

Sunfish Pond [BEST HIKES]

NJ side of the Gap, in Worthington State Forest.

Summary: Sunfish Pond is a popular destination, but rightly so. Hike through some of the prettiest forest in New Jersey and arrive at Sunfish Pond, a glacial lake 1,000 feet ABOVE the surrounding area. Sunfish Pond makes for a great place for a snack or lunch break. There is a log bench at the southern end, or you can walk around the pond to find a good spot.

Our two cents: For newer hikers, this hike is manageable... but it's also not a "walk in the park" – and 7.6+ miles may be longer than you realize or can comfortably do. While on our way back, we've passed many weary hikers asking "how much farther to the pond?" *Please* bring water, have appropriate footwear, and honestly assess your fitness level. This is not a good choice for your first hike.

- **Trail surface:** The Gap is notorious for rocks and will give feet and joints a good pounding. It can be hiked in sneakers... but we wouldn't recommend it. The Appalachian Trail is rockier than the Dunnfield Creek Trail, in our opinion.
- **Water crossings:** The Dunnfield Creek (GREEN) trail contains several rock-hops across the creek. After real heavy rain, they can be a bit tricky to negotiate. Trekking poles or a stick can come in handy.

Route 80 west to just before the last exit in New Jersey. On the right there is a sign for Dunnfield Creek Natural Area. There is a parking lot on the right, then a large main lot in the center and if that is full, you can park on the grass next to that. The road is one way so you can't backtrack to a passed lot unless you get back onto Rt 80 and come around.

In the photo gallery we've added a photo overview of the parking lots as it's just easier to show it than explain it.

Hike Directions: These directions are for the Dunnfield Creek (GREEN) to Sunfish Pond with return via the Appalachian Trail (AT) route.

0.0 – At the far end of the main lot, look for a trail sign and a bridge over Dunnfield Creek. Cross the bridge, and follow the trail which is the Appalachian Trail (WHITE) at first.

0.5 – A large trail sign is at a V-intersection. Bear RIGHT here for the start of the Dunnfield Creek Trail (GREEN). (The Appalachian Trail bears left here, and also leads to Sunfish Pond – and is the return route)

Cross a bridge. There are some nice water cascades here. [For the short hike mentioned above; turnaround here and retrace your route]

0.7 – Continue GREEN. Pass the start of the BLUE DOT trail on the right.

1.9 - Pass Holly Springs trail on the left.

Keep an eye out for the GREEN markers which can be sometimes hard to spot. They will also indicate several times to cross Dunnfield Creek.

3.3 - The trail starts to turn west, away from the creek. Cross through an area that can be quite wet.

3.7 – The trail starts heading uphill, a little steeply and over some rock slabs, as it nears the pond.

4.1 – Sunfish Pond. The Dunnfield Creek Trail comes to an open area with a plaque. Walk towards the pond (north/right) to find a place to take a break.

[*Optional add-on...* walk around the pond a bit: The west side of the pond is quite rocky, or there is a fire road around the east side of the pond (or combine to make a loop). The fire road veers away from the pond so it doesn't offer any breakspots at the water's edge unless you go up to the Turquoise Trail. To do so would add about 1.6 miles to your route.

[*To go to the Turquoise Trail:* find the fire road on the east side of the pond (it's an unmarked woods road). Follow the road north for about .6 miles until the Turquoise Trail starts on the left (there is a small pile of rocks). Follow Turquoise to the edge of Sunfish Pond, where there are large rock slabs to sit on. When done, retrace your route back on Turquoise and the Fire Road to the southern end of Sunfish.

When ready to head back, look for the WHITE markers of the Appalachian Trail (AT) heading south. Stay on the AT all the way back to the parking lot. The trail is well marked.

6.4 – Continue AT. Holly Springs (RED) and Beulahland (YELLOW) cross the AT.

7.4 – Continue on the AT as it passes the start of the Dunnfield Creek Trail on the left. Retrace the route from earlier, back to the parking lot.

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Hiked: 5/9/11. Trail Blog: "[Dunnfield Creek – Sunfish Pond](#) –