

12. Sam's Point Preserve to Jenny Lane

Features: Shawangunk Mountains

Distance: 13.70 miles

USGS Map Quads: Napanoch

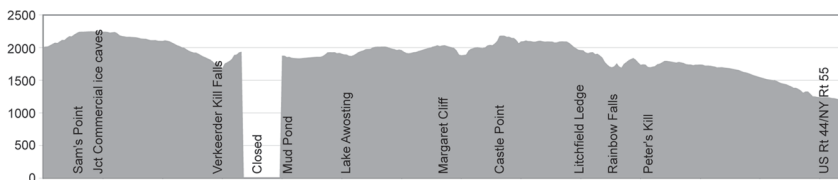
Trail Conference Maps: Map 9, Southern Shawangunk Trails

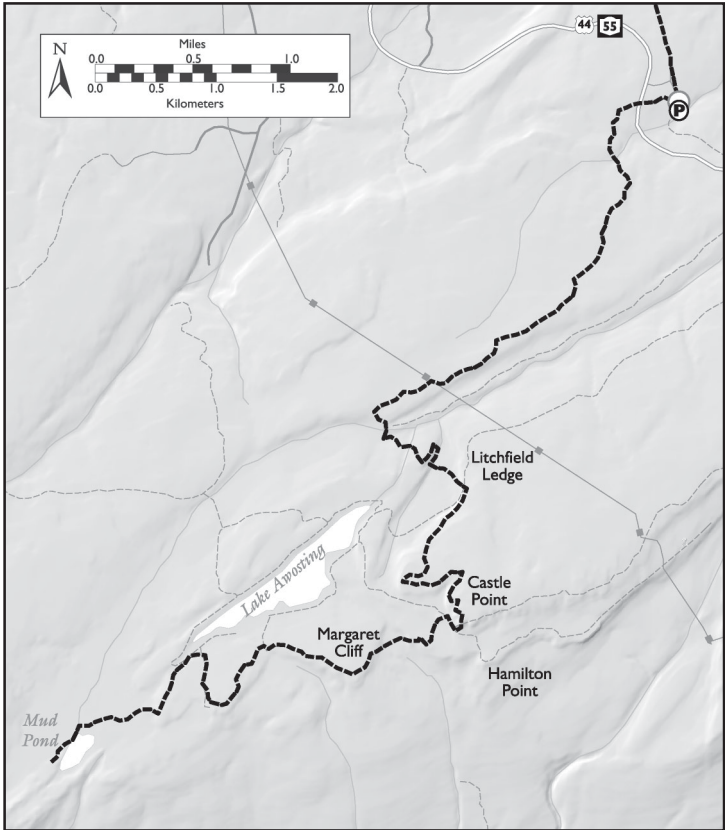
General Description

The Long Path enters the northern Shawangunks by Lake Maratanza on the Nature Conservancy's Sam's Point Preserve. The Shawangunks are one of New York's most popular scenic destinations. Capped by a hard, white conglomerate, the Shawangunks form a long mountain ridge with gently dipping slopes along the surface of the conglomerate, that give way suddenly to great white cliffs. A favored spot for rock climbers from all over the northeastern US, the cliffs provide wonderful views of forested and farmed land in the valley below. In addition, the many miles of carriageways provide unparalleled mountain biking and cross-country skiing opportunities. The trail is quite rugged where it traverses cliff sections. It passes by three lakes: Lake Maratanza, Mud Pond and Lake Awosting. Lake Awosting especially is a gem with wooded shores that plunge into clear, deep blue water. In this section, the Long Path also passes two of the Shawangunk's finest waterfalls: Verkeerder Kill Falls and Rainbow Falls.

Access

Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 17, Newburgh. Continue west on Interstate Route 84 to Exit 5. Follow NY Route 208 north to NY Route 52. Turn left onto Route 52 and follow it west to the top of the ridge at Cragsmoor. Turn right on Cragsmoor Road and follow it 1.3 miles to the middle of the Hamlet of Cragsmoor. At a three-way intersection, bear right and again make a right onto Sam's Point Road. Follow Sam's Point Road one mile to parking lot at end.





Parking

- 0.00** Sam's Point Preserve entrance (fee charged). (18T 553137E 4613363N)
13.45 Minnewaska State Park parking area on US Route 44/NY Route 55, about 0.75 miles south of the trail crossing (fee charged). (18T 562860E 4620571N)
13.75 Parking area at Jenny Lane. (18T 562229E 4621346N)

Trail Description

0.00 The Long Path passes through the gate beyond the parking lot at the north end of Sam's Point Road. It then turns right and follows the right fork of the road that loops around Lake Maratanza.

0.10 The trail reaches a hairpin turn in the road and continues along the road as it climbs through the woods towards Sam's Point.

0.50 The Long Path passes under the cliffs of Sam's Point on the left and comes to a spectacular view to the right. From here you can see south along the ridge to High Point, New Jersey. You can also see across the Wallkill Valley to the Hudson Highlands to the south and east. After the view, the trail turns left and ascends along the road to the top of the cliffs.



HERB CHONG

0.60 To the left is a road that leads a short distance to Sam's Point. It is worth the detour as the view is even better than along the road. Here you are high enough to see above the high point of Cragmoor and can see west as well as south and east. Just to the west of the ridge and ten miles south is Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area. On a clear day, you can see all the way into New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Long Path continues straight ahead on the road, passing through a dense pitch pine forest.

1.00 Reach the intersection with the road that led down to the former commercial ice caves. The side trip to explore the ice caves and return to this junction takes less than

Verkeerder Kill Falls



Castle Point

an hour and is well worth the time. The Long Path turns right and follows this road a short distance.

1.05 The Long Path turns left and leaves the road. The trail ascends through the blueberry bushes for a short distance and then descends gradually through a mixed blueberry-pitch pine forest.

1.25 The trail gradually turns left and goes through an open area covered with blueberry bushes. There are continuous views north towards Mud Pond and Minnewaska State Park with Gertrude's Nose and Castle Point prominent on the skyline.

1.45 The trail enters a denser forest of pitch pine and blueberry.

1.65 The trail enters a hardwood forest with a stream running through the middle. Here a highly unusual stand of birch is found in the middle of the pitch pine and blueberry woods.

1.75 The trail exits the hardwood forest and reemerges in the pitch pine and blueberry scrub. Again there are views towards Minnewaska State Park.

2.00 The Long Path intersects the old trail that once ran from Lake Maratanza to Verkeerder Kill Falls. The trail left to Lake Maratanza is now closed. The Long Path turns right and follows the other branch of the old trail as it descends towards the falls. The forest gradually changes from one of pitch pine and blueberry to a hardwood forest.

2.60 The trail passes a large glacial erratic on the right. To the right, there are limited views to the valley. The trail enters a hemlock forest.

2.80 The trail crosses Verkeerder Kill. Here there are several channels and the

crossing may be difficult in times of high water.

2.85 The trail reaches an intersection. To the right, a path leads in several hundred feet to a spectacular overlook above Verkeerder Kill Falls. Be careful here, as a misstep will send you plunging to the base of the falls 100 feet below. Please do not proceed beyond the falls as the landowner has closed the trail beyond this point. The falls and the overlook are also on private property. The landowner has graciously allowed us access to the falls, so please respect his rights and keep the area as you found it. The Long Path turns left back at the intersection and begins to climb to the top of another ridge. The climb is gradual at first, then steep.

3.10 The climb becomes gentler as it gains the ridge crest. After a viewpoint to the left on a conglomerate shelf, the trail turns away from the edge and passes through an area covered with blueberry bushes and small trees.

3.20 The Long Path reaches open slab. There is an intersection with the High Point Trail (red). The High Point Trail follows the original Long Path route to High Point and the High Point Carriageway 2.65 miles away.

Note: The Long Path is temporarily closed between its intersection with the High Point Trail and Mud Pond ahead. The Trail Conference is investigating

alternate routes. Blazes and cairns between this intersection and Mud Pond have been removed and following this route without the permission of the landowner is illegal. Please check on the Trail Conference web page at <http://www.nynjtc.org> for more information. Those wishing to take the High Point Trail to the other side of Mud Pond, an 8-mile detour, must consult the Southern



HERB CHONG

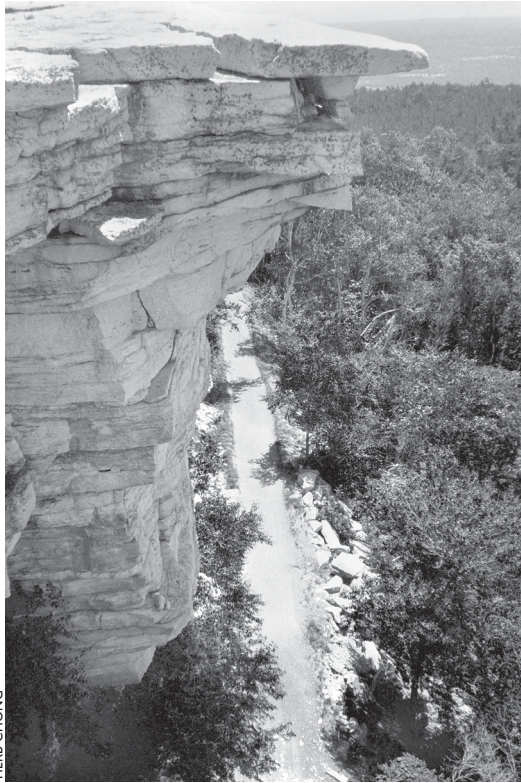
Azaleas growing wild on the trail

Shawangunk Trails map to follow the carriage roads around the gap.

4.15 The trail reaches and drops to the level of Mud Pond and begins to run through swampy ground, sometimes on boardwalks.

4.25 Cross the outlet of Mud Pond and continue on a nearly flat table through blueberry, with scattered pine and birch.

5.15 Just as the trail makes the short descent to the western end of Lake Awosting, make a sharp turn to the right. The trail parallels the lake for a short distance to reach a carriage road. Turn right. Farther down the shore is a swimming beach that may be used when a lifeguard is present. Continuing along the shore will cut some distance and time off the hiker's route, but at the expense of wonderful scenery. The Long Path now ascends gently through



HERB CHONG

Hamilton Point Carriageway

scrubby pine forest, following the route of the former, and exceptionally well named, Scenic Trail. Some faded yellow blazes may still be visible.

5.55 Reach the edge of the ridge, with views to the south and west. The ledges are vertical faces of white, bedded conglomerate. The carriage road twists uphill to reach a higher outlook ledge on Murray Hill with its 270-degree view that includes the Wallkill Valley to the southeast and the great ridge of the Shawangunks to the northeast. The carriage road ends here and the Long Path follows a footpath along the ledge. The route, which is often bare and marked by cairns, is nearly flat, with occasional sharp, short climbs or drops. The vegetation is generally short and scrubby.

5.80 Reach a high point with a 360-degree view that includes Lake Awosting. After a short drop, the trail goes left on the overgrown remnants of a carriage road for about 125 feet, and then turns right onto a footpath.

6.20 The Long Path turns right, onto another carriage road. In 250 feet, it turns left and uphill on a path to reach a decayed carriage road.

6.45 After the carriage road ends, the trail emerges onto Margaret Cliff with its many good views. The trail continues to run along the edge of the cliff.

6.95 The trail drops steeply, at first through a cleft in the rock, until reaching

the base of the rock cliff. It moves away from the cliff, crosses a carriage road and then a stream, and ascends through the woods.

7.15 The trail goes through a natural tunnel in the rock. It can be dark, narrow and damp. Hikers with large packs can detour around the tunnel by going about 15 feet to the right. The trail emerges from a cleft between rocks and passes below an overhanging rock to reach a cliff top with several views.

7.60 Turn right onto the Hamilton Point Carriageway. In 20 feet, the Castle Point Carriageway leaves to the left as the Long Path bears right on the Hamilton Point Carriageway. (For reverse direction, continue straight ahead on the Hamilton Point Carriageway, as the Castle Point Carriageway leaves to the right.)

7.70 Turn left off the carriageway onto a footpath and climb. The ascent becomes very steep and requires hand-pulls up ledges. Very good views appear.

7.80 Reach Castle Point and turn left onto the Castle Point Carriageway. The splendid view here includes Lake Awosting. (In the reverse direction, the Long Path drops off the ledge at a sharp left turn in the carriageway.) In 25 yards, take the right fork in the carriageway. The carriageway twists gently downhill with several splendid views. After following the cliff edge toward a narrowing notch, the road turns away from the edge.

8.30 A few hundred feet past a sharp switchback turn in the carriageway, the Long Path turns right, goes up two stone steps and enters the woods on a footpath. It passes a small ledge on the left. After that, a tremendous view to the south and west opens up. The ledge curves gradually clockwise and affords views of Lake Awosting as it begins to run above a small ravine.

8.70 The Long Path turns right and leaves the ledge. A worthwhile detour follows the ledgetop clockwise for a short distance, providing yet more spectacular views of Lake Awosting, the Catskills, and Huntington Ravine below. Until 1994, the Long Path followed this portion of the cliff-top until it was rerouted to remove a long walk along the Upper Awosting Carriageway ahead.

8.80 The trail reaches a rock outcropping on the top of the ridge where there is a view north toward the Catskills and



Wild apple blossoms by the trailside

east toward Castle Point. The trail continues north following the slab and pitch pine for a short distance before descending through the laurel into a hemlock forest. Upon reaching the hemlocks, the trail turns right and follows the top of Litchfield Ledge. The trail is now deep in a hemlock grove.

9.35 The trail descends and reaches an exposed part of Litchfield Ledge where there is a spectacular view of the Rainbow Falls and the Catskills. The trail

continues along the ledge and then descends to the Upper Awosting Carriageway.

9.50 The trail crosses the Upper Awosting Carriageway and descends toward a small stream. The trail crosses the stream as the forest becomes dominated by hemlock.

9.70 Rainbow Falls plunges over the cliff wall just after another stream crossing. After the falls, the trail turns right and continues down the valley of Huntington Ravine.

9.85 The trail turns left and climbs steeply out of the valley. The ascent gradually becomes gentler as several views appear.

10.10 Reach the top of a conglomerate rock plane with a tremendous view to the north. The trail now descends at a moderate pitch down the rock plane with small pines and blueberries growing in patches of soil on the bare rock. On the way down, the trail briefly passes through denser woods and crosses a stream. Toward the bottom of the drop, the trail enters scrubby pine woods.

10.40 Turn right onto the Peters Kill Carriageway (it provides the most direct access to Lake Awosting from the Park parking area) and cross the valley of Fly Brook on a causeway. Once over the causeway, the Long Path turns right at the clearing with a large pine tree at its southern edge. In a short distance, it turns left to leave the carriageway and crosses a grassy clearing.

10.55 At the end of the clearing, the trail enters the woods on a slight upgrade and almost immediately turns right onto a wider, rocky trail. The trail follows gentle grades near the top of a gentle slope.

10.95 The trail crosses and briefly follows a power line right-of-way. It then turns left into the woods at a pair of poles just before a sharp drop-off and continues near the top of an asymmetrical ridge that is gentle to the left and sharp to the right. There are occasional views of a parallel ridge across the valley to the right.

11.60 The Blueberry Run Trail (blue) begins to the right, leading down to the Peters Kill Carriageway. The Long Path regains the ridge crest as it passes through short pines.

11.80 Turn left away from the edge of the ridge and into hardwoods. The trail descends gently through forest rich in mountain laurel.

13.40 Cross the Sanders Kill on rocks.

13.50 Cross US Route 44/55.

13.65 The trail crosses a stone wall and passes through a grassy field.

13.70 Reach Jenny Lane, a gravel road that was the old Wawarsing Turnpike. To continue, turn left and follow the road.