

self-guided activities

Bridge Haven Golf Club is an 18-hole public course with a snack bar, driving range, club/cart rentals, and weather permitting, a putting green is available. **Call:** (304) 574-2120 for tee times. **Directions:** Head to Fayetteville, cross 19, go through town center (2 lights), and continue past the downtown. At Sherry's Beer City (on right) take the left fork, which is Gatewood Road. Continue about 3.5 miles and turn left at Elverton Road, then left again at Browns Road. Bridge Haven will be on your left. Fore!

Kayaking – rentals

Backcountry Sports - 304-574-4005

On-Road Biking This part of West Virginia is mainly "hills and hollers", so you'll definitely use those lower gears. The shoulders on many of our roads are narrow and often not well-maintained. Also, many country roads - including most of the following route - are two-way, but only one lane. So keep your wits about you, and wear something bright up top. **Back way to Fayetteville:** Fayetteville is worth a visit, and a bike ride along Laurel Creek is a picturesque way to get there. Get on your bike, leave the park and head down the hill. Turn hard R at the stop sign (mile 0.0) and you're heading toward the Animal Control Center, with **Laurel Creek** on your left. At the Center, turn L, still following the creek. Reach a stop sign at 2.4 miles - there's a tall rusty structure to your left. Turn L. From this point, it's a moderate, but not steady, climb to US-19 (6.2 miles). Cross 19 and continue to a T at Fayetteville High (6.6 miles), where you'll turn L and cruise into Fayetteville. Just before you reach the light you'll pass **Daniel's Market**.

Fayetteville: Fayetteville is the county seat, and has benefited from seasonal outdoor tourism. Along with rafting, rock climbing and kayaking are the two sports that have put this area on the map. Fayetteville has a tiny downtown, but it has **several good places to eat** within a short walk, a couple small galleries, antiques, and "outdoor" shops.

The return leg is up to you. I recommend retracing your route. It's pretty, a lot of downhill, and the alternative is less safe IMO. Route 16 (which is how you got to the County Park in the first place) down to Beckwith has many curves and bad shoulders - creating real wreck potential if you need to get over at the wrong moment for a driver going 55. If you do decide to go that way, take it easy going down hill and keep your ears wide open, especially in blind curves. Don't assume drivers will be looking out for you, because they won't be.

Hiking/Walking/Driving Around

Be safe: If you plan to hike in the Gorge, bring a buddy, something to eat, and especially water.

Into the New River Gorge by car, with hiking option

Before the "Big bridge" was constructed (and you can get the story on that at the **Canyon Rim Visitors Center** - see below), the only way across the New River in this region of the county was Fayette Station Road, and it's a great drive. Turn R out of the County Park Road and proceed to US-19. (Fayetteville is dead ahead.) Turn left at US-19, cross **the New River Gorge Bridge**, and take your first right, which is the Park Service exit. Turn R and enter the **Canyon Rim Visitors Center** lot. Check this place out thoroughly, inside and out on the short overlook trails. Pick up a trail map at the counter if you like. Then, hop back in your car, exit the lot, turn right, pass the souvenir shop, and take an impossibly hard R downhill. You're on Fayette Station Rd., or Rt. 82. Wherever you have a choice thereafter, head downhill, and you'll reach the bottom of the Gorge. Cross the **Fayette Station bridge**; it's a near-replica of the one taken down a few years ago, and proves that once in awhile, the actually do build 'em like they used to. You can pull over and park once you've crossed, and walk back onto the bridge. Look downstream - that's the Fayette Station Rapids. It's fun to **watch rafters and kayakers** run that rapid, and you may see a few, depending on when you arrive - later is better. To get right down on the **New River** for a great view, drive downstream a short distance until you reach a fork. Left will take you back out of the Gorge. (Don't turn around! Fayette Station Road is one way!) Instead of taking that left just yet, continue straight over a small wooden bridge and on into the parking lot. Get out, and look toward the river. You're looking at a belt of trees. Thread your way through those trees, taking whatever path you find. You'll have to climb over a few boulders before you reach the water, where you'll see the rapid. Find yourself the perfect boulder, sit and enjoy the BIG water. Eat lunch if you have it, or save it for later.

Okay, you're ready to leave the river. Cross that little wooded bridge again and turn right.

Hiking option: Up the road aways on the left is the Kaymoor Trail. It's an easy but great 2-mile walk (one way) to the remains of the old Kaymoor Mine complex, which alone is good enough reason to take this pleasant walk. The trailhead is on your L at a sharp R bend; pull over to the left and park well off the road. There was a monster flood here a few years ago and it utterly altered the terrain at this trailhead. (That's Wolf Creek by the way.) Enjoy your walk along this old mining *bench* - a road cut into the side of the gorge face to access the mines and to transport the coal out. Amazing. While you're at the mine site, find the descending stairs. This is the STAIRMASTER FROM HELL. If your knees give you trouble, don't even think about it. But hey, you're a dancer! Otherwise, enjoy the descent to the river, keeping in mind you'll have to climb out again eventually.

A shorter (but strenuous), much more fun climb: From the wood stairs, backtrack just a bit, looking uphill. Find the narrow, lichen-covered concrete steps running up the hillside (they start up on the bank, not down at your trail). This is the old Kaymoor Miner's Trail, used by the miners living at the top of the Gorge (the community of Kaymoor Top) to get to and from work each day. It runs at about 45° straight up the Gorge. As you climb it and it gets more overgrown, it really feels like your climbing some old Meso-American temple ruin. Consider climbing those steps after a hard day bent over in the mine digging coal. The stairs end shy of the top, and a trail runs left along the base of the cliff and joins a footpath which does go to the top of the Gorge. You might just feel like turning back at the top of the stairs, just "watch your step" coming down.

Retrace your route back to your car. Continuing up and out of the Gorge, you'll come out back on US 19, but back on the Fayetteville side of the "Big Bridge" again.

Other "Saturday drives": You could combine these for a full morning or more.

#1: Gauley Canyon

This is Wild, Wonderful WV. Allow 2-1/4 hrs. plus however long you wish to spend at the Gauley. Turn right onto Rt. 16 and proceed to Fayetteville. Turn left (N) onto Rt. 19. (Watch your speed in Fayetteville!) Continue north, crossing the Meadow River Bridge into Nicholas County. Continue until you reach Rt 127 at the light at the big U-Save gas station. **SET YOUR ODOMETER TO ZERO HERE!** (Your odo readings may differ slightly from these.)

0.0 Rt. 127

4.8 Stay on 127 here (Whitewater Rd. continues straight)

5.8 Stay on 127

9.5 Left onto Panther Mountain Road. From here on, take your time as road narrows, especially at the many blind turns!

12.8 Arnette Methodist Church

13.1 Stay to right; then pass the 1888 house

14.0 Keep right at fork

14.2 Hard right at fork

15.3 Middle Gauley Campground; road narrower and rougher now

16.2 Water crossing; stay left

16.4 Hard left and through gateway

16.7 Water crossing (waterfall)

16.8 When you see the river through trees on right, pull over left and park. Walk right and downhill to Waterfall at Bucklick Creek. **Do NOT reset odometer. Wet rock is treacherous!**

When you leave Bucklick, pass through gateway and CONTINUE STRAIGHT; do not backtrack.

17.5 Water crossing; stay left

19.0 Stay left

19.6 Cross RR tracks and Peters Creek Bridge. Continue with creek on your right.

20.5 Right onto two-lane (Rt. 39)

23.5 Drennan. Turn right onto Rt. 129. On the way back you'll pass the Carnifax Ferry Rd. This would be a nice, short side trip, especially if you're interested in the Civil War. If you take this side trip, backtrack when you're done, and turn right when you reach Rt. 127. Take 127 back to US-19, and turn right (South).

#2: Babcock State Park Scenic Drive

This is a considerably shorter drive than #1, it's all paved road, and there are maintained hiking trails. Turn right onto Rt. 16 and proceed to Fayetteville. Turn left (N) onto Rt. 19. (Watch your speed in Fayetteville!) Continue to US-6 (AKA Midland Trail), and take a left at the end of the ramp to head toward Rainelle. Follow this road to Rt. 41, and turn R. When 41 and 60 split, turn R, staying on 41. Pass Clifftop Loop Road on R and continue to the main entrance of Babcock State Park. Drive to the bottom of the hill and park. If it's lunch time, pick a spot where you like the view and enjoy. The rock pool below the **Grist Mill** was a swimming area in less litigious times. The Grist Mill is purportedly the most photographed structure in the State. You can pick up a trail map in the Office. **Mann's Creek Trail** is a favorite of mine; it's a beautiful creek. When you decide to leave, head back up the hill, passing a left down to a cabin area, and take the next left. This is the service road that will take you to the Manns Creek cabin area and on to the campground. Exit the campground onto Old Clifftop Road. From here, you can turn right and drive to the **Art Gallery**, which you'll find on the left at an intersection. David Weaver and his family are all accomplished artists, and David's Flemish School-type painting is well known and admired. Backtrack and stay on Old Clifftop Road (careful, it winds and is narrow) until it ends at Rt. 60. Continue ahead back to Rt. 19, where you cross over the highway and get in the left lane to get on 19 S, which will take you back to Fayetteville. Turn right at the light to return to Whitewater Whirl, or go left into Fayetteville.

Other excursions:

Tamarack Tamarack is the nation's first and only statewide collection of handmade craft, art and cuisine showcasing The Best of West Virginia. From hand-carved furniture to glass and pottery to Appalachian quilts, Tamarack offers only the best. You will also find a delectable array of regional specialty foods and products, as well as performances, craft demonstrations, and theatre (depending on what's going on when you are there). Plus, they feature THE BEST cafeteria food you'll EVER have, at great prices.

<http://www.tamarackwv.com/> **To get there: Head to Fayetteville, take a right at the light at US-19, and keep going until you begin seeing the distinctive Tamarack signs, which you just follow.**

Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine Call ahead first: (304) 256-1747

This mine tour would be a natural to combine with a visit to Tamarack, since they're in the same general area. The Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine offers visitors a realistic look at coal mining as it was at the turn of the century, both [way] underground and in the coal camp above. It's worth doing!

http://www.beckleymine.com/becm/coal_overview.cfm

To get there: Go to the Fayetteville light at US-19 and turn right (South). Go about 16 miles to Beckley. Take the US-19 S/WV-16 ramp toward NORTH BECKLEY/BRADLEY. Turn LEFT onto WV-16 S. and go 4.8 miles. Turn RIGHT and just ahead, take a SLIGHT LEFT onto ADAIR ST. Then just ahead, Turn LEFT onto EWART AVE. End at 513 Ewart Ave.