

Pedlar District Trail Map Updates

-Jeff Monroe, PATC Maps Committee

The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club has recently completed updates to trail maps covering the Pedlar District of George Washington National Forest, including the Appalachian Trail. Map 12 covers the area just south of Shenandoah National Park, from Rockfish Gap to the Tye River, and Map 13 covers from the Tye River south into the Jefferson National Forest south of the James River. Each of these maps constitute comprehensive revisions, as outlined below.

The PATC has a long history of producing trail maps in these areas. Both areas were first covered in a single 1933 map that covered Rockfish Gap to Lee Highway just north of Roanoke. In 1948, the second edition covered a smaller area, from Rockfish Gap to the James River, the area now covered by both Maps 12 and 13. This area was split into the present two maps in 1975 and this coverage continues to this day, with the printing of Map 12's 12th Edition and Map 13's 7th Edition.

Revisions to each of these maps replace the 11th edition of Map 12 (dated 2011), and the 6th edition of Map 13 (dated 2010). Extensive input has been integrated into these two revisions. Every current trail in the Pedlar District was measured using GPS tracks provided from volunteers, USFS Pedlar District representatives consulted on which trails constitute "official" trails at this point. Input was also received from members of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club and the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club.

Trail changes are not the only alterations to these maps, however. While each map includes updates since the previous editions were published (such as the Blue Ridge Tunnel – a new rail-trail being constructed *under* Rockfish Gap, and new properties acquired by the United States Forest Service within view of the Spy Rock summit), there are additional upgrades. In the past 20 years, the trails around local hiking hotspot Humpback Rocks at the north end of the Blue Ridge Parkway have expanded greatly, thanks to work by the Old Dominion Appalachian Trail Club. These increased trail options are detailed in a new inset map found on Map 12.

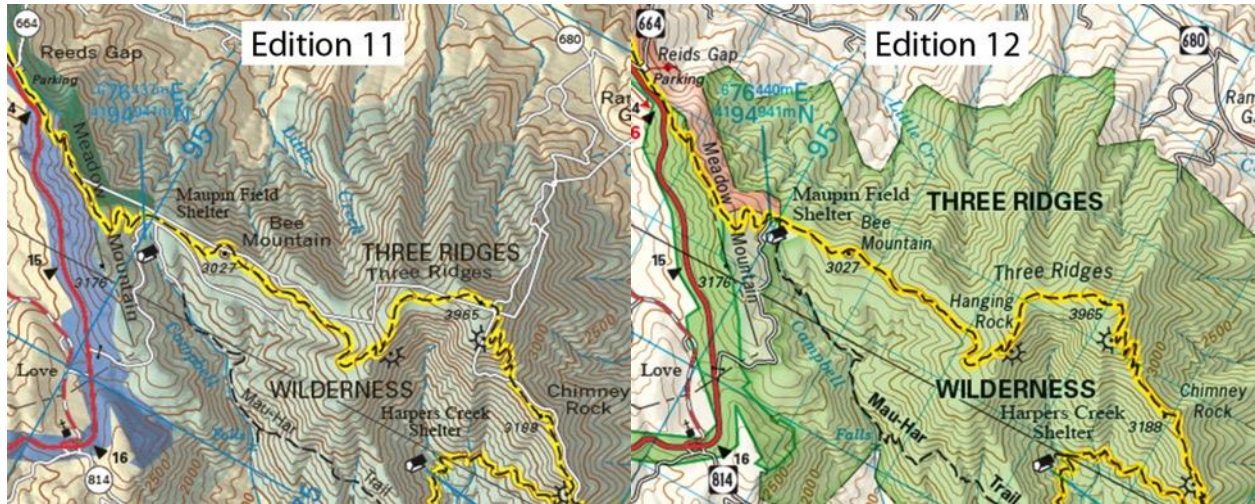
Map 13 has been expanded to cover new territory. Previous editions of Map 13 covered a couple of major hiking hotspots often hiked by PATC groups. The first is The Priest Wilderness/Crabtree Falls/Spy Rock area. The second is the Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area, featuring the Appalachian Trail's spectacular summit hike over the bald on top of Cold Mountain and the fantastic viewpoint from the summit of Mount Pleasant. The new version of Map 13 extends coverage south of the James River, and now includes the James River Face Wilderness. James River Face was the first federal wilderness area in Virginia and remains an extraordinary destination for both day hikes from the Roanoke area and overnight backpacking trips for hikers of all levels of ability. The location track of each trail in this Wilderness have also been verified by GPS – a statement that no other trail map publisher for this area can make. As a result, I am confident that these new editions represent the most accurate trail maps available for this part of the GWNF and Jefferson National Forests.

Upgrades are not limited to the map portions of these publications. Information previously contained in the PATC's *Hiking Guide to the Pedlar District, George Washington National Forest, 3rd Edition*, by Lee Sheaffer, has been updated and added to the back side of Maps 12 and 13. Photos from the trail, taken by PATC volunteers, are also integrated into the back of these maps. For the first time, these maps are a complete resource for both the novice and experienced hiker seeking to learn about trails in these areas.

The maps themselves contain many changes from the previous versions. A sampling of the completeness of the alterations can be seen in a comparison of a small portion of Map 12, Editions 11 and 12, showing the Blue Ridge Parkway and Three Ridges Wilderness. Just in this small square, changes on the new map include:

- Removal of nonexistent random, stray roads in Three Ridges Wilderness (shown in white)
- Corrected wilderness boundary along the forest road to Maupin Field Shelter
- Correct location where this same forest road meets Blue Ridge Parkway and correct location of gate

- Removal of a nonexistent connector road between Love Gap Rd and Sherando Road
- Improved fonts that are easier to read, with less interference from linework
- Crisper colors and lighter shaded relief for improved legibility and standardization with other PATC maps
- A more accurately located Maupin Field Shelter
- Correct classification of the northern end of the Mau-Har Trail as a trail, not a forest road
- Updated highway shields that resemble the ones used on road signs
- Corrected spelling of “Reids Gap” in the upper left corner (thanks to the TATC)



If you are looking to purchase updated maps, be sure that you are purchasing the newest edition, which is Edition 12 for Map 12 and Edition 7 for Map 13. These new versions are now available, but outdoor stores may still be selling old editions. The best way to make sure that you have the newest versions is to go to the PATC’s website, at <http://www.patc.net> and click on “our store” near the top of the page. The current editions have a 2015 edition printed prominently on the front cover.