

Petersburg Loop 1 - Part B

1. After enjoying the view from the observation tower at Spruce Knob, ride back down to the main road (Rt 28/33) and turn left/north. After about 2 miles, you will reach the town of Riverton. Watch on the right for Germany Valley Road CR-9 and signs to Seneca Caverns.
2. After crossing a small bridge, take a moment and stop at the memorial on the right for the Battle Of Riverton. Then, continue less than 1/4 mile and watch for a small sign for Horse Ridge Road to the right. This narrow road winds its way up a steep hillside past an old cemetery. When it starts to level off, find a safe place to stop and turn around to enjoy a wonderful view of the rocks. To your left is Germany Valley, visible from the overlook you passed earlier (and will pass again shortly).
3. Continue on Horse Ridge Road. After a mile or so, the road forks. If you feel adventuresome, bear left and continue past several old farms for about 2 miles until you come to a historical marker for John Dahle's Grave. He is the namesake for Dolly Sods. You can park and hike up the hill to the tree line and find his gravestone along the fence.
4. Going back to the fork in the road (or continuing if you did not take the sidetrip to John Dahle's grave), bear right on Bland Hills Road past some farms and friendly cattle. Watch for the old 1954(?) DeSoto resting and rusting by the side of the road. Great photo op! Shortly, the road ends on Rt 33.
5. Turn left/east on Rt 33 and enjoy your ride over the mountain again to Franklin. If you missed it earlier, the Germany Valley overlook is just a couple of miles up the mountain.
6. At Franklin, you may want to top off the gas tanks since there are no stations along Smoke Hole Road. Turn left on Rt 220 north and ride past Upper Tract (where you came out on the Part A leg of this loop). About a mile or two north, watch for a new bridge (built after the 1985 flood) and Smoke Hole Road to your left.

7. Follow CR2 / Smoke Hole Road as it passes Eagle Rock (stop and read the historical marker and gravestone to find out why it is named as such) and continues along the South Branch Potomac River for a few miles to the intersection with Shreve's Store. Stop and enjoy the view of the old log church next door too.

8. At Shreve's Store, bear left and go about 1/4 mile. After passing several camping trailers, watch for a small sign for Smoke Hole Road to continue to the right towards Cabins. There are no more intersections until the end of the road in 13 miles. It is good advice to obey the speed limit (35MPH) since road is narrow (but well paved) with lots of blind corners, no guard rails to keep you from going over steep embankments, and families with children walking along parts of the road. Relax and enjoy the scenery.

9. At the north end of Smoke Hole Road, you have two options. If you have time, turn left on Rt 28/55 and enjoy a scenic ride about 12 miles to Seneca Rocks. Just past the intersection is a wonderful Discovery Center. From here, you can hike to the top via a well-maintained trail - somewhat strenuous and steep so allow 2 hours round-trip at an average pace. If it is warm, take water as there are no fountains along the way.

10. If you don't have time or have seen Seneca already, you can turn right on Rt 28/55 and head back into Petersburg.