

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 between Pennsylvania and 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, a winding road that 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 1 billion years in age. By comparison, humans have been associated with this land for about 11,000 years. Native Americans used the land for centuries but left little evidence of their presence. European 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 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 cultural traits of their own, born from the harshness 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 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 allowing an overused area to return to a natural state. The Civilian Conservation Corps built recreational facilities, 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. Today the park faces many new challenges, as air quality declines, forest pests invade, and land use patterns around the area change. The largest remaining open area is Big Meadows, which

is kept in its historically open condition. Here, wildflowers, strawberries, and blueberries attract wildlife and humans.

Deer, bear, bobcat, turkey, and animals that were rare or absent have now returned. Deer and smaller animals are often seen. Bear are found mostly in backcountry areas but are occasionally spotted elsewhere. About 200 species of birds have been reported. A few, such as ruffed grouse, barred owl and woodpeckers are permanent residents. More are seen during the warmer months. These include flycatchers, thrushes, and 35 species of warblers. The park is home to several species of salamanders, and 2 poisonous snakes, the timber rattlesnake and the copperhead, are occasionally reported, as are several harmless species.

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. Wildflowers bloom during April and May, and the large-flowered trillium carpets the forest floor. Pink azalea blooms in late May followed by mountain laurel in June. Migrating birds in the 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, indigo bunting, and towhee abound. Fawns are often seen. The variety of wildflowers increases as the summer progresses, and by late summer they cover the roadsides and open areas. Fall is the season of brilliant colors and crisp days. Many people come to the park to see the fall color, which is usually 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, 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 on the other side for information about specific sites.

Headquarters of Shenandoah National Park is 3 miles west of Thornton Gap and 4 miles east of Luray on U.S. 211. Information and backcountry permits may be obtained here during business hours, Monday through Friday. For more information write: Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park, Route 3 Box 348, Luray, VA 22835-9051; or call 703-999-2266 (recording) or 703-999-2299.

For emergency help, call 800-732-0911 to report law enforcement problems, fires, accidents, injuries, or other urgent situations. Do not call this emergency number for information.

Park visitor centers provide information, exhibits, and illustrated programs. Dickey Ridge Visitor Center (Milepost 51) are open April through October, and at intermittent times the rest of the year. For current information, write or call the park. Books, slides, postcards, posters, maps, and other information about the park are sold in both visitor centers by the Shenandoah Natural History Association. The association will furnish a list of items and prices by phone, 703-999-3582, or by mail, Route 4 Box 348, Luray, VA 22835-9051. The visitor centers are here for your convenience; please use them.

Interpretive programs, consisting of evening programs and campfire talks on cultural and natural history, 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 visitor contact stations. Self-guiding nature trails, with signs or leaflets, are at 5 locations. Watch for interpretive signs at overlooks along Skyline Drive.

Family campgrounds are at Big Meadows (Milepost 51), Lewis Mountain (Mile 57.5), 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.

During the summer and fall, campsites at Big Meadows may be available by reservation only. Dundo group campground is available for organized groups by reservation. The campground has pit toilets and running water. Call the park for more information.

Backcountry camping is possible throughout the park. A free camping permit, required for all backcountry camping, can be obtained by mail or in person at entrance stations, visitor centers, and park headquarters.

Picnic grounds are located at 7 locations (see chart and map). They have tables, fireplaces, drinking fountains, and restrooms.

Accommodations include overnight lodging and restaurants at Skyland Lodge (Mileposts 41-43) and at Big Meadows Lodge (Mile 51.2), plus

cottages that can be rented at Lewis Mountain (Mile 57.5). Food service, gift shops, service stations, and facilities for campers—grocery and camping supply stores, laundry, and ice and wood sales—are at various points along Skyline Drive (see chart and map). Horseback trips are offered at Skyland Lodge. All facilities are open in summer, some are open in spring and fall, and most are closed during January and February. For information on concession facilities write: ARA Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc., Box 727, Luray, VA 22835; or call 800-999-4714.

Another park concessioner, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 118 Park St., SE, Vienna, VA 22180-4609, 703-242-0315, operates 6 trail cabins for hikers and maintains huts for Appalachian Trail hikers. The club 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 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 brochure 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 Virginia license is required; a 5-day license is available at most wayside facilities and camp stores in the park. An annual listing of streams open to fishing is available at visitor contact stations.



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; fires built on the ground may sterilize the soil or cause forest fires. For this reason, too, wood fires are prohibited in the backcountry. Extinguish all smoking materials completely. Matches or cigarettes carelessly tossed in loose dry leaves have started many forest fires.

Feeding wildlife is unsafe and illegal. Some animals appear tame, but all are wild. They can bite, kick, and spread disease. If fed, deer and other creatures become easy targets for illegal hunters. Store your food in your car and clean up after you eat. Be good to yourselves and the animals; resist the temptation to offer them food.

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 a ranger immediately. If you cannot find a ranger, call 800-732-0911.

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 are frequently seen along the road shoulders; drive carefully, for they often dart across the road.

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.

There are many waterfalls in the park, and many injuries occur around them. Do not play at the top of falls or climb on nearby rocks. Rock surfaces are wet and slippery. When streams are full, do not cross them.

Stop at the visitor centers for hiking information. Stay on the trails when you do hike, and it is a good idea to hike with a friend. At the park

boundary, many points of access cross private property; respect the rights of landowners. Failure to honor owner's wishes may jeopardize access.

All water, except that from developed systems, must be boiled vigorously for 1 minute. Selecting backcountry sites out of view of the trails is required and will enhance your wilderness experience. Most injuries in the park are caused by falls, so wear proper footwear when hiking. Do not take shortcuts.

Prevent theft. Do not leave personal items on picnic tables, in unlocked cars, or other accessible places. Although national parks have traditionally been places in which theft was unknown, today not all park visitors are looking at the scenery. Keep valuables locked and out of sight. The trunk of your car is more secure than the back seat. Better yet, keep your valuables with you.

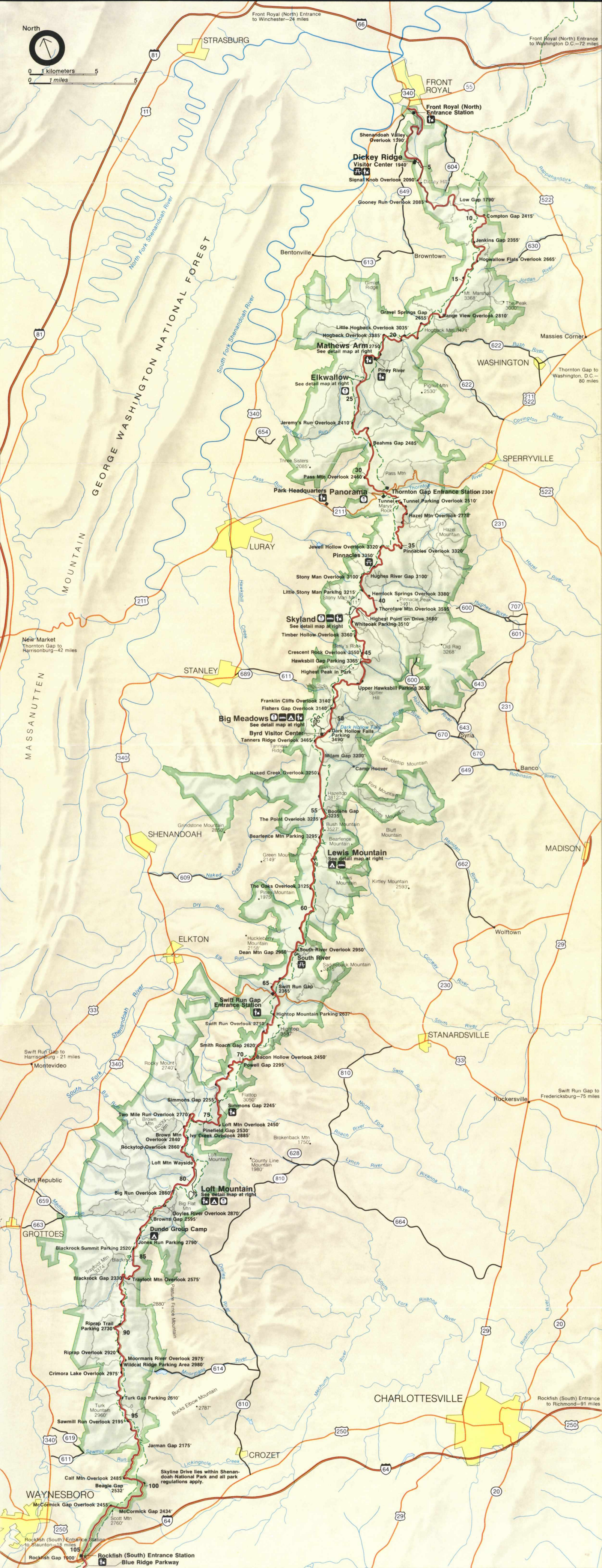
Major Facilities and Services

	4.6 Dickey Ridge									
22.2 Mathews Arm										
24.1 Elkwallow										
31.5 Thornton Gap										
41.7 Skyland										
51.0 Big Meadows										
57.5 Lewis Mountain										
79.5 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 road as you head south. They are numbered from north to south, and they are labeled every five miles on this map.

- Shenandoah National Park
- Overlook
- Other trail
- Skyline Drive Milepost
- Ranger station
- Campground
- Picnic ground
- Food service
- Lodging

Accommodations and other services 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.

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.

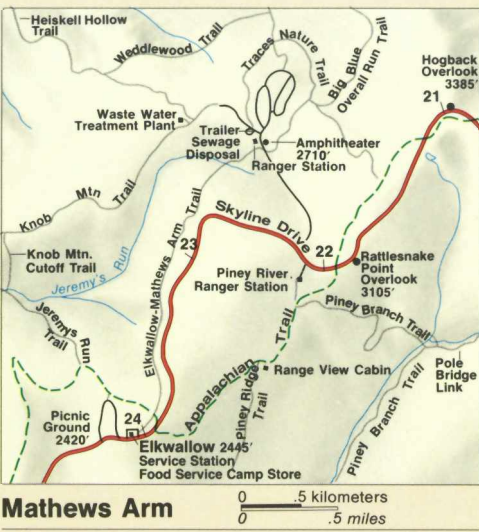
21 Hogback Overlook offers, on clear days, a look at many of the bends of the meandering Shenandoah River.

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 is currently closed. The campground is scheduled to remain closed through 1998 based on budget projections.

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

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



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 Skyline Drive here. Park rangers at the entrance station can answer your questions and give other assistance. Park headquarters is four 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 Whiteoak Canyon boasts six waterfalls. A trail, 5 miles round trip, leads to them and to the Limberlost, 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.



Hawksbill Gap to Big Meadows

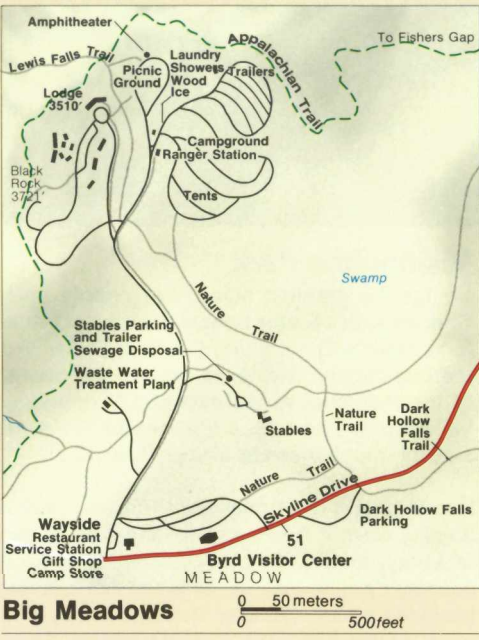
45.6 Hawksbill Gap Parking Area trails lead to Hawksbill Mountain, at 4,051 feet the highest point in the park.

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 & 51.9 Big Meadows offers a multitude of activities and services at 3 sites, all connected by a network of trails. Byrd Visitor Center, entrance at Milepost 51, is one of the park's 2 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 self-guiding nature trail. The wayside facilities at Mile 51.3 include a coffee shop, camp 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 has tent and trailer sites, trailer sewage disposal station, showers, laundry, ice, firewood, self-guiding nature trail, picnic ground, and the summer campfire program. During the summer and fall, campsites at the campground may be available by reservation only. Byrd Visitor Center, the Big Meadows campground, the Lodge, and Wayside are often closed in winter. Please call the park for current information or if you plan to visit in winter.



Bearfence to Simmons Gap

56.4 Bearfence Mountain summit provides a 360-degree view. The round trip from the parking lot is only 0.8 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, camp 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. Park rangers at the entrance station can answer your questions and give other assistance.

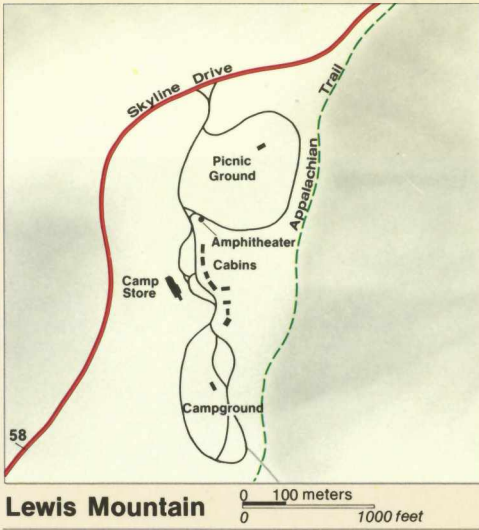
66.5 Hightop Mountain Parking, at an elevation

of 2,637 feet, is on the west side of the Drive near a crossing of the Appalachian Trail.

67.2 Swift Run Overlook provides an informational bulletin board for travelers on park programs, 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.



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 camp 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 Doyles 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 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 Summit Parking is the start of a 1-mile round trip hike to Blackrock and outstanding views.

94.2 Turk Gap Parking area is east of the Drive near a crossing of the Appalachian Trail.

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.

