

### **Backbone Mountain, MD, 3,360 ft. – May 29, 2005, HP #3: No Long-Distance Views**

Friday May 27, 2005, I got off work early, a couple hours after lunch, and just that very morning Yenny I had decided to go camping for the Memorial Day long-weekend. Our intended destination for that evening was the George Washington forest near Wardensville, West Virginia. From there we planned to venture over to Blackwater Falls State Park located in the Allegheny Mountains of Tucker County, West Virginia, and also find the highest point in Maryland. Packing took some time, and I became worried about Friday long-weekend traffic, so I called Yenny and we decided we would be better off leaving in the morning instead.

Early Saturday morning we meet at my place in Herndon Virginia and instead of stopping at our Friday night intended camp spot near Wardensville we continued west on highway 48 toward Blackwater Falls. I had moved from Arlington to Herndon for a better paying job about thirteen months prior.

At Moorefield, with a whole day ahead of us, we detoured off the direct line to Blackwater Falls, and followed the same roads I had use when I visited Seneca Rocks and Spruce Knob almost four years earlier. Needing a break from the serpentine drive we decided to stop at Seneca Rocks as my cohort had never been there. This time we got some nice photos from within the “realm of the climber” area, and again we saw people rock climbing on the impressive cliff faces.

As I had done four years prior, once again, since we were in the neighborhood, we popped over to Spruce Knob, the highest point in West Virginia, just 20 or so miles away. After checking out the views from the summit platform, and taking a few photos, we drove to Spruce Knob Lake



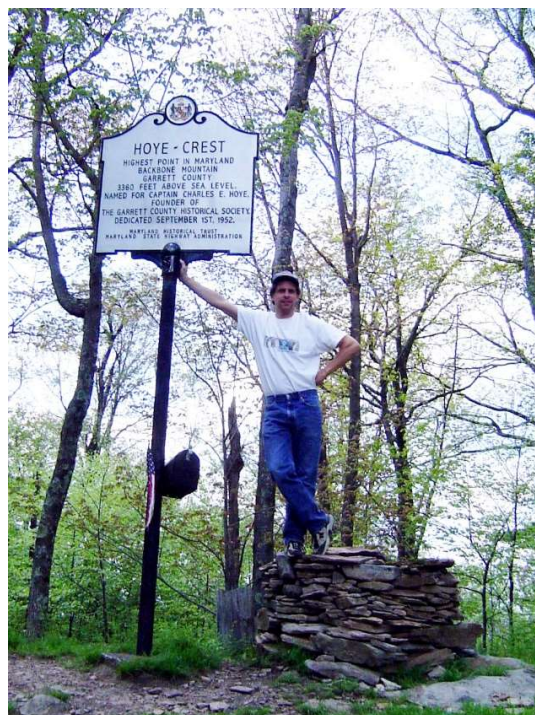
and from there took a gravel road to Job, on to Harman, and through the Canaan Valley to Blackwater Falls about 70 miles to the north. It was raining when we arrived and already too late in the evening to look around, so we drove into the Monongahela Forest to find a remote camp spot. Finding one was not easy, but we eventually found a suitable spot. Auspiciously, the rain broke long enough for us to catch an amazing sunset as the sun settled behind the wooded mountains of Tucker county.

Sunday morning, we climbed up Olsen's tower, and then drove into Davis, WV for lunch. Our next stop was the beautiful Blackwater Falls, named for its amber waters tinted by red spruce needles and the tannic acid of fallen hemlocks. The falls are an impressive fifty-seven feet tall.

From Blackwater we headed toward the West Virginia and Maryland state line and Backbone Mountain. The trail to the highpoint of Backbone Mountain is a rough logging type road just over a mile in length from highway 219. Since my SUV was equipped with four-wheel drive, we drove up it most of the way until the driving became extra rough. We walked the remainder to the highest spot in Maryland at 3,360 feet.



The highpoint is called Hoyer-Crest and contains a large sign on a metal post. Hoyer-Crest is named in remembrance of the First World War Captain Charles Hoyer, a descendant of early settlers to the area, and founder of the Garrett county historical society. Hoyer was also a veteran of the Spanish-American War. Backbone Mountain crosses the border of Maryland and runs into West Virginia, earning its name because the thirty-nine mile long ridge which it crowns is often rugged and rocky. We found the summit covered in too many trees to allow for any long-distance views. In 2005 the Highpointers club had not yet installed one of their benches seen at many of the minor elevation highpoints today.



Heading back down, someone had parked on the logging road, but we were lucky enough to be able to just barely squeeze past the unthoughtful persons car, as we returned to highway 219 and drove seventy plus miles to the George Washington Forest at Wardensville, WV where we camped for the night.

Memorial Day we enjoyed the solitude of our remote camp spot as we hung out and cooked on the fire. We were even lucky enough to see a rafter of wild turkeys. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when we got back to Herndon.

Eventful and enjoyable long-weekend, and my third highpoint reached.