

# G4. Old NY Route 17 to Long Path

**Feature:** Wurtsboro Ridge

**Distance:** 1.00 mile

**USGS Map Quads:** Wurtsboro

**Trail Conference Maps:** Map 9, Southern Shawangunk Trails

## General Description

Upon leaving Old Route 17 (Sullivan County Route 171), the Shawangunk Ridge Trail quickly gains the ridgetop. From there it follows the ridgetop to its intersection with the Long Path. This ridgetop trail section is one of the most dramatic in southern New York, with many spectacular views in all directions. With the forest primarily scrub oak, blueberry and occasional pitch pine; the hiker is frequently above the trees with unlimited visibility. There are also sections of Shawangunk slab, though not as frequently as found in the northern Shawangunks.

## Access

Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 16 (Harriman). Take NY Route 17 (the Quickway) west 29 miles to Exit 114, Highview. Turn left at the end of the exit ramp onto Old Route 17 (Sullivan County Route 171) and go down the hill 0.7 miles. As the road makes a hairpin turn to the left, there is a turn right on a gravel road to the old Wurtsboro High Line O&W Rail Station (now a VFW post) where there is parking, and where a white trail leads in about 0.1 miles to the Long Path.

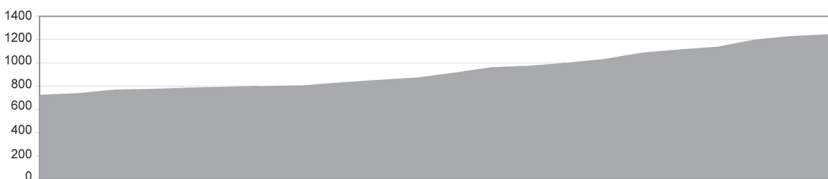
## Parking

**0.00** Old Wurtsboro High Line O&W Rail Station. (18T 544459E 4602949N)

**4.05** Ferguson Road (still called Roosa Gap Summitville Road on most maps), 0.7 miles west of the ridgetop (Shawanga Lodge Road). (18T 547142E 4606751N)

## Camping

Camping on DEC land.



## Trail Description

**0.00**The Shawangunk Ridge Trail turns left off Old Route 17 just east of a gravel road that leads to the old Wurtsboro High Line O&W Rail Station. This section of trail is on the New York State DEC Wurtsboro Ridge Parcels and is thus marked with blue DEC discs. The trail turns onto a piece of the abandoned New York, Ontario & Western Railroad and then immediately turns right into the woods. Across Old Route 17 from this turn is an abandoned bridge abutment. Following the rail bed in the opposite direction leads to the abandoned Highview Tunnel in about half a mile. This was the main line of the New York, Ontario & Western Railroad, which was the major travel route to the Catskills in the heyday of the Sullivan County resorts. One of the first railroads to fall upon hard times, it was abandoned in the 1950s. The trail goes north in the woods, paralleling the rail bed as it gradually climbs up toward the ridgetop.

**0.10A** white-blazed side trail leads to the VFW post.

**0.20**Past a stream crossing, the trail switches right and then left to gain the top of the ridge. As the trail approaches the ridgetop, the trail steepens and the forest cover begins to thin. At the higher elevations the forest is predominantly scrub oak and blueberry. As the trail reaches this dwarf forest, views begin to open up.

**1.00**The trail reaches the top of the ridge, turns north and comes to a section of rock slab where there are spectacular views up and down the ridge. This is the junction with the Long Path. To the south you can see the Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area. This is an excellent area to watch migratory birds. To the west you can see the Village of Wurtsboro below, with NY Route 17 in the distance crossing the mountains to the west. Just to the north you can see Wurtsboro Airport, where it is common to see airplanes towing gliders aloft to float above the updrafts created by the ridge. To the far north the Catskill Mountains can be seen. Beyond this vantage point, the trail follows the western slopes of the ridge. Unlike the northern Shawangunks, where the most interesting topography is in the east, the southern Shawangunks are much more interesting on the western side. Development reaches high up on the ridge on the east side, as witnessed by the gravel road that is just east of our vantage point. This gravel road is part of a failed subdivision that would have resulted in houses being built on the mountaintop; before that could happen, however, the owner went bankrupt and the state purchased the land. Going north follow the directions in Section 11 along the Shawangunk Ridge, which brings you in 3.05 miles to Ferguson Road. To continue southeast into Orange County, turn right on the Long Path, and you will reach Shawanga Lodge Road after 0.5 miles following the description in Section 10.