

## **The balanced rock along the A.T./R-D on Fingerboard Mountain.**

**FEATURES:** This hike climbs to the ridges of Surebridge and Fingerboard Mountains and passes the historic Greenwood Mine

**LENGTH:** About 5.5 miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate to strenuous **TIME:** About 3 1/2 hours

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Take N.J. Route 17 north to the New York State Thruway and take the first exit, Exit 15A (Sloatsburg). Turn left at the bottom of the ramp onto N.Y. Route 17 north and continue through the village of Sloatsburg. Just beyond the village, turn right at the next traffic light, following the sign for Seven Lakes Drive and Harriman State Park. Follow Seven Lakes Drive for 10.3 miles to the Tiorati Circle. Go three-quarters of the way around the circle and turn right onto Arden Valley Road. Almost immediately, turn left into the Tiorati parking area and park just beyond the first dumpster on the right. A parking fee is charged in the summer (Memorial Day through Labor Day).

Find the triple blue blaze that marks the start of the Lake Tiorati Trail, and follow the trail for 0.3 miles up to the crest of Fingerboard Mountain, paralleling the paved Arden Valley Road. At the top, turn right onto a gravel road, then turn left onto Arden Valley Road and proceed downhill for 0.2 miles. At a bend in the road at the bottom of the hill, turn left onto the aqua-blazed Long Path, which follows a rocky footpath through a wet area. After a gradual descent, you'll pass a cliff on the left.

Just beyond, the Long Path turns left, crosses over three pipes, and passes through dense mountain laurel thickets. It next crosses three small streams. After crossing a fourth stream, the trail begins a gradual climb, joining an old woods road and crossing another stream along the way. After reaching the height of land, the Long Path descends and passes to the right of a large wetland. A short distance beyond, the Long Path crosses Surebridge Brook on rocks. It passes a flooded mine pit on the left and crosses the unmarked Surebridge Mine Road. The trail now proceeds uphill, passing to the left of a corrugated-metal trail shelter. It then climbs more steeply to an open rock ledge, with limited views.

After continuing to the crest of the rise, the trail descends and passes to the right of another wetland. It then climbs through hemlocks to a secondary summit of Echo Mountain, from where it makes a winding descent. At the base of the descent, it reaches a junction with the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (A.T.), marked by a wooden signpost. Turn left here, following the A.T. downhill to a stream. The A.T. bears left and parallels the stream. It crosses the stream, continues to parallel it, then turns right and begins a steep climb. It bears left and descends through a valley, but soon curves to the right and continues to climb to the crest of Surebridge Mountain.

The A.T. now descends gradually to Surebridge Brook, which it crosses on rocks. On the other side, the A.T. turns left onto unmarked Surebridge Mine Road. In a short distance, you'll reach the Greenwood Mine, with a 100-foot-long flooded mine pit on the right and a huge pile of tailings on the left. After descending a short distance on the road, the A.T. turns right and begins a steep climb on an eroded trail, with many exposed tree roots. The grade soon moderates. After climbing through dense mountain laurel thickets, the trail bears right and levels off. It climbs steeply over rock ledges, passes through more mountain laurel thickets, then ascends on a rocky switchback to the bare summit ridge of Surebridge Mountain.

At the crest of the ridge, the A.T. joins the Ramapo-Dunderberg (R-D) Trail, which comes in from the right. Turn left and follow the co-aligned A.T. and R-D along the ridge, with much of the trail on bare rock. Soon, you'll pass on the right the trailhead of the blue-blazed Hurst Trail, which leads downhill to the stone Fingerboard Shelter.

The joint A.T./R-D now passes just to the east of Fingerboard Mountain's 1,378-foot summit and soon descends to a col. As you climb back up, you'll pass an interesting rock formation on the left. The height of land is marked by a balanced rock on the left. Continue following the ridgeline to the northeast.

After descending more steeply, the A.T./R-D passes between two water tanks. A short distance beyond, you'll reach the western end of the blue-blazed Lake Tiorati Trail, which begins on the right. Turn right and follow the Lake Tiorati Trail for 0.3 miles downhill, retracing your steps to the parking lot where the hike began.

"Hiking" is provided by Daniel Chazin of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. The Trail Conference is a volunteer organization that builds and maintains more than 1,850 miles of hiking trails and publishes a library of hiking maps and books, including a two-map set for Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails (\$9.95) and the guidebook "Harriman Trails: A Guide and History" (\$19.95). The Trail Conference's office is at 156 Ramapo Valley Rd. (Route 202), Mahwah; (201) 512-9348; [nynjtc.org](http://nynjtc.org); [HikeoftheWeek@aol.com](mailto:HikeoftheWeek@aol.com).