

Sugarloaf Mountain, Frederick and Montgomery Counties



Sugarloaf Mountain boasts many unique features. It is a monadnock, or a mountain that remains after the erosion of the surrounding land. That process took some 14 million years, and has left a wonderful area for exploring. The rugged cliffs on the summit are composed primarily of quartzite, providing interesting study for geologists. Sugarloaf has long been a mecca for birders in the Mid-Atlantic region. Forest birds include the great horned owl, pileated woodpecker, wild turkey, and red shouldered hawk. During the spring and fall, many migratory species of songbirds can be found. The forests are dominated by red and white oaks, but there is a wide variety of other trees such as black oak, chestnut oak, black birch, eastern hemlock dogwood, and sassafras. Sugarloaf contains more than 500



Kathryn Arion/TNC

Sugarloaf's summit is comprised of rugged quartzite cliffs.

Key Elements

- Red and white oaks
- White tail deer
- Great horned owl
- Red shouldered hawk

species of plants including a variety of wildflowers, many of which can be found blooming during the warm weather months. Whitetail deer are abundant on and around the mountain. Other mammals include flying squirrel, red fox, eastern cottontail, and raccoon.

Sugarloaf is a Registered National

Landmark due to its geological interest and natural beauty. The Conservancy has brought under protection 1,473 acres near Sugarloaf Mountain since 1975. Two tracts, totaling 1,413 acres, are protected through conservation easements that the

Conservancy assigned to the Maryland Environmental Trust. The 60-acre Tolbert tract was purchased by the Conservancy in 1977 and conveyed in 1978 to Stronghold, Inc., which owns and manages the property. Also, from 1974 to 1983, The Nature Conservancy negotiated the purchase of 1,573 acres along the nearby Monocacy River, which is now managed as a Natural Resource Management Area by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The mountain itself is the heart of a 3,000 acre private preserve acquired and established by Gordon Strong. Clearly much effort has been put into preserving this vast and important landscape. Protection aims at preserving the mountain and the surrounding farmland from development pressures coming from major metropolitan areas. There is also an audio tour available to enhance a visit to the preserve.

Visiting

- Conservation and recreation area available with 8 miles of marked trails and splendid views
- Open every day sunrise to sunset



Nick Hall

Sugarloaf is a popular birding site, where visitors can see such species as the great horned owl.

Rich in History

Sugarloaf Mountain has played an important part in American history. During the Civil War, Union forces were occupying the summit. From that vantage point they spotted the Army of Northern Virginia as it crossed the Potomac River into Maryland. As the Union force retreated from the coming Confederates, they ran into the 1st North Carolina

Infantry and engaged in a small battle. The Union troops were able to escape, but were later caught by Confederate

cavalry. In the early 20th century Gordon Strong, a Chicago businessman, bought a great amount of land around the mountain. Strong commissioned architect Frank Lloyd Wright to create an development for the top of the mountain, but that idea was never carried out. Later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt briefly considered using Sugarloaf as his Presidential retreat, but Strong persuaded him to choose a site near Catoctin Mountain (today the site is known as Camp David). Strong created a trust fund that maintains the trails and other tourist facilities at Sugarloaf.

Directions (GPS Coordinates: 39°15'43.2"N 77°23'48.8"W)

From Frederick, MD: Take Route I-270 South to the Hyattstown exit. Follow Route 109 to Comus, then right on Comus Road to the Sugarloaf Mountain entrance. Take the road up the mountain and park in the West View parking lot. The audio tour begins near the west end of the Green Trail.

From Washington, DC: Go North on Route I-270 to the Hyattstown exit. Circle under I-270 and continue on Route 109 to Comus, then right on Comus Road to the Sugarloaf Mountain entrance. Take the road up the mountain and park in the West View parking lot. The audio tour begins near the west end of the Green Trail.

From Bethesda/Rockville Area: Take Route 28 West of Rockville to Dickerson. After passing under the railroad bridge, turn right on Mt. Ephraim Road and go 2.5 miles to Sugarloaf Mountain entrance. Take the road up the mountain and park in the West View parking lot. The audio tour begins near the west end of the Green Trail.

Contact

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For more information:

www.nature.org/Maryland



Kent Mason

Whitetail deer are common on the mountain.

Watch Out For!

- Ticks and biting insects