



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Current Conditions in the High Peaks Region
Compiled on February 26, 2015

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 Thursday, February 26. Hikers & campers should expect and prepare for colder temperatures, stronger winds and more snow in higher elevations compared to the 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 20 percent chance of snow showers before midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -9. Wind chill values as low as -18. Light and variable wind.
- Friday: Mostly sunny and cold, with a high near 7. Wind chill values as low as -19. West wind 3 to 6 mph.
- Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around -8. Wind chill values as low as -23. West wind 5 to 8 mph.
- Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 17. West wind around 7 mph.
- Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around -2. West wind 8 to 10 mph.
- Sunday: A 30 percent chance of snow after 1pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 25. South wind 8 to 11 mph.
- Sunday Night: Snow likely. Cloudy, with a low around 14. South wind 11 to 13 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.
- Monday: A 30 percent chance of snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 26. West wind 14 to 18 mph.
- Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 4. West wind 9 to 17 mph.
- Tuesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 25. West wind 5 to 8 mph becoming south in the afternoon.
- Tuesday Night: A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a low around 15. Southeast wind around 9 mph.
- Wednesday: A 50 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 31. South wind 8 to 11 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.** Plan ahead - bring flashlight, first aid equipment, extra food, plenty of water and clothing. Always be prepared to spend an unplanned night in the woods.

Electronic Technology: Do not depend on electronic technology in the backcountry. Cell phone coverage is spotty at best and often non-existent. GPS signal can be poor under heavy tree cover. Batteries expire quickly in cold temperatures. Plan and prepare before entering the backcountry and carry a map & compass for navigation or at least as backup.

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.**

Skis, Snowshoes & Traction Devices: Snowshoes or skis are required all trails in the High Peaks and should be worn on all backcountry trails. The use of snowshoes or skis avoids “post-holing”, eases travel, and prevents injuries. Traction devices, such as crampons, should be carried and worn when warranted.

Trail Conditions: Trails remain in great condition. Most trails are hard-packed with 3 inches of fresh snow on top. The snow depth at Marcy Dam (2,350 ft. elevation) is 30 inches and at Lake Colden (2,750 ft. elevation) there is 39 inches of snow. Snow depths increase with increase in elevation. Some lesser used secondary trails may not be “broken” yet. Breaking trail requires more time and energy, plan accordingly. See **Snow Information** on next page.

Ice on Water: Avoid ice over or near running water, near inlets & outlets and near boathouses & docks – especially those with bubblers or other ice prevention devices.

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.

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

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

Snow Information (See attached snow cover profile)

- The High Peaks received 3.14 inches of 5% Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) new snow from 2/20 to 2/22
- Snow stake at the Marcy Dam is currently recording 30 inches and the stake at Lake Colden is 37 inches. Snow depths are at 3,500 feet are 36 to 40 inches and between 4,000 & 5,000 feet are 40 to 50 inches.
- Winds continue to play a large role in localized snow depths, expect higher snow depths in the leeward slopes and in likely deposition zones in addition to further wind slab formation. Over the last week winds were coming out of all directions, be suspect of wind loading on all slopes.
- Cold temperatures dominate the current weather pattern and expected to last through Friday 2/27, these temperatures will only reinforce the temperature gradient in the snowpack.
- If you are plan to travel in avalanche terrain be sure to:
 - Carry essential equipment – avalanche transceiver/beacon, shovel, & collapsible or ski-pole probe;
 - Dig test pits;
 - Remember the red flags;
 - Travel safely; and
 - Have a self-rescue plan and the tools to accomplish it.
- Just because you see a ski or boot track on an avalanche slope doesn't mean one cannot occur. Make your own decisions.

Trap Dike: The Trap Dike is full of snow, considerably slowing people climbing the dike.

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

Lake Colden & Avalanche Lake: Avoid the area immediately around inlets and outlets.

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.

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.

Clear Pond Gate: 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 roundtrip for any excursions from the trailhead, plan accordingly.

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.

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.