

SNP Central, July 28, 2007

Contributed by Donn Ahearn
Sunday, 29 July 2007

Starting at the big Old Rag parking lot, well, didn't go there.

It looked like enough others were doing that for me, so I opted for a loop of Robertson and Corbin Mountains by way of the Weakley Hollow Road, coming out on the Nicholson Hollow Trail.

Africa hot. Robertson East Ridge – the only way I will go up it – was its usual grindy self. I just enjoy the feeling of accomplishment hitting that nice grassy patch at the top. I was drenched, but a nice sit down up there cooled me off with only a few vultures for company. Off the mountain, met a guy coming to do the west side (wuss, I thought, sorry, can't help it), then strolled up Old Rag Fire Road to Corbin Mountain Trail. Met four backpackers at the Indian Run junction, and saw no one else until I hit Nicholson Hollow (a family group of like five). A dip there, and a coast out. After the family left, no one until I passed the Upper Old Rag parking. Didn't feel...OK, felt a twinge of regret that I did the sitzhole at the Corbin crossing rather than the Bonafide Hole not five minutes' walk downstream. But certainly had no desire at that moment to rectify the error. Next time.

Wonder how many folks a Rag hiker saw today? I'd seen a dozen or so before I started on the Weakley road, and I was early, for me (8:30 start).

Had fun with a ma bear and cub at a berry patch on Corbin, about three-quarters or so down. Saw the cub first, running down the trail; thought cat, what's a cat doing here? nope, way too big...uh oh, where's mom? She was still in the patch, oblivious. I thought, hmm...then decided (black bears being generally less snippy than grizzlies in this situation) to take my chances, strolling on, now as best I could tell between her and the cub. I looked back to see if ma was still occupied; she was looking right at me. Presently she gave a few huffs; she seemed to have no idea where junior was but seemed to be saying, wherever you are, get up a tree! I topped a little rise and here came junior tearing up a tree I was about to pass, faster than a squirrel. I stood watching him for, well, however many seconds it was that many more than I should have, and then moved on with all deliberate speed.

There were several blowdowns on Robertson, mainly Corona do-able but one that is high enough and stout enough to warrant a hefty one-man or a well-wielded axe. One odd one was two small, live trees, a bit short of the summit ridge, bent up the trail so as to impede progress. No sign of so much as a crack in the trunks, but they sure didn't grow that way. Corbin Mountain shows the results of an incredible amount of work, both to clear huge amounts of blowdown and to preserve the treadway. Kudos to the overseer. Can't remember a blowdown there. Nicholson Hollow had one big sycamore down, about halfway between the Corbin junction and the start of the trail, an apparent victim of heart rot from what I bothered to look at.

Thornton River Grille is its usual pricey self (feeding me cost what feeding two cost at Franklin's in Hyattsville last Wednesday, and I got far fuller at Franklin's). But folks, it's good, and the service excellent, so what can I say. The beef barley soup was the best I have ever had, and the Chocolate Drop dessert was, if you love chocolate, made for you. I have worse (and probably more expensive) habits.