

20. Platte Clove Road to Palenville

Features:Buttermilk and Wildcat Falls

Distance:10.00 miles

USGS Map Quads: Kaaterskill

Trail Conference Maps:Map 41, Northeastern Catskill Trails, Map 40, North Lake Area

General Description

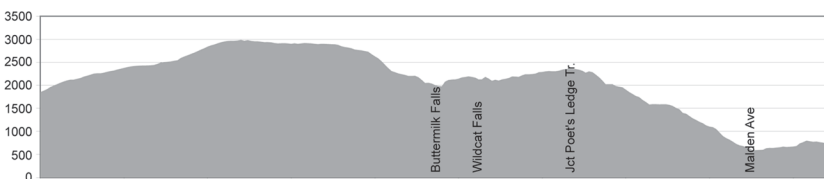
The first part of this section runs along a DEC snowmobile trail that ascends the northern slopes of Kaaterskill High Peak on rather gentle grades. After leaving the snowmobile trail, the Long Path descends gradually at first and then steeply to the old Red Gravel Hill Road, which it follows the rest of the way. For the next two miles it is level, passing a series of dramatic waterfalls with a spectacular view into Kaaterskill Clove. After a brief ascent, it descends continuously into Palenville, passing a number of abandoned bluestone quarries. For most of this section, blue DEC trail markers mark the Long Path. The last part of the section, which crosses private property, is marked by aqua paint blazes.

Access

Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 20 (Saugerties). Continue on NY Route 212 west to the small town of Centerville. As Route 212 curves to the left, bear right onto Ulster County Route 35 and stay on it for the next 1.6 miles. Shortly after passing the Blue Mountain Campground, Route 35 makes a sharp left turn. Turn left here, but afterwards continue straight ahead on Ulster County Route 33, as Route 35 turns right. In about two miles, the road (now known as Platte Clove Road or Greene County Route 16) turns into a dramatic mountain road that climbs over 1,000 feet in less than three miles. At the top of the climb, four miles after leaving Route 35, the road crosses a small brook; the trailhead is immediately beyond the brook on the right at the intersection with Steenberg Road.

Winter Access

Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 20 (Saugerties). Take NY Route 32 north to NY Route 32A. Continue on Route 32A north to Palenville. Turn left (west) onto Route 23A, and follow it through Kaaterskill Clove and past Haines Falls to Tannersville. In Tannersville, turn left at the traffic light and



continue along Greene County Route 16 (known for most of the way as Platte Clove Road) to the top of Platte Clove. The trailhead is on the left at the intersection with Steenberg Road.

Parking

0.00 On Steenberg road about 250 feet north of the trailhead. (18T 575825E 4665015N)

9.45 On the north side of Malden Avenue, about 100 feet beyond where NY Route 23A joins this road (the road is barricaded to vehicular traffic beyond this point). (18T 579529E 4669860N)

Trail Description

0.00 From Platte Clove Road take the snowmobile trail to the north, following the Steenberg Road uphill. The snowmobile trail is blazed with large orange or yellow DEC plastic snowmobile markers in addition to blue DEC markers for the Long Path.

0.70 Turn right onto another dirt road.

0.95 Turn right, leaving Steenberg Road, and follow another old woods road northward.

1.05 To the right, an unofficial trail, with yellow markers, leads to Huckleberry Point, an excellent viewpoint. The Long Path continues straight ahead on nearly level grades.

1.35 Cross bridges over a pair of streams in a swampy area. After the second bridge, the ascent resumes, as the trail climbs to the 3,000-foot elevation on the north flank of Kaaterskill High Peak.

2.25 Reach the highest point on the trail in this section in an area known as the “Pine Plains.” The trail continues through nearly level, though swampy, terrain. For the next 0.75 miles, the forest is typical of that found at higher elevations, with considerable spruce, hemlock and birch.

3.50 The snowmobile trail turns left, uphill, while the Long Path, blazed with blue DEC markers, continues straight ahead. To climb Kaaterskill High Peak, turn left with the snowmobile trail, turn right in 0.1 miles onto the snowmobile loop trail, and then turn left onto an unofficial blue-blazed trail that leads to the summit of High Peak. The Long Path now goes through drier terrain.

3.70 The Long Path turns right (north) onto an old trail that formerly ran from the private community of Twilight Park to High Peak, and begins to descend off the ridge. The descent is often steep and contains many small switchbacks.

4.15 Leave the old Twilight Park Trail and begin to descend over a series of sharp slopes and narrow flat ledges.

4.80 The trail reaches another narrow ledge, turns right on the old Red Gravel Hill Road, and begins to run parallel to the edge of the great drop to Kaaterskill Clove on the left.

5.00 Reach Buttermilk Falls just to the left of the trail, a spectacular two-step waterfall. Cross the stream and continue along a level ledge.



Buttermilk Falls during the dry season

5.50 Reach Wildcat Falls, another spectacular waterfall. The ledge to the west of the falls affords an excellent view of Kaaterskill Clove and the Hudson Valley to the east. Cross the stream and continue along the level trail. You will descend a small ledge to the left, pass a large boulder, and bear right along the slope edge again.

6.00 Cross the two streams of Hillyer Ravine, which provide the last sure source of water in this section. The trail now ascends slightly and crosses several intermittent streams.

6.95 Reach the crest of the rise and begin to descend. The trail continues downhill, at times steeply, until reaching Malden Avenue. The trail uses several long switchbacks in its descent, and an old bluestone quarry is passed to the right of the trail.

8.50 Cross the state land boundary. Since the Long Path now runs over private property, the trail markers change from blue DEC plastic markers to aqua paint blazes.

8.95 Reach Malden Avenue in Palenville and turn left along the road.

9.45 After going around a barricade which blocks vehicular traffic, turn right onto NY Route 23A.

10.00 The section ends where a woods road leaves to the left, just east of an “Entering Catskill Park” sign. To continue, turn left onto the old road.