

Appalachian Trail-Cedar Run-Whiteoak Canyon Hike

Approximately 11 miles

Estimated Time: 5 - 8 hours

AT = Appalachian Trail

SDMP = Skyline Drive Mile Post

This is an 11-mile circuit hike which covers portions of the Appalachian Trail and two scenic trails within Shenandoah National Park: Cedar Run and Whiteoak Canyon. There are 8 waterfalls along these two trails.

The Appalachian Trail (AT) is marked by **white blazes** on the trees.

The Cedar Run and Whiteoak Canyon trails are marked by **blue blazes** on the trees.

Double blazes mark a change in the trail direction.

To Trail Head from Skyland Resort Conference Hall, 0.5 miles

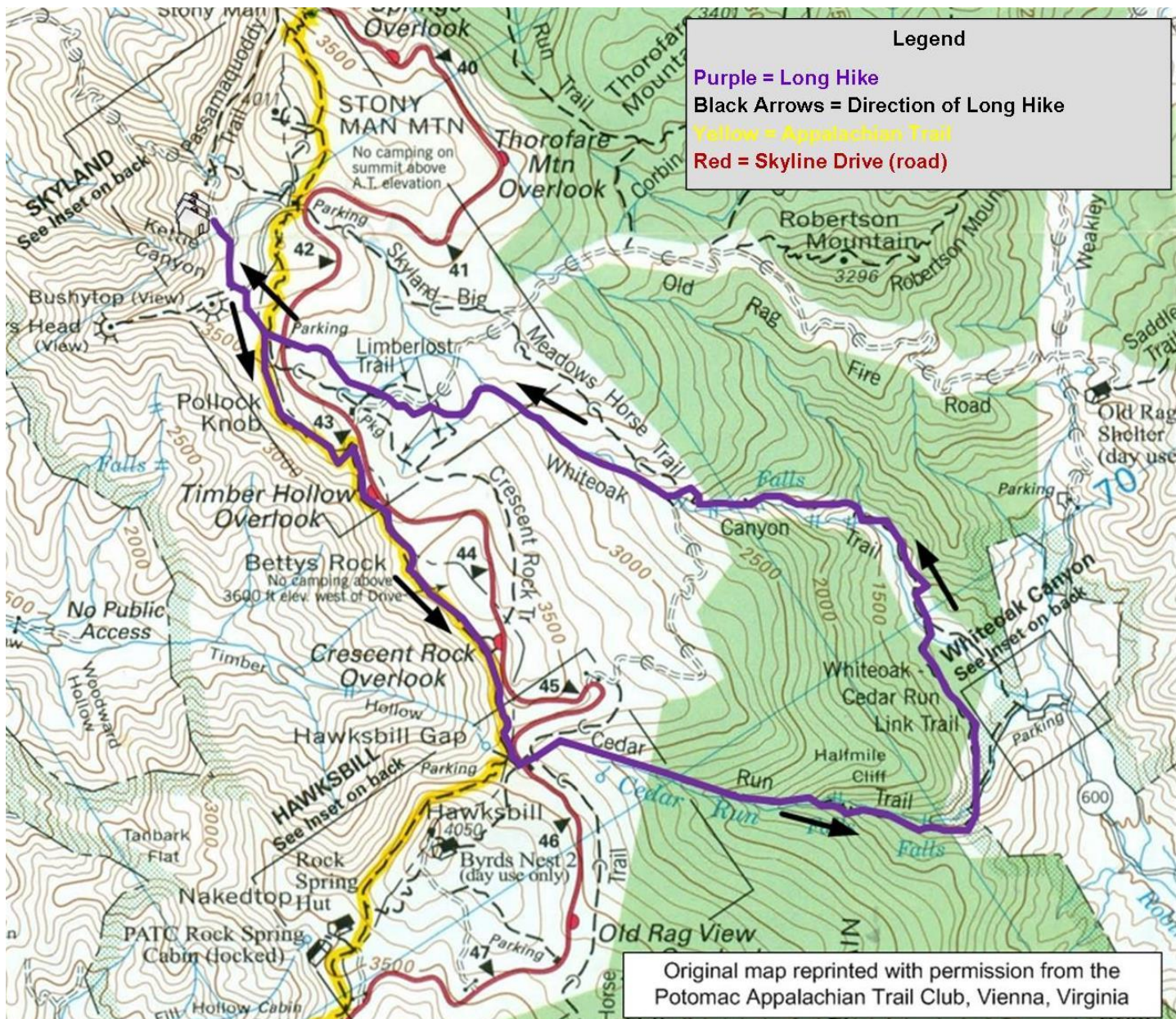
- Follow the road up the hill to the signs for the Stables to the right. Look for the white blazes on the trees - near the sidewalk and entrance to the stables - to join the AT.

AT Portion, 2.5 miles

- Trail leads along cliffs on western edge of ridge under Pollock Knob, 3,560 ft. (named for George Pollock, founder of Skyland). There are occasional views to the right from the Trail.
- Where AT begins descent by switchbacks, there is a spectacular view of Hawksbill Mountain and Ida Valley. Beyond, AT parallels Skyline Drive, passing through a thicket of laurel.
- Reach open area. 1st concrete sign post identifying Timber Hollow Parking Overlook on Skyline Drive (SDMP 43.3). However, stay on main trail.
- Trail climbs over small ridge, then descends gently, slapping steep western slopes of Blue Ridge.
- Bend offers great views of western valley.
- Reach Hawksbill Gap. **At concrete post (Hawksbill Gap Parking, Skyline Drive) turn left onto spur trail, uphill 300 ft.** to cross over Skyline Drive to the Cedar Run Trail head.
- *NOTE: If you reach Rock Spring Hut, you have gone too far and missed the turn off for Cedar Run Trail. Backtrack to concrete post for Hawksbill Gap parking area.*
- Cross Skyline Drive at Hawksbill Gap parking area (SDMP 45.6). Cross Skyline Drive and look for **Cedar Run Trail** head sign / post. Approx. 1.5 hours from start of hike.

Cedar Run-Whiteoak Canyon, 8.0 miles

- Start down Cedar Run trail marked by **blue blaze**.
- Stay on Cedar Run Trail as it crosses Skyland-Big Meadows Horse Trail (yellow-blazed), and continue descent into Cedar Run Canyon. You will continue toward “no horses” concrete post.
- Trail parallels stream on right past several small pools. Trail can be wet/slippery here.
- Uppermost waterfall on Cedar Run is visible to right at approx. mile 4.3 of hike (from Skyland Conference Hall starting point).
- **Ford stream** and climb opposite bank of ravine at double blue blaze.
- On Cedar Run again. Tallest cascade on Cedar Run is to left and sheer Halfmile Cliffs are across creek. Continue on Cedar Run as trail parallels stream.
- **Turn left and ford Cedar Run immediately below falls** – will see double blue blaze when trail leads to base of waterfall – at approx. mile 5.1 of hike. (Don’t follow bed of old road that continues downstream). Approx. 3 hours from start of hike
- **At fork marked by concrete post (which says Link Trail – Whiteoak Canyon Trail 0.8 miles), bear left** to enter Cedar Run-Whiteoak Canyon Link Trail (blue-blazes).
- Continue on Cedar Run-Whiteoak Canyon Link Trail until it merges with Whiteoak Canyon Trail - **ford creek that enters on right**.
- Flow blue blaze trail up and left after crossing creek. Concrete post – Skyland 4.8 miles. Approx. mile 6.1 of hike.
- Trail switchback and then parallels creek on your left.
- **Lower Whiteoak Falls at approx. mile 6.3 of hike = popular photo and lunch/rest stop**
- Begin steep ascent along northeast side of Whiteoak Run – creek to your left with some trail switchbacks up canyon.
- Excellent view to left marked by “View” concrete post overlooks upper Whiteoak Falls at approx. mile 8 of hike. Continue straight as yellow-blazed trail enters from right.
- Cross bridge over Whiteoak Run (a few yds upstream of ford), go right and keep climbing Whiteoak Canyon Trail.
- Crossover Limberlost Trail twice (plus gravel “road” in between), continue on Whiteoak Canyon Trail. Remain on Whiteoak Canyon Trail until reaching the parking area at Skyline Drive.
- Cross Skyline Drive: **stay left on road** and follow sign for “Amphitheater”, go up hill, passing Amphitheater, and down road to Conference Hall. IGNORE road signs to Skyland Resort; that will take you the long way back.



Most descriptions courtesy of ***Appalachian Trail Guide to Shenandoah National Park, 2009 Thirteenth Edition, published by Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (pgs. 50-52, 122-123).***