

# Silvermine Lake Loop

## Overview

This hike loops around Silvermine Lake and climbs to the William Brien Memorial Shelter.

Details Time: 2 hours Difficulty: Moderate Length: 3.8 miles

## Driving Directions

Take N.J. Route 17 north to the New York State Thruway and take the first exit, Exit 15A (Sloatsburg). Turn left at the bottom of the ramp 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 Harriman State Park. Cross an overpass over railroad tracks and continue along Seven Lakes Drive, passing under the Thruway overpass, and soon entering Harriman State Park. Follow Seven Lakes Drive for about 12 miles to the Silvermine Picnic Area, on the right side of the road (the Silvermine Picnic Area is 2.1 miles beyond Tiorati Circle). Park in the large parking area near the entrance (a parking fee is charged on weekends in the summer).

## Description

To begin the hike, find the bridge over the stream at the southern end of the parking area (marked with a sign "Welcome to the Silvermine Boat Launch"). Here, you will see a yellow blaze of the Menomine Trail, which you will be following for the first part of the hike. Cross the bridge, then turn left onto a dirt road, passing two park maintenance buildings. Just before reaching Silvermine Lake, turn right, then bear left when you reach a brown-painted cinder block building. Here, the yellow blazes resume. Follow the trail into the woods on a rocky footpath.

Soon, you'll again reach the shore of the lake. In a short distance, the trail widens to a woods road – the old Bockey Swamp Road. Before Silvermine Lake was created in 1934, the road followed the edge of what was then known as the Bockey Swamp. When the lake was filled with water, the northern portion of the road was submerged, and the old road emerges from the lake here.

Continue ahead on the level woods road. After passing the southern end of the lake, the road begins to climb, and it soon reaches a T-intersection. Continue to follow the yellow blazes of the Menomine Trail, which turns left onto another woods road. After crossing the inlet of the lake on a metal culvert, the road begins to climb, first gradually, then more steeply.

At the top of the rise, the stone William Brien Memorial Shelter is on the left. Overnight camping is permitted here, and the shelter is frequented by thru-hikers on the Appalachian Trail who hope to complete the entire trail from Georgia to Maine. Built in 1933 as the Letterrock Shelter, the shelter was renamed in 1973 in memory of Mr. Brien. This is a good place to take a break.

When you're ready to continue, proceed for about 50 feet ahead on the Menomine Trail to a junction with the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (A.T.) and the red-dot-on-white-blazed Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail (R-D). Turn left onto the joint A.T./R-D and follow it up a steep, rocky slope. The trail traverses a series of short ups and downs, then descends steadily to reach the Silvermine Road in the col between Letterrock and Black Mountains. Built in 1934 by workers of the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration, it can be recognized by the stone embankments along its sides.

Turn left onto Silvermine Road and follow it downhill. Although it is unmarked, it is obvious and easily followed. In some portions, you have to walk on the original stone subsurface, but for the most part, the surface is smooth and covered with moss or grass. In about half a mile, you'll cross a stream, reach the shore of Silvermine Lake and begin to parallel it, with views over the lake on the left.

After following the lakeshore for about a quarter mile, Silvermine Road bears right and parallels Queensboro Brook, below on the left, until it crosses the brook on a wide wooden bridge. Just beyond, as the road curves to the right, you'll notice the embankment of Seven Lakes Drive on the left. When the road again curves to the right, turn left onto an unmarked trail and follow it a short distance up to Seven Lakes Drive. Turn left and follow the shoulder of the Drive for about 0.4 mile to the Silvermine Picnic Area, where the hike began.