



Current Conditions in the High Peaks Region

Compiled on January 28, 2016

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

Weather forecasts and conditions can and do change quickly. Check current weather conditions and short-term forecast before entering the backcountry at the National Weather Service (<http://www.weather.gov/btv/>). 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.

Prepare for Winter Conditions: Winter conditions are present throughout the area. Days are short, temperatures are below freezing, and snow and ice are present. Wear appropriate footwear, a waterproof outer layer, a hat and layers of non-cotton clothing. Carry extra layers of non-cotton clothing. Put on and take off layers to keep comfortable. Avoid hypothermia by staying warm & dry, and resting, eating and hydrating often. Plan trips to be out of the backcountry before dark. **Always carry a flashlight or headlamp and extra batteries** in case you are caught after dark.

Snow Information: Snow depths on trails mainly range between 10 and 16 inches, with less than 10 inches of snow at the trailheads & lower elevations and 2 feet or more on the summits. Deeper snow drifts have formed on and near summits, lakes and other open areas. The Lake Colden Interior Caretaker reports 16 inches of snow at the stake (elevation ~ 2750 feet) with 6 inches of hard base snow. Snow in lower elevations was softened by rain during the week and refroze. Snow may be hard, crunchy or crusty with light snow on the surface. The National Weather Service **NERFC Snow Information** (<http://www.weather.gov/nerfc/snow>) has current snow depths, daily snowfall amounts, snow forecasts and information about the snowpack.

Trail Conditions: Trails may be icy in lower elevations and on exposed summits. Crampons, spikes or other traction devices should be carried and used when warranted. Conditions for skiing range from fair to good. Marcy Truck Trail is the best place to ski. The trail through Avalanche Pass is passable on skis but conditions are marginal rough: drainages lack snow, and rocks, roots & other obstacles remain exposed or just barely covered by snow. **Snowshoes are required beyond Marcy Dam** (elevation ~ 2350 feet) and wherever snow depths exceed 8 inches. **The use of snowshoes or skis prevents injuries, eases travel through snow, and avoids “post-holing”**. Post-holing makes trails more difficult and more hazardous for others to use.

Blowdown: Blowdown (fallen or hanging trees, limbs, and branches) may be found on trails, especially on trails in the higher elevations and less used trails.

Ice on Water: Ice continues to slowly thicken. People have been crossing Lake Colden and Avalanche Lake, however slush may be present below the snow. **Always check the thickness of ice before traveling across it.** Avoid ice over running water, near inlets & outlets, and near boathouses & docks - especially those with "bubblers" or other ice prevention devices. Ice with snow on the surface, may not hold a person's weight.

Summits: Temperatures will be colder, winds will be stronger and snow will be deeper. Sight distance will be limited, sometimes significantly, when clouds cover the summits.

NOTICES

Corey's Road: The last 3 miles of the road are closed to public motor vehicle traffic for the winter and will remain closed until the end of the spring mud season. The gate at the Raquette Falls Trailhead is closed. The town of Harrietstown plows the road to the bridge over Stoney Creek, it prohibits parking in the area around the bridge and the half mile of road prior to the bridge. Skiers and snowshoers should park at the first pull-off after the end of the pavement and hike the remainder of the plowed road on foot. Skiers and snowshoers will need to travel road three miles to reach the Seward Trailhead. Logging operations will continue through the winter at Ampersand Park. Watch and listen for logging trucks, move to the side to allow trucks to pass safely.

Elk Lake Trails: The trails to Mt. Marcy and Dix Mountain that pass through the Elk Lake Conservation Easement Land are open. However the gate at Clear Pond is closed until after the spring mud season. This will add four miles of travel round trip, plan accordingly.

South Meadow Lane: The Town of North Elba has closed South Meadow Lane for the winter. Barriers have been placed across the road near the entrance at the Loj Road. Vehicles may park there for access to the Mt. VanHovenberg Trail, the Marcy Truck Trail and the Klondike Trail. Do not block the gap in the barrier, it is used by emergency vehicles.

Table Top Mountain Herd Path: The start of the Tabletop Mountain Herd Path on the VanHovenberg Trail to Mt. Marcy has been moved 150 feet closer to Indian Falls.

Ward Brook Truck Trail: The Ward Brook Truck Trail is flooded due to beaver activity just north of the junction with the Northville-Placid Trail.

Calamity Brook Trail: The High Water Bridge over Calamity Brook on the Calamity Brook Trail between the Upper Works and the Flowed Lands has been repaired by the Student Conservation Association Adirondack Program and can be used by hikers.

Opalescent Suspension Bridge: The suspension bridge over the Opalescent River on the trail from Lake Colden to Mt. Marcy has been repaired by the Student Conservation Association Adirondack Program and can be used by hikers.

Lake Colden to Marcy Trail: A 10-foot section of trail near Uphill Lean-to along the Opalescent River above Lake Colden was washed out during heavy rains. Hikers can get around it by going through the trees but should use caution when doing so.

Bradley Pond Trail: The first and second foot bridges on the Bradley Pond Trail are damaged and unusable. The stream can be forded /rock hopped most of time on the downstream side of the bridge sites.

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.