
Little Simon Pond TRAIL GUIDE

This guide first published in 2012 represents the work of many people and friends of the Read family to make and maintain a trail system used for hiking and hunting. Both Three Star Camp and The Birchery formerly known as Read & Strange Park was purchased in 1899 and consists of approximately 5,200 acres.

The property boundaries and trail locations were verified by both Garmin and Trimble GPS units and transferred to ESRI ArcView GIS software. The base maps and computer files can be easily altered to include future trails and points of interest. With the GIS mapping software one could include information on timber stands, watershed acreages, elevation profiles, etc.

The purpose of this guide is to establish a permanent network of trails and roads that can be used and maintained for years to come. However, this requires significant annual work to clear the trails after the winter ice & snows and whenever there are wind storms. Just as important are trail markers which need to be monitored so that novice hikers and camp guests can find the routes without guides. Each camp should designate a trail committee, persons or guide who will be responsible for trail maintenance and signage on their respective property.

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance in making new trails and recovering historic routes used by our forebearers: Robby Barnett, Randy Bernard, Peter Read family, Tom & Neilson Snye, Andy & Jay Read, Todd Friend, Lamb & McIlwaine family members and my own family and others who have been coerced into trail work from time to time over the past twenty years. Technical assistance was provided by Sean Hayden and Michael Morin of the Northwest CT Conservation District.



Eventually you descend and then climb gently up the valley between small ridges to Fibrillation Rock, so named by the great hunter, Uncle Bill Read. From this large split rock the trail descends steeply into the valley between Buck Mountain and Sleeping Bear ridges. The trail then ascends again moderately to the west up to ~2,700 ft. and a short spur to the Little Simon Lookout on the Sleeping Bear ridge. From this junction the trail continues until it joins the Litchfield Lookout Trail in ~15 mins. Estimate ~90 minutes steady walking



from start finish. Lake Look-

out



Follensby Trail – starts off the Lake Trail beyond the northeast bay on our lake. Just after the initial left (north) off the Lake Trail if coming via the outlet dam, there is the trailhead sign/entry to the right for the Twin Rocks Trail. The Follensby Trail is a long relatively flat walk along swamps and brooks until you reach an open meadow and bridge near McBride's Pond (~ 35 mins). The trail continues without maintenance to the Follensby Park line now owned by the Nature Conservancy.

Twin Rocks Trail – starts off the Follensby Trail very near to the Lake Trail junction beyond the northeast bay on our lake. This is a wonderful climb up onto Buck Mountain (as named in topo maps). It can take about an hour to ascend and eventually leads to some large outcrops that overlook the lake. The climb can be steep in places and used to be serviced by ladders prior to relocation. You have to descend the same way. There is a Birchery hunting trail off to the south (right) halfway up that follows a bench that rises and traverses the front slope of the ridge. This trail is the start of the Holy Grail Trail which traverses across the top of the valley between Buck Mtn. and Sleeping Bear.

Holy Grail Trail – connects from the Twin Rocks Trail on its northerly entrance or from the Litchfield Lookout Trail on the southerly end. This trail was completed in 2012 and was named the Holy Grail Trail because it forms a loop that allows for a circular route of the lands and mountains cradling Little Simon Pond. When accessing from the Twin Rocks Trail you shortly come to an impressive vertical granite wall that is ideal for technical rock climbing. There are also several “caves” to be explored along this route which progresses up and along a long “bench” near the top of Buck Mountain.

Lake Trail –

Circumnavigates the lake for about 3 miles with minor ups & downs passing by all shoreline docks. One starting point is “Poodle Walk” just above Three Star Camp on the Litchfield Road. This section leads to a Read family memorial graveyard before re-entering the Litchfield Road past the stone wall overlooking the southwest end of the lake and island. The Lake Trail again exits the road in about 100 yards to cross the swamp. Follow the markings and walk through swamp grasses and cross footbridge over Mt Morris/Cedar Swamp Brook. Eventually you cross a logging road at the head of the lake and enter another swampy area caused by the Litchfield Notch Brook. One trail (the Notch Brook Trail) exits the Lake Trail right along the brook. A second trail to the Nose of the Bear exits right shortly thereafter. At these junctions stay left and arrive at the dock in the southeast cove of the lake and continue along lake another ½ mile to the Sucker Brook dock across lake from Three Star camp. Cross Sucker Brook then pass a spur trail on right going up to logging road. Stay left passing another dock and continue along lake shore. Eventually at northeast end of the lake the trail continues into the woods and turns left to cross a small brook and intersect with the Follensby Trail. North of this junction there is an entrance for Twin Rocks Trail. The Lake Trail continues to the left and returns to the lake at a dock in the northeast cove. The trail rises up through a stand of large hemlocks and comes to another trailhead entry for both McBride's Pond and the Tupper Lake Lookout trails. Stay left and cross the bridge over The Carry Brook (near dam in NW cove). This open area is called the Potato Patch. You can continue up logging road back to the Guidehouse or skirt the lake by entering next to the Sandy Beach dock. This lower route ends in the Birchery Camp yard.

The record run around the Lake Trail was originally 24 minutes by Uncle Duncan Read in 1924. It was later broken by Peter Read Jr. in

Mt. Morris Trail – Goes to top of Mt. Morris at 3,152 ft elevation for a 360 view and takes about 1.5 hours. This trail leaves from the road across from the Three Star Camp shop building south of the Guidehouse by about 50 yards and goes up the hill passing the Reservoir. The trail continues up a gentle grade to the southwest and eventually steepens and winds over a ridge and down into a hollow and up again passing the old Ranger Cabin ruin. Soon after there is a junction to the left with the Cliff Trail which makes a nice loop. There is one more short up and down section to the bald summit with old fire tower. Big Tupper Ski area is below to the west. ~ 90 minutes to top. Mt. Marcy is visible to the east. Length of trail from Camp to Mt Morris tower is 4 miles.

Barnett Spur of the Cliff Trail – begins going up bank after crossing bridge over Mt. Morris Brook on the Litchfield Road. This trail basically follows the brook along the base of the dramatic Mt Morris cliffs. It takes about 30 minutes to reach a “cave” near the brook where the Cliff Trail up Mt. Morris begins across the brook. If you walk up through the “cave” you will be on the Cave to Cave Trail. This trail is dedicated to Robby Barnett, who has scouted several trail routes, and his brother Tim Barnett of Adirondack Nature Conservancy fame for helping to preserve Whitney Park, Follensby and other large tracts in the Adirondack Park.

Cliff Trail - leaves the “cave” at the end of the Barnett Spur across the brook and ascends steeply hugging outcropping to your left. In several hundred nearly vertical yards you reach a wall where you turn left. When you get to a small “saddle” walk up to the left for an outstanding view of the cliffs and lake on a granite outcropping. Return to the saddle and continue to the left. The trail then ascends again to the right up through birches and ferns until the inter-

The trail climbs easterly into the center notch of the Sleeping Bear ridge and then bears right (southwest) across the ridge top after the

Holy Grail Trail junction. Many bear and deer have been intercepted on this ridge top. Eventually, it starts to drop down to a bench where it intersects with the Nose of the Bear trail to your right. At this intersection, drop down a short way through some cover onto a promontory where there is a fine panorama of 180 degrees from the Mt. Morris cliffs to the Litchfield Castle. Total time from the Lumber Road to the lookout is ~ 1 hour.

Tupper Lake Lookout Trail – starts from the Lake Trail after crossing The Carry Brook below the outlet dam at the Birchery end of the lake. This is a short hike of ~10 minutes that climbs and then traverses a ridge that brings you to a view of Lake Simond and the Town of Tupper Lake. Just before the overlook there is a short connector trail to the east (right) over the ridge to the McBride’s Pond Trail. Go left (north) to McBride’s or right to return to the Lake Trail.

McBride’s Pond Trail - leaves the Lake Trail at the same spot as the Tupper Lake Lookout trailhead. This is a gentle up and down grade for ~25 minutes to reach McBride’s Pond on the Birchery property line with the old Oval Wood Dish lands. It is a wild setting and a remote spot to observe birds and wildlife. You can follow a log road east on the southern end of McBride’s to connect up with the Follensby Trail (~15 mins). If you turn left you will have another view of the ponds and swamp. If you turn right, you can follow the trail back SW to Little Simon Pond passing the trailhead for Twin Rocks on the left before intersecting with the Lake Trail.

is. The total ascent takes about one hour.

Nose of the Bear Trail - can be accessed from the Lake Trail via the dock at the southeast end of the lake or the lumber road around the lake from old Chaisson's Camp clearing. From the dock turn right and then take the first left in about 50 yards. This trail climbs up to the lumber road in ~15 minutes walking where you will see markings directly across the log road and the Litchfield Notch Brook. After a moderate ascent for ~15 minutes, you arrive at an old beaver pond/meadow. Walk around the left side and re-enter the woods opposite for more ascent. Eventually you are confronted by a granite wall where the trail turns right and ascends steeply through the cliffs and rocks. Near the top of the ridge there is a well marked intersection with the Litchfield Lookout Trail coming down from the left. At this juncture you turn right downhill for a short distance and come out on a ledge looking south (Litchfield Lookout). There is a fine panorama of 180 degrees from the Mt. Morris cliffs to the Litchfield Castle. Total time estimate from the lumber road is ~45 minutes. This trail makes a nice loop in conjunction with the Litchfield Lookout Trail.

Notch Brook Trail - can be accessed from the Lake Trail via the dock at the southeast end of the lake. This short hunting trail starts from the Lake Trail just west (Mt Morris side) of the Nose of the Bear Trail. It follows the Litchfield Notch Brook and then rises over a ridge and outlets in Chaisson's Camp clearing just off the Litchfield Road. It takes about 15 minutes if walking steadily.

Litchfield Lookout Trail - can be used as a descent from the Nose of the Bear Trail or an ascent from the lumber road. Between the two Sucker Brook docks there is a short access trail up to the Lumber Road. When you hit the road turn right and walk for about ¼ mile where you will see the trailhead and sign on your left.

Cave to Cave Trail - can be accessed from the end of Barnett Spur or from the west via a logging road or from the Cedar Swamp Trail which is the preferred and more dramatic route. From the latter entry points the trail ascends to the southwest and after about 15 minutes follows along a vertical rock face on your right. After ~100 yards enters a "cave". At the end of the cave the trail turns sharply to the right and skirts the Litchfield boundary line up and then over a small ridge, then traverses a flat area before turning left and ascending to a large rock. You go around the uphill side of the rock and down the hill to the second "cave" which you scramble down through to the intersection of the Cliff Trail and the Barnett Spur. This section can be walked in about 45 minutes.

Cedar Swamp Trail - starts on the Litchfield Road with a right turn to the southwest about 100 yds past the Cedar Swamp Brook bridge. This entry is not far past the old log road that exits the Litchfield Road left towards the head of the lake. This is a relatively flat walk through white cedars, grasses and swamp flora. It is ideal habitat for birds and wildflowers and affords views over a large swamp and the Mt. Morris cliffs. After about 20 minutes you come out to the magnificent Cedar Swamp. Continue around to the right through grasses and then carefully cross the swamp on the old beaver dam to arrive at a patch of woods on a knoll. The trail continues across a wet meadow and then bears right through open woodland to end at a logging road directly across from the eastern entrance to the Cave to Cave Trail. This section will take another 15 minutes.