

Schuber/Ridge Trail Loop

Overview

This loop hike traverses lesser-used portions of the reservation, passing a scenic reservoir and a waterfall and climbing to an expansive viewpoint.

Details Time: 3 hours Difficulty: Moderate Length: 4.5 miles

Driving Directions

Take N.J. Route 17 to U.S. Route 202 in Mahwah. Proceed south on Route 202 for two miles, then turn right into the Ramapo Valley County Reservation parking area.

Bus

Short Line offers bus service from Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City to Ramapo College, which is located about a mile to the north of the park entrance on Route 202. For schedule information, go to www.shortlinebus.com [9]. Only limited service is available on weekends.

Description

The hike begins at a kiosk in the southwest corner of the parking area. Just ahead, you'll notice two triple blazes on a tree. The three silver-on-white blazes mark the start of the Silver Trail, while the three orange blazes designate the start of the Schuber Trail.

Follow the co-aligned Silver and Schuber Trails, which descend a slope and continue ahead on a wide gravel road, crossing the Ramapo River on a steel truss bridge. In another 250 feet, follow the orange blazes as they turn left, leaving the wide gravel road.

The Schuber Trail continues on a footpath along the shore of the Ramapo River. Since the footpath is in the floodplain of the river, it may be muddy or even flooded in places when the water is high. After passing a small cascade, the trail bears right, away from the river. Continue to follow the orange blazes, which bear left at the next intersection. Just beyond, the green-on-white-blazed Halifax Trail ends on the right.

Cross a wooden bridge over a stream and reach the ruins of a stone cabin, built by a camp that once operated on this property. Here, the Schuber Trail turns right and begins a rocky climb along the stream. The trail soon levels off, passing attractive cascades and pools in the stream to the right. After curving to the right, the Schuber Trail reaches a junction with the wide park road leading to the MacMillan Reservoir.

Follow the Schuber Trail as it turns left and continues along a paved section of the park road. After crossing a bridge, be sure to follow the main road as it curves left (don't follow the unblazed dirt road that continues straight ahead). Soon, the trail passes to the left of the stone dam of the MacMillan Reservoir. You've gone a little over a mile from the start, and this is a good place to take a break.

When you're ready to continue, you'll notice a triple yellow-on-silver blaze on the south side of the Schuber Trail, opposite the dam. This marks the start of the Yellow-Silver Trail. Follow this trail, which climbs stone steps, continues uphill on switchbacks and then levels off.

After a short descent, you'll reach a fork. The Yellow-Silver Trail continues ahead on the left, but you should bear right and follow the red-blazed Marsh Loop Trail, which begins here. After passing a phragmites marsh on the right, the Marsh Loop Trail parallels the stone-lined walls of an old mill race channel and ends at a junction with a wide woods road – the route of the orange-blazed Schuber Trail.

Turn left onto the Schuber Trail, which crosses a stream, descends a little, and levels off. In 750 feet, you'll reach a fork in the road. Here, the Schuber Trail bears left, but you should take the right fork, marked with the light-blue blazes of the Ridge Trail.

The Ridge Trail continues to descend. After crossing a stream and its tributary, it ascends gradually, levels off, and descends a rocky section of the road to cross another small stream. The trail now begins a steady climb, which is gradual at first, but soon steepens. As it nears the crest of the rise, the trail bends sharply to the right and levels off, continuing along the ridge. Rocky Mountain and Drag Hill are visible through the trees to the right (when there are no leaves on the trees).

After another short climb, you'll reach a junction where the Ridge Trail turns right, leaving the road. Follow the blue blazes, which continue on a footpath. (Straight ahead, the road is marked with the blue-on-white blazes of the Havemeyer Trail). Soon, the trail reaches an exposed rock ledge, where it bears left and continues over undulating terrain.

In about half a mile, at the top of a short climb, you'll begin to parallel a stone wall to the left. The trail then descends to reach another woods road (the White Trail ends here). Turn right, continuing to follow the blue blazes, and follow the road downhill. In another 500 feet, you will notice a sign "Overlook," with a side trail leading to the right. Turn right and follow this side trail, blazed with a red triangle on a blue background, for about 400 feet to a viewpoint over the Ramapo Valley, with Campgaw Mountain visible in the foreground to the right. On a clear day, the Manhattan skyline is visible in the distance. After taking in the view, return to the Ridge Trail, turn right, and descend on a wide, rocky path.

When you reach a fork, follow the blue blazes, which bear right and continue to descend to the main park road – the route of the Silver Trail. Here, the Ridge Trail ends. Turn left onto the Silver Trail and follow it downhill along the park road. A short distance ahead, just beyond where the road bends to the left, a sign points to a beautiful waterfall on the stream in the valley to the right. Continue ahead on the Silver Trail, which curves to the right near the base of the descent, passes to the right of Scarlet Oak Pond, and continues across the bridge over the Ramapo River to end at the parking area where you started the hike.