

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



11/06/10, Tuscarora Trail/Standing Stone Trail Loop: This was a great 11 mile day hike. I was joined by Jody, Heidi, Single Malt, Dimitri, Bubbles, Scott and the Mad Hatter. We set off from the Cowans Gap SP Bath House parking lot around 10:15. We stopped briefly on the dam to take in the view of the lake and the surrounding valley. We turned right onto the Tuscarora Trail and began a rather pleasant walk, first along the stream and then a bit above it. This is not the typical rocky Tuscarora Trail that we have all come to know and love but rather a pretty gentle old logging road that is easy to walk on. In about three miles the TT went off to the right while we continued on the logging road (formerly the end of the SST, now known as Todd Trail) for a bit longer before turning left and climbing to the top of the ridge. Most of us were so busy trying just to make it to the top that we missed some recently installed switchbacks and continued up the old trail. Dimitri, who was running sweep, informed us and we soon made the correction. Once at the junction with the SST we turned north and hiked about 0.3 miles to two vistas, one looking

east at several ridges and the other (on a yellow blazed trail) looking west, down into a valley. We took a brief lunch there (It was too chilly to linger.) and retraced our steps back to the last trail junction. We continued along the ridge, each at our own pass as we took in many views: some partial, some window sized and a fair share of panoramic views. Although past its prime the fall colors were still good although the dense cloud cover did much to mute them. The rest of the hike was generally downhill but it was quite rocky and had several ups and downs as the trail switched from the east flank of the ridge to the west and then across the top ... and then seemed to repeat itself all over again. At one point near the end we had the option to bail on the ridge top hike early to join the Knobsville Road Trail that takes you back to the parking lots but we stayed on top until the ridge walk ended. From there it was an easy downhill 1.3 mile walk passing the Lake Vista and then following the Lakeside Trail back to the cars. This is definitely a keeper hike and will be posted on the site soon. I'd like to thank the SST Club and the many volunteers that extended the trail. It was definitely a worthwhile venture!