

Waffle Rock – What is it?

FOSSILIZED DINOSAUR LIZARD SKIN,
PREHISTORIC PICTOGRAPH, GEOLOGICAL FORMATION
OR SOMETHING EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL...



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When the “Waffle Rock” was found in the area of the Allegheny Mountains near Elk Garden, West Virginia, many theories of what it was were suggested. Some thought that the pattern was the fossil of a large dinosaur or lizard skin. The geometric pattern on one side of the rock made some think it had been etched or carved by people of a bygone era and still others were convinced that the rock was something from “out of this world” left here by extra-terrestrials.



Waffle Rock can be viewed near the West Virginia Scenic Overlook at Jennings Randolph Lake in Mineral County, WV.

BOTH PHOTOS BY MIKE CALHOUN

When geologic experts studied the rock, it was determined that after millions of years which included the forming of the mountains, and many other changes to the earth, sand was deposited by ancient streams and later it became hard rock or sandstone. Through millions of years of geologic activity various physical and chemical processes took place. Over time cracks in the rock began to fill with iron oxide (Hematite) that leached from the surrounding



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Above: The West Virginia Scenic Overlook at Jennings Randolph Lake.

Insets: The Adams family enjoys camping at Jennings Randolph Lake. Pond fishing at the Robert W. Craig Campground, jet skiing on the lake, and playing at the beach are just some of their favorite activities.

rocks by percolating water. This iron oxide mixed with the sand grains in the cracks and formed a super cement holding the surrounding sandstone pieces together. As the surface of the rock was exposed to wind and rain, the sand without the iron oxide slowly washed away but the sand mixed with the iron oxide did not, resulting in the strange looking rock.

Waffle rock is rare, but the example we're referring to is on display at Jennings Randolph Lake in Mineral County, WV. Other examples are at Tea Creek Mountain in Pocahontas, WV, and also in Canada. There's also a small piece of the rock on display at the Smithsonian Institute of Natural History in Washington, DC.

If you're visiting Jennings Randolph Lake to see the Waffle Rock, many other opportunities are available for enjoying outdoor family fun and adventure. Boating, fishing, camping,

hiking, nature walks, cabins, whitewater rafting, swimming and 3-D archery are just some of the activities available at Jennings Randolph Lake and nearby.

Visit the Jennings Randolph Lake website at <http://nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/DamsRecreation/JenningsRandolphLake.aspx>

