



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Current Conditions in the High Peaks Region

Compiled on September 22, 2016

Please be advised of the following conditions and prepare for them to ensure a safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational experience.

See the Backcountry Information for the High Peaks Region 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.

Fire Danger: MODERATE. Never leave a campfire unattended. Be sure campfires are completely out and all wood, coals, embers and ash are cool.

Shorter Days: Autumn has arrived the sun sets earlier each day. Sunset is around 6:50 pm, earlier in deep valleys and on northern and eastern facing slopes. Plan to return to the trailhead by sunset but **always carry a flashlight or headlamp** when hiking.

Cooler Days: Autumn has arrived and the days and nights are cooler. Night time temperatures are forecast to be below freezing this weekend with daytime highs in the 40s & 50s. Wear layers on non-cotton clothing and pack extra clothing including **a non-cotton jacket or sweater and a hat**. Add and remove layers to regulate your body temperature.

Adirondak Loj Trailhead: Due to expected high use on the weekends through Columbus Day/Canadian Thanksgiving Day Weekend, when the parking lot is full **DEC Forest Rangers will be turning around motor vehicles** on the Adirondak Loj Road at South Meadow Lane.

Alternate Hikes in Autumn: Parking areas along the Route 73 corridor and trails and summits in the Adirondack Mountain Reserve, Dix Mountain Wilderness, Giant Mountain Wilderness and eastern High Peaks Wilderness **are expected to be crowded on weekends through the Columbus Day/Canadian Thanksgiving Day Weekend**. DEC has identified a dozen nearby hikes (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9163.html>) that provide a similar experience as hiking the High Peaks with amazing scenic views of the autumn foliage, mountains and waters of the Adirondacks.

Hunting Seasons: Some big game, small game and waterfowl hunting seasons are 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. Hunting accidents involving non-hunters are extremely rare. Hikers can wear bright colors as an extra precaution if it makes them more comfortable.

Black Bear Activity: Due to the dry conditions black bears have been more active than usual throughout the Adirondacks.

- In the Eastern High Peaks, campers not properly using ***bear-resistant canisters*** (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7225.html>) have lost their food to bears.
- The use of **bear-resistant canisters is required** for overnight users in the **Eastern High Peaks Wilderness** and recommended throughout the Adirondacks.
- **ALL** food, toiletries and garbage must be stored in bear-resistant canisters in the Eastern High Peaks Wilderness.
- Elsewhere, **ALL** food, toiletries and garbage should be stored in bear-resistant canisters or in a food (aka bear) hang elsewhere.
- Bears are most active in the evening, cook, eat and clean up before dusk.
- These and other practices can ***prevent attracting black bears*** to campsites in the backcountry. (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6995.html#Backcountry>)

Trail Conditions: Trails may be wet and muddy along water bodies, in low lying areas and during & after rain events – especially if forecasted showers occur. All hikers should wear waterproof footwear and gaiters. **Remain on trails; walk through mud & water to prevent further eroding trails and damaging trailside vegetation.**

Water Levels: Waters level are low. Most low water crossings and drainages can be easily crossed. Water levels can rise quickly during and immediately after rain events in drainages, streams and rivers. Showers are forecasted.

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

NOTICES

Marcy Dam: DEC and SCA Adirondack Program are working on the removal of the dam for the second year. Please pay attention to caution flagging in this area and follow minor reroutes around the rigging equipment at the dam. Do not enter the worksite or disturb tools when workers are not present after hours and on weekends.

East River Trail: The second bridge on the trail to Allen Mountain and Hanging Spear Falls has been replaced by DEC and SCA Adirondack Program. Please do not bounce on the bridge.

Opalescent Trail: A trail reroute has been constructed around the washout near Uphill Lean-to by members of the Student Conservation Association Adirondack Program.

Moose Creek Suspension Bridge: Repairs on the bridge on the Northville-Placid Trail between Shattuck Clearing and Cold River are completed and the bridge is open for use.

Ouluska Brook Bridge: The bridge over Ouluska Brook on the Northville-Placid Trail has collapsed into the brook. Due to low water conditions crossing the brook is still possible.

Blueberry Hiking Trail: The first 1,500 feet of trail has been closed. The trail now connects with the Blueberry Horse Trail approximately 0.3 mile east of the previous location (0.8 mile from the Seward Trailhead). This reroute eliminates the need to hike through a large wet area and avoids hiking (and maintaining) more than 120 feet of bog bridging.

Northville Placid Trail: The trail has rerouted around a beaver pond south of Plumley's Point on the shores of Long Lake. The reroute passes the beaver pond higher up the slope and eliminates having to cross the beaver dam and the wet feet obtained when the water levels were high. Follow the Blue NPT trail markers.

Blueberry Horse Trail: The trail between the Calkins Creek Horse Trail and Ward Brook Horse Trail in the Western High Peaks contains extensive blowdown, is grown in with vegetation and is poorly marked. The trail is impassable to horses making it impossible to complete the Cold River Horse Trail Loop. DEC intends to work on the trail this fall.

Garden Trailhead Parking Area: The town of Keene operates the Garden Parking Area and charges a \$7/day fee for parking. An attendant is present 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Fridays and from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays until October 16. The rest of the week hikers are expected to pay the fee using the envelope and collection slot.

Garden Trailhead Shuttle: The town of Keene operates a shuttle between the overflow parking area at Marcy Field and the Garden Trailhead from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on weekends and holidays through October 16. A roundtrip costs \$5.

Phelps Trail: The high water bridge over Slide Mountain Brook between the Garden Trailhead Parking Area and Johns Brook Lodge is broken and unusable.

Whiteface Landing Trail: The trail has been rerouted to avoid private camps on Connery Pond. The new trail route starts at the small parking area just before the private gate. Please respect the private property and stay on the trail.

State Route 73 Bridgework: The Department of Transportation is working on several bridges on State Route 73 between St. Hubert's and Alstead Hill Road west of Keene. There is single lane with traffic lights and/or flaggers on most bridges – expect and plan for delays.

Connery Pond/Whiteface Landing/West Branch Ausable River: Construction is occurring through November 1 on the State Route 86 Bridge over the West Branch Ausable River about three miles northeast of Lake Placid. Parking near the bridge is restricted and hikers accessing Whiteface Landing should use alternate parking areas. Paddlers are advised to find an alternate takeout and are discouraged from paddling under the bridge. Entering the construction site or staging area is prohibited. Pedestrians crossing the road should use the marked crosswalk.

Corey's Road: Logging trucks are using the road. Listen and watch for trucks while on the road or when entering the road from trailhead parking areas.

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 on the downstream side of the bridge sites.