

## Dicks Creek Gap to Bly Gap

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We decided to spend our first year anniversary on the Appalachian trail. It was a good time and we hiked from Dicks Creek Gap to the North Carolina border. This hike was a little over 9 miles one way. We survived the weekend and the weather worked out very well.

See all of the picture from the Dicks Creek Gap Trip

Friday Afternoon: We left for Lake Burton around 3PM. We made it with no problems. We fixed dinner, started a fire in the fireplace, and put together our packs for the following morning.

Lake Burton is an excellent place to stay the night before a Saturday hike in the north Georgia Mountains. I hope to plan several more trips in this area with friends. I think it will work out very well to have everyone arrive Friday night. This way everyone can arrive when they want Friday night and we will be able to get an early start on Saturday. I will have to look into some good day hikes in this area.

Saturday Morning: 7 AM the alarm goes off and we begin the day. Fix breakfast and take a look at the lake levels. Lake Burton drops around 8 to 10 feet during the winter. The day is shaping up to be excellent and not cold at all.

After only a 15 minute drive to the trail head, much better than at 3 hour drive from Atlanta, we get there and unload the car. A scout troop from Marietta is also there preparing for the same hike. They are about 30 to 45 minutes ahead of us. We get all geared up and Amber is about to get her first real taste of what backpacking is all about.

We start out on the trail after taking the required before picture at the start of the hike. The sign says 8.7 miles to Bly Gap, which feels much longer when carrying a 40 pound back pack. We are now on our way. Everything is going well the new boots are wearing very well. I am glad I spent the time breaking them in during the previous week,

Saturday Afternoon: We climb up and down a few small hills until we get to mile 4.5 at plumb orchard gap. We figure this is a great place to take off the packs and have lunch. Plumb orchard gap is home to one of the more unusual trail shelters along the Appalachian Trail. The shelter here is 3 stories and constructed very well. It is my understanding that the whole shelter was flown in by helicopter about 10 or 15 years ago. The shelter is located a few hundred yards off to the right when heading north on the trail. We take a look around and see the spring that is located very near the shelter.

We put the packs back on and continue our trek to the Bly Gap. I am not sure if the hills are getting bigger or the weight of the pack is feeling heavier. We cross paths with some of the slower members of the scout troop as we continue on. We pass over some pretty strenuous hills and gaps and eventually arrive at Blue Ridge Gap. We stop here for some more of the time tested GORP. With the packs back on we head for another mile or so. A campsite all by its lonesome is off to the left on a small knob.

The campsite looks perfect, flat rock less area for the tent, fire pit already built and even a few rocks to set the stove on and use for chairs. The packs are dropped and unpacked. The first item on the list is to set up the tent which goes up with out problem. We then search for firewood and again this is easy lots of dead trees and fallen branches from the fall and winter. We then proceed to set up the rest of camp and all is done around 4PM. Plenty of daylight left.

Saturday Night: After a few small snacks we start dinner on the menu is rotini pasta with sauce, Italian bread and smores for desert. With plenty of firewood we are able to get a pretty good fire going. When it is just the right temperature for smores we put them on and the heat some water for hot tea and coffee. The remainder of the night is quiet and we are the only people in the entire area. There is a little field mouse that is running around about 10 feet away from us. He is given some peanuts and marshmallow bits and he seems pretty content.

Once we are in the tent and in the sleeping bags, Amber is convinced that she hears a bear coming to get us. We wait and wait but the bear turns out to be our little field mouse friend. He runs around most of the night but never gets within five feet of the tent. All in all it is a very quiet night on the trail.

Sunday Morning: Today is our one year wedding anniversary. In the morning we get up fire up the stove again for

oatmeal, hot tea, and coffee. Camp is broken and the packs packed. Amber and I head north to Bly Gap and North Carolina with out backpacks. We have around 20 miles to hike to our destination. Much easier hiking without the packs but we are both pretty sore from the day before. After 15 to 20 minutes all of the joints warm up and we are on our way.

After about an hour of hiking we make it to the North Carolina and Bly Gap. We climb some trees and take some photos of our new hiking boots which were a gift from Amber's brother Irish. After about 20 minutes at the preverbia "summit" it is time to head back.

We now hike back to our campsite and pick up the packs and are reminded how much better it is to hike without packs. No choice now except to don the packs and hike back to the trail head. The weather is great, a little overcast but very warm for the middle of January. The hike out is relatively uneventful we do meet to different Appalachian Trail maintainers on their respective sections of the trail.

Sunday Afternoon: When we return to Plumb Orchard Gap it is time for lunch. On the menu is peanut butter and jelly on pita and one year old wedding cake. Here we meet a couple of guys that are out for a couple of days with their dogs, a golden retriever and a black lab. After lunch we put the packs back on and head out for the car. After another hour or two we arrive back at the car and see the scout troop again. It appears that all parties involved have made it out alive. We load up the car and head on to Helen for a dinner of funnel cakes and fried ice cream. All I can say now is good time had by all.