



Rocky Run Challenge
South Mountain Recreation Area
Park Quest 2016

Welcome!

This quest consists of a 1 mile hike, exploring a portion of the Appalachian Trail, reaching the beautiful Rocky Run shelters. On your hike you will discover the natural wonder, peace, beauty, and some of the history that the Maryland portion of the Appalachian Trail has to offer. So keep your eyes open. Remember, safety comes first. The hike to the shelter and back will be 2 miles round-trip and take 1- 2 hours. Give yourselves time to explore and enjoy the surroundings at the shelters. Complete worksheet activities as you go, wait until you reach the shelters, or after you've finished the hike. Take a picture of your team at the shelters to complete the Quest. Have fun!

Don't Forget...

Something to write with

A digital camera

A desire for adventure

Water/trail snacks (or a picnic lunch)

Appropriate clothing & shoes for hiking, climbing, trekking, playing, learning, & growing!

Cell phone

Compass (optional)

Let's Go!

Access the trail from the parking lot. You will not need to cross Reno Monument Road or Lambs Knoll Road to access the trail. You will be heading south on the Appalachian Trail. Enter the Appalachian Trail.

Look for the white blazes that mark the trail and will help keep you on course. Your team will be looking for blue blazes which will mark the side trail leading to the Rocky Run shelters. Take the blue blazed trail, headed southwest, to the shelters.

You can complete activities along the way, or wait until you stop at the shelter.

Most importantly- Be safe and have fun!



The Appalachian Trail is marked in white blazes.



Blue blazes mark official side trails along the Appalachian Trail.

Activity: Where are you? You are about to hike on the world-famous Appalachian Trail. This trail is roughly 2,190 miles long and runs from Maine to Georgia. The trail is over 75 years old and is well maintained by over 6,000 volunteers. The entire trail is marked by white marks, which are called blazes. Follow the trail using these white blazes as your guide. Two white blazes together indicate a turn in the trail. Blue blazes indicate an official side trail, usually leading to a shelter, overlook, or other significant landmark. Look at the map of the AT below. Make a mark on the map where you are located on the trail. Are you closer to Maine or Georgia, or somewhere in the middle?



Activity: While hiking, what did you notice about the trail? Was it flat? Rocky? Wet? Muddy? Was the trail straight and wide, or curvy and narrow? In your own words describe the trail features. What are some challenges that hikers might face on this trail?

Activity: People who hike the entire AT are called “Thru-Hikers”. People who hike smaller portions of the trail, or hike the whole AT in sections, are called “Section Hikers”. Today, you are a team of section hikers.

As a section hiker, if you were planning a weekend backpacking trip on the AT, what are some items you would need to pack?

If you were a thru-hiker, what are some additional items you would need to pack?

Activity: There are 2 shelters by the Rocky Run spring. The older shelter was built in 1940 by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the newer shelter was built in 2008 by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club volunteers. To find the old shelter, continue on the blue blazed trail past the new shelter. Features of both shelters include a flat floor for sleeping, a second floor in the new shelter, a covered porch, fire rings, privies behind the shelters, and a hikers’ log or journal. Shelters like these are spaced about a day’s hike apart from each other in the Maryland section of the AT. Hikers must plan their overnight hikes based on this, as camping along the AT is only allowed in designated shelters and campsites.

If you were a backpacker, stopped here for the night, how would you get water? How could you stay warm if the temperature dropped overnight? What would you do if your gear or clothing had gotten wet?

Activity: Inside each shelter, a hikers’ log book can be found, usually inside a mailbox on the wall. It can be fun to add your comments to the hikers’ log book and see what other hikers have added.

Why is the log book a useful tool to volunteers who maintain the trail, park rangers who manage the trail, or emergency responders?

Congratulations!

You've made it to your destination. Take a picture of the team or a team member at either of the shelters as proof that you've completed the Quest.

Return to your vehicle the same way you came. When you come to the intersection where the blue blazed trail meets the white blazed trail, make sure you go north on the trail (stay to the left). Follow the white blazes to stay on the trail.

If your team prefers to have an official stamp in your passport book, you can drive to the museum at Washington Monument State Park to receive a stamp (optional, not required). Please see museum hours and directions below. You must arrive at the museum during open hours to receive a stamp.

By the way...

Did you know you're on a battlefield? The parking area is located on Fox's Gap; site of the Civil War Battle of South Mountain. Union and Confederate troops clashed here on September 14th, 1862. Take a moment to explore the markers and monuments located in the area. For more information on the Battle of South Mountain (and a passport stamp), please visit the museum at Washington Monument State Park. Please see museum hours and directions below. You must arrive at the museum during open hours.

Washington Monument State Park

Drive Time: 5-10 minutes from Quest site.

Hours: Thursday through Monday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Directions from Reno Monument Road: Turn right onto Reno Monument Road. At stop sign, turn left onto Bolivar Road. At stop sign, turn left onto Old National Pike/Alt. 40 West. At top of hill, turn right onto Washington Monument Road. At stop sign, continue straight into Washington Monument State Park. At stop sign, continue straight to parking lot at top of hill. Museum is smaller building at northwest corner of parking lot.

Thank you for visiting Washington Monument State Park and participating in Park Quest.

We're so glad you came and hope you will visit again soon!