

# Millstone Trail/996-foot Viewpoint Loop from Skyline Drive

## Overview

This loop hike passes interesting and historic millstones and climbs to a panoramic viewpoint over Bergen County and the New York City skyline.

Details Time: 4 hours Difficulty: Moderate Length: 6 miles

## Driving Directions

Take Interstate Route 287 to Exit 57 (Skyline Drive) and proceed north on Skyline Drive for a little over a mile to the upper parking area for Ramapo Mountain State Forest on the left side of the road at milepost 1.4, opposite the entrance to Camp Tamarack.

## Description

From the northwest end of the parking area, cross to the east side of Skyline Drive and find three white blazes on a tree (along with orange and yellow blazes for other trails). This triple white blaze marks the start of the Todd Trail. Turn right and follow the white blazes along Skyline Drive for 200 feet, then turn left and continue along the trail as it winds downhill on a rocky footpath and then ascends from a shallow ravine. In half a mile, the trail turns right onto a woods road. Follow the white blazes as they turn left onto another woods road. A short distance beyond, you will notice three yellow blazes that mark the start of the Yellow Trail.

Turn left and follow the Yellow Trail, which heads north, soon reaching Todd Lake. Here, the trail bears left and follows along the west shore of the lake, passing a rock ledge with a stone wall at lake level, with a view over the water. After climbing steeply to a rock outcrop near the north end of the lake (from which a municipal water tower is visible to the right), the Yellow Trail begins a steady, rather steep descent to a valley, where it crosses two streams (with attractive cascades when the water is high). Just beyond, the trail joins an old woods road and begins to ascend.

In another 500 feet, follow the Yellow Trail as it turns left, leaving the woods road, and ascends the hillside to the west, with a stone wall to the right. It soon bears right and heads north, continuing to climb steadily. The trail eventually levels off on a shoulder of the ridge, with views through the trees of Campgaw Mountain to the east.

About two miles from the start of the hike, continue on the Yellow Trail as it joins the white-blazed Millstone Trail. Just beyond the junction, several abandoned millstones in various stages of completion may be seen to the left of the trail. This area was once the site of a millstone quarry, and the stones that you see were either damaged during quarrying or abandoned when the quarry operation shut down. After crossing an old woods road, the two trails pass a millstone in nearly perfect condition 25 feet to the right.

Continuing to descend, the trails pass an old stone wall, which marks the boundary of Camp Glen Gray, and cross paved Midvale Mountain Road. They bear left into the woods and head west, parallel to Fox Brook, then turn right to cross two branches of the brook on footbridges. The trails now begin to climb, reaching a junction in a level area. Here, the Millstone Trail leaves to the left, but you should turn right, staying on the Yellow Trail. The trail briefly follows an old woods road, then turns left at a huge, flat-sided boulder and heads north, climbing steadily through a wooded valley.

After reaching the crest of the rise, the trail descends briefly and continues along a level woods road. It crosses a stream on rocks and, just beyond, passes the ruins of some old Scout buildings. Just ahead, it turns right onto a wide woods road (briefly joining the route of the Yellow-Silver Trail). In 100 feet, it turns left and begins to ascend, soon passing a stone foundation on a rock ledge.

At the high point of the ridge (996 feet), reached a little over three miles from the start, you'll come to an expansive viewpoint over northern Bergen County from a rock outcrop a short distance to the right of the trail. On a clear day, you can see the Manhattan skyline on the horizon to the right. You've now gone a little more than halfway, and this is a good place to stop and take a break.

After enjoying the panoramic view, return to the trail and find a wooden post with orange blazes. Follow these blazes, which mark the route of the Schuber Trail, straight ahead downhill (to the west). Soon, the trail joins a grassy woods road. About half a mile from the viewpoint, the Yellow-Silver Trail begins to the left, but you should continue along the Schuber Trail as it turns right onto another woods road and crosses a wooden bridge over the outlet of Sanders Pond, to the right of the trail. After climbing over a knoll, the Schuber Trail descends to cross the historic Cannonball Road. It continues straight ahead on a footpath, descending to North Brook, where it turns left and joins the Old Guard Trail, blazed with a green tulip leaf on a white background.

After climbing to a rock outcrop overlooking the brook, the trails skirt a wet area, cross an old woods road and reach the Tindall Cabin. The trails skirt the cabin and reach a footbridge over North Brook. Here, the Old Guard Trail proceeds ahead, but you should turn right to follow the Schuber Trail, which turns right, crosses the footbridge and then bears left, passing stone foundations of the former Sanders Farm.

After skirting a campsite (the former camp archery range) to the left, the Schuber Trail joins Mary Post Road. It crosses a plank bridge, passes a rifle range to the right, and gradually curves to the left, going past more cabins and campsites at Camp Glen Gray (for more information about the camp, consult [www.glengray.org](http://www.glengray.org) <sup>[8]</sup>).

Soon, the trail reaches the shore of Lake Vreeland. After crossing a culvert over South Brook, with the lake to the left and a wet area to the right, the Schuber Trail turns right, leaving the lake shore. Here, the white-blazed Millstone Trail joins, and both trails continue past the Explorer Cabin to a fork. The Millstone Trail takes the right fork, but you should follow the orange blazes of Schuber Trail, which bears left and climbs on a rocky trailway.

In another quarter of a mile, you'll cross the white-blazed Millstone Trail. Soon, the Schuber Trail crosses a stream on rocks and continues over rolling terrain. After crossing another stream on cinder blocks, the Schuber Trail passes the ruins of the former rifle range of Camp Tamarack. Here, the trail turns right and then bears left. It climbs to the southwest on a winding footpath and ends at Skyline Drive, opposite the large upper parking area where the hike began.