

ABOUT THIS TOUR

All along the scenic driving route from Webster Spring, through Richwood to the Highland Scenic Highway, you will encounter exhilarating and engaging places to stop and investigate. Some of the stops are mysterious, some are almost forgotten places from the past, and many are remarkable creations of Mother Nature.

Trailheads leading off the main road along the way afford the heartier among us an adventure, in hiking into magnificent wilderness, leaving behind the bustle of 21st Century life. Passing like many before without leaving a trace, you, as a visitor, can enjoy the beauty and vastness of our wilderness lands.

Driving time: about 2-3 hours.



The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area celebrates the central Appalachian forest - its history, culture, natural history, forest management and products. This grass-roots partnership works in West Virginia and western Maryland to explore the relationship between the Appalachian highlands forest and the people who live within it.

While staying in the Webster Springs area, you might also enjoy visiting northern Webster County, including Holly River State Park and the Mountain Parkway Byway and Backway. Other forest heritage sites can be found in adjoining counties—see the AFHA website for additional sites and driving tour recommendations.

For more information on AFHA, see our website, www.appalachianforest.us, or call us at 304-636-6182.

This brochure was developed by the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area with the assistance of the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, Inc., the Webster County Economic Development Authority, Webster Springs Main Street Association, and the Richwood Chamber of Commerce.

DRIVING TOUR

WEBSTER SPRINGS AND CRANBERRY FLATS





WEBSTER SPRINGS

Your tour begins with the small mountain town of Webster Springs, whose **courthouse** sits majestically on a hill overlooking the town. Begun in 1895 and finished in 1902 it is an impressive example of Romanesque Revival architecture, made of rough-faced, locally-quarried Elk River stones. The courthouse lawn is home to the **largest chunk of coal** ever mined in West Virginia, and a **sulfur well** reminiscent of the area's early-20th century spas where people came to bathe in the restorative waters. The town has a rich history, and has had several names since its founding, including Fork Lick and Addison. Though still officially called Addison by locals and town government, the Post Office designates it as Webster Springs.



In its heyday the town boasted a robust tourist industry, rooted in the baths and spas that grew up around the salt and sulfur springs. A 300-room hotel with its own ballroom was the town's centerpiece. In its present incarnation, Webster Springs' natural beauty, its mountain setting, and its festivals throughout the spring and summer bring tourists here. The most popular of these are

the Woodchopping Festival, held on Baker Island on Memorial Weekend, and the Burgoo International Cookoff in October, featuring cooks who compete in a contest for the best recipe of this local stew.



The **Addison Visitors Bureau** on Main Street features local crafts, and offers information about things to see and do, including the "A Stroll Through Webster Springs" walking tour brochure. At **Carpenter's 5 and 10 Cent**

Store, you can step back in time to the 1950s among a charming array of unique, nostalgic merchandise displayed in old fashioned display cases. If you are hungry, there are several eateries, including the locally-famous **Custard Stand**, 1.7 miles from downtown.



COWEN & BIG DITCH



Leaving Webster Springs you will pass through Cowen. Fourteen miles from Webster Springs, a brief detour onto State Route 82 takes you to **Big Ditch Wildlife Area** for picnicking and fishing. On the road to Cowen, you will pass **Camp Caesar**, a camp built in 1922 that is now a private conference center. You are welcome to drive

through the facility if it is open. There are also several convenience stores on the way where you can pick up picnic supplies and other items.

You may want to visit **Riffle Pottery's studio and shop**, which is adjacent to the recreation area. The shop features authentic West Virginia pottery by Webster County native Larry Riffle, and carries brochures for things to see and do in the area. Camping supplies, fishing gear and other necessities are available at **Rusty's Hardware** on the road out of town.



CRAIGSVILLE

Down the road 14 miles there are several places to eat and a gas station in Craigsville. There are fewer places after this, so you may want to eat here or take something with you for later. You will follow WV Rt. 55 from here; follow signs to keep you on this road, which later merges with Rt. 39.

RICHWOOD



Established in 1898, Richwood prospered in the hardwood timbering



WEBSTER SPRINGS—CRANBERRY FLATS DRIVING LOOP

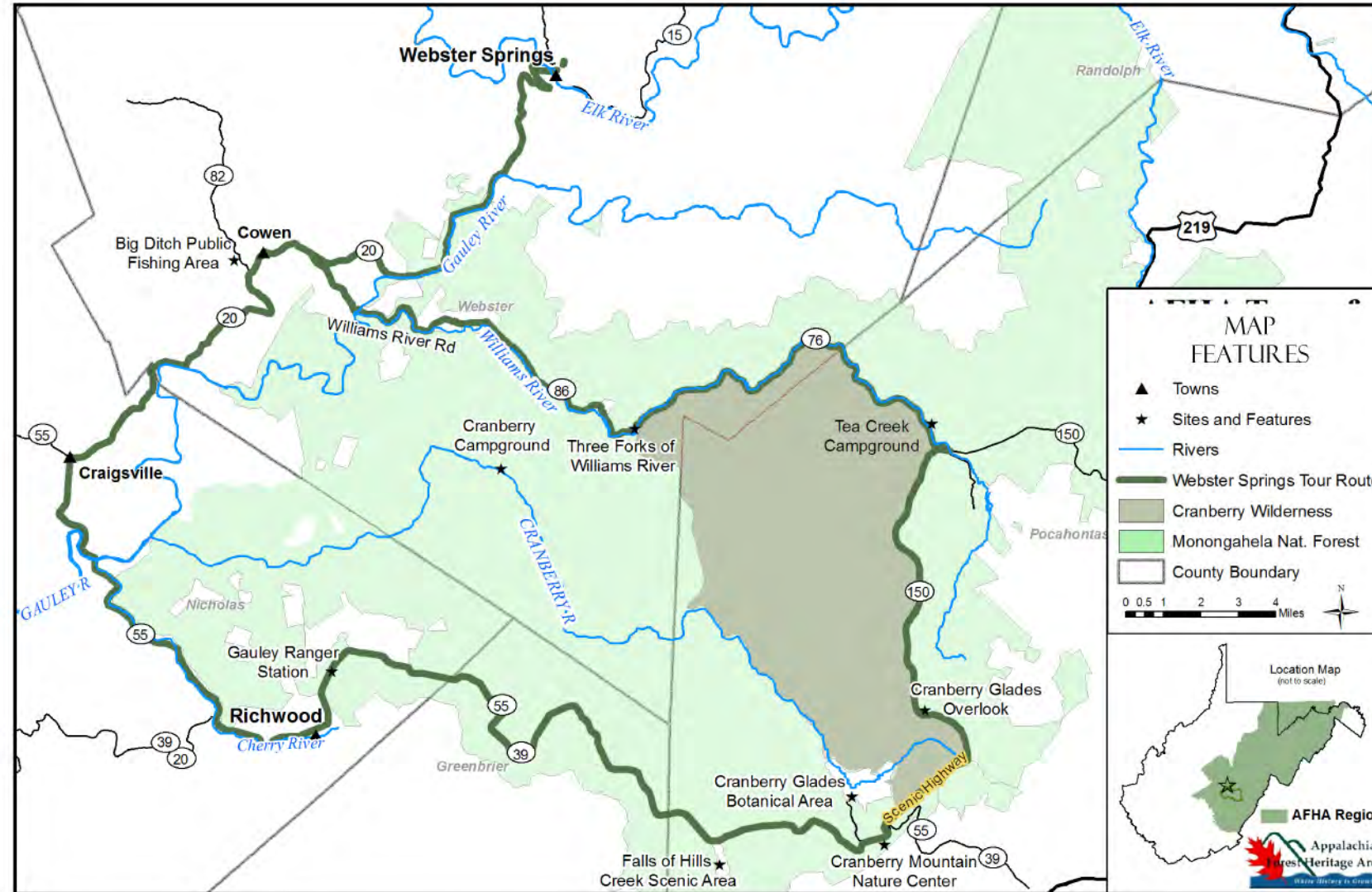
industry during the early 20th century. The railroad transformed this remote West Virginia town into a bustling center of production. Although the hubbub of its early days has diminished, it retains much of the charm of 19th and early 20th centuries in its homes and downtown buildings. The **Visitor's Center** is housed in the original railroad depot, where staff can point you to other interesting sites. If you want to stay a night, **The Richwood Inn**, on your approach to town, and the **Four Seasons Motel**, just as you are leaving, both offer overnight accommodations.

MONOGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST / CRANBERRY WILDERNESS AREA



Richwood serves as a gateway to one of the most beautiful scenic drives in the United States. Now on the **Highland Scenic Highway**, your drive takes you into the heart of the **Monongahela National Forest**, where trees form a canopy over the road, and a diverse array of plants surrounds you on all sides. The Monongahela Forest is home to the headwaters of five major rivers and many smaller streams.

A few miles into the forest and 16 miles from Richwood, a road leads to the **Falls of Hills Creek**, where three waterfalls cascade 133 feet down the mountainside over sandstone and shale to a shady wildflower glade. A 3/4 mile boardwalk affords a good vantage point for viewing the falls. Wildlife here includes black bear, white-tail deer, wild turkey,



grouse, snowshoe hare, cottontail rabbit, mink, bobcat, fox and a diversity of birds, snakes, and amphibians.

Shortly after, follow signs to the left to **Cranberry Glades Botanical Area**. An interpretive boardwalk leads to the center of this wetlands. You will find many other trails along the course of this tour loop. In fact, there are 45 miles of hiking trails between Richwood and the Highland Scenic Highway.

The **Cranberry Mountain Nature Center** is the next stop, at the junction of WV 55/39 and Route 150. Here you can get maps, information, books and gifts, and friendly help with anything you may need on your tour. There are ex-



hibits on wildlife, interactive programs for visitors of all ages, and an interpretive trail.

As you turn left onto Rte. 150, you will continue on the **Highland Scenic Highway**. The breathtaking panoramas along this road afford some of the most beautiful views in all of Appalachia. There are several pull offs along the highway where you can stop to enjoy a picnic or simply rest, read



the interpretive signs, and take in nature's wonder.

WILLIAMS RIVER ROAD

Williams River Road, County Road 86, 13 miles into the Highland Scenic Highway, is a must-see on your tour. Take it west and follow the contour of the river. Check out Tea Creek Campground, an old logging camp, and the parking areas where you can pull off and enjoy the sights and sounds of the river as it rushes over huge, ancient boulders in the riverbed.



The road eventually winds back to Cowen, where Route 20 returns you to Webster Springs. This completes your driving loop experience. Thank you for taking the time to see us, and enjoy your visit to our area!

