

EAST HUDSON HIGHLANDS

Trails are marked with rectangular paint blazes or round plastic or metal discs in white, red, blue or yellow. A double blaze, one above the other, indicates a turn with the upper blaze offset in the direction of the turn. A triple blaze in a triangle pattern indicates the start (pointing up) or end (pointing down) of a trail.

The network of trails makes it possible to plan a great variety of hikes. Helpful planning aids include the detailed maps published by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. See **GENERAL INFORMATION** to contact the Trail Conference.

SUGGESTED HIKES

◆ **Fishkill Ridge.** Follow the Fishkill Ridge Trail (white) from the metal tanks of the Beacon water supply, reached by a narrow road which branches off of East Main Street 0.2 mile east of Howland Avenue. The trail makes a loop along the ridgeline over Lamb's Hill and Bald Hill with fine views of the urban and rural areas to the north, east, and west. The round trip from the water tanks is about **7 miles**. The loop may also be reached from the east on the Wilkinson Memorial Trail (yellow) beginning on the Old Albany Post Road (Old Uhl Road) off US 9, three miles north of NY 301, or from the Overlook Trail (red). See below.

◆ **Overlook Trail.** The Overlook Trail (red) offers hikes and views north of the Highlands. Parking is at the end of Sunnyside Road in Fishkill, up a steep gravel road to the left. Starting at a kiosk, the Overlook Trail immediately turns onto a woods road, and shortly leaves it as the road curves left. Climbing steadily, the trail passes a large glacial erratic, and at 0.6 mile curves, cuts into the shoulder of a hill, and steeply descends to cross a stream. The trail steadily ascends Lamb's Hill and at 1.1 miles comes out onto open rocks with views of the Hudson River. The trail continues to ascend steeply offering more viewpoints until it levels off at 1.4 miles. After passing along old stone walls through abandoned orchards, the trail resumes its ascent before ending at the Fishkill Ridge Trail (white) at 1.7 miles. There is an expansive view just before the junction. (The Fishkill Ridge Trail may be followed east for a loop that returns to this point, an additional **4.9 miles**. See above.)

◆ **South Beacon Mountain.** Marked by its fire tower, this is the highest summit of the Hudson Highlands. The hike begins on the Notch Trail (blue) on NY 9D, 4 miles north of Cold Spring. Where the Notch Trail turns off to the right of the junction with the Wilkinson Memorial Trail (yellow) continue on the Wilkinson. The Breakneck Ridge Trail (white) joins from the right and then breaks away sharply uphill to the left; follow it up Devil's Ladder to the top. The round trip is approximately **6 miles**.

◆ **Breakneck Ridge.** The sentinels of the northern gate of the Highlands are Breakneck Ridge on the east side of the Hudson, and Storm King across the river to the west. A climb over some of the steepest terrain in the Highlands, plus some of its most dramatic views, make Breakneck an exhilarating outing, although not a good choice in slippery conditions or strong winds. The Breakneck Ridge Trail (white) begins north of the tunnel on NY 9D, 2.1 miles north of Cold Spring. Several viewpoints are passed, each followed by a brief descent and another steep climb before the top of the ridge is finally reached. Continue past the junction with the Notch Trail (blue) to where the two trails diverge. Bear left on the Notch Trail, left again on the Wilkinson Memorial Trail (yellow) for 0.1 mile, which returns you to NY 9D at your starting point, 0.3 mile north of the tunnel. The Wilkinson Trail passes over Sugarloaf Mountain, with views including Bannerman's Castle on Pollepel Island. The total distance is **5.5 miles**.

From the south the Undercliff Trail (yellow) provides a connection between Bull Hill and Breakneck Ridge. Its southern terminus is in Nelsonville, accessible from the Cold Spring railroad station. The Undercliff Trail ascends Bull Hill, traverses its western shoulder and crosses the Washburn Trail (white) at 1.7 miles. It meets the Brook Trail (red) at 3.3 miles, finally reaching its northern terminus on the Breakneck Ridge Trail. See accompanying map.

◆ **Bull Hill (Mt Taurus).** The Washburn Trail (white) begins on NY 9D, 0.8 mile north of Cold Spring, skirts an abandoned quarry, rises steeply, and provides ever widening views to the south and west before reaching the wooded summit. Continuing north past a clearing with a view of the Shawangunks and Catskills to the west, the Washburn Trail ends at the beginning of the Notch Trail (blue). The Notch Trail descends the north side of the mountain and turns left. At the Breakneck Brook crossing, it turns left onto the Brook Trail (red) and follows the stream on an eroded woods road past remains of an abandoned estate. This trail leads down to NY 9D, 1.7 miles north of Cold Spring. A more popular route is to leave the trail and return by way of the Cornish Trail (blue) that ends at a gate 0.2 mile north of the Washburn trailhead. This hike is **4.5 miles**.

◆ **Canada Hill.** There are many opportunities for circular hikes in the Southern Highlands. One hike is to start from the east via the Appalachian Trail (AT, white) where it crosses US 9 at its intersection with US 403. Where the AT turns left to climb the ridge, take the Carriage Connector (yellow) which ends at the Osborn Loop (blue). Continue straight ahead on the Osborn Loop to the junction with the Sugarloaf Hill Trail (red). A side trip (one mile round trip) to the top of Sugarloaf Hill yields views up the river to West Point and south to Bear Mountain Bridge. The Osborn Loop turns south along the western flank of the mountain and then turns uphill to reach its southern terminus at the AT. Follow the AT north along the ridge and then descend to the junction with the Carriage Connector. This loop hike is about **6.5 miles** excluding the side trip.

◆ **Anthony's Nose/Camp Smith Trail.** From this southern gatepost of the East Highlands, there are broad views of the Hudson Valley to the north and south. To the west, Iona Island and Bear Mountain Bridge are in the foreground below; across the river lies the vast expanse of Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park. The viewpoints are also favorites with birdwatchers for observing eagles, hawks and vultures.

The Camp Smith Trail (blue) begins on US 6/202, south of the Bear Mountain Bridge, at the old stone tollhouse, 0.7 mile north of the Camp Smith entrance. Behind the tollhouse, the trail turns left. Over its 3.1 mile course to the summit, roughly parallel to the road, (US 6/202), the trail rises 1,100 feet. If a second car has been parked just north of the Bear Mountain Bridge, one may continue northeast another 0.6 mile to the Appalachian Trail coming up from NY 9D. The half-mile descent on the AT to reach NY 9D brings the total distance to **4.2 miles**.

Hiking Trails

in the East Hudson Highlands

