



The Lure of the Mountaintop



Mountaintops have always beckoned humans. To stand at the top—to see as far as the eye allows, to take in the vastness of our world—is to be awed and humbled and inspired all at once.



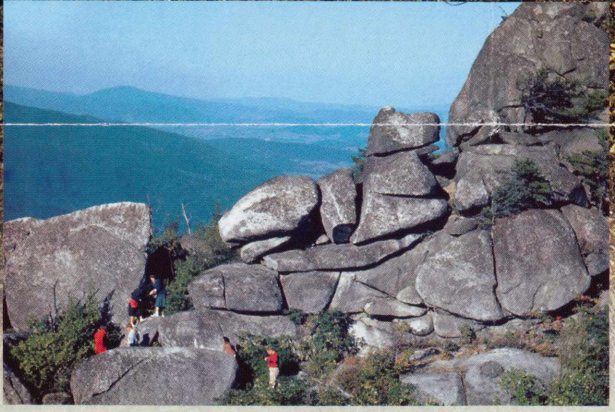
Shenandoah National Park, established in 1935 before skyscrapers and air travel were commonplace, was designed to give millions the opportunity to travel to the top.

From the beginning, national park planners, capitalizing on the new popularity of motor cars, called for Shenandoah's "greatest single feature" to be a sky-line drive on which motorists could enjoy a leisurely drive through the Blue Ridge and where they could experience the awe and inspiration of magnificent views. Construction of Skyline Drive—your road to the top—was begun even before Congress established the national park.

Today, Skyline Drive is your portal to a multitude of experiences. Discover the rich natural and cultural stories hidden in the forests and hollows of Shenandoah. Learn about the establishment of this new park in the East that would give urban residents the national park experience that had become popular in the West.

Formed from over 1,000 privately owned tracts of land, Shenandoah started as a patchwork of forests, fields, orchards, and homesites. But by the 1970s Congress was able to designate over 40 percent of the park as Wilderness, providing the highest level of protection to this precious resource.

Hiker, NPS/JOHN F. MITCHELL; SHALLOWTALL, ©PAT AND CHUCK BLACKLEY



Old Rag Mountain's big boulders dwarf aspiring hikers.



Lady's slippers adorn woodland trails.



Groundhogs are a common sight along the Drive.



Hemlock Springs lies cloaked in winter.



Dark Hollow Falls is one of nine waterfalls in the park.



A walk in foggy woods is magical.



Mountain laurel blooms in June.



Autumn colors beckon visitors to the mountains.

Cover: View from the top of Little Stony Man Cliffs.

Seasonal Change in Shenandoah

Spring may arrive at your home on some specific date, but here it climbs up the mountains about 100 feet per day starting in March with blooming red maple, hepatica, and serviceberry. Chipmunks and groundhogs appear above ground again. Trees won't leaf out on peaks until late May. Wildflowers begin to bloom in April and May, and the large-flowered trillium carpets forest floors. Pink azalea

blooms in late May, mountain laurel in June. Migrating birds in colorful plumage return. Each seasonal cycle in the year is different, bringing new reasons to return to the park.

Summer wears its mantle of deep greens on ridge and hollow. Birds are nesting—catbirds, indigo buntings, and towhees. Deer fawns and bear cubs are out and

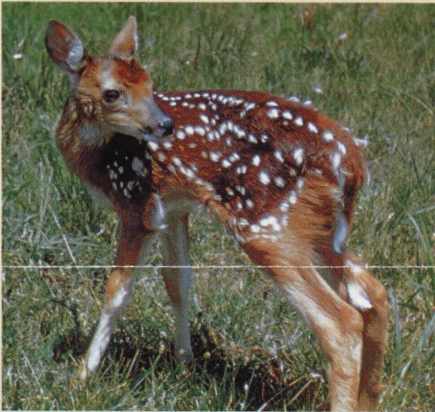
about exploring and learning. The blooming wildflowers proliferate as summer progresses, covering roadsides and open areas by late summer.

Crisp fall days bring brilliant leaf colors, usually peaking between October 10 and 25. The southward migrations of birds feature hawks in large numbers flying down the ridge.

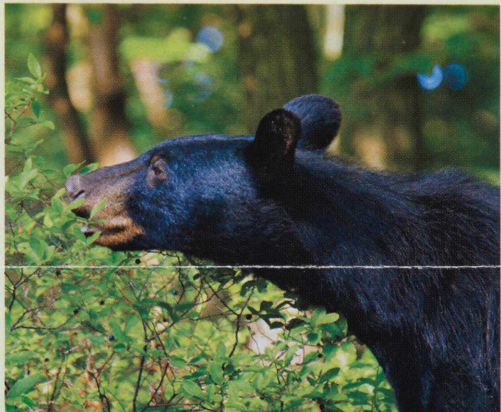
With more clear days and leaf-bare trees, winter is the time for distant views and the frozen sculptures tumbling waterfalls create. Seasons and colors change, migratory songbirds, hawks, and the monarch butterflies come and go. Shenandoah's year-round residents, deer, bear, and others, adapt to each season in turn, making each day a sight to see.



Peregrine falcons are making a comeback.



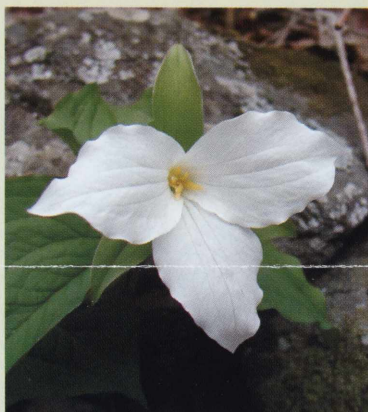
White-tailed deer fawns have spots for camouflage.



Black bears thrive in Shenandoah.



Explore new worlds with a park ranger.



Trilliums dot the forest floor in spring.



Remnants of home sites can still be found in the park's backcountry.



Concrete trail markers direct hikers.

Shenandoah Stories



CCC workers build erosion controls along Skyline Drive.

BOTTOM PHOTO NPS/ED KNEALEY

People came to the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia for rest and recreation long before Shenandoah National Park was established. Skyland Resort hosted weary urbanites for long stays starting in the late 1800s. Later, President Herbert Hoover and First Lady Lou Henry Hoover built their Rapidan Camp as a retreat to escape the stress of work and summer's heat and humidity in the nation's capital. The Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) "boys" came in the 1930s to build many rustic-style park facilities—some still seen and used today—so that everyone could retreat to the mountains for recreation and relaxation.

You can compare notes with those of earlier visitors by exploring Shenandoah's rich stories in more depth. Visit Skyland Resort and tour the restored Massanutten Lodge. Plan a trip to Rapidan Camp to see the restored presidential cabin and an exhibit about the Hoovers. Stop at the visitor centers to see films and exhibits about even more of the park's stories.

In summer and fall check the park's visitor guide *The Overlook* for the ranger program schedule. Shenandoah's stories are here to be discovered. There is always more to see and do at Shenandoah National Park!

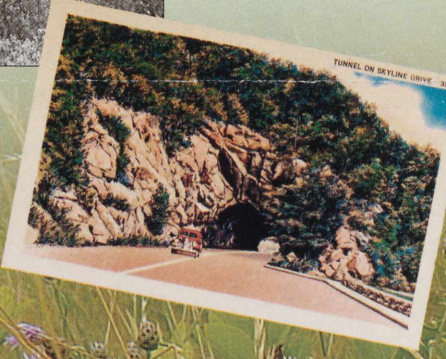


President and Mrs. Hoover relax at their Rapidan Camp.

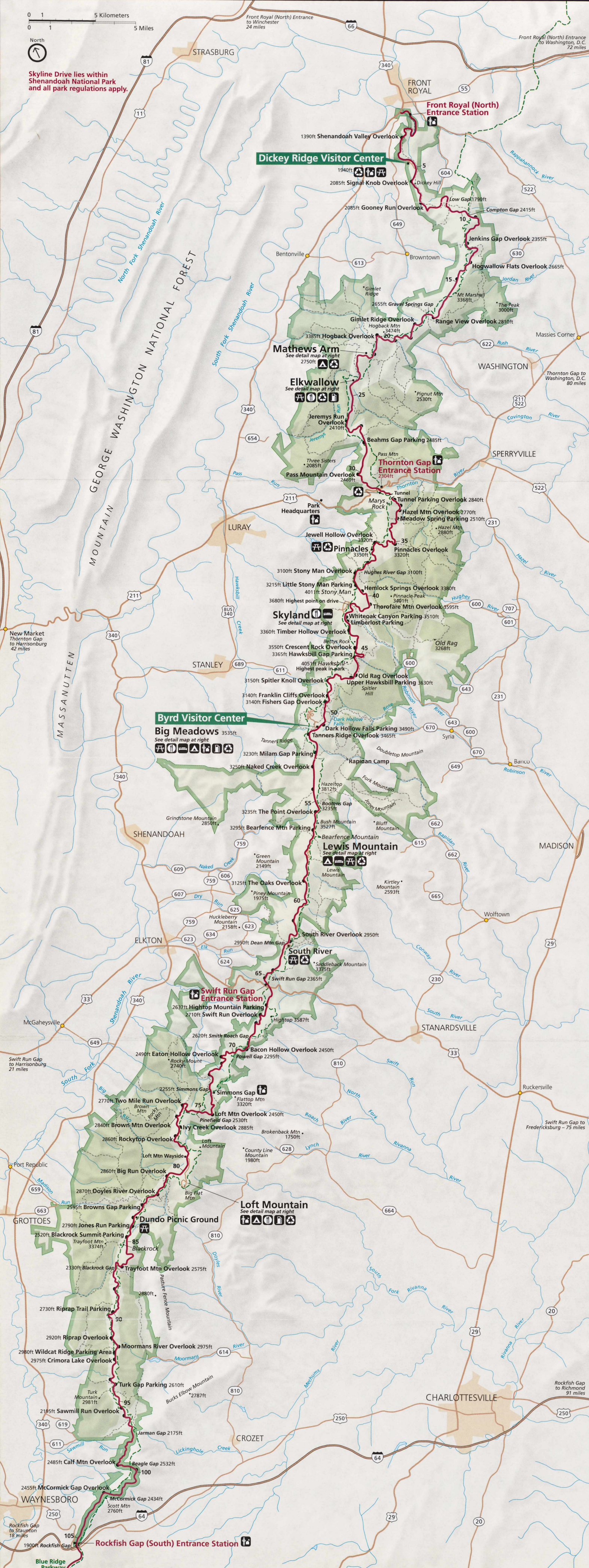


Visit the historic, refurbished Massanutten Lodge at Skyland Resort.

The historic postcard (below) shows Marys Rock Tunnel, built in 1932 on Skyline Drive. It cut through 600 feet of mountain. The clearance is 12 feet, 8 inches.



Exploring Shenandoah



Using Your Map and Guide

Shenandoah National Park's scenic roadway, Skyline Drive, follows the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains for 105 miles. At its southern end it joins the Blue Ridge Parkway, which stretches 469 miles to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Numbered concrete mileposts on the west side of Skyline Drive help you find



facilities and services. Mileposts are numbered north to south, and this map is labeled every five miles. Many of the Drive's 75 scenic overlooks are located with a black dot. Detail maps show developed areas. More detailed guides and hiking maps are available at entrance stations and visitor centers.

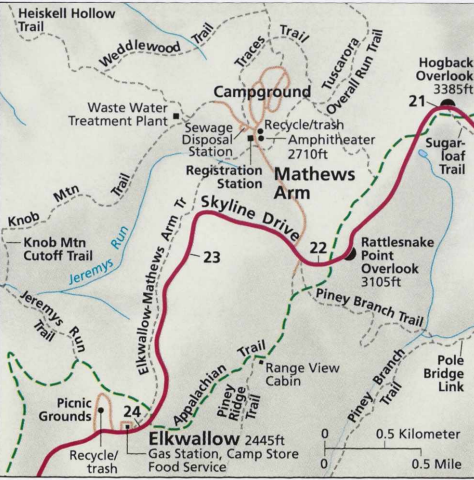


Report all emergencies, injuries, motor vehicle accidents, or violations to a ranger immediately or call **800-732-0911**.

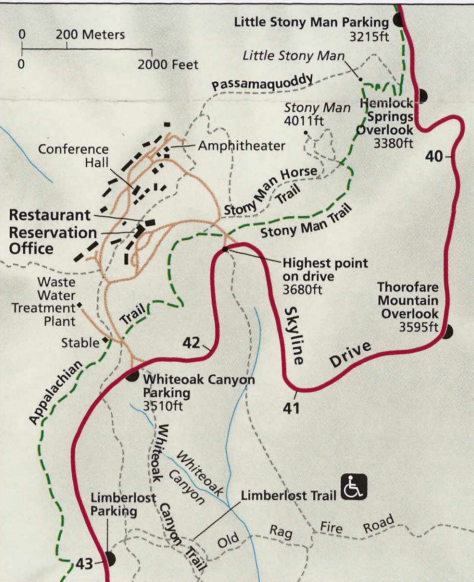


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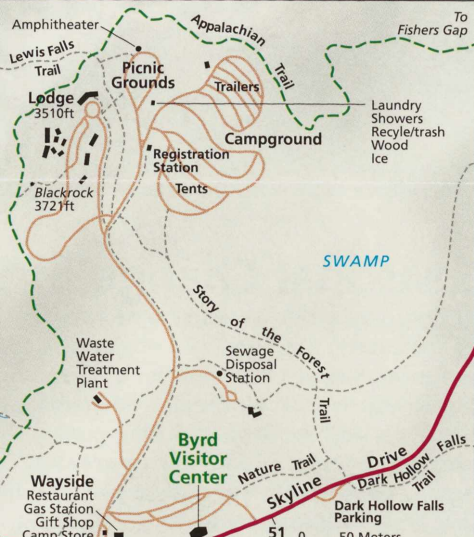
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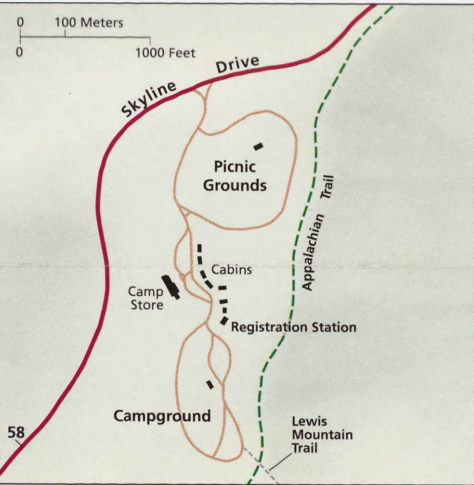
Skyland



Big Meadows



Lewis Mountain



Loft Mountain



Become a Junior Ranger in Shenandoah.

Get the Information You Need

Shenandoah Overlook, your free park guide, lists ranger-led programs, activities, safety tips, and regulations. It contains information about backcountry camping and hours of operation for facilities and services. For hiking, stop at a visitor center for maps and guides or visit the online bookstore, www.snpbooks.org. To plan ahead, visit our official park website www.nps.gov/shen.

Skyline Drive is a narrow mountain road with beautiful vistas and wildflowers along the shoulders. Take a leisurely drive and pull off at some of our 75 scenic overlooks to see the views. Wild animals frequent the Drive's shoulders and may dart across the road, so observe the 35-mile-per-hour speed limit for their safety and yours. Bicyclers be cautious—shoulders can be narrow, and vehicle drivers may be distracted. Bicycles and all motorized vehicles are limited to paved roads only.

The maps show services offered in the park. Facilities are open April through November. For information on concession facilities (lodges, restaurants, and gift shops) contact ARAMARK, 800-999-4714 or visit www.visitshenandoah.com.

Beyond the Drive and developed areas, over 500 miles of trails beckon to the hiker. Detailed maps and hiking guides are available at visitor centers and at www.snpbooks.org. Day-hike trail maps may be downloaded at www.nps.gov/shen. The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) operates six cabins (reservations with PATC required) and maintains huts for Appalachian Trail thru-hikers. Contact: PATC at 703-242-0315 or www.patc.net.



Discover more to explore at visitor centers: exhibits, films, park store.

Pets

Dogs/pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet at all times. They, too, are visitors who must respect others' homes and other visitors' experiences and enjoyment. Pets are prohibited on only a few trails, for safety reasons. Check the information at the trailhead.

Be Prepared

Mountain weather can change quickly. Come prepared for cold, wet conditions and fog in any season. Even a warm sunny day may be followed by a cold night. Bring plenty of water when you hike, and dress appropriately. Be sure to match your hike with your physical abilities. There are no hiker shuttles.

Stay Safe

Never play at the tops of falls or climb on nearby rocks. Do not attempt to hike rocky areas that are wet and slippery. Do not cross swollen streams. All water except from developed systems must be boiled vigorously for one minute or otherwise treated to be safe for drinking. Lock valuables in your vehicle out of sight or carry them with you. Let someone know your itinerary. Cell phones do not work in many areas of the park.

More Information

Shenandoah National Park
3655 U.S. Highway 211 East
Luray, VA 22835-9036
540-999-3500 (recording)
www.nps.gov/shen



Proper food storage is a must!

Leave No Trace

Ensuring that future generations can enjoy Shenandoah National Park is everyone's responsibility. Follow these Leave No Trace guidelines to help take care of Shenandoah. www.lnt.org

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces: Stay on roads and trails. Trampled vegetation leads to erosion.

Dispose of Waste Properly: Pack it in and pack it out.

Leave What You Find: Taking plants, animals, or cultural artifacts is illegal and means that other people cannot enjoy them.

Minimize Campfire Impacts: Build fires only in designated areas with grates.

Respect Wildlife: If an animal changes its behavior because of your presence, you are too close.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors: Leash and control your pet. Let nature's sounds prevail—avoid loud voices and noises.



Join a ranger to discover hidden treasures.



Seventy-five overlooks provide views from the top.