



To get up to the Hilltop in Inwood Hill Park, follow the trail outlined on the picture. Enter the park at Payson and Beak Streets. There is an entrance with a bunch of benches around it. You'll go up a hill until you get to your first big intersection. On the right, it goes steeply up and on the left, it looks like a car could drive it. Go straight where it immediately gets steeper. Very shortly, you'll need to take a right hand turn. This turn continues up the hill. Going straight looks like the wrong way, so don't go there. As you ascend this hill, you'll see and hear the highway to your left. Notice that you want to continue up with the highway always at your left. Soon, you'll see a pathway going up a steep hill to your right. Skip that pathway. You'll also shortly see a fork in the path. The left-hand of the fork goes down, so do not take that. Instead, go right at this fork, and continue slightly

uphill. At this point, the woods become more dense and you start to lose sight of the highway. You'll also slightly descend, then rise back up. This part is darkest on the path, and possibly the "scariest." Along the way, (as of this writing - Feb 2011), the path is a bit blown out, with the pavement being washed out. Parks does need to come do some repairs. Forge on until you see the next reference point: another trail going right. Ignore that and keep on the straight-ahead path. The trees open up a bit above you at this location, giving you clear sky. You're almost there. After the second little right-hand trail offshoot, watch for the big lefthand turn that goes uphill. There is a downed tree at this turn on the lefthand side. Follow this lefthand turn up the hill. You'll hear the highway soon, and you'll see the trees thinning in front of you as you go. As you get close, please remember to **turn off your flashlight**, and start to get dark adapted. You'll see the pathway opening up with a drop to your left, and the clearing on your right!

As always, please bring a buddy when coming up to the hilltop. We've had thousands of people come up to the top with no issues, but I don't want ANYONE to be that first time problem. In general, a dark park is safer than a lit park (!), and you are always safer if you do not use a flashlight and just go up using your night vision. (Think about this one and you'll know it is true...) Not only can you see greater contrast if all is dark around you, but stargazing will be good upon arrival. You'll enjoy the park the way it was intended at night – dark. Hear the critters sing their songs, and the wind in the trees, the hoot of an owl or the quiet wings of a bat hunting bugs. The dark forest is beautiful, and you should enjoy its quiet splendor as well as the dark skies.