

Massanutten Mountain Cluster

Signal Knob Catback Mountain Southern Massanutten Mountain

Five areas of almost 49,000 acres on the Lee Ranger District compose the Massanutten Mountain Cluster of Mountain Treasures. Massanutten Mountain is a relatively low-lying outlier in the center of the Shenandoah Valley with elevations generally under 3000 feet.

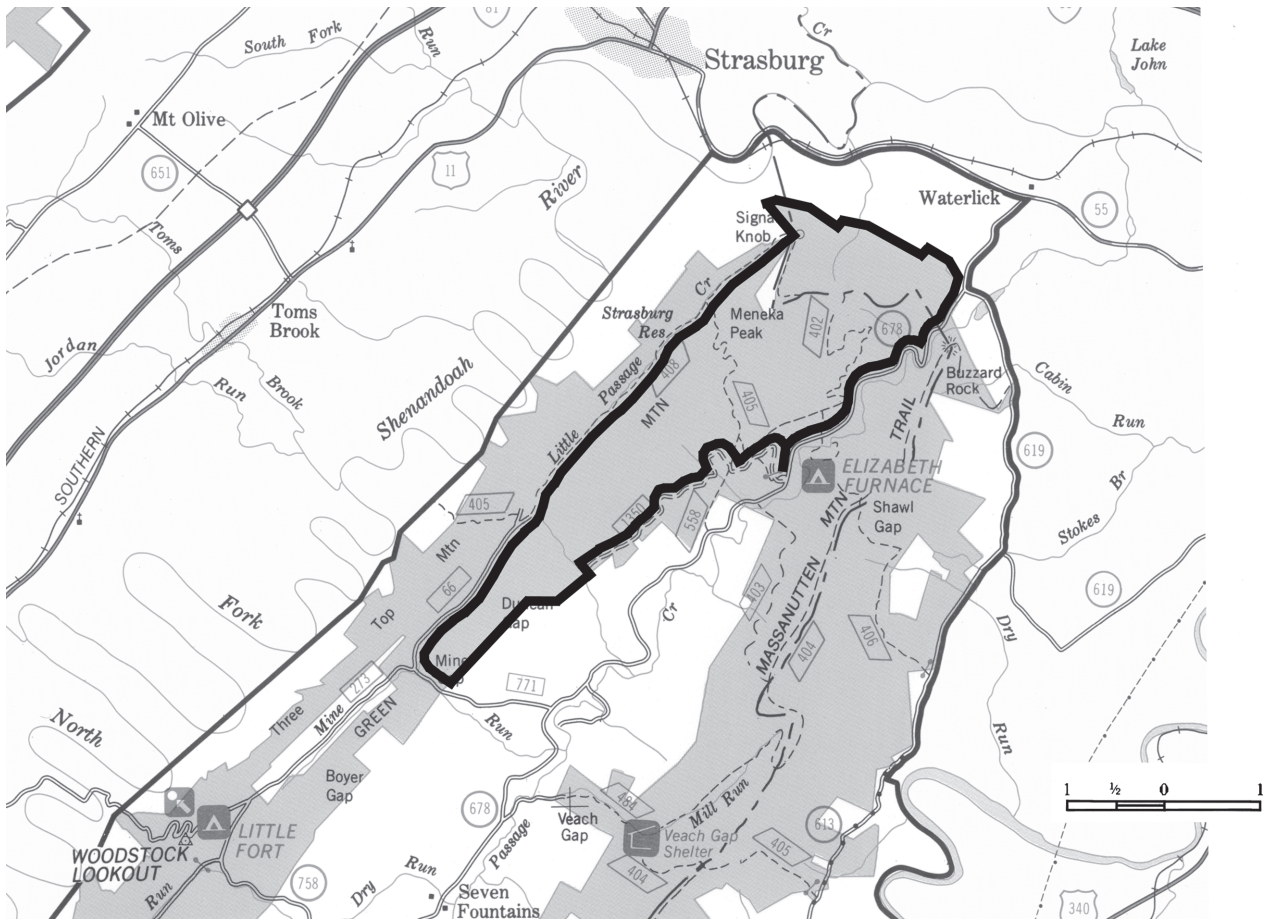
It is part of the Ridge & Valley physiographic province and is noteworthy for its close proximity to the Blue Ridge Mountain province to the east. Because of this position, Massanutten Mountain serves as an important corridor and stepping stone linking Blue Ridge wildlands such as Shenandoah National Park to the east with the bulk of the GWNF lands to

Northern Massanutten Mountain Short Horse Mountain

the west.

The Massanutten Mountain Treasures are embraced by the drainages of the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River. Forest growing conditions here are generally poor with soils derived from low nutrient value sandstones and quartzites.

A well-developed trail system exists on Massanutten Mountain. The Big Blue/Tuscarora Trail serves as a connector from the Appalachian Trail in the Park to the North Mountain trails across the Shenandoah Valley to the west. There are no designated Wilderness Areas or National Scenic Areas in the Massanutten Mountain cluster.



Signal Knob

The Signal Knob area is found at the far northwest end of Massanutten Mountain high above the Shenandoah Valley and the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The popular campground at Elizabeth Furnace is just to the east.

Because of its unique topography, prominently located between the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains, Signal Knob was an important east-west signaling location during the Civil War, thus living up to its name.

The area encompasses Richardson Knob, Meneka Peak, Mudhole Gap, and Little Passage Creek. The area also includes two Special Biological

Areas designated in the forest plan, Signal Knob Shale Barren and Mudhole Bog. The Virginia Division of Natural Heritage recommends a significant extension of the boundary around the Bog to protect the groundwater recharge area for the seep. In addition, the municipal reservoir for Strasburg is located at the western boundary of this Treasure.

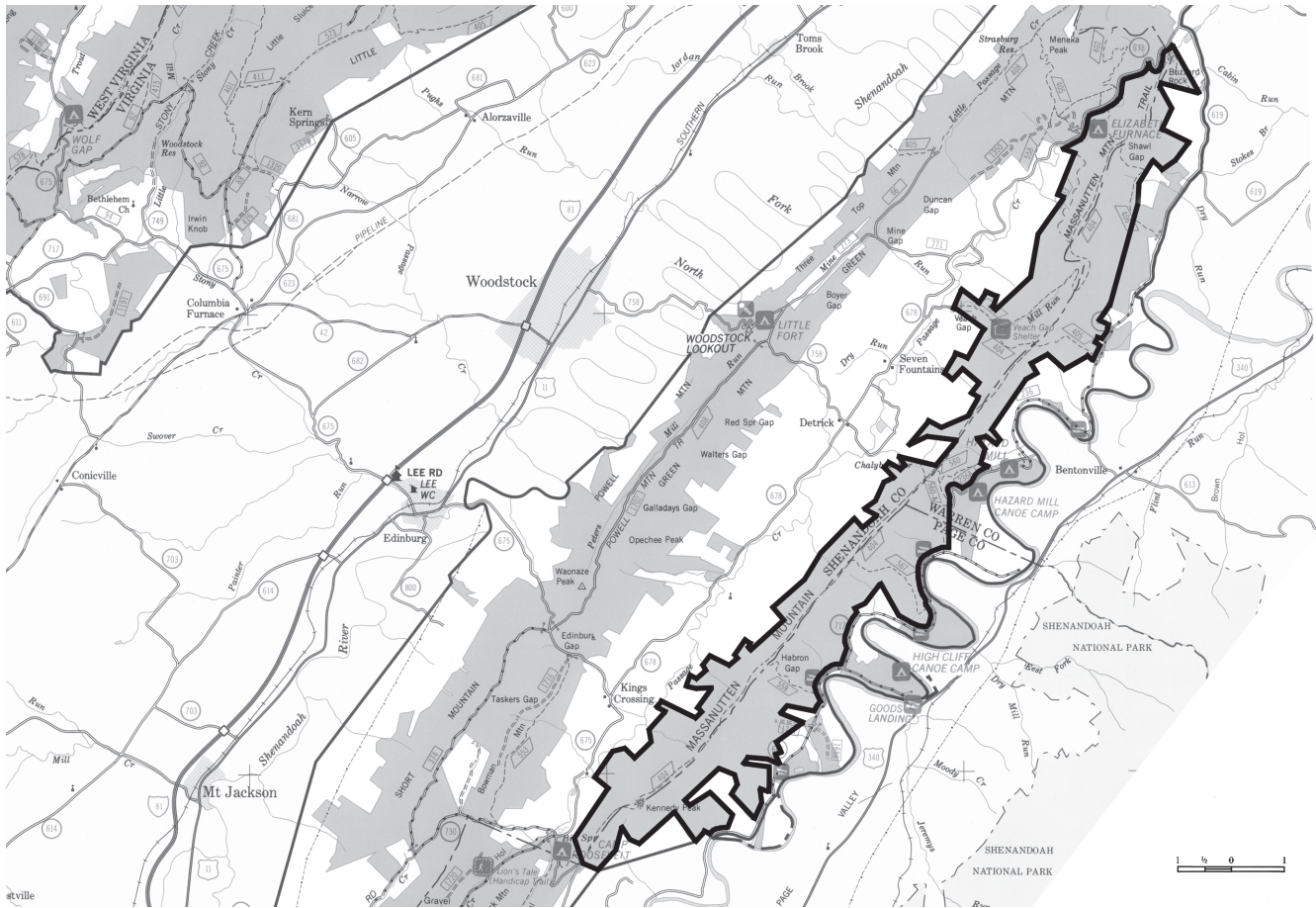
The Signal Knob Trail combined with the Tuscarora Bear Wallow Trail provides a loop hiking experience over eight miles long. These are the nearest trails to the DC metro area open to mountain biking in the GW. As such they are extremely popular.

The area may contain 1361 acres of possible old growth.

Approximate Size: 5471 acres

Location: Shenandoah and Warren Counties, Virginia in the Lee District

Topos: Strasburg



Northern Massanutten Mountain

Serving as a scenic backdrop to the slow moving South Fork of the Shenandoah River, Northern Massanutten Mountain stretches south from Front Royal almost fifteen miles to Camp Roosevelt. This roadless area extends westward down into Fort Valley and eastward almost to the South Fork. The area is significantly expanded from the original Forest Service roadless inventory

The long ridge is dotted with several low gaps including Habron Gap, Milford Gap, and Shawl Gap. Many rock outcrops are visible along the crest of the mountain. Kennedy Peak is the highest point with an elevation of 2550 feet. Many small unnamed feeder streams drop off the eastern flank as tributaries of the

South Fork. On the west, small feeder streams drain into Passage Creek, a tributary of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

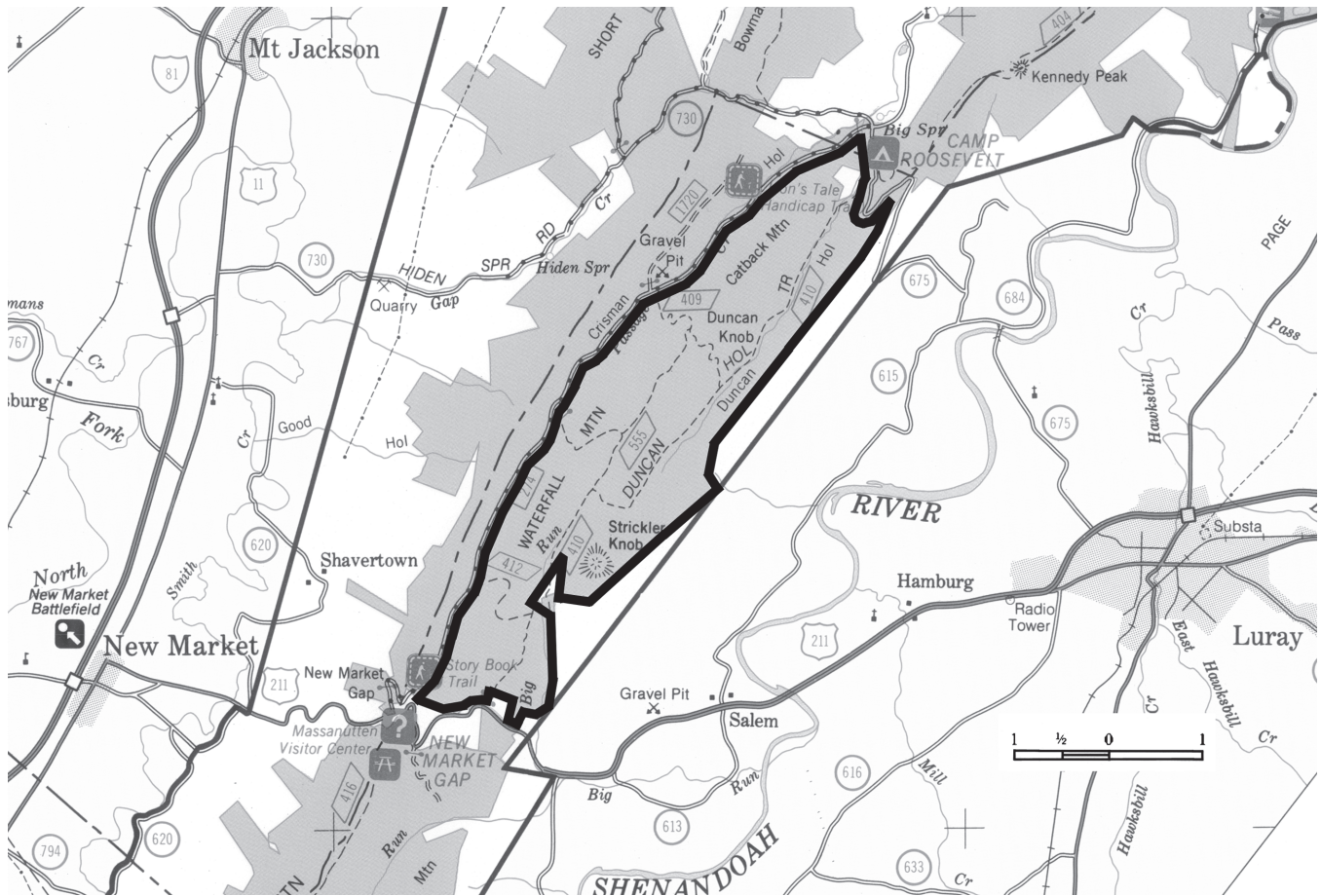
The area is a recreational paradise. The Massanutten Mountain Trail travels the entire length of the ridge, and there is a shelter at Veach Gap. Numerous side trails climb from the bottom of both the eastern and western flanks to the ridge crest, connecting to the Massanutten Mountain Trail. The South Fork is a popular canoeing river with several sites to put in and take out.

North Massanutten Mountain may contain 3727 acres of possible old growth.

Approximate Size: 17,770 acres

Location: Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, Virginia in the Lee District

Topos: Luray, Rileyville, Bentonville, Strasburg



Catback Mountain

The Catback Mountain area contains a diversity of terrain, with two main parallel ridges. This Treasure is the headwaters of Passage Creek, whose Fort Valley splits the northern Massanutten. Catback Mountain, Duncan and Strickler Knobs, Duncan Hollow, and Big Run are some of its prominent topographical features.

Scothorn Gap Shale Barren is a 34 acre forest plan-designated Special Biological Area. In addition, Waterfall Mountain Cliffs is a conservation site that the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage recommends be designated as a Special Biological Area. The Forest Service has identified significant amounts of semi-primitive acreage here.

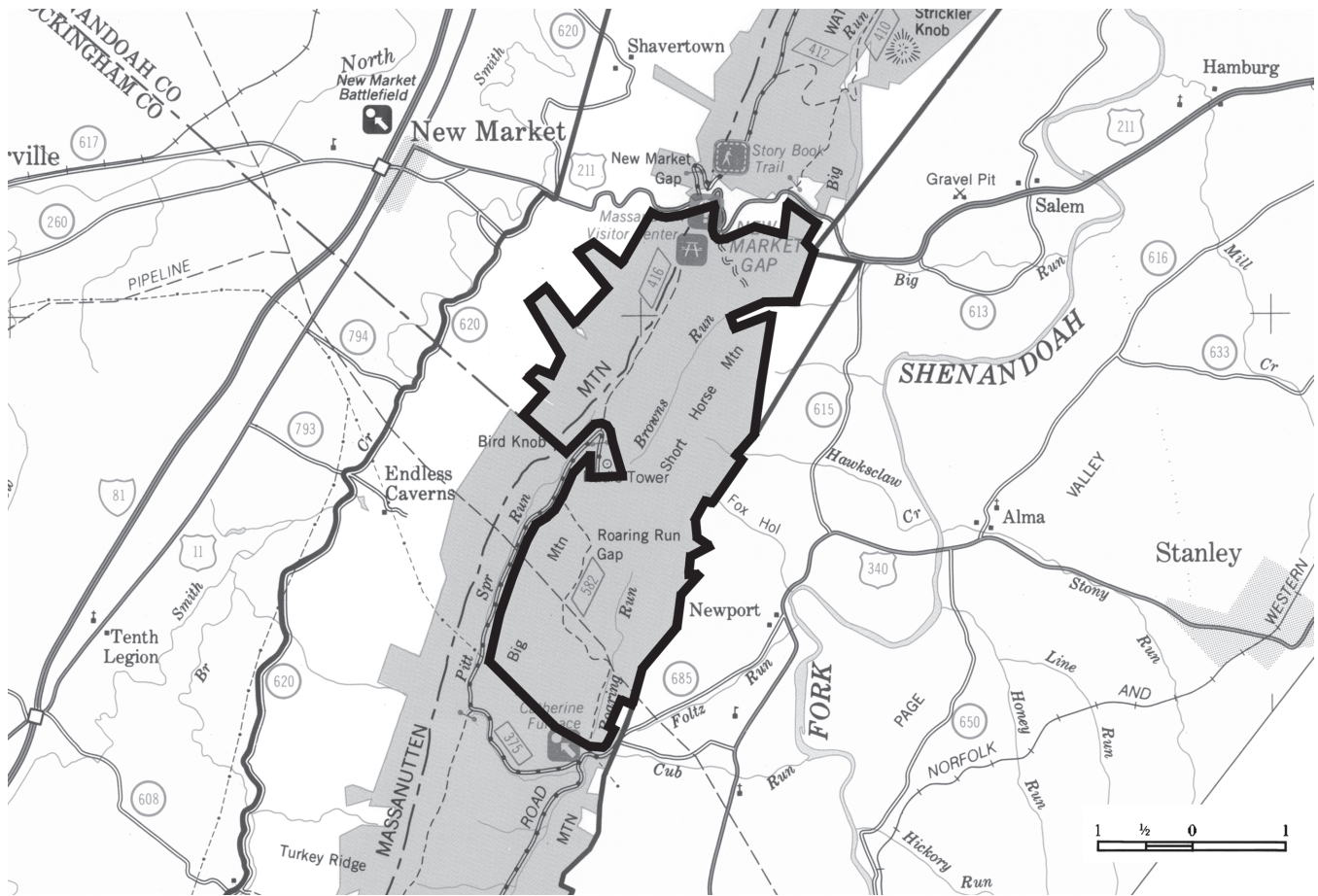
Catback Mountain is adjacent to and southwest of the National Forest campground Camp Roosevelt. Duncan Hollow Trail passes through Duncan Hollow and Big Run over nine miles and connects Camp Roosevelt to US Route 211. Several side trails create loops for any skill level. In addition to these trails, there is a handicapped boardwalk that leads to spectacular cliffs.

Catback Mountain may contain 246 acres of possible old growth.

Approximate Size: 6386 acres

Location: Page County, Virginia in the Lee District

Topos: Hamburg



Short Horse Mountain

Short Horse Mountain is located south of New Market Gap and north of Catherine Furnace. It includes Short Horse Mountain, Roaring Run, and Browns Hollow. The Forest Service's Massanutten Visitor Center is located near the north end of the area.

Browns Hollow Shale Barren is a 1089 acre plan-designated Special Biological Area. There are also significant amounts of semi-primitive acreage here

that offer remoteness and serenity.

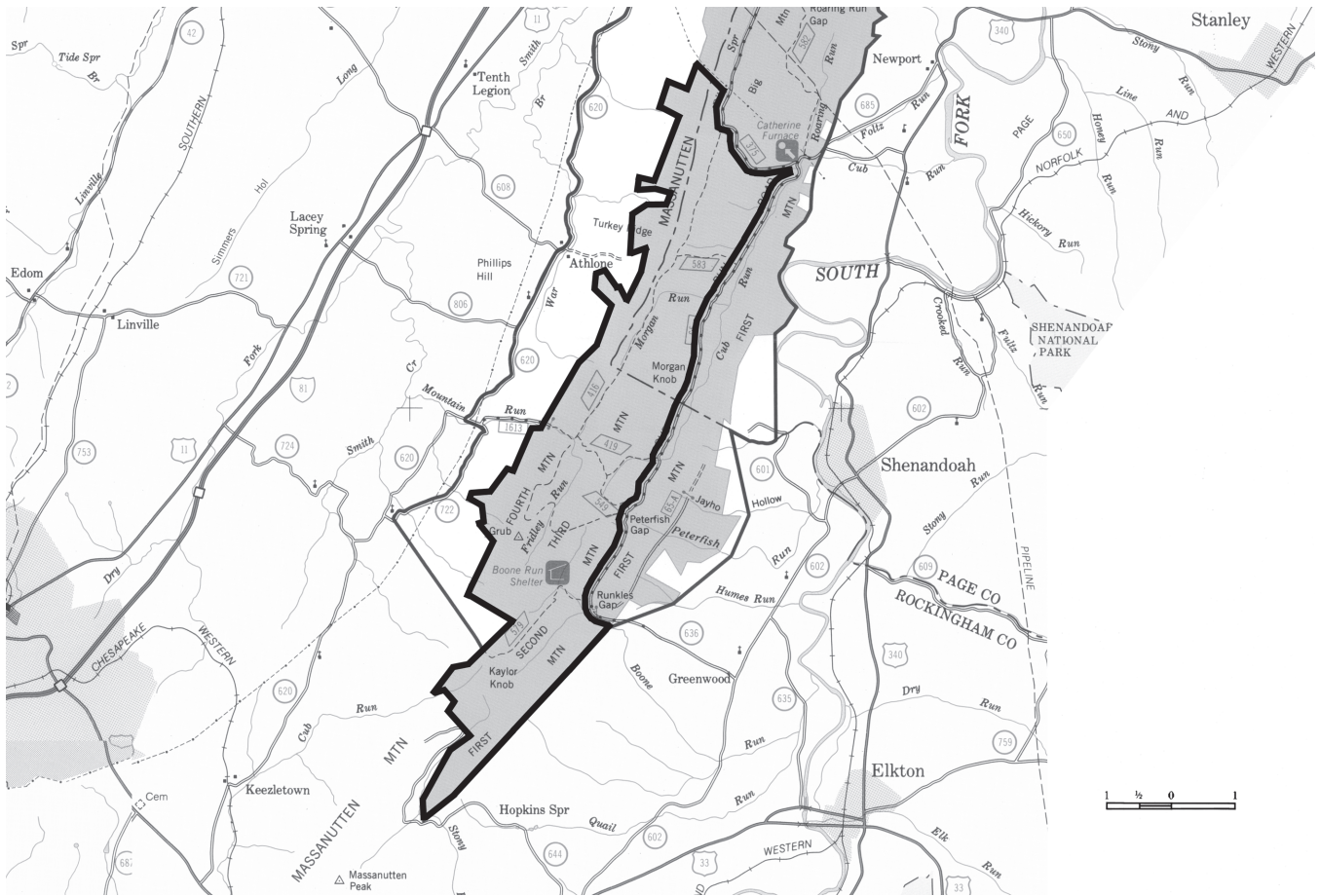
The Roaring Run Trail runs four miles from Roaring Run in the southeast to FDR 375 on the west; the Bird Knob Trail runs 2.2 miles along the crest of Massanutten Mountain from the Visitor's Center to Forest Development Road 375 at Bird Knob.

Short Horse Mountain may contain 271 acres of possible old growth.

Approximate Size: 7243 acres

Location: Page and Shenandoah Counties, Virginia in the Lee District

Topos: Tenth Legion, New Market, Hamburg, Stanley



Southern Massanutten Mountain

Like Northern Massanutten Mountain this area serves as the scenic backdrop to the beautiful South Fork of the Shenandoah River. The area is adjacent to the Short Horse Mountain area to the north. Grubb Knob and Morgan Knob both climb to over 3000 feet.

The southern part of this roadless area is divided by three separate but narrow drainages. Of the two main drainages, Cub Run separates Second Mountain from Third Mountain, while Fridley Run divides Third Mountain from Fourth Mountain. Farther north all

these ridges are drawn together into the narrow Massanutten Mountain ridgeline.

Numerous hiking and mountain biking opportunities exist within the narrow confines of this roadless area. The many small valleys and ridges create a trail lover's dream. The Massanutten Mountain Trail extends almost from the southern boundary to the Visitor's Center, and many short side trails allow for the exploration of the smaller drainages and hollows.

Southern Massanutten Mountain may contain 2266 acres of possible old growth.

Approximate Size: 11,919 acres

Location: Page and Rockingham Counties, Virginia in the Lee District

Topos: Hamburg, Tenth Legion, Elkton, Stanley