General Trek Information

New for 2020, HMSR will be offering Trek options in Weeks 2, 3, 5 and 6. Each Trek is developed around unique opportunities that are based on the local Schuylkill River and Appalachian Trail.

Each Trek is designed for 7 youth and 2 adults plus a Trek guide from HMSR. The base cost for each youth is $450 and for each leader $225. Units electing a Trek must commit to at least 5 youth and the 2 adults.

Those Treks including a black-powder range option, must follow the game commission rules and requirements. Note that the cost for this option is not included in the price and must be paid individually by each leader or Scout as necessary. The reason for this is that each license is a personal license and is not available for organizations. More information, pricing and requirements can be found at the game commission website:

https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/StateGameLands/StateGameLandsRanges/Pages/default.aspx

Check back often for any updates to our Trek information. Changes will be highlighted to make it easy for leaders to determine changes to the program elements.
A Walk in the Woods

Day One
Depart Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation and begin the day with a 2 mile hike through a second growth forest, home to large, old trees to get a feel for what the frontier of colonial Pennsylvania was like 265 years ago. Then hike 7 miles north along the Appalachian Trail atop Peters Mountain with views into Clark Valley below. Spend the night camping on top of Peters Mountain.

9 miles

Day Two
Leave the AT for a hike down into Clark Valley followed by a short road hike, and a morning of shooting black powder rifles. After the shoot retrace your steps to the top of Peters Mountain and continue north on the Appalachian Trail. Spend a second night camped on Peters Mountain. Yesterday was an easy day; today you will begin to build miles and elevation gains into your backpacking trip.

9.4 miles, 750’ gain

Day Three
Follow the AT north, descending into Clarks Valley and then climbing Sharp Mountain. Hike along an old stagecoach road and pass an abandoned ghost town on your way to a gap in Sharp Mountain. Follow Rausch Creek down through the gap and spend the night camping along the waters of Rausch Creek. Today will be your challenge day; you will add more miles to your day and roughly double your elevation gains over yesterday.

13.3 miles, 1300’ gain

Day Four
Hike northeast along a rail-trail to meet your ride up Sharp Mountain, then spend the afternoon climbing and rappelling at Boxcar Rocks. After departing Boxcar Rocks hike southwest along an abandoned railroad siding and then turn south at the Middle Patch Path. Follow the Path up Second Mountain, and camp for the night at the intersection with the Appalachian Trail. Today won’t see the elevation gains you saw earlier in the week, but the hike along the abandoned railroad siding will be challenging.

10 miles, 300’ gain

Day Five
Head north along the Appalachian Trail, dropping down to the Swatara Creek. Cross the Creek and climb Blue Mountain, following the AT north. Follow the Game Commission access road to the Swope Valley and meet your ride back to Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation. The elevation gain today will challenging as it all occurs as a single climb out of the valley of the Swatara Creek.

10. 6 miles, 2000’ gain
Pack and Paddle

Day One
Island Park Landing to Port Clinton

Depart Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation and put-in at Island Park in Schuylkill Haven. Paddle downstream, passing the Auburn canal tunnel site and Ft. Lebanon site before reaching Port Clinton. Camp in Port Clinton for the night. This paddle should take about 4.5 hours without breaks. Perhaps a little longer if water is low.

18 miles

Day Two
Port Clinton to Felix Landing

Depart Port Clinton, paddling downstream. Pass Pulpit Rock, a noted local landmark, and portage around the New Kernsville Dam. Today’s paddle should take about 4.75 hours without breaks. Again, if water is low it may take a little longer.

18.5 miles

Day Three

Hike south on the Appalachian Trail from its intersection with PA Route 183. Take time to search for the Berks County high point and to visit the boulder field near Shubert Gap. Take advantage of several overlooks to take a break and enjoy looking out over the Lebanon Valley and Little Mountain. Camp on top of Blue Mountain tonight. Portions of the trail are rocky; slow down and watch your footing.

6.2 miles, 250’ gain

Day Four

Continue following the Appalachian Trail south along Blue Mountain. Portions of the trail are rocky. Slow down and watch your footing; Pennsylvania is referred to as Rocksylvania by thru-hikers for good reason. You will pass a spring used by travelers during the colonial period. You will pass several overlooks that offer views of Little Mountain. Once past Fisher Lookout the trail becomes less rocky; you are now following an old stagecoach road. Camp on top of Blue Mountain tonight.

7.2 miles, 300’ gain

Day Five

Follow the AT south along Blue Mountain. Infrequent overlooks give a view of the Monroe Valley. You will see old stone works as you descend to Swatara Creek and visit the historic Waterville Bridge. Then, catch your ride back to Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation.

7.3 miles
Day One
Depart Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation for the Appalachian Trail. Enjoy the view at Balanced Rocks and play on the natural teeter-totter. Hike on to Dan’s Pulpit to take in the view, then hike another mile and make camp for the night atop Blue Mountain. There are a few very rocky stretches of trail today; you are definitely hiking through Rocksylvania.

9.7 miles, 200’ gain

Day Two
Hike down into and up out of “the Eck”. Take time to enjoy the views at the Pinnacle and Pulpit Rock, then hike on into the Windsor Furnace Gap campsite. As yesterday so today - there are a few very rocky stretches of trail today.

10.9 miles, 1000’ gain

Day Three
Up early today, you have an appointment to keep. Your food for the rest of the trip is waiting for you at the Port Clinton post office. Miss the 11AM closing time and you go hungry until tomorrow morning. Welcome to the life of an AT thru hiker. The good news? You’ll be shooting rifles this afternoon at a Game Commission range. Spend the night in Port Clinton at the backpacker’s pavilion.

6.1 miles, 500’ gain

Day Four
Gets your legs under you and your wind up as you hike south from the backpacker’s pavilion this morning because you start the day with a thousand foot climb up out of the Schuylkill Gap. Hike south along the Appalachian Trail as you travel along the ridge of Blue Mountain. Stop at the Auburn Overlook to enjoy the view and spend the night at the Eagle’s Nest Shelter. This will be a challenging day due to the morning climb. After that the trail gets easier. Well except for the rocks.

8.6 miles, 1000’ gain

Day Five
Sleep in this morning, then head to the Eagle’s Nest Overlook. The Overlook is the birthplace of the local AT club. Every mile of trail you have hiked this week was built by and is maintained by club volunteers. Continue south along the AT atop Blue Mountain. A little past the intersection with Pennsylvania Route 183 you will turn north and hike into Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation.

5.8 miles