



A Hike with My Kids

Waggoner's Gap Preserve

By Liz, Founder of CarlisleKids.com

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Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch has been on our family bucket list for a while, but it wasn't until I drove past last spring and realized just how close it is that checking it out moved to the top of our list. A couple of weeks ago, while my sister was visiting us from out-of-state, we decided the

Hawk Watch was the perfect way to spend a couple of hours on Sunday morning. We loaded the whole family in the car, auntie included, and headed out Route 74, following the winding road up Blue Mountain toward Waggoner's Gap.

It was a beautiful September day--the sun was shining and the humidity low--and we all had a wonderful time being outdoors together. We didn't get a chance to explore everything, but that just gives us a reason to go back!



Keystone Fund Investment: \$190,000

Total Public/Private Investment: \$415,600

There are two different trails, both less than a half-mile. We followed the Hawk Trail, silhouettes, and reached the top within 20 minutes or so, including the inevitable stops to inspect a wandering bug or interesting leaf. The trail is steep and rocky

which was a fun change from the gentler nature trails my kids are used to, but the short distance kept the hike very do-able. The trails lead to a large outcrop of rocks and boulders, which is where you can watch for birds.

Once you reach the Hawk Watch you have a breathtaking view of the Cumberland Valley laid out before you. My photos do not do it justice *at all!* That's what I get for not wanting to lug my big camera along and using my phone instead!

The number one reason for visiting the Hawk Watch is, of course, the hope of sighting a raptor or two. Fall is prime migration season and a perfect time for bird-watching along the Kittatinny Ridge. The Hawk Watch, which is managed by the Audubon Society, is known as one of the best bird-watching spots in the Northeast with an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 raptors passing through each year. Be sure to bring binoculars along with a good dose of patience--the kids might spot a Northern Harrier, an Osprey, a Kestrel, or even a Bald Eagle!

