

Manassas National Battlefield Park

Not one but two, great battles were waged on the fields and in the woods of Manassas. The first was fought in July 1861, early in the Civil War, with green troops on both sides fighting to control railways leading to Richmond. The second, fought a summer later with Union forces getting outmaneuvered, resulted in the Confederacy going on the offensive in the north shortly afterward. The Civil War was a wrenching conflict. Stop to read the placards posted all over the park and you will feel the depths of the struggle. Learn of the bravery, the gut wrenching horror of what the soldiers went through. You'll ask yourself how it could have been in what is now such a peaceful place. You'll see why the South has not forgotten and what sacrifice the North put into keeping a stronger united country; one free of slavery. You may even rejoice at the human spirit that has gone forward from this conflict.

The park is fairly huge by local Washington area standards. It's somewhat divided equally into six zones by three roads that make a kind of grid. The Visitor Center is in the southeast of these where the fighting of both battles took place. No matter what time of year, the views are beautiful. From Henry Hill, you can see west across the rolling bronze colored fields to the forests and to Bull Run Mountain on the horizon. Not only are the trails good for running, but this is also the most popular Washington area place where cross country skiers congregate during snowfalls. The trails embody the essence of Virginia cross country running. Two types of trails, one for horses and hikers, and one for hikers only, follow the routes of battle, the remnants of farm roads no longer there, and the perimeter of the park. Almost all are natural surfaced and can be very muddy during wet months. During summer, the heat can be stifling, and the trails rock hard dry. The only drawback of the trails is that near the Visitor Center, they are not well defined—or perhaps there are just too many crisscrossing each other. Throughout most of the rest of the park they are well defined and usually not hard to follow. Facilities in the park are minimal. Except for the Visitor Center, drinking water is non-existent so plan ahead. No bicycling is allowed on the trails.

Getting There

From the Capital Beltway

Take Exit 9, for Interstate 66 headed west. Go approximately 16 miles, then take Exit 47 at the Manassas exit for Manassas-Sudley Rd., Rte. 234, headed north. Turn right three-quarters of a mile later toward the Visitor Center. Go in the Visitor Center and pay a nominal fee for each person, then start from the east end of the parking lot.

Area Routes

Henry Hill (2.15 or 2.4 miles, II)

Fear not the "hill" in the name of this route; enough people already feared for their lives here during fierce battle. Starting on open grassy fields, to follow the trail you'll have to look closely for depressions left by the footsteps of those preceding you, as you cross the length of the ridge to Warrenton Pike. Park placards tell the story of the First Battle of Manassas. In which Union forces were expected to rout southern defenders. The Union was winning at first as they forced

the Confederates off the hill and into the woods to the right. Some thought the war, just started, would be over soon. The Union was in turn repelled however, upon the arrival of reinforcements and Confederate General Thomas Jackson. Jackson's arrival (at a location close to the Visitor Center) earned him his famous "Stonewall" moniker as Confederate General Barnard Bee yelled: "There stands Jackson like a stone wall!" Pass the Robinson House then turn right down the hill on the grass while paralleling Warrenton Turnpike, Rte. 29. Pickup the Bridal Trail, a dirt trail that circumnavigates most of the park. Mostly in the woods from here, the trail rolls at first on a bluff overlooking a creek named Youngs Branch. Climbing gradually on or along a fire road (the two parallel each other), either stay on the horse trail near the perimeter of park borders, or take a blue blazed hiking trail back to the Visitor Center.

Mathews Hill (5.05 miles, V)

In the First Battle of Manassas, Union forces encountered Confederates at the Stone Bridge, just a short distance from present day Warrenton Turnpike, Rte. 29; northeast of the Visitor Center. According to park materials, the Union feinted an attack there, and took the bulk of their force around to the north, hoping to catch the Confederates from behind. The Confederates realized what was happening however and encountered the Union on Mathews Hill. A marker where George T. Stovall fell in this battle quotes his last words "I am going to heaven." The New Hampshire and New York militia pushed back Alabama forces to Henry Hill where the southerners eventually rallied with the help of reinforcements.

This route takes the Bridal Trail along Young's Branch and crosses Warrenton Turnpike, Rte. 29. Going up and down some rolling hills, eventually cross Young's Branch on stones (in wet seasons the water may be too high to be able to do this and stay dry). Some of the trail may be covered in wood chips however most of it is dirt well pounded out by the hooves of horses (always defer the trail to a horseback rider for their safety as well as yours). Eventually, climb the hill toward the George T. Stovall Marker. Go past it just a little way, then turn right on the hiking trail. The hiking trails pleasantly stays in the woods passing the Carter Family Cemetery. After crossing the fire road, the trail is on a hilltop in open fields with good views to the south. Eventually pass the location of the Van Pelt House, only about half a mile from the Stone Bridge. Instead of going to the bridge however, go instead back across Warrenton Turnpike, and Young's Branch to pickup the Bridal Trail, and go back to the Visitor Center. This Bridal Trail/hiking trail combination is one of the best for running on in the park. The frequent 50 foot hills will require some stamina however.

Bridal Loop (6.9 or 9.1 miles, VIII or X)

Circumnavigate most of the park with this long route on unpaved trails. Most of the way is on the Bridal Trail, a horse and hiker trail, though significant portions (most of the longer extension), use other trails. On the way, pass over Henry Hill, and Mathews Hill (see above), both significant in the First Battle of Manassas. From Mathews Hill, head west cross over Dougan Ridge. Here Union forces in the Second Battle of Manassas, under the confident direction of General John Pope, assembled for their onslaught against "Stonewall" Jackson. Much of the fighting in the three-day battle took place around an unfinished railroad grade, begun in the 1850's that was to go to Alexandria.

The longer option of this route goes along the Unfinished Railroad grade (alternatively park at Featherbed La. and start the loop from there for just a 3.05 mile run). Read the park placards and imagine if you could, on a hot August day, the tired bloodied soldiers on both sides running out of ammunition who resorted to throwing rocks at each other. The longer option also passes the Brawner House where soldiers stood in open fields 50 yards apart, with no cover and shot at each other. Note that the trail along the railroad grade is rocky and has numerous stairs where gullies crossing the trail. Also, the way out to the Brawner house is used infrequently. The trail is followed by seeing where the grass was mowed and few signs are available at turns. The Brawner house is fenced-in and dilapidated.

The longer option eventually comes back through more woods and fields to join the shorter route at Featherbed Lane, Rte. 622. There follow the Bridal Trail again over Dougan Branch and across Warrenton Turnpike, Rte. 29. On the other side is Chinn Ridge, where according to park materials, some of the Union forces bought time for a retreat of the rest of their army. The price was heavy however. While fending off southern General James Longstreet, New York's 5th and 10th Regiments in five minutes lost 123 men "the greatest loss of life in any single infantry regiment in any battle of the Civil War." The Bridal Trail from Warrenton Pike to Chinn Ridge crosses an open rolling field then goes into the woods before approaching the New York Monument. Afterwards, it crosses Youngs Branch. After an initial hill, most of the rest of the way back is flat until approaching the Visitor Center.

Nearby and Connecting Zones

Cub Run Stream Valley Park
Prince William Parkway Trail, Signal Hill Park

What to do Afterward

Food and Drink

Mama Mia Pizza - 703 361-0014
Don Pablo's - Tex-Mex - 703 257-7884
Chinese Imperial Restaurant - 703 361-4634

Entertainment and Edification

Manassas National Battlefield Park - 703 754-1861/703 631-2963
Ben Lomond Regional Park - Splash Down Waterpark - 703 361-4451
Manassas Museum - 703 368-1873
Bull Run Regional Park - 703 631-0550
Nissan Pavillion at Stoneridge - concert line - 703 754-1288

Henry Hill

Distance: 2.15 or 2.4 miles

Rating: II; mostly gentle hills, over grass and dirt trails; equally shady and sunny

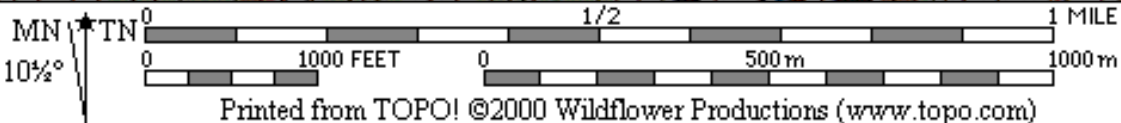
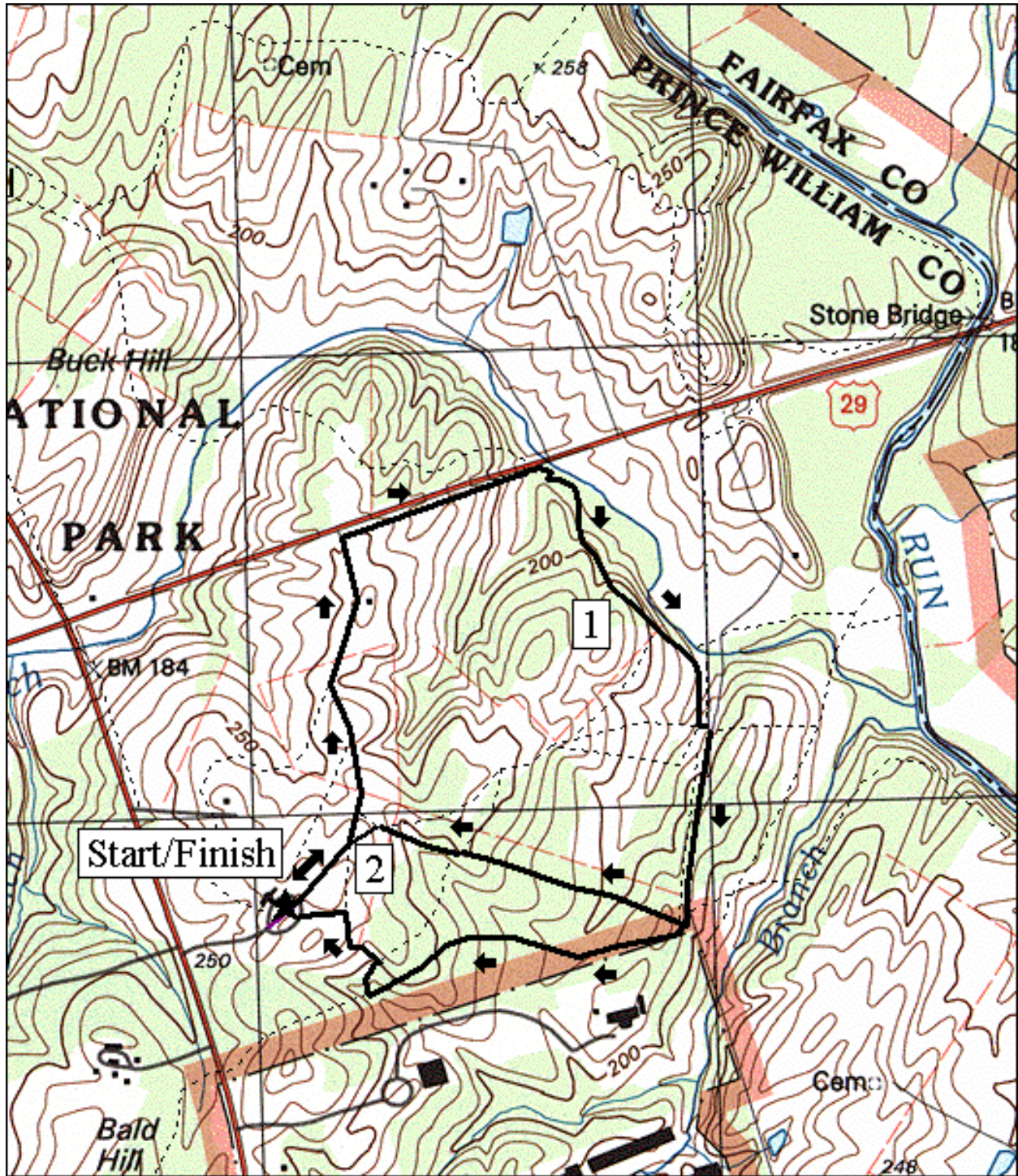
2.15 Mile Route

- 0.0 from the parking lot bear northeast toward the cannons; large oak trees in the field should be on your right
- L 0.15 trail X; follow the cannons across the ridge on the grassy trail; Henry Hill
- 0.2 Farm Road remnant L & R
- 0.3 grassy trail on L merges
- 0.45 foundation of Robinson House on R; continue on the lane
- 0.5 trail merges on L from Henry House
- R 0.55 go through the gate, then R before and along Warrenton Tkp, Rte 29 down the hill on the grass
- L/R 0.8 at bottom of the hill, go L around the fence, R on the Bridal Trail (yellow blaze)
- 1.05 Mile Marker 7
- 1.15 trail X on R; hikers only
- 1.25 trail on L to wooden bridge over Youngs Branch creek; bottom of hill
- R 1.25 up the hill; fire road parallels on L
- L/R 1.3 trail X; use fire road; R is hiking trail going toward Visitor Center
- <*
- R 1.55 onto blue blazed hiking trail; cross the yellow blazed horse trail
- 1.65 wooden bridges over streams
- 1.85 cross the Bridal Trail (yellow blazes)
- BL 1.9 doubletrack toward clearing
- 2.0 cannons on Henry Hill
- 2.15 Visitor Center parking

*2.4 Mile Route

- R/L 1.55 R on blue blazed hiking trail; immediate L on yellow blazed Bridal Trail
- BR 1.6 at trail X on L
- 2.05 small stone bridge
- R 2.15 at trail X for other Bridal Trail (also yellow blazed)
- L 2.25 trail X on L (unmarked); goes uphill toward the Visitor Center
- BR 2.25 as the trail leaves the woods; continue uphill on the grass
- L 2.3 artillery exhibit; Griffin's Guns
- 2.4 Visitor Center parking

Henry Hill



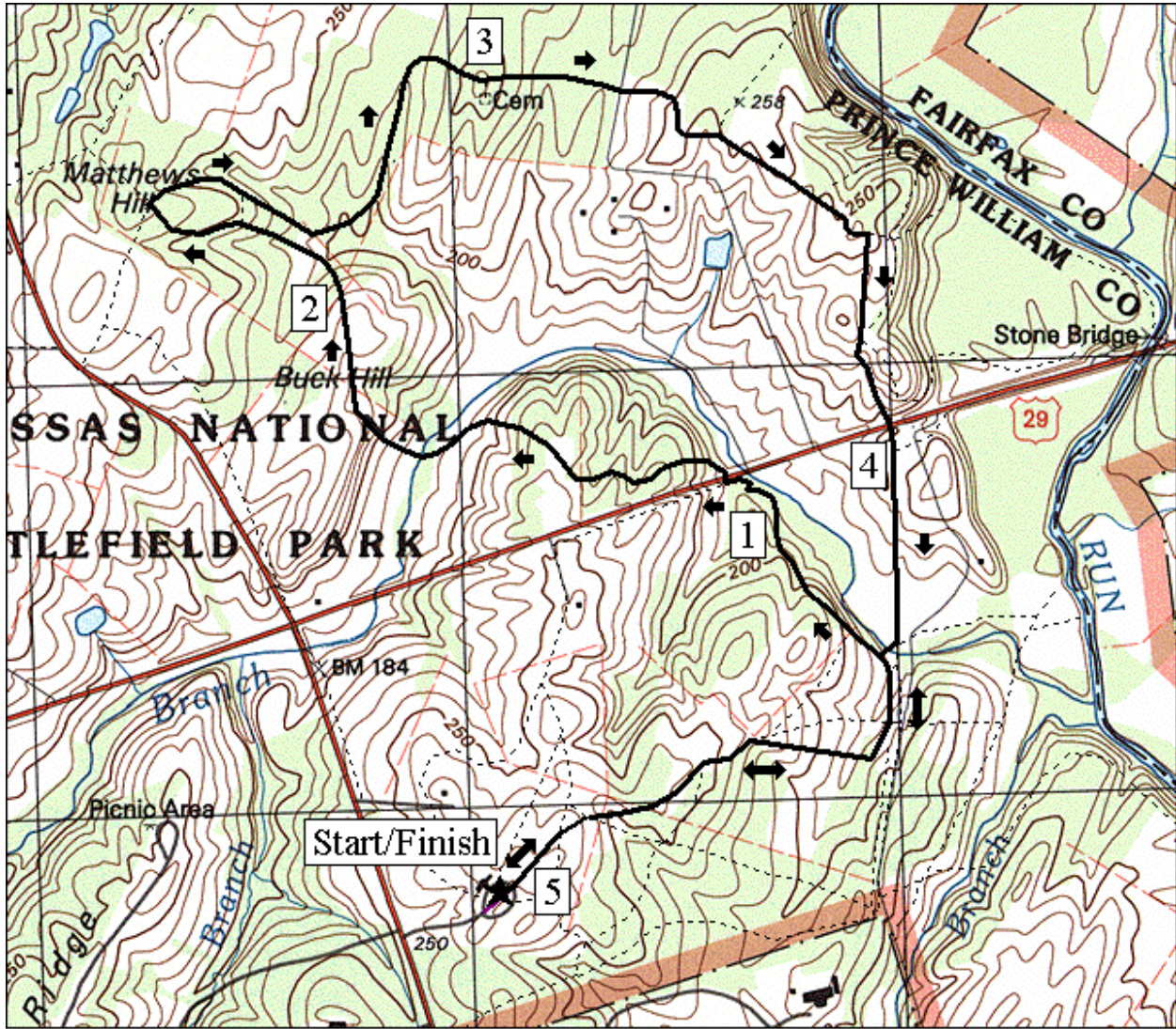
Matthews Hill

Distance: 5.05 miles

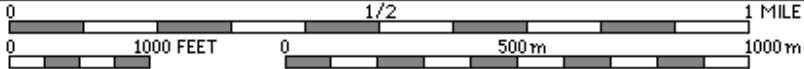
Rating: V; mostly dirt trails through woods and fields; frequent rolling hills

- 0.0 from the parking lot bear northeast toward the cannons; large oak trees in the field should be on your right
- 0.15 trail X; L is the ridge of Henry Hill
- 0.25 hiking trail (blue) crosses at diagonal
- 0.35 Bridal Trail joins from R (yellow blazes)
- BR 0.45 trail splits R is for horses & hikers
- 0.6 stream
- L 0.7 trail X (hiking trail)
- L 0.75 at trail X for Bridal Trail; Young's Branch (creek) is S
- 0.75 trail X on R to footbridge over creek
- 0.85 trail X on L; hikers only; little used
- 0.95 Mile Marker 7
- 1.2 cross Warrenton Tkp, Rte 29 (!); stay on Bridal Trail; trail X on L to field
- 1.35 trail X on R; #27
- 1.7 cross Young's Branch on stones (!)
- 2.05 cross stream
- BL 2.2 at George T Stovall Marker; also trail X on L over bog
- R 2.35 trail X; hiking trail (blue blaze)
- BL 2.45 trail X on R to George T Stovall Marker
- 2.6 wooden bridges over stream
- 3.0 trail X on R to bench; Carter Family Cemetery
- 3.2 fire road; continue S into field
- 3.4 trail X in the middle of the field
- R 3.6 trail X; go R along edge of woods; L goes into the woods
- R 3.65 bench; trail on R crosses the field
- R 3.8 trail X; Van Pelt House site
- 3.9 trail X on L goes up hill to the Confederate position; defender's of the Stone Bridge
- 3.95 cross Warrenton Tkp, Rte 29 (!); gate
- 3.95 trail X on L after crossing; #11
- BR 4.0 merge onto fire road at its turn
- R 4.25 trail X; R is to footbridge over creek
- L/R 4.3 Bridal Trail (yellow blazes) after crossing the creek
- 4.35 trail X; hiking trail
- 4.45 stream begin climbing ahead
- 4.6 trail merges at top
- S 4.7 Bridal Trail goes L into the woods
- 4.8 hiking trail X at diagonal; blue blaze
- 4.9 cannons; R is the ridge of Henry Hill
- 5.05 Visitor Center parking

Matthews Hill



MN ↑ TN
10½°



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Bridal Loop

Distance: 6.9 or 9.1 miles

Rating: VIII or X; rolling hills, over mostly dirt and grass trails; partly shady

6.9 Mile Route

		<*
	L 3.25	Featherbed La, Rte 622 (alternate parking)
0.0	from parking bear northeast toward cannons	3.45 trail X on L
L 0.15	trail X; follow the cannons across the ridge on the grassy trail toward the road	BL 3.7 onto Bridal Trail; parallel the road
		>*
		4.0 cross Dougan Branch on stones (!)
R 0.55	go through the gate, then R on the grass along Warrenton Trpk, Rte 29; down the hill	4.15 trail X on L; cross Warrenton Trpk
		L 4.2 Bridal Trail crosses the field
L 0.8	go L around the fence & cross Warrenton Trpk, Rte 29 (!); Bridal Trail yellow blazes	4.5 NY Monument; cross park road & go down
1.0	trail X on R, #27	R/L 4.7 after bridge, Youngs Branch; Mile Marker 4
1.35	cross Young's Branch (creek) on stones (!)	5.0 trail X on L
		5.2 gravel road; L to Chinn's House 0.6
BL 1.85	at Stovall Marker; also trail X on L over bog	5.65 doubletrack on L
		5.7 L is to wooden bridge; Mile Marker 5 ahead
L 2.0	trail X; hiking trail (blue blaze)	6.05 park road
2.25	trail X on L to Stone House 0.5; open field	6.45 Manassas-Sudley Rd, Rte 234 (!)
		6.5 trail X on R (no horses)
R/L 2.3	Rte 234 (!); into Dougan picnic area	
		L 6.65 Bridal Trail splits; trail X
BR 2.4	on double track; bear away from parking	
		L 6.75 trail X on L (unmarked); goes uphill
L 2.55	Bridal Trail at T	
		BR 6.8 as the trail leaves the woods; go uphill
R 2.6	at T for Bridal Trail; L is to picnic area	
3.1	trail X on L is yellow blazed	L 6.8 artillery exhibit; Griffin's Guns
3.15	two trail X's on R (unmarked)	6.9 Visitor Center parking

*9.1 Mile Route

		4.8 trail X on L
		4.85 trail X; #42
CL 3.25	Rte 622; Unfinished RR Trail	5.1 trail X in field after bog planks; Battery Heights is up grassy hill on R (unmarked)
3.4	Deep Cut Trail on L	
3.7	Groveton Monument	
3.8	trail X on R	L 5.25 at T; cross stream in tree break (unmarked)
4.05	Battery Heights Trail on L	
4.05	Bridal Trail X (yellow blazes)	R 5.35 at T before woods (unmarked)
4.2	dry pond on L	
		L 5.4 at T; go into the woods (unmarked)
R 4.3	trail splits at tree break	
4.35	trail bears L around trees; toward cannons	R 5.6 at T; Deep Cut Loop Trail
R 4.5	trail X on R; to stay on trail	R 5.75 at T in open field, Deep Cut Loop Trail
4.55	trail bears L	
4.65	Brawner House on R; trail on L merges	CR 5.9 Featherbed La, Rte 622; Bridal Trail (pickup cues from mile 4 of 6.9 mile route)
L 4.7	trail X on L; Brawner Farm Loop trail	

Bridal Loop

