

Description: This is a moderate 10 mile circuit hike taking you through some of the prettiest deciduous and coniferous forests, past grand waterfalls, if you don't mind bushwhacking, and along some very tranquil streams. There are a few hard parts. You will have to negotiate four significant water crossings, at least two of which will require either alternate footwear or will leave the hiker walking in wet boots. Rocky Point trail can be described as nothing other than ... rocky. Overall, the sacrifices are worth the rewards. If this description sounds familiar it's because a lot of the trails are used in Red Creek/Dunkenbarger Loop* described elsewhere in this site. The primary differences are that the slog up Dunkenbarger Trail and descent down Little Stone Coal as a return route is replaced by a descent on Big Stone Coal Trail and then retracing the initial portion of Red Creek Trail. The distance is the same but this is probably a good 30 minutes faster, all other things being equal.

Directions to Dolly Sods Laneville Trailhead from the junction of US 55 and US 33:

1. From US 55 turn right (West) onto US 33. Travel approximately 11.7 miles.
2. Turn right onto SR 32 toward Canaan Valley resorts.
3. In approximately 3.9 miles, turn right onto CO 32 - Bonner Mountain Rd.
4. Follow Bonner Mt. Rd to its end at Rt 45 - Laneville Rd.
5. Turn right on Rt 45. Cross Red Creek on an old metal bridge. Immediately turn left into the driveway of the Wildlife Management Cabin. Park in the rear or on the shoulder of the drive.

Trail Notes: Before starting, take note that there are no blazes in Dolly Sods. Recently, sign posts have been re-installed at all trail intersections but they can disappear rather quickly.

From the parking area, walk up Red Creek Trail. It begins as a wide forest road which stops at a backwater of Red Creek. Cross and immediately turn right on a narrow footpath, following close to the bank. Part of the trail has been blown out. This area will become apparent to you shortly. Bushwhack through this area and pick up a well-defined footpath on the other side. Follow it to a grassy clearing with a trail that comes in on the left (0.65 miles from the start). This is Little Stonecoal Trail.

Stay on Red Creek Trail and proceed upstream, first traveling along a railroad grade and then climbing gradually up a footpath. At about 0.91 miles from the junction with Little Stonecoal Trail you will come to a cairn and a trail that goes to the left. This trail ends at a campsite. Continue straight on the main trail. Beyond this point to the left will be a sketchy trail marked with a cairn on the downhill side that descends through the Rhododendron. The trail is hard to find and steep but is a quick connection with Big Stonecoal Trail and the rest of Red Creek Trail. This is a popular campsite.

Shortly after your descent turn upstream (right) at the trail junction sign. You will join an old railroad grade for a while then bear right onto a footpath that will climb up above the creek. In 1.5 miles reach the junction of Fisher Spring Run Tr on the right. Descend to Red Creek. There are several campsites upstream from here on an old railroad grade. Follow it and pick the site of your choosing if you are doing this as an over-nighter. There is also a nice waterfall there. It makes for a good lunch spot. To continue, return to the crossing (marked with cairns), don the footwear of your choice and cross Red Creek. There is another good campsite on a bench sitting above the creek here and another one just a little further up the trail almost directly across from your lunch spot.

Continue up Red Creek trail as it climbs to a junction with Rocky Point Trail (0.7 miles from the ford). Turn left onto Rocky Point Trail. Soon the trail will become quite rocky as it becomes apparent that you are walking on an old railroad grade with the ballast still there.

Pass several small Cairns on your right with hints of trails going up to the Lions Head. These are all difficult routes in comparison to the easier routes. Ignore them. For a bit you will find the path devoid of trees. At this point you are almost directly under the Lion's Head. The trail will gradually turn north, paralleling the Big Stonecoal Drainage. As you begin to re-enter the woods watch for a cairn behind a log on the right marking a footpath. You may want to drop your packs here and bring your camera, water and snacks for the rest of this side trip. The trail weaves steeply, first through vegetation and then rocks. Cairns mark the way. Climb up through a fissure in the rocks to the top. Follow the Cairns on your left out to the edge to a grandstand view of the entire Red Creek Drainage. The Lion's head is to your right.

Another route to the Lion's Head on Rocky point Trail is just a little further north of this one and is marked by a cairn composed of a tall, slender rock with a pointy rock on top and more rocks around its base. This trail is steep and rocky but well marked by Cairns. At the top the trail flattens and passes through a large Pine plantation popular with campers. The trail seems to end at a rock outcrop but if you descend to the right you will pickup cairns that will lead you all of the way to the top.

Return to Rocky Point Trail, recovering your gear along the way, and turn right. Rocky Point Trail ends at its juncture with Big Stonecoal Trail. If the water is running well continue upward on Big Stone Coal Trail (This will add about 0.6 miles to your trek.). Soon you will see here a waterfall. It's the one shown on [Red Creek/Dunkenbarger Loop](#) described elsewhere in this site. If you desire, drop your gear and bushwhack down for a great photo op. Note: the walls of the gorge are steep and slippery so take care!

Return to the intersection with Rocky Point Trail and bear right onto Big Stonecoal Trail. (If you do not opt to explore the upper falls you will be making a left here coming down from the Lion's Head.) Towards the bottom the trail splits. An old railroad grade continues straight and a footpath descends steeply down to the run itself. If you take this route merely bushwhack along the run and behind another old railroad grade until you

regain the trail just before a large cairn at the confluence of Red Creek and Big Stone Coal Run. Cross and pick up the trail on the other side. Turn right at the intersection with Red Creek Trail. When you reach the obvious blowout in the bank turn left and scramble up the bank to the continuation of Red Creek Trail. Turn right and retrace the initial 1.5 miles back to the car.