

Trail Notes for Pulpit Rock-Pinnacle Loop

Description: Through hikers consider Pulpit Rock and the Pinnacle to be the two premier vistas on the entire PA stretch of the AT, offering endless views of Lehigh valley and its surrounding ridges. This popularity brings with it a busy parking lot at the Hamburg water treatment plant on any clear weekend day. Arrive early to avoid the crowds.

Described here is a moderately difficult 8.7 mile circuit with about 1300 feet in elevation gain. The hardest part begins about 2 miles in as you climb steeply up a rocky slope to Pulpit Rock and the first vista. While most of the climbing is done at that point the very rocky terrain continues for at least another mile. This hike definitely requires sturdy boots. The Pinnacle is "as advertised". Allow time to take it all in. The last 4 miles offer an easy stroll along old woods road and the descent through the Hemlock filled hollow through which Furnace Creek flows is quite refreshing.

Note: Google Maps may tell you to make a turn onto Fisher Court at the end of your drive. It does not exist. You will turn onto Reservoir Road.

Trail Notes: From the parking lot walk up the gravel road, passing the yellow gate. In 0.52 miles the AT comes in from the left as the road bears right, crossing Furnace Creek on a bridge. Immediately after crossing turn right onto the continuation of the AT. In 0.24 miles turn right onto an old woods road continuing to follow the blazes. In another 0.62 miles pass an unmarked trail on the right (shown as red on the map). In another 0.38 miles pass a blue blazed trail on the right that leads to Blue Rocks Campground. Here the AT bends to the left and begins to climb more steeply. In another 0.35 miles the AT turns hard right off of the old woods road it had been following (now blazed blue ahead) and climbs steeply through the rocks for 0.18 miles to Pulpit Rock.

After taking in the view continue climbing slightly through the rocks. The rockiness continues for the next mile or so with little semblance of a trail, just scattered white blazes on trees. Stay along the rim until the trail becomes more obvious. At 1.75 miles from Pulpit Rock pass a yellow blazed trail on the right. In another 0.41 miles arrive at a very large cairn and a short blue blazed spur that leads to the Pinnacle.

After taking in the view return to the AT and turn right. The next 1.82 miles is an easy walk on an old woods road. About halfway through a clearing called the helicopter pad turn sharp left on a blue blazed trail (another old road) and descend through a Hemlock and Rhododendron forest as Furnace Creek gurgles below you. In 1.33 miles pass Hamburg Reservoir and in another 0.42 miles arrive back at the bridge you crossed earlier. Follow the road back to your vehicle.