

26. Greene County Route 32C to West Conesville

Feature: Huntersfield Ridge

Distance: 12.60 miles

USGS Map Quads: Ashland, Prattsville, Gilboa

Trail Conference Maps: none

General Description

This section of the Long Path is mostly pleasant ridge walking. While there are few good viewpoints, there are many views through the trees when the leaves are down. In this section, the trail traverses some of the highest peaks in the Catskills outside the “Blue Line,” with Huntersfield Mountain being the highest point on the Long Path outside the Catskill Park. The trail passes through three State reforestation areas: Mt. Pisgah State Forest, Ashland State Forest and Huntersfield State Forest. As the state forests are not connected, the Long Path also crosses private land. Between Mt. Pisgah State Forest and Ashland State Forest, the trail must descend off the ridge to avoid private property. In this section, the trail traverses land that was recently acquired by the New York–New Jersey Trail Conference to allow access between the two reforestation areas. Beyond Huntersmark and Macumber Road, the trail crosses state land then traverses Sickler Mountain before the section ends with 1.75 miles of road walk.

Access

Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 21 (Catskill). Continue west on NY Route 23 for about 20 miles to the Town of Windham. About 3 miles west of Windham, turn right onto North Settlement Road (Greene County Route 19). In another mile and a half, turn left onto Steinmetz Road. Follow Steinmetz Road to the stop sign at Greene County Route 10, and then continue ahead across Route 10. Steinmetz Road becomes Greene County Route 32C at this point. Continue on Route 32C to the top of the ridge. There is a parking area on the left side of the road at the top of the ridge.

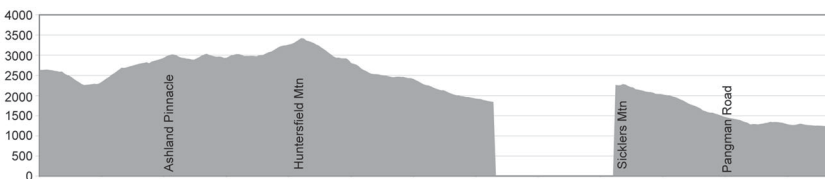
Parking

0.00 Route 32C at top of ridge on west side. (18T 558523E 4690176N)

6.55 On Huntersmark and Macumber Road. (Unlocated)

10.90 Pangman Road (limited). (18T 547972E 4690958N)

12.60 NY Route 990V and Prattsville Road. (18T 546855E 4692197N)



Camping

Camping is available to backpackers in the reforestation areas. You may camp anywhere in the reforestation areas, no closer than 150 feet away from the trail and away from water.

Trail Description

0.00 The Long Path crosses CCC Road and heads west along a woods road, which passes through a mature forest of Norway spruce.

0.15 Turn right, leaving the woods road, and begin to descend to avoid private property. At the higher elevations, the trail continues through the spruce plantation.

0.40 The trail nears the private property boundary and begins to descend more steeply through a hardwood forest.

0.80 After descending almost 500 feet, the trail turns left, levels off and leaves the reforestation area, entering land acquired by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference to provide a protected corridor for the Long Path in this area.

1.00 The Long Path reaches the far end of the private property and turns left to steeply ascend the ridge, following a narrow strip of land between two private tracts.

1.15 Cross a boundary and enter Ashland State Forest. The trail begins to veer away from private property as it heads uphill to the ridge, entering a reforestation area of spruce and pine. As the trail continues uphill, the grade moderates, but remains steep. There is ample evidence of logging here, with many old logging roads crisscrossing the area.

1.40 At the top of the ridge at the broad logging road, the trail turns left, following the road downhill for a short distance. It then turns sharp right to a short, steep climb to regain the ridgeline, then left again. After a short distance in a spruce-pine forest, the trail enters a hardwood forest. When the leaves are down, there are views through the trees towards the Catskills to the south. After turning right on another old logging road, the trail stays on the north side of the ridge. If heading south, take care to follow the Long Path blazes straight ahead as the logging road descends off the ridge.

1.80 The trail descends gradually. The Long Path turns left and follows a woods road that stays on the north side of the ridge, ascending toward Ashland Pinnacle. There are views through the woods toward the valley of West Conesville and to the north toward Albany and Schoharie Counties.

2.20 Reach a height of land just below the flat, level summit of Ashland Pinnacle, and begin to descend along the woods road. When the leaves are down, there are views through the trees to the north, as well as west toward Huntersfield Mountain.

2.35 Reach a col at the base of the descent. At a Y-intersection, the Long Path turns right, and begins to ascend the first of two unnamed knobs. Cross the boundary of Ashland State Forest and enter private property. Camping, fires, etc., are prohibited.



Upper Rapids of Manor Kill Falls

2.75 The trail reaches the top of the first knob and begins to descend. The trail follows the west side of the ridge, which is narrow at this point, with steep drop-offs on both sides. The trail descends below several rock ledges and continues west, just below the ridgetop.

3.05 Reach a col and begin to ascend the second knob.

3.25 The trail reaches the top of the second knob, and then begins a short descent, continuing to follow the ridge.

3.65 The Long Path levels off, with views south along the logging road toward the Catskills. The trail now begins to ascend Huntersfield Mountain, with the grade alternating between steep and moderate.

4.35 The trail leaves private property, crosses into Huntersfield State Forest and continues to climb.

4.40 About 100 yards before the summit of Huntersfield a yellow-blazed side trail leads left for 0.10 miles to the Huntersfield Lean-to. Just before the lean-to there is a view to the east along the ridge toward Mt. Pisgah. At the lean-to there is a view south of Hunter and Slide Mountains.

Continuing on the yellow trail for another 0.10 miles there is a view to the west and north of the Schoharie Valley and the reservoirs. The yellow trail continues for another 0.10 miles to rejoin the Long Path just west of Huntersfield's summit. Following the Long Path you reach the summit of Huntersfield Mountain and turn right. Although the summit is wooded, Huntersfield Mountain is the highest point on the Long Path outside the Catskill Park. It is the last of the high Catskill peaks; north of here, the Long Path does not reach any summits higher than 2,500 feet in elevation. The trail now be-

gins to descend, sometimes steeply, along the west side of the ridge, with rock ledges and steep drop-offs to the west.

5.25 Reach a spectacular viewpoint from a rock ledge, about 75 feet to the left of the trail, toward the Schoharie Reservoir. The ridge that the Long Path will follow to the edge of the Schoharie Reservoir is visible in the foreground. West and north of the Schoharie Reservoir, you can see the mountains of Eminence State Forest that the Long Path follows through Schoharie County. Just past the viewpoint, the trail descends to a rock shelter on the left. There is a series of small caves in this area.

5.40 The trail crosses into private property as it continues to descend along the ridge.

5.50 Cross a stone wall and re-enter Huntersfield State Forest, passing through a mature pine forest.

5.60 The Long Path intersects an old logging road, turns left and follows the road through the pine plantation.

6.10 The Long Path continues along the gravel logging road.

6.25 The trail crosses a stream, then turns right, leaves the road, and follows the stream downhill.

6.55 Reach Huntersmark and Macumber Road. There is room to park several cars at this point. The Long Path crosses Huntersmark and Macumber Road and enters the woods by a “Huntersfield State Forest” sign. It descends to Huntersfield Creek and follows the bank of Huntersfield Creek through a reforestation area. The other side of the creek is private property and is a hardwood forest.

7.05 The trail crosses a woods road and reaches the western boundary of Huntersfield State Forest. The Long Path continues along Huntersfield Creek now in private property. The forest has changed to a hardwood forest. The trail follows an old woods road along the creek that emerges onto an open field.

7.55 The Long Path reaches paved Albert Slater Road, turns right and follows the road.

7.85 to 8.80 Trail closed until further notice.

8.80 The trail turns left and ascends Sickler Mountain. There are two short steep sections followed by more gradual climbs. At the end of the second steep section, the trail follows a woods road uphill.

9.25 Reach the level wooded summit of Sickler Mountain. When the leaves are down it is possible to see through the trees across the valley to the north. The Long Path turns left and begins to descend along the woods road, eventually crossing a barbed wire fence to continue on the road.

9.50 The trail turns right and follows another woods road, continuing to descend.

10.60 The trail makes a right jog, and leaves the woods road to go through some dense brush before turning left onto another woods road. There is a view to the right to a farmhouse below as the trail crosses a power line. The trail continues downhill along the road through a hemlock forest.

10.90 The Long Path reaches gravel Pangman Road. Pangman Road, which

is closed in the winter, is sometimes known locally as Dog Hill Road. The trail turns right and descends along Pangman Road.

11.50 Cross the Manor Kill.

11.60 Pangman Road ends. The trail turns left on NY Route 990V. The trail continues along 990V paralleling the Manor Kill. The trail passes through the hamlet of West Conesville.

12.60 The Long Path reaches the intersection of Schoharie County Route 39, Prattsville Road, and NY Route 990V. Several hundred feet ahead to the left is Manor Kill Falls. To continue, follow 990V north along the Schoharie Reservoir.