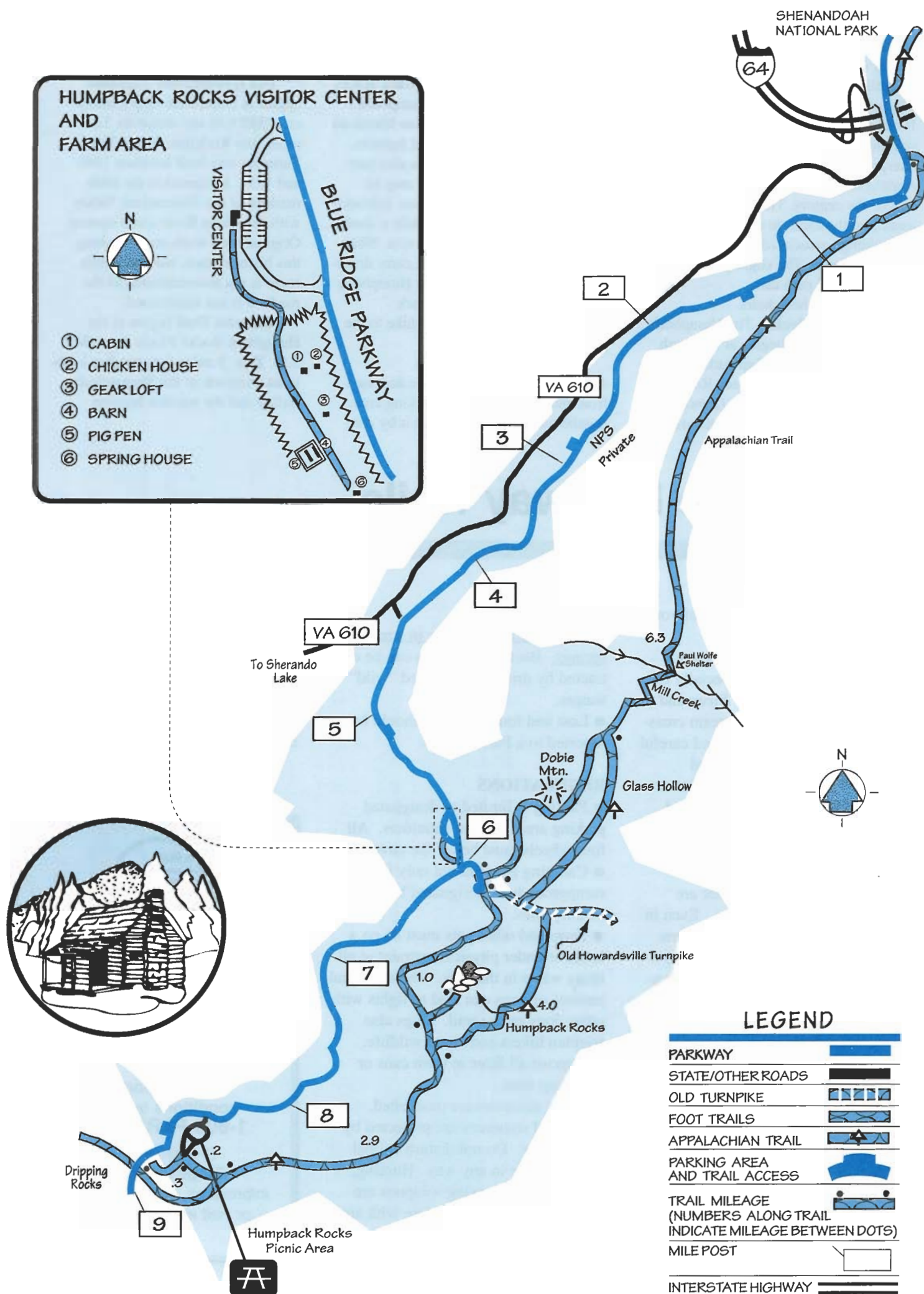




Humpback Rocks Trails



Humpback Rocks Trails

The Humpback Rocks area at the northern end of the Blue Ridge Parkway offers a wonderful variety for the serious and casual hiker. Visitors will find both the natural and cultural world of the southern Appalachian mountains opening up before them.

Mountain Farm Trail begins at the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center (MP 5.9). This is an easy .25 mile hike through an outdoor museum that is reminiscent of an 1890s mountain farm. During the summer months, costumed interpreters demonstrate southern Appalachian mountain life at the turn of the century. The gravel path leads past the cabin to other outbuildings associated with many mountain farms. The slightly inclined gravel path can accommodate wheelchairs.

Humpback Rocks - The Humpback Rocks Trail, which begins at the south end of the Humpback Gap parking area, provides access to Humpback Rocks (1 mile), Humpback Mountain (2 miles), and the Humpback Rocks picnic area

(3.9 miles). About a half-mile up the blue-blazed trail, hikers can reach Humpback Rocks from a spur trail on the left. The strenuous 700-foot climb rewards hikers with spectacular views of the Rockfish and Shenandoah Valleys. Hikers continuing straight at the fork for one mile can reach the summit of Humpback Mountain to view ridges to the north. Beyond the summit, the trail winds a half-mile along the top of a cliff to a trail leading to the Humpback Rocks picnic area. Generally, the Humpback Rocks trail is marked with blue blazes on trees, rocks, and other natural features. At times, however, the trail is also part of the Appalachian Trail and may be marked in white. A single blaze indicates the trail continues straight while a double blaze indicates an upcoming turn. Wear appropriate hiking shoes and carry drinking water. Allow one hour to Humpback Rocks, two hours to Humpback Mountain, and four hours to hike to the picnic area.

Appalachian Trail - The Appalachian Trail can also be accessed from the Humpback Gap parking area. Southbound hikers can reach it by con-

tinuing south on the Humpback Rocks trail. Northbound hikers can reach it taking the one mile blue blazed path at the northern end of the parking lot, or the one mile white blazed path just off of the Howardsville Turnpike. The Appalachian Trail is the nation's premier hiking path, stretching 2,000 miles from Maine to Georgia. Throughout much of Virginia, it parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trail is marked with white blazes.

Old Howardsville Turnpike begins at Humpback Gap parking area (MP 6.0) and descends 3.5 miles into Rockfish Valley. The Turnpike was built between 1846 and 1851. It connected the trade markets of the Shenandoah Valley with the James River canal system. Original rock walls are still along this historic trace, but hiking this route is not recommended as the roadbed is not maintained.

Catoctin Trail begins at the Humpback Rocks Picnic Area (MP 8.5). This .3 miles leg stretcher leads to an overlook of the Shenandoah Valley and the western horizon.

Blue Ridge Parkway Trails

IMPORTANT ADVICE

- Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.
- Hiking shoes or boots are recommended for most trails, especially for the more strenuous ones. Steep and rocky areas and slippery stream crossings require extra attention and careful footing. Even for trails marked "easy," it is advisable to wear flat or rubber-soled shoes for comfort and good traction. Wearing sandals, "flip-flops," or high heels can result in accidents.
- Sudden changes in weather are common in these mountains. Even in mild seasons, rapid dips in temperature and unexpected thunderstorms frequently occur, and at higher elevations the wind and temperature can carry a surprising chill. Be prepared for weather changes by bringing along suitable clothing.
- For your safety and the protection of the resources, stay on established trails. Shortcutting at switchbacks causes soil erosion, disfigures the trail, and makes it difficult for other hikers to find their way. Take advantage of log walkways, steps, or other trail construction. They are there to minimize human impact on the natural environ-

ment.

- Do not drink the water in streams or springs. Bacterial diseases can be contracted by drinking untreated "wild" waters.
- Lost and found articles should be reported to a Park Ranger.

REGULATIONS

- Parking is limited to designated parking areas or road shoulders. All four wheels must be off the pavement.
- Camping is permitted only in park campgrounds or designated back-country sites.
- Dogs and other pets must be on a leash or under physical restraint at all times while in the park. The territorial instinct of dogs can lead to fights with other dogs on the trail. Dogs also frighten hikers and chase wildlife.
- Deposit all litter in trash cans or recycling bins.
- Metal detectors are prohibited.
- Natural resources are protected by Federal law. Do not disturb animal and plant life in any way. Hunting, trapping, and carrying weapons are prohibited. Do not interfere with animals by feeding, touching, or frightening them. Do not cut, deface or dam-

age trees. Leave wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural condition for other hikers to enjoy.

- Historic resources are protected by Federal law. Do not damage, deface, or remove any of these structures, furnishings, or exhibits.



Help protect and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway. Be alert for uncontrolled fire, safety hazards, accidents, and emergencies.

Please report such conditions by calling: 1-800-PARKWATCH

(1-800-727-5928)

For general parkway information, call (828) 298-0398 or visit www.nps.gov/blri on the Internet.