

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



05-17-2008 - Bill Goat Tr - Sections C and B + Berma Road/C&O Towpath: This was the earliest Mrs. H and I have ever started a hike. We were on the trail by 9:00 o'clock. The sky was clear and the temps were crisp. Just before turning off onto Section C of the Billy Goat Trail we saw what I thought was the remains of an old lock in the canal. Ken Clark, who does this hike once or twice a year informed me that it is all that remains of a pivot bridge built in 1941 by the CCC. The trail was pretty easy to follow but muddy in places due to all of the recent rain. You could see where the mighty Potomac had crested, causing the vegetation along the trail to lay down. At one point a large amount of river detrius (Sticks, logs, etc) was blocking the path. There was just the right amount of rock scrambling and we both got a lot of practice with our balance. The views were great although the river was quite muddy. The rock climbers covered the cliffs near the western end of Section C like ants. Section B was much like C with a mixture of smooth trails and rock scrambles. Near the end we passed Offutt Island. I don't know what it is but there is something ominous about it.

Our initial plan was to just do the Billy Goat Trail - Section C and B but even with all of the rock scrambling and scouting around we hit the west terminus of Section B by 11:30. Janet expressed an interest in seeing all of the cool Great Falls area sites. We studied the map and figured an easy hike could be made by using the Berma Road and the Towpath. The Berma Road would be less crowded than the Towpath which we would use as a return route.

This additional adventure left us with a total mileage of 12.5 miles. This and the crowds, who were now out in full force were worth it. We quickly took in the views from Olmsted Island and the Washington Aqueduct as well as the Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center, canal locks and boat. On our return leg we enjoyed views of the gorges of the river and the Widewater area of the canal, dodging the crazy cyclists the best we could. Once past the Anglers Inn bridge the traffic decreased substantially and we were able to enjoy the last two miles of our trek in relative quite. We were done by 3:00 o'clock.