

Lake Sonoma/Overlook Rock/Hewitt-Butler Trails Loop from Burnt Meadow Road

Length: 6.5 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate **Time:** 4.5 hours

Directions to trailhead

Take Skyline Drive to its northwestern terminus at Greenwood Lake Turnpike (County Route 511). Turn right and continue for 5.8 miles, then turn left on Burnt Meadow Road. After 1.4 miles, the pavement ends. Continue on the dirt road for another 1.2 miles until you reach a bridge over Burnt Meadow Brook after a steep downhill. Park on the right side of the road, just before the bridge.

Hike Description

Walk ahead along the road, crossing the bridge, and continue for about 500 feet to an intersection with another dirt road on the right. Just beyond, a triple orange blaze on the right marks the start of the Lake Sonoma Trail, built by volunteers of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

Turn right and follow the Lake Sonoma Trail, which heads into the woods and climbs to a high point, with limited north-facing views. After descending to cross an intermittent stream, it ascends to another high point, with west-facing views. The exposed rock face directly ahead is Overlook Rock, which you'll reach later in the hike.

The Lake Sonoma Trail now descends rather steeply on switchbacks, passing interesting boulders along the way. After about a mile, the Lake Sonoma Trail ends at a junction with the yellow-blazed Manaticut Point Loop. Turn right onto the Manaticut Point Loop. A short distance ahead, you'll notice a triple yellow/orange blaze on the left, but you should continue ahead on the yellow-blazed Manaticut Point Loop, which descends to cross the inlet stream of Lake Sonoma at a woods road, immediately turns right, and soon reaches a limited viewpoint over the lake. The trail reenters the woods, with views of the lake through the trees, then bears right and reaches a panoramic viewpoint over the lake. Soon, it bears sharply left and heads away from the lake, following a narrow ridge, then turns right onto a woods road.

The Manaticut Point Loop soon turns left, leaving the woods road. It briefly parallels a stream, then crosses it below an attractive cascade. The trail immediately turns sharply left, briefly joining another woods road, then bears right and begins a steady climb. At the top, it bears left, briefly descends, then turns sharply left at a switchback and climbs gently to reach a junction with the white-blazed Overlook Rock Trail, which joins from the right.

Continue ahead, now following both yellow and white blazes. In 150 feet, both trails turn right at a double blaze. Here, you should turn left and make a short, steep climb up a rock ledge, emerging onto Overlook Rock -- a massive exposed rock face. Overlook Rock affords a panoramic east-facing view over Lake Sonoma and Windbeam, Bear and Board Mountains, with the Ramapo Mountains in the background. You've now gone about two miles from the start.

After taking in the view, descend from the rock, turn right, and retrace your steps along the joint yellow/white-blazed trail for 150 feet, then turn left onto the white-blazed Overlook Rock Trail. The trail descends gradually, crossing a woods road and then a stream. It turns right and parallels the stream, soon joining a level woods road, which it follows for 0.2 mile.

Immediately after crossing another stream, the Overlook Rock Trail turns left, leaving the road, and climbs to reach a long rock outcrop. It parallels the outcrop on the left, then bears right and climbs to the top, with another broad east-facing view.

The trail descends from the outcrop and again begins to climb, soon joining a woods road. After passing under power lines at the crest of the ridge, the Overlook Rock Trail reaches a junction with the blue-blazed Hewitt-Butler Trail. Turn right onto this trail, which follows woods roads for a quarter mile. Just beyond a sharp bend in the road, the trail turns left, leaving the road, and continues north on a footpath.

In another half mile, the trail briefly joins a woods road, then turns right and climbs to the summit of the ridge, with east-facing views over Horse Pond Mountain. The trail then descends and, in half a mile, reaches a junction with the green-blazed Burnt Meadow Trail. Turn right onto the Burnt Meadow Trail, which passes another viewpoint and then descends rather steeply to cross Hewitt Brook.

After crossing and then following several woods roads, the Burnt Meadow Trail reaches Burnt Meadow Road just before the paving ends. Turn right onto Burnt Meadow Road. At the next utility pole, the green blazes turn left into the woods, but you should continue along the road for 1.2 miles back to your car.