



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Current Interior Conditions in the High Peaks Region
Compiled on December 31, 2014

See the **High Peaks Trail Information web page** (www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9198.html)

Weather: This is the National Weather Service seven-day forecast for the Marcy Dam area of the High Peaks Wilderness on Wednesday, December 31. Hikers & campers should expect and prepare for cooler and windier conditions in higher elevations, and more snow if forecast. **Always check current forecasts before entering the back country as the weather forecast can change. National Weather Service Burlington:** <http://www.weather.gov/btv/>

- Tonight: A 50 percent chance of snow showers. Cloudy, with a low around 8. Wind chill values as low as -6. Southwest wind around 10 mph, with gusts as high as 31 mph. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.
- New Year's Day: Snow showers likely. Cloudy, with a high near 22. Wind chill values as low as -5. Southwest wind 11 to 16 mph, with gusts as high as 38 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.
- Thursday Night: Snow showers likely, mainly before 10pm. Cloudy, with a low around 10. Wind chill values as low as -2. West wind 8 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 39 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New snow accumulation of around an inch possible.
- Friday: Snow showers likely, mainly between 11am and 1pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 21. West wind around 7 mph, with gusts as high as 22 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.
- Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 5. West wind 5 to 7 mph, with gusts as high as 21 mph.
- Saturday: Partly sunny, with a high near 21. Light and variable wind becoming south around 6 mph in the afternoon.
- Saturday Night: Snow and freezing drizzle likely. Cloudy, with a low around 14. Southeast wind 7 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%.
- Sunday: Drizzle, snow showers, and freezing drizzle likely. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 34. Southeast wind 9 to 11 mph becoming southwest in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 60%.
- Sunday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 2. West wind 15 to 17 mph.
- Monday: Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 8. West wind around 16 mph, with gusts as high as 26 mph.
- Monday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -6. West wind 7 to 13 mph.
- Tuesday: A 30 percent chance of snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 12. Southwest wind 5 to 7 mph.

Backcountry Conditions

Wilderness conditions can change suddenly. **Weather forecasts and conditions can and do change, check current weather conditions and short-term forecast before entering the backcountry.** All users should plan accordingly, including bringing flashlight, first aid equipment, extra food, plenty of water and clothing. Always be prepared to spend an unplanned night in the woods.

Winter Conditions: Winter conditions are present throughout the area. Snow, ice and cold temperatures are present at all elevations. Carry extra layers of non-cotton clothing. Put on and take off layers as needed to keep comfortable. Plan trips to be out of the backcountry before dark. **Always carry a flashlight or headlamp with fresh batteries just in case.**

Snow: A lot of snow melted over the past week from the rain and warm temperatures. The Lake Colden Caretaker reports 12 inches of snow at the stake this morning. Return of cold temperatures has hardened any snow on the ground. National Weather Service forecasts 3-5 inches of new snow over the next several days.

Snowshoes & Traction Devices: Snowshoes are required in the High Peaks on trails above 2,800 feet and should be worn on all backcountry trails where snow depths exceed 8 inches. The use of snowshoes or skis avoids "post-holing"; eases travel and prevents injuries. Traction devices, such as crampons, should be worn below 2,500 feet and on summits. Carry both snowshoes and traction devices, wear whichever is required or warranted.

Trail Conditions: Lower elevation trails have little snow with many rocks and bare patches present. Drainages are bare of snow and ice at nearly all elevations. Cross-country skiing conditions are very poor.

Blowdown: Blowdown may be present on trails, especially lesser used secondary trails.

Ice on Water: Only a few days ago many water bodies had some open water with slush and water on top of any ice that was present. Ice has formed, melted and reformed several times on many waters. Recently open waters now have a thin layer of ice and thicker ice is weaker than usual. Check the thickness of ice before traveling across it – ice that holds snow may not bear the weight of a person.

Summits: Temperatures will be colder, winds will be stronger and snow will be deeper – especially where drifts form. Sight distance will be limited, sometimes significantly, when clouds cover the summits or in heavy falling and/or blowing snow.

Avoid Hypothermia: Stay dry and warm. Drink plenty of water, eat food and rest often.

Hunting Seasons: Small game hunting seasons and some waterfowl hunting seasons remain open. Hikers should be aware that they may meet hunters bearing firearms or archery equipment while hiking on trails. Please recognize that these are fellow outdoor recreationists with the legal right to participate in these activities on the Forest Preserve. There is no record of a hunting related shooting incident in New York State involving a hiker.

NOTICES

Lake Colden & Avalanche Lake: The inlets and outlets at either end of the lakes and water shorelines are covered with a thin layer of ice.

Backcountry Snow Report: No report this week.

Marshall Herd Paths: The herd paths on Marshall do not lead to the summit. Those climbing these peaks should navigate with a map and compass rather than follow the paths created by others.

Avalanche Lake Outlet: The bridge on Avalanche Lake Outlet is washed away. During low water rock hopping will be necessary to cross, during high waters crossing will require getting wet.

Elk Lake Trails and Clear Pond Gate: The two trails that pass through the Elk Lake property to Panther Gorge in the High Peaks Wilderness and the southern approaches to Dix Mountain in the Dix Mountain Wilderness are open for public use. The Clear Pond Gate on the Elk Lake Road is closed and will remain closed until the end of the spring mud season. This will add 4 miles to roundtrip, plan accordingly.

Avalanche Pass Slide: The Avalanche Pass Slide is closed to public recreation of any type through the winter.

South Meadow Road: The Town of North Elba has closed and barricaded South Meadow Road off the Adirondak Loj Road. The road will remain closed through the spring mud season.

Hurricane Mountain Trail: The trail from the Route 9N trailhead has been rerouted to bypass areas flooded by beavers. The trail now extends 3.4 miles from the trailhead to the summit. The reroute and new footbridges were completed by the Student Conservation Association Adirondack Program.

Trap Dike: Fixed ropes, harnesses and other equipment are often abandoned in the Trap Dike. Due to the age, weatherizing and wearing of these materials they are unsafe and should never be used.

Closed Campsite: The designated campsite on Big Slide Mountain Brook in Johns Brook Valley near the intersection with the Phelps Trail has been permanently closed due to site degradation. Other designated campsites are located across from the Howard Lean-to and just past Johns Brook Lodge. Signs on the hiking trail direct hikers to these sites.

Bradley Pond Trail: The first foot bridge on the Bradley Pond Trail has been dropped and is unusable. The stream can be forded /rock hopped most of time on the downstream side of the bridge site.

Northville-Placid Trail: The trail contains a large area of blowdown near the Seward Lean-to. A detour around the blowdown has been marked with pink flagging.