

Lake Sebago and Stony Brook in Harriman State Park

Overview

This loop hike runs along the shore of scenic Lake Sebago and follows the cascading Stony Brook

Details

Time: 3 hours Difficulty: Easy to Moderate Length: 5.1 miles

Driving Directions

From the New York State Thruway, take Exit 15A (Sloatsburg). Turn north onto N.Y. Route 17 north, and continue through the Village of Sloatsburg. Just past the village, turn right at the traffic light, following the sign for Seven Lakes Drive/Harriman State Park. Cross an overpass over railroad tracks and continue along Seven Lakes Drive for 0.7 mile, passing under the Thruway. Just before reaching a large sign "Welcome to Harriman State Park," turn left at a sign for Johnstontown Road, immediately reaching a stop sign at a T-intersection. Turn right, proceed for 1.2 miles to the end of Johnstontown Road, and park at the cul-de-sac

Description

At the northeastern end of the cul-de-sac, you will find the start of the White Bar Trail, marked by three horizontal white blazes. Follow the blazes gently uphill, heading northeast on a grassy woods road (Old Johnstontown Road). In 0.3 mile, the Kakiat Trail, marked by vertical white blazes, joins from the left, briefly runs concurrently with the White Bar Trail, then leaves to the right. The Kakiat Trail will be your return route, but for now, continue ahead on the White Bar Trail.

In another 750 feet, the White Bar Trail turns left, passes several huge boulders, then turns right at a fork. A short distance beyond, the trail turns left, passes between two green metal gateposts, and heads uphill. After reaching the crest of the rise, the trail begins to descend. At the base of the descent, you will notice a marsh on the left. Soon, you'll see (between the trail and the marsh) a cellar hole, which marks the site of the 19th century homestead site of John Frederick Helms, known as the "Old Dutch Doctor." Helms grew medicinal herbs, such as ginseng, here.

Just beyond, the Tuxedo-Mt. Ivy Trail (T-MI), marked by red-dash-on-white blazes, joins from the right. Turn right here, leaving the White Bar Trail, and follow the T-MI Trail uphill through a rocky area. (NOTE: As of this writing, the intersection of the White Bar and T-MI Trails is not marked well. If you find yourself following both white and red-dash-on-white blazes, you've gone too far, and you should go back to the intersection.) After climbing over a hill, the trail begins to descend, crossing a paved camp road on the way down. In another 250 feet, the trail turns right and passes through a mountain laurel thicket, paralleling the shore of beautiful Lake Sebago.

After briefly coming out at the lakeshore (with panoramic views over the lake), the trail reaches Seven Lakes Drive. It crosses the road, turns left, and follows the sidewalk across the Lake Sebago dam. At the other side of the dam, it turns right, goes under the guardrail, and heads down along the eastern side of the spillway. You've now gone 2.2 miles from the start of the hike.

At the base of the dam, the unmarked Woodtown Road goes off to the left, but you should continue ahead, following the T-MI Trail, which soon bears left to parallel Stony Brook. In a quarter mile from the Lake Sebago dam, the T-MI Trail crosses a tributary stream. Just beyond the stream crossing, the orange-blazed Hillburn-Torne-Sebago Trail (HTS) begins to the right. The T-MI turns left here and heads uphill, but you should continue straight, now following the orange blazes of the HTS Trail.

Continue along the HTS Trail for 400 feet to a junction with the yellow-blazed Stony Brook Trail. The orange-blazed HTS Trail bears left here, but you should continue straight ahead along the Stony Brook Trail. This relatively level trail bears left to cross Diamond Creek, then parallels the cascading Stony Brook for over a mile. About 3.85 miles from the start of the hike, the white-blazed Kakiat Trail joins from the left. Turn right here, now following both white and yellow blazes, and cross a footbridge over Pine Meadow Brook.

About 750 feet after crossing the footbridge, the white-blazed Kakiat Trail splits off to the right. Turn right, leaving the Stony Brook Trail, and follow the Kakiat Trail, which crosses a second footbridge - this one, over Stony Brook - and climbs through an evergreen forest. NOTE: This second footbridge was washed away by Hurricane Irene in 2011 and, as of February 2014, has not been replaced. See comment below. After a level section (an old farmsite), the trail climbs to the crest of a hill, then descends on a woods road to Seven Lakes Drive. It crosses the road and heads downhill, reaching the Old Johnstontown Road in 150 feet. Turn left on this road, joining the horizontal-white-blazed White Bar Trail.

The Kakiat Trail soon turns off to the right, but you should continue straight ahead on the grassy woods road, retracing your steps along the White Bar Trail for 0.3 mile back to the Johnstontown Road Circle, where the hike began.