



Highland Scenic Highway

Entirely surrounded by the Monongahela National Forest, the Highland Scenic Highway makes its way through some of the most breathtaking and unique scenery on the continent. Nestled in the Allegheny Mountains, this byway rises as high as 4,500 feet above sea level, giving motorists plenty of opportunities to take amazing pictures. Once covered by glaciers, this area hosts some of the most unusual plant life found in the United States.

Cranberry Glades Botanical Area

As the glaciers retreated northward, they left behind acidic wetlands, or bogs, like the ones found in the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area. These bogs became the perfect sanctuary for exotic plants not usually found this far south. In fact, there are even some carnivorous plants that prey on unsuspecting insects. Visitors can enjoy this unique habitat by taking a stroll on the 0.5-mile boardwalk that spans two of the bogs.

Cranberry Wilderness

For those wanting a more rugged and interactive experience, Cranberry Wilderness is perfect for hiking, fishing, and bird watching. With over 35,000 acres of protected wilderness, the

National Forest Service has tried to maintain the untouched beauty of the area. Trails are only marked by a few rock cairns that help guide hikers during periods when the trail becomes faint. Cranberry Wilderness also offers many trout streams; numerous waterways are stocked with trout monthly. Not far from the wilderness area, visitors can see the Falls of Hills Creek. Many trails in the Monongahela National Forest allow horses and leashed dogs to accompany their owners on the trails.

Railroading Adventures

In addition to challenging trails, the Highland Scenic Highway is also close to the Cass Scenic Railroad State Park. Cass, once an old logging railroad, now takes rail fans on beautiful fall foliage rides, as well as bluegrass music and mystery theater rides. The Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad boasts three different rail lines. Ride lengths vary between 2-7 hours and visitors can choose to ride the New Tygart Flyer or the Durbin Rocket. Each train offers a unique experience and follows a different route from the other two.

National Radio Astronomy Observatory

Those looking for a truly out-of-this-world experience should head to the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) in Green Bank. This highly advanced radio telescope studies everything from pulsars (objects in space that emit "pulsing" energy) to water content on our Moon. Tours include a demonstration on liquid nitrogen, a short movie, and a bus tour to see the many smaller telescopes still in use plus the main 8,000-ton Green Bank Telescope.

Williams River Backway

The Williams River Backway winds its way alongside the boulder-strewn Williams River. Long known as a haven for trout, this roadway is frequented by anglers eager to catch brown, rainbow, and brook trout. This well-stocked stream is filled with over 27,000 pounds of trout each year! But before you head out with your fly rod, be sure that you have a fishing license complete with both a trout stamp and a national forest stamp. Camping facilities are available at both Day Run and Tea Creek with primitive sites available closer to the river.



So for a wonderful view of all that West Virginia has to offer, drive the Highland Scenic Highway. Due to their elevation, both the Highland Scenic Highway and Williams River Backway are closed during the winter with no snow removal but it's that very remoteness that makes these two roadways so attractive. The wilderness and beauty that surround these roads continue to provide a refuge from the hustle and bustle of today's lifestyle.