



PHOTO BY LORI MIER

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HIKING / TRAIL RUNNING

HIGH KNOB FIRE TOWER

Located in the George Washington National Forest

This moderately-strenuous hike rewards with some of the best views in the George Washington National Forest from the historic High Knob Fire Tower. After it was restored from 2001-2003, the tower now lends expansive, 360° views to visitors, with sunset vistas of Spruce Knob, West Virginia's highest mountain on the Eastern Continental Divide, and sunrise views over the slopes of Shenandoah Mountain, Switzer Dam, and the Blue Ridge which are visible in the distance. Plaques on each side of the tower catwalk show the names of these peaks. The area also offers excellent bird watching.

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

GOOGLE: *High Knob Trailhead*



Driving: 30 minutes west of Harrisonburg



Signs and Marking: From the trailhead at the parking area, follow the trail blazed yellow on trees.



Parking: Large gravel parking area on the left/south side of Rt. 33 immediately after cresting the pass on the VA/WV state line. Space for 20+ cars. Trailhead/parking not signed from the road, but is very visible.

PRACTICAL PLANNING INFORMATION



Services Along Trail: None, grassy clearing at the top of the mountain around the fire tower



Food & Water: None



Phone Service: There may be service at the parking area and on top of mountain, depending on the carrier

MORE INFORMATION

NATIONAL HISTORIC LOOKOUT

The High Knob Fire Tower was constructed by World War I veterans in 1939 and completed by members of the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in 1940. Fire marshals utilized the tower to monitor the area for fires. While most fire towers were built out of metal or wood, this tower was uniquely constructed out of stone. Many of these fire towers were taken down after fire detection technology improved. High Knob Fire Tower was added to the National Historic Lookout Register due to its scenic location and unique stone construction.



TRAIL INFORMATION



Time: 1.5-2.5 hours

Distance: 2.5 miles

Elevation: +/- 643 ft.

Terrain: Mostly singletrack footpath, with

a short section on a wider dirt road

Preferred direction: Out and back



NAVIGATING THE TRAIL

From the parking lot, the trail starts with a short, rocky descent from the guardrail down to a yellow-blazed trail through the forest, which gradually climbs in elevation. After 0.8 miles, turn left on the High Knob Trail which climbs steeply up to a dirt road at 0.9 miles. (The trail to the right is 2.4 miles long and leads to Brandywine Lake). Then, at the point where the trail levels out, turn right on the dirt road, and walk 0.1 miles. Turn left on a grassy road that leads uphill to the fire tower (1.3 miles). Return via the same path.

Be sure to stay on the trail to avoid entering private property, which is well signed. Note that temperatures can be significantly cooler at this elevation than in Harrisonburg, and the area is exposed to wind. It's wise to bring a jacket. Take caution when climbing the fire tower, especially with young children. Hunting season is most of November through January each year. During this time, be aware hunters may be more active on national forest lands. Wear bright clothing to make yourself more visible and consider a brightly colored hat or vest. Whistle, sing, or carry on a conversation to alert hunters your presence. For more information, visit the Virginia DWR website.

