

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



03-27-2010, Bucktail trail/Halfmoon Lookout: It was a clear yet crisp spring morning, a great day for hiking. I was joined by 16 Penny, Indiana Moser, The Mad Hatter and Jill. We reached the trailhead around 10:30 and soon found ourselves hiking up the Bucktail Trail (a fire road at this point, with Rocky Ridge on our left flank. At 2.3 miles we passed the bridged junction of the capon trail as the road deteriorated into a footpath severely eroded in places by the recently flooded Halfmoon Run. (There are two of them on this hike.) We explore what I always thought was a wild life clearing as a potential future campsite only to find that it was a bog with a very spongy base. After four stream crossings, the trail once again became a very smooth woods road. We took a break at its uppermost gate before beginning the steep and rocky climb up what I now called "Mister Wilson's Trail" (Formally called the German Wilson trail after one of the early inhabitants of the mountain). It's always a challenging part of the hike but we all made it up to the top in good order. The hike out and up to the lookout was a casual jaunt. The view was pretty stunning with Trout Run Valley below us with Mill Mountain and Big Schloss to our left, Tibbet Knob and the Devil's Backbone straight ahead and Long Mountain to our right. As the others ate lunch I took a ten minute power nap. (I'm becoming known for them I think.) As we descended from the mountain we ran into two members of the Stonewall Brigade of the PATC surveying the area for trail damage. As we chatted I gave them we reported that we experienced no significant damage on our route to this point. This obviously helped them out a lot as ten minutes after leaving them they passed us as we took a break at the second Halfmoon Run. From here it was an pretty leisurely 2.7 mile stroll back to the cars as we weaved in and out of several short coves. There were some short hills but generally speaking was mostly flat or downhill. We arrived back at the trailhead at 4:00 all feeling a bit tired but rewarded by this excellent hike.