

Spanning the Gap

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Designing with Nature



Raymondskill Creek winds through a beautiful ravine surrounded by rhododendrons and towering hemlock trees, before tumbling down a series of falls. A narrow trail follows the creek and

provides views of Raymondskill Falls. It's a pleasant place to go for a walk, but the trail can be hazardous, and minimal signs and parking have allowed it to go unnoticed by many park visitors.

To make this site safer and to provide amenities to visitors, restrooms and a new parking lot will be constructed after trail rehabilitation work is done in partnership with the Appalachian Mountain Club. It is a relatively simple project, but it must be sympathetic to its surroundings.

Park design guidelines offer suggestions regarding building styles, materials, and sustainable design. At Raymondskill Falls, the Denver Service Center design team used these guidelines to develop amenities and safe access to the falls without detracting from the natural beauty of the ravine.



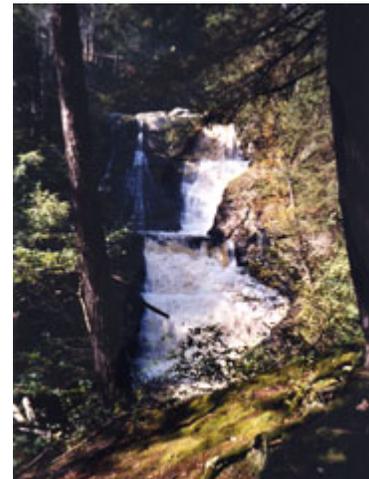
Stylistically the restrooms take cues from other buildings in the area. The battered stone base,



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(Left, above) The restroom at Raymondskill Falls. *(NPS Photo by Ken Sandri)* *(Left, below)* Raymondskill Falls.



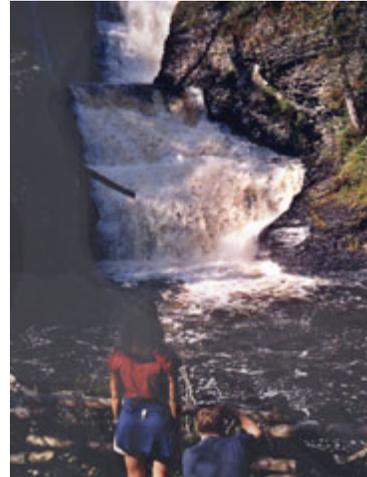
Raymondskill Falls.



Trail to the upper falls at Raymondskill Falls.

gable roof, and wood siding are similar to nearby resort homes. Materials also help make the building contextual. The cobblestone, slate, and wood planned for this building are commonly used throughout the river valley, and blend with the natural surroundings. The battered stone base also strengthens the relationship between the building and the ground.

Sustainable design practices ensure that development does not impact resources directly or indirectly. The use of gravel instead of asphalt for the parking lot, recycled plastic parking bumpers and bridge decking, and composting toilets contribute to this design. The Raymondskill Falls project is typical of many new facilities at Delaware Water Gap, which are not intended to be eye-catching or cutting-edge design, but to blend with the surroundings, allowing nature to be the focus of attention.



Raymondskill Falls