



Information and Alternative Hike Suggestions

What is occurring?

The Panorama Building on the south side of Thornton Gap and the surrounding structures including the Backcountry Camping Permit Building will be removed. This will necessitate the extended temporary closure of the Marys Rock – Appalachian Trail trailhead and both the upper and lower parking areas while construction work is occurring.

Why is this occurring?

Three old buildings which have outlived their lifespan will be removed. A new water system will be installed and new modern restroom facilities will be constructed in the upper lot.

When is this occurring?

The upper and lower Panorama parking areas will be closed beginning in late May 2008. Construction work will occur throughout the summer and fall of 2008.

Where will this occur?

The Panorama area on the south side of US Route 211 at Thornton Gap, including both the upper parking area accessed from Skyline Drive and the lower parking area accessed from US Route 211.

What are the potential impacts to park visitors?

Access to the Appalachian Trail and Marys Rock from the Panorama trailhead will be temporarily closed for the duration of construction work. Alternative day hikes to peaks in the area are listed below. Backcountry camping permits will be available for overnight visitors at the Thornton Gap entrance station at the Skyline Drive access road on the north side of US Route 211. Backcountry camping permits are also available at 10 other locations through the park listed on the back of the *Exploring the Backcountry* brochure available at entrance stations, visitor centers, and www.nps.gov/shen.

Alternative day hikes: If you like Marys Rock, you'll enjoy these hikes

- **Compton Peak** (mile 10.4) - 2 mile round trip with a 605 foot climb, northern vistas and unique rock formations
- **Little Stony Man** (mile 39.1) - 0.9 mile round trip, 400 foot climb south on the Appalachian Trail to western and northern vistas
- **Stony Man Mountain Summit** (mile 41.7) - 1.6 mile circuit, 340 foot climb to the second highest point in the park with western vistas (pets not permitted)
- **Millers Head Observation Platform, Lower Skyland Area** (mile 42.5) access - 1.6 mile round trip with 300 foot climb, vistas of hollows, ridges, and the valley
- **Hawksbill Mountain Summit** (mile 46.7) - 2.1 mile round trip, 520 foot climb to the highest point in the park, 360 degree views
- **Bearfence Mountain** (mile 56.4) - 1.2 mile circuit, 400 foot climb, 360 degree views and a challenging rock scramble, not recommended for small children (pets not permitted)

For more information about these and similar hikes in Shenandoah National Park, you can purchase the booklet *Hikes to Peaks and Vistas* at any park visitor center or entrance station.
