

Hiking with Zoey



It's
Monday
and we're

Soldiers Delight Natural Environment

off! Today we're going a little bit outside Columbia to Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area, with its many acres of serpentine barren. This hike has very unusual terrain. Sometimes, it seemed as if we were out in the prairies with wide-open, dry spaces filled with tall desert-like grasses and soils. Our path was rocky, the trails going over under-lying, exposed bedrock. Because of the previous day's rains, our path was very



soggy. At times we weren't sure if we were still on the trail or had

wandered into a stream bed! (word-to-the-wise: Don't go soon after a rain!)

Our hike took us in and out of the trees, up and down the slight mountainside. Charred trees seem to litter the slopes. I was a



little uncomfortable at first, what with all the new smells and textures. The day we went, the skies were overcast, filled with winter cold and the earth seemed very flat and uninviting to me. But squirrels raced across my path, in and out of the bordering wood, and birds soared overhead as we wound our way around the trails. Very quiet. We saw only one other human as we made our way back to the parking area. I did discover a small stream en route, though, so all was not lost! We'll go back again since we liked the solitary feel of this place.

Information for Humans

Location

Rte 70W to Marriottsville Rd. Exit 83. North on Marriottsville Rd. about 5 miles.

Left onto Wards Chapel. Go approx. 4.5 miles then right onto Deer Park Rd. Parking .5 miles down on the right.

Trails

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|------------------------|-----------|
| Serpentine (White) | 2.5 miles |
| Red | 1 mile |
| Orange | 1 mile |
| Yellow | 1 mile |
| Red-Orange-Yellow loop | 3 miles |

Parking

Park at either the Overlook or the Visitor's Center both on Deer Park Road.

Zoey's Ratings

