

Ramapo Escarpment and Pine Meadow Lake from Town of Ramapo Equestrian Center

Overview

This hike climbs to scenic Pine Meadow Lake and to several panoramic viewpoints along the Ramapo Escarpment.

Details Time: 4 hours Difficulty: Moderate Length: 6.2 miles

Driving Directions

Take N.J. Route 17 north to the New York State Thruway and take the first exit, Exit 15A (Sloatsburg). Turn right at the bottom of the ramp onto Route 59 east and follow it for 1.6 miles to the first traffic light in the village of Suffern. Turn left at the light onto U.S. Route 202 north, follow it for 5.4 miles, then turn left into the Town of Ramapo Equestrian Center. Continue over a small bridge and park on the left, just before the white, fenced-in riding area.

Description

From the parking area, continue heading towards the mountain, with a large barn on your right. You will see another barn at the base of the mountain, behind white fencing. The triple red-square-on-white-blaze that marks the start of the Pine Meadow Trail is visible on the side of that barn. You will be following this trail for the next 2.85 miles.

Follow the blazes uphill for 0.1 mile and turn right onto a gas line service road. In about 750 feet, rock cairns and blazes lead you to the left under the power lines, then right onto a parallel service road, crossing Guyascutus Brook. Soon the trail leaves the power line service road and turns left on a woods road, beginning a moderately steep climb. It recrosses the brook, turns right and climbs alongside it.

At 0.85 mile, after a rather steep climb along the brook, the Pine Meadow Trail reaches a junction with the yellow-blazed Suffern-Bear Mountain (S-BM) Trail. Here, the woods road you have been following along the brook continues straight ahead, but you should turn left, following the co-aligned red-square-on-white and yellow trails up Catamount Mountain. In 0.4 mile, after leveling off and crossing a small stream, the trails diverge. The yellow-blazed S-BM Trail bears left, but you should bear right, following the red-square-on-white-blazed Pine Meadow Trail.

For the next mile, you will pass through a hardwood forest, with an understory of blueberries and mountain laurel, eventually crossing unpaved Pine Meadow East Road (identified only by a rusted "Foot Travel Only" sign). In another 0.4 mile, you'll reach beautiful Pine Meadow Lake and a junction with the white-blazed Conklins Crossing Trail.

Continue straight ahead on the red-on-white-blazed Pine Meadow Trail, which follows the northeast shore of Pine Meadow Lake. You will notice some old, rusted pipes along the trail. These were installed by workers of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s to serve children's camps that were to be built along the lake. The camps were never built, and the pipes were never used.

In about 500 feet, you'll reach the site of Conklin's Cabin, which was inhabited by the Conklin family between 1779 and 1935. Nothing remains of the cabin, but a rock ledge on the left offers a panoramic view of the lake.

After taking in the view, retrace your steps back to the junction with the white-blazed Conklins Crossing Trail, and turn right. Follow the white blazes generally uphill for 0.6 mile, crossing two streams along the way. The white trail terminates at a junction with the yellow-blazed S-BM Trail, marked by large boulders. Turn left onto the S-BM Trail. In 0.15 mile, you'll reach "The Egg" – a huge boulder on your right, with a panoramic view to the southeast from the top.



From "The Egg," you'll descend, cross a small stream, and climb to reach the Stone Memorial Shelter, built in 1935. The trail goes around the front of the shelter, then bears left and crosses a woods road. It now climbs steadily and, after a few minor ups-and-downs, emerges on the edge of the ridge at Hawk Cliff, with panoramic views.

In another half mile, the red-square-on-white-blazed Pine Meadow Trail joins from the left. From here to the end of the hike, you'll be retracing your steps. Continue along the co-aligned red-square-on-white and yellow trails for the next 0.4 mile, and when the trails diverge, turn right, following the red-square-on-white blazes.

Follow the Pine Meadow Trail downhill, crossing under the power line, and briefly follow along the gas line. Be alert for a sharp left turn, and follow the red-square-on-white blazes as they descend to the equestrian center and back to your car.