

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



02-02-08 - [AT/Sunset Rocks](#) (modified), PA: So Friday this area had a horrendous ice storm. The roads were open but the adverse trail conditions proved to be a challenge. We were joined by new comers Christy, Adam, Brenda and Van. A few old but familiar faces reappeared. There was Terri G., Gear Gyrl, 16 Penny and the Traveling Gnome. The ranks were filled out by a host of regulars: Dave, Waffles, Clark Kent, The Mad Hatter, Shortstack, Indiana Moser, Skywalker (bringing with him one of the best belated Christmas presents I've ever received), Cognac Jack, Hungry Ted, Mary, Pooh Bear, Ted E. and Rob Bear (Neither related to Pooh B.), Judge N. Amy, Youness and John D. Twenty-five in all.

The entire forest was cloaked in a thin sheet of crystalline ice. The sun refracting off of it created quite a light show. Photos don't do it justice. While the climb up and down the handle or stick of the lollipop was quite tiring, the main loop was much easier to negotiate ... at least until we reached the main event on Rocky Ridge, a 0.4 mile rock scramble to Sunset Rock vista. All of the boulders were coated with a thin sheet of ice. I tried one route while Clark tried another. We both almost made it to the top but the odds of someone in the group getting hurt were just too high to risk the crossing.

We retraced our steps to a bailout route that I had been saving for such an emergency. It was an old logging road that parallels the ridge to the east and Tom's Run and the AT to the west. In actuality it was a pretty pleasing substitute. There was a lot of ice-covered ground cover and exposed understorey. (The area had recently been logged.) The late day sun danced off of it all, given the appearance of gigantic Easter cellophane grass (the clear stuff). As we once again approached "the stick" of the lollipop we passed the northern terminus of the Sunset Rocks Tr. It was a pretty solid

sheet of ice ... probably all the way up to the vista, further reinforcing the decision to bail as a wise move. We'll have to come back when we know there won't be any ice and attack the rock scramble under more favorable conditions.