

# Hussy Mountain Horse Camp

by

Richard S. White, Extension Agent, Animal Science  
Virginia Cooperative Extension

**Hussy Mountain Horse Camp** is located 2 miles East of US highway 21, on a Forest Service Road (FSR), just South of the town of Speedwell in beautiful Southwest Virginia. Directions to the camp are marked, on US 21, with the traditional brown Forest Service markers of a tent and horse. The Sports Map of the area is available (\$5.25) from the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area Office, Rt.1, Box 303, Marion, VA 24354, telephone 540-783-5196.

The camp provides excellent access to both the **Virginia Highlands Horse Trail** and the **Iron Mountain Trail** in addition to many connector trails. Such connector or loop trails as **Horse Heaven**, **Henley Hollow**, and **Divide** provide wonderful diversity in terrain and scenery.

More about the trails in a moment – about the camp. The Hussy Mountain Horse Camp has three levels of camping areas. Camping sites are undesignated, but generally, orderly location of your rig can be achieved. Campers are served by vault toilets and potable water through a frost-proof water spigot. Horses can be watered from buckets of potable water or at the prepared rock stream bed flowing through the camp. Horse hitch rails are scattered throughout the camp and there is space to put up an electric fence or a high-line picket. Water, for horses, is no problem once you are on the trails.

The Virginia Highlands Horse Trail (VHHT) connects through the camp to offer East or West access out of camp. Traveling West out of camp, for about a mile then turning North on the VHHT for another mile brings you to Henley Hollow Trail. Turning West again, you are in for a treat as you descend the narrow switch-backs for a couple of miles down to US 21. Crossing US 21, Dry Run Trail picks up to parallel Dry Run Creek for awhile before ascending to rejoin the VHHT. Turn East on the VHHT to return to camp, again crossing

US 21. To make this a loop, allow 3 to 4 hours, depending on how fast you ride.

While at the junction of the VHHT and Dry Run, you have the options to: **1**-head South up to the Comers Rock Overlook, to see almost three States; or **2**-at the base of Comers Rock you could veer West to Hale Lake to loop back to Comers Rock; or **3**-at Hale lake continue East to join the Iron Mountain Trail back to camp; or **4**-stay West on the VHHT on to Mount Rogers if you are packing.

Back near camp where you took off on Henley Hollow, you can continue North on the VHHT to join Horse Heaven which will loop around to join the FSR on which the camp is located back to the West. However, continuing South across the FSR and turning East, you can ride the VHHT on over to the Cold Branch Horse Camp (which is another story) to the Cripple Creek Area. Or, after crossing the FSR, veer South up the Divide Trail to join the Iron Mountain Trail. You can go East or West on Iron Mountain, but turning west will loop you back to the FSR just west of camp. **A word of CAUTION, yellow jackets are prevalent on Iron Mountain during August and September.**

As with most of the Southwest Virginia Country through which the VHHT runs, more riding is offered than I have described here. Most of the loops, out of the **Hussy Mountain Horse Camp**, will range from 3 to 6 hours, again depending on how fast you ride. The riding in this area is usually along tree covered ridge tops which provide grand vistas. These trails require a fit horse and rider. The ascents can be steep at times but the terrain is not dangerous.

And remember, **Pack-it-in, Pack-it-out** and **Please do not tie horses to trees**. Help keep our trails and camps clean and open for our future use.