mountain  |                | ●        | ●    |         | ●          | ●                   | ●            | ●       | ●      |
|                     | Visitor Center | Gasoline | Food | Lodging | Picnicking | Self-Guiding Trails | Ranger Talks | Camping | Hiking |

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## Using This Map and Guide

Skyline Drive runs the full length of Shenandoah National Park and connects directly with the 469-mile Blue Ridge Parkway. To help you find features, facilities, and services, concrete mile markers have been placed on the right-hand side of the Drive as you head south. They are numbered from north to south, and they are labeled every five miles on this map.

For your convenience, the park has been divided into five areas below with brief descriptions of the major points of interest. Those between the mileposts are noted in tenths of a mile. All overlooks are not listed here. You may purchase more detailed guides at the Dickey Ridge and Byrd Visitor Centers.

Tourist services, besides those within the park, may be found near the four entrances to Skyline Drive: Front Royal (North), U.S. 340 and Va. 55; Thornton Gap, U.S. 211; Swift Run Gap, U.S. 33; and Rockfish (South), I-64 and U.S. 250. See the reverse side of this folder for other information about traveling in this national park.

- |                          |                   |             |                |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Shenandoah National Park | Overlook          | Other trail | Ranger station |
| Skyline Drive Milepost   | Appalachian Trail | Campground  | Picnic ground  |

## Front Royal to Beahms Gap

**Mile 0** Skyline Drive begins in the north at its junction with U.S. 340 south of Front Royal, Virginia. I-66 west meets U.S. 340 4 miles north of the city.

**0.6 Front Royal (North) Entrance Station** is staffed by National Park Service personnel who, besides collecting entrance fees, can answer your questions and give other assistance.

**2.8 Shenandoah Valley Overlook** provides a sweeping view across the valley to Signal Knob, a Civil War communications post to the right on Massanutten Mountain. The mountain divides the valley and the Shenandoah River, with the south fork on this side and the north fork on the far side. The two forks meet north of Front Royal.

**4.6 Dickey Ridge Visitor Center** is one of the park's two major information facilities with exhibits on services and activities and a sales outlet for publications, slides, and maps. Picnic ground,

1.3-mile circuit self-guiding nature trail, and, across the Drive, access to Dickey Ridge Trail.

**6.8 Gooney Run Overlook** gives a view across the valley and toward Dickey Ridge on the right.

**17.1 Range View Overlook** offers a spectacular view of a large section of the Blue Ridge.

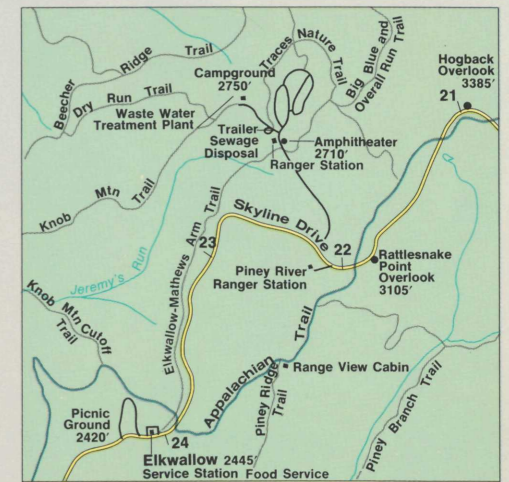
**21 Hogback Overlook** offers, on clear days, a look at many of the bends of the meandering Shenandoah River.

**22.1 Piney River Ranger Station** is on the east side of the Drive. Stop here if you need help.

**22.2 Mathews Arm** campground includes tent and trailer sites, trailer sewage disposal station, a self-guiding trail and several other trails, conducted hikes and campfire programs in summer.

**24.1 Elkwallow** facilities are open from May through October. Picnic ground, food service, campstore, gasoline, ice, firewood, souvenirs.

**28.5 Beahms Gap** provides access to the Appalachian Trail and shorter trails.



Mathews Arm

## Thornton Gap to Crescent Rock

**31.5 Thornton Gap** is one of the major entrances to the park, for U.S. 211 from Warrenton to Luray crosses the Drive here. A trail leads to 360-degree views from Marys Rock, which rises 1,200 feet above the gap on the south side. Panorama Restaurant, service station, gift shop. Park headquarters is 4 miles west on U.S. 211.

**32.4 Marys Rock Tunnel**, built in 1932, goes through 600 feet of rock with a 13-foot clearance.

**36.7 Pinnacles** beckons picnickers, even in rainy weather, for there is a shelter. Access to Appalachian Trail.

**38.6 Stony Man** peak is straight ahead as you enter the overlook from the north. Across the valley is Massanutten Mountain.

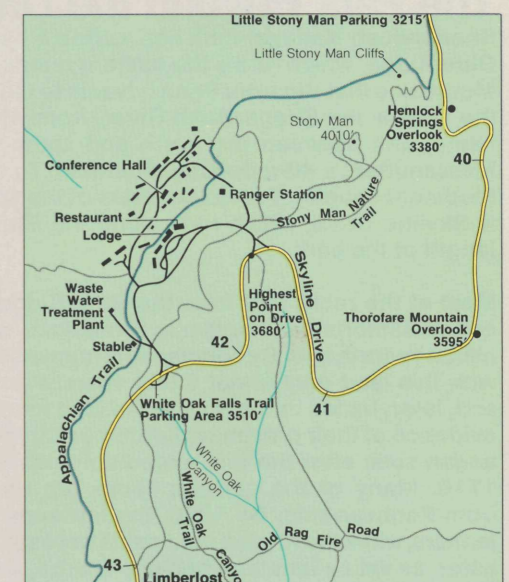
**39.1 Little Stony Man Cliffs** can be reached by a round trip hike of 0.9 mile from the parking area. Access to Appalachian Trail.

**41.7 & 42.5 Skyland**, at 3,680 feet, is the highest

point on the Drive and one of the primary tourist facility stops. Naturalist George Freeman Pollock, who built Skyland resort in the 1890s, was a major proponent for establishing the park. Lodge, dining room, gift shop, riding horses, Stony Man Nature Trail and other trails, conducted hikes, and evening programs.

**42.6 White Oak Canyon** boasts six waterfalls. A trail leads to them, 5 miles round trip, and to the Limerlost, an area of large hemlocks.

**44.4 Crescent Rock**, 25 yards from the Drive, provides the best view of Hawksbill Mountain. Another trail leads to Betty's Rock, 0.6 mile round trip.



Skyland

## Hawksbill Gap to Big Meadows

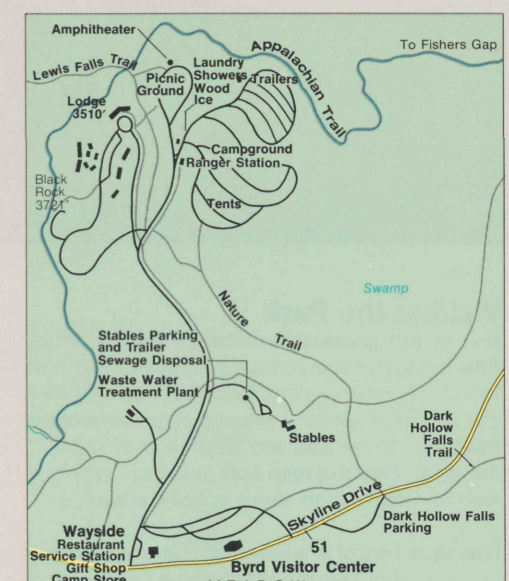
**45.6 Hawksbill Gap Parking Area** trails lead to Hawksbill Mountain, at 4,051 feet the highest point in the park.

**46.7 Upper Hawksbill Parking Area** to the Hawksbill summit is 2 miles round trip.

**50.7 Dark Hollow Falls**, the waterfall closest to the Drive, cascades 70 feet over greenstone. Round trip from the parking area is 1.5 miles.

**51 & 51.2 Big Meadows** offers a multitude of activities and services at three sites, all connected by a network of trails. Byrd Visitor Center, entrance at Milepost 51, is one of the park's two major information facilities, providing exhibits on the area's human and natural history; film and ranger programs; sales outlet for publications, slides, and maps; conducted hikes; and a self-guiding nature trail. The wayside facilities at Mile 51.3 include a coffee shop, campers' store, gift shop, and service station. One mile from the Drive,

using either entrance, is Big Meadows Lodge with rooms, dining room, and gift shop open in spring, summer, and fall. Big Meadows Campground offers tent and trailer sites, trailer sewage disposal station, showers, laundry, ice, firewood, self-guiding nature trail, picnic ground, and summer campfire programs. A trail leads from the lodge area to Lewis Falls, 3.3 miles circuit. The campground, lodge, and wayside are closed during January and February. Byrd Visitor Center is open on an intermittent basis during these months.



Big Meadows

## Bearfence to Simmons Gap

**56.4 Bearfence Mountain** summit provides a 360-degree view. The round trip from the parking lot is only 0.3 mile but part of it is a rock scramble and can be difficult, especially if wet. Wear sturdy shoes.

**57.5 Lewis Mountain** is open from May through October. Facilities and services include cabins, campground with tent and trailer sites, campers' store, picnic ground, and campfire programs.

**62.8 South River** is a fine place to stop for a picnic and then take a hike to South River Falls, 2.5 miles round trip.

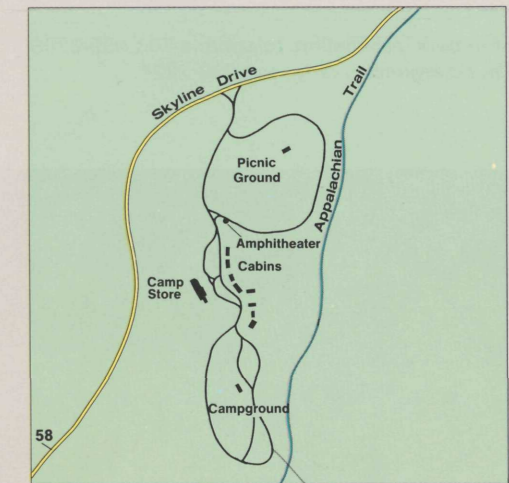
**65.7 Swift Run Gap** serves as a major entrance point to the park, for here U.S. 33 crosses the Blue Ridge. To the west are Elkton, with limited travel facilities, and Harrisonburg, with a wide variety of commercial facilities.

**67.2 Swift Run Overlook** provides an informational bulletin board for travelers on park pro-

grams, services, and facilities.

**69.3 Bacon Hollow Overlook** offers a view of the Piedmont to the east and Flattop to the south.

**73.2 Simmons Gap Ranger Station** personnel are responsible for the southern portion of the park. Stop if you need assistance from the rangers.



Lewis Mountain

## Rockytop to Rockfish Gap

**78.2 Rockytop Overlook** provides a good view of the wild canyon country of the Big Run watershed.

**79.5 Loft Mountain** campground has both tent and trailer sites, a trailer sewage disposal station, service station, wayside facility with a campers' store, gift shop, picnic ground, showers, laundry, ice, firewood, a self-guiding nature trail, and conducted hikes and campfire programs in the summer.

**81.1 Doyle River Trail** takes you to the upper falls, 2.7 miles round trip.

**83.7 Dundo Group Camp**, the site of a former CCC camp, is restricted to organized youth groups on a reservation basis.

**84.1 Jones Run** is a good place to park for a rewarding hike of 3.6 miles, round trip, to the 42-foot Jones Run Falls. The reward: mosses and flowering plants growing on the water-

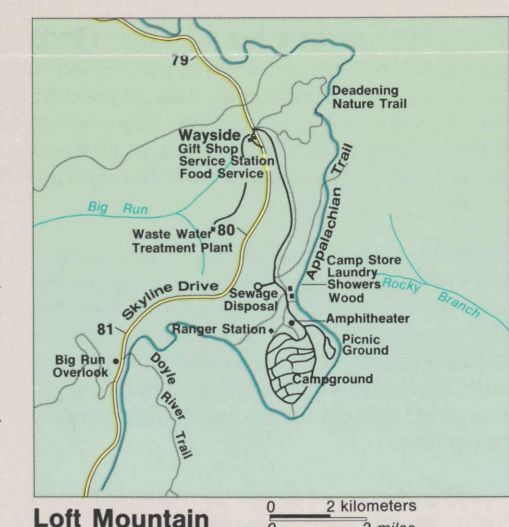
sprayed cliff.

**84.8 Blackrock Parking** is the start of a 1-mile round trip hike to Blackrock and outstanding views.

**98.9 Calf Mountain Overlook** provides a spectacular 300-degree view.

**104.6 Rockfish (South) Entrance Station** is staffed by the Park Service.

**105.4 Rockfish Gap** starts or ends Skyline Drive, depending on which way you are heading. The Drive runs south directly into Blue Ridge Parkway, also administered by the National Park Service. The Humpback Rocks Visitor Center is 5 miles south. Two major east-west highways, U.S. 250 and I-64, cross the mountains here. Travel facilities are numerous in the Waynesboro and Charlottesville areas.



Loft Mountain