

JOE 2025 Information Packet for **Moderate 9 or 6-Mile Loop Hike at Highpoint State Park**

Day: Saturday	Start Time: 9:00 am	End Time: 3:00 pm
Co-Leader:	Co-Leader:	Limit: 12 people
Transportation: Van or Personal Car	Driver:	Bus Captain: n/a
Fees: \$18 Transportation Fee	Travel Distance: 28 Miles One-Way	Travel Time: 28 Min. One-Way

Moderate 9 or 6-mile Loop Hike at Highpoint State Park

Experience a refreshing 9 or 6-mile loop hike with approximately seven hundred feet of elevation gain along the stunning Appalachian and Iris Trails at High Point State Park, near Montague Township, New Jersey. This invigorating trail features rocky ridges that provide breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains, lush valleys, picturesque fields, and serene lakes – a perfect escape into nature! The Appalachian and Iris Trails crisscross each other several times, making a figure eight. You can do the entire 9-mile (980 ft Elevation gain) figure eight or just the 6-mile (700 ft elevation gain) option, which loops back when the two trails meet the first time. The group will decide which option to take during Meet Your Leader the night before.

- Bring Standard Hiking Gear: Hat, Water, Food, Walking Stick and Hiking Shoes
- Maps: NYNJTC Delaware Water Gap & Kittatinny Trails Map 2021 - 8th edition [Paper](#) / [Digital](#)
- [AllTrails](#) / [NjHiking](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- Cost \$18 Transportation Fee (Drivers with passengers are free)

Key At-A-Glance Information

- LENGTH: 8.8- or 6.3-miles options
- TRAILHEAD: The trailhead parking is 0.1 miles after the High Point Country Ski/Visitors Center, also on the right side, by the maintenance building. 41°18'09.7"N 74°40'03.4"W / 41.302697, -74.667607
- CONFIGURATION: Loop
- DIFFICULTY: Moderate
- EXPOSURE: Partially shaded at best
- TRAFFIC: Popular on sunny weekends, light traffic on weekdays
- TRAIL SURFACE: Pointy rock upheavals, grass, dirt, and rooty stretches.
- HIKING TIME: 3 to 4 hours pending which option.
- FACILITIES: Restrooms, water, and public phone at the park office
- PARK OFFICE: 1480 NJ-23, Sussex, NJ 07461, (973) 875-4800

Logistics:

- 9:00 am Leave Camp
- 9:00 am – 9:30 am Travel from camp to the park office to get trail condition updates, bathroom, and maps.
- 9:30 am – 10:00 am Gear check. Travel to the trailhead and prep for a hike.
- 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Hike with a lunch stop at the shelter.
- 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm Travel back to camp (with a possible ice cream stop in Milford if by car or van)

Hike Description

Overview: BLUE connector – Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) – Appalachian Trail (“AT” – WHITE) – Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) – BLUE connector

0.0 – Follow the trail near the trail sign from the parking lot.

0.2 – Turn RIGHT onto Iris (RED DOT on WHITE). It is also marked with a BLUE connector. The trail joins the red-dot-on-white-blazed Iris Trail. Bear right and continue along the combined blue and red trail for a short stretch to a four-way junction labeled “Cross-Roads,” with a four-foot-high drainage pipe on the left.

0.3 – At the intersection, turn LEFT to follow the Appalachian Trail (“AT” – WHITE) South. The red-on-white-blazed Iris Trail veers right here, while the yellow-on-white-blazed Mashipacong Trail goes straight. Take a left onto the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (A.T.), which you will follow for the next 3.3 miles, with black birches, maples, various oaks, and some shagbark hickory trees providing shade along the way.

0.4 - A.T. climbs 150 feet to the ridge.

0.9 miles, you will pass the Blue Dot Trail (a connector to Sawmill Lake), which descends steeply, ending at the Saw Mill Pond campground 350 feet below. A good west view overlooking Saw Mill Pond is 0.1 miles past this trail junction.

Soon after getting on the AT, pass a large wall of rock above you. The trail surface of the AT throughout NJ is notoriously rocky – and the first couple miles of this route is even more so.

1.4 miles - Find views of the western ridge to the right. Approach this spot quietly; while you may not see any pheasants, you might spot a vulture or raptor perched on the rocks.

The trail descends a slightly steep section, then goes up a steep rocky section.

1.5 – Limited viewpoint (elevation 1,622 feet) east overlooking Sussex County. Lake Rutherford can be seen in the distance. There is another limited view at 1.6 miles.

2.4 – Viewpoint from a large, slanted slab of rock. Lake Rutherford is visible on the left, with the rural Wallkill Valley beyond—a lovely place to take a break. The trail continues south along the ridge, gradually descending.

2.6—Dutch Shoe Rock is another open rocky viewpoint, but the lake is not visible. This viewpoint provides views in all directions. While many sources use this name, I could not locate its origin. The trail now turns left and begins to descend.

2.9 – Continue AT (WHITE), At the base of the descent, passing a BLUE spur trail on the left leading to the Rutherford Shelter (0.4 miles to the camping spot on the Appalachian Trail). There is a sign for it.

3.3 – The AT (WHITE) intersects with Iris (RED DOT on WHITE). Bear RIGHT, still following AT (WHITE). AT (WHITE) and Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) are co-joined briefly, then split.

Shorter 6.5-Mile Option: Return via the Iris trail now by turning LEFT. Follow Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) and then pick up the description below at 6.5.

Longer 9-Mile Option: When the trails split, bear LEFT to continue following AT (WHITE) only, while Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) goes straight. There may not be obvious markings here.

4.2 – The AT (WHITE) crosses a pipeline cut—a short walk over to the left leads to a view over the valley below. The valley is seen below from a pipeline-cut viewpoint. Just after crossing the cut, AT (WHITE) bears RIGHT. [A gated woods road continues straight ahead].



4.6 – At an intersection with a large rock, make a sharp RIGHT to begin following Iris (RED DOT on WHITE). [Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) continues to the left and will go a little way to a parking lot on Deckertown Turnpike, while the AT (WHITE) continues ahead].

5.5 – Pipeline cut, further down from the crossing earlier.



5.7 – Continue straight on Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) [AT (WHITE) is on the right, where you turned earlier in the day.] For this brief section, the two trails are co-joined.

Bear RIGHT when the trails split and continue following Iris (RED DOT on WHITE). [AT (WHITE) bears left]

6.5 – Continue following Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) as markers indicate a sharp LEFT. [The woods road continues straight but is marked private property].

Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) then quickly veers to the right. [An unmarked woods road continues straight, leading to the Rutherford shelter].

The trail is mostly level with moderate changes, grassy at times, with few rocks. There may be extended areas of flooded sections where you can rock-hop or walk along the sides.

Lake Rutherford eventually comes into view, but the trail does not run right along it.

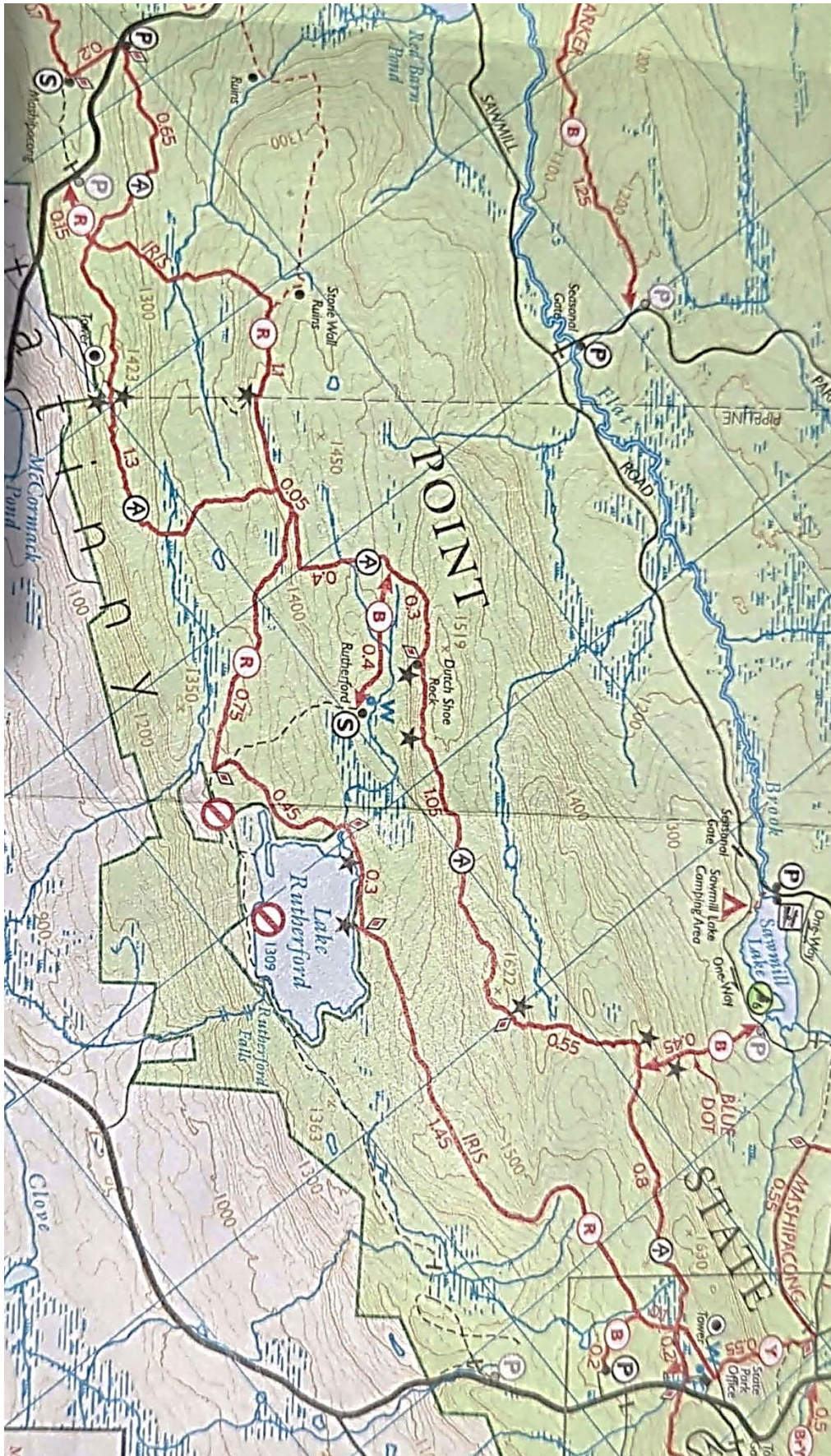
7.0 – Cross a stream on a wooden footbridge. Shortly, there is a limited view of Lake Rutherford through the trees. There is a rock to sit on for a break, but there is another rest spot in a bit.

7.3 – Turn RIGHT on an unmarked spur trail (easy to miss – the Iris trail makes a left bend at this junction). Follow the unmarked spur trail somewhat steeply downhill to the edge of Lake Rutherford for a beautiful view and break spot.

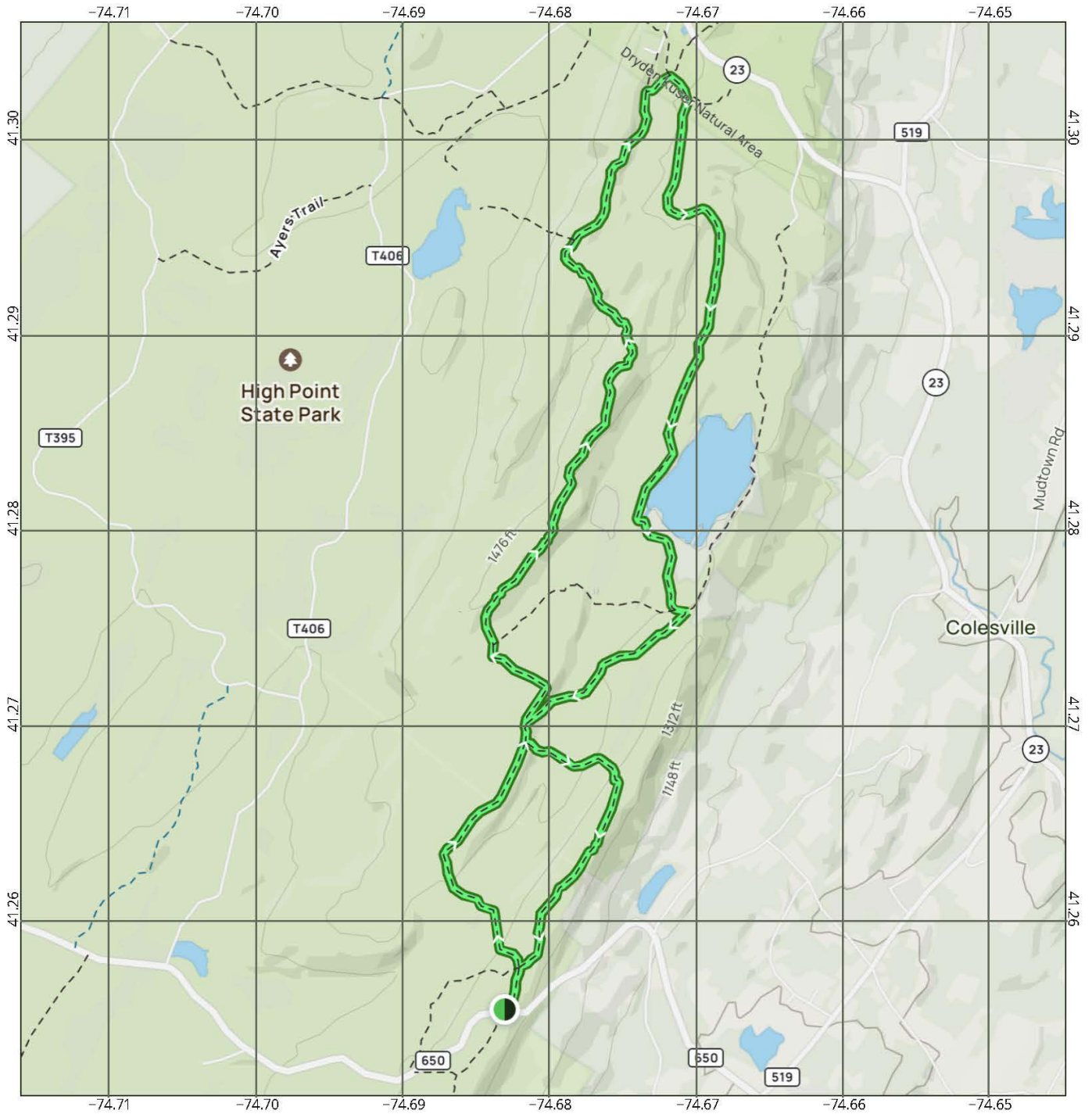
White clouds in a blue sky reflected in Lake Rutherford.

Return to Iris (RED DOT on WHITE) and turn right on it to continue.

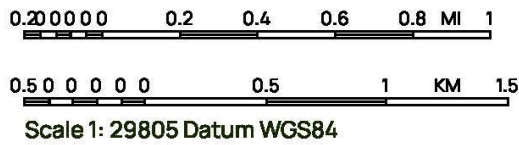
8.8 – Turn right onto the BLUE connector and head back to the parking lot.



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MN ★
12.6°W
3/23/2025



Gain: 980.97 ft Loss: 977.69 ft



Appalachian and Iris Trail Loop
Sussex, NJ



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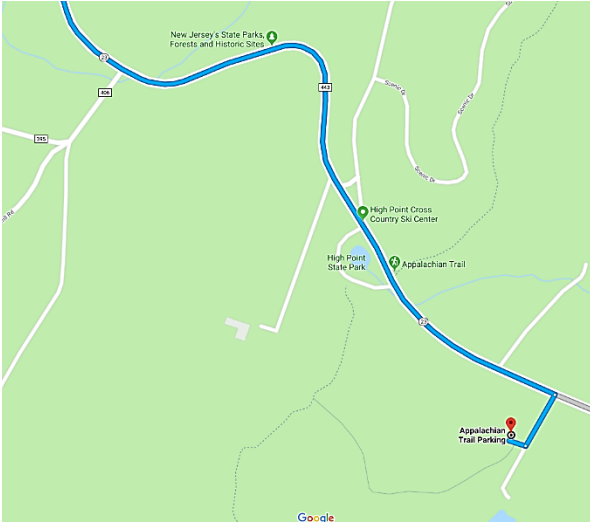
6-Mile Option



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TRAILHEAD:

- The trailhead parking is 0.1 miles after the High Point Country Ski/Visitors Center, also on the right side, by the maintenance building.
- Address: [41°18'09.7"N 74°40'03.4"W](https://www.google.com/maps/place/41.302697,-74.667607) | [41.302697, -74.667607](https://www.google.com/maps/place/41.302697,-74.667607).
- Trailhead is just off NJ-23 in Wantage, NJ 07461.
- Use "[883J+4X Wantage, New Jersey](https://www.google.com/maps/place/883J+4X+Wantage,+New+Jersey)" in Google Maps



TRAIL SENSE AND SAFETY

Trail Markings: Official trails display colored blazes on posts, trees, and rocks. A single blaze indicates to continue straight, while two blazes signify a turn in the direction of the top blaze. Be prepared: bring water with you, and consider packing snacks, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Check the weather before heading out, and dress appropriately. The weather at High Point is often cooler and windier than in other areas, so it is advisable to wear extra layers.

Tick Protection: Insect repellent, long pants, and light-colored clothing can help prevent tick bites. It is wise to check yourself periodically during your hike and to conduct a more thorough check when you return home.

Report trail issues to the park at (973) 875-4800.

Report emergencies by calling 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337), or 911

High Point Trail Lengths at a Glance		
Ayers Trail (1 mi)	Monument Trail (3.5 mi)	Appalachian Trail
Blue Dot Trail (.5 mi)	Old Trail (.5 mi)	AT Connector Trail
Cedar Swamp Trail (2 mi)	Parker Trail (6.5 mi)	Iris Trail (4.5 mi)
Fuller Trail (.85 mi)	Shawangunk Ridge Trail (3 mi)	Mashipacong Trail (2.8 mi)
Life Trail (.8 mi)	Steenykill Trail (.7 mi)	

Appalachian Trail (AT)

Long White Blaze • 9 miles within High Point • Hiking • Moderate to Difficult • Rocky, uneven ground

The 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail (AT) stretches from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mount Katahdin in Maine. Nine miles of the AT pass through High Point, providing challenging hikes along the Kittatinny Ridge and numerous scenic views.

The Trailhead AT parking lot is on Route 23, half a mile south of the park office. From this point, the Appalachian, Iris, and Mashipacong Trails are accessible. From the lot, follow the connector trail (blue) to the Iris Trail (red). Turn right onto the Iris Trail to access the Appalachian and Mashipacong Trails or reach the Park Office. Turn left on the Iris Trail to head south toward Deckertown Turnpike.

Trail Surface: The trail is a well-used wooded path, nearly entirely covered in wood. The stone cover varies from moderate to heavy, with heavier stone cover being more common on the northern half of the trail. A short section where the AT co-aligns with the Iris Trail follows an old, wooded road.

Scenery/Points of Interest: The High Point State Park headquarters is worth a visit. Several excellent viewpoints are along this section of the AT, facing both west and east.

Elevation Changes: There are five or six short climbs or descents of 100 to 200 feet, but no significant climbs along the length of the AT in the Park (we will not attempt all of them). The ascent to the second ridge does feature a rock scramble.

Iris Trail

Red Blazed • 4.5 miles • Multi-use • Easy to Moderate • Rocky, uneven ground.

Trailheads Appalachian Trail parking lot or pull-off parking along Deckertown Turnpike.

Iris Trail (red blaze) Winding through gentle slopes across moderate terrain, much of this trail was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and designed as a bridle path. In contrast, the section of the trail closest to Deckertown Turnpike was part of a network of wagon roads that connected small ridgetop farms in the 1800s and early 1900s. Almost every type of vegetation found in the forests of this area can be observed along the Iris Trail. Several species of oak, hickory, and birch provide shade along the path, while sassafras, witch-hazel, and various pines also thrive. Once common in Eastern forests, a few small American chestnuts can still be spotted today. These trees were affected by a fungus known as Chestnut Blight in the early 1900s, and now, the remaining few rarely exceed twenty feet in height. The undergrowth is home to various ferns and a wealth of wildflowers, with blueberries and huckleberries dominating some areas, ripening in mid to late summer. The Iris Trail offers numerous opportunities to observe birds and other wildlife, passing by scenic Lake Rutherford, a private lake that does not allow swimming permits.

Access: ample parking is available at the Appalachian Trail parking area off NJ State Route 23, just east of the High Point State Park headquarters. The Appalachian Trail either intersects with or runs parallel to the Iris Trail for short distances at three points, allowing for various loop hikes that combine the two. Additionally, there is parking for several cars at the Deckertown Turnpike end.

Trail Surface: The entire trail includes wooded paths with varying amounts of stone coverage, ranging from none to moderate. A brief section follows the access road to Rutherford Shelter. Two footbridges cross streams, but several streams and wet areas necessitate stepping from stone to stone.

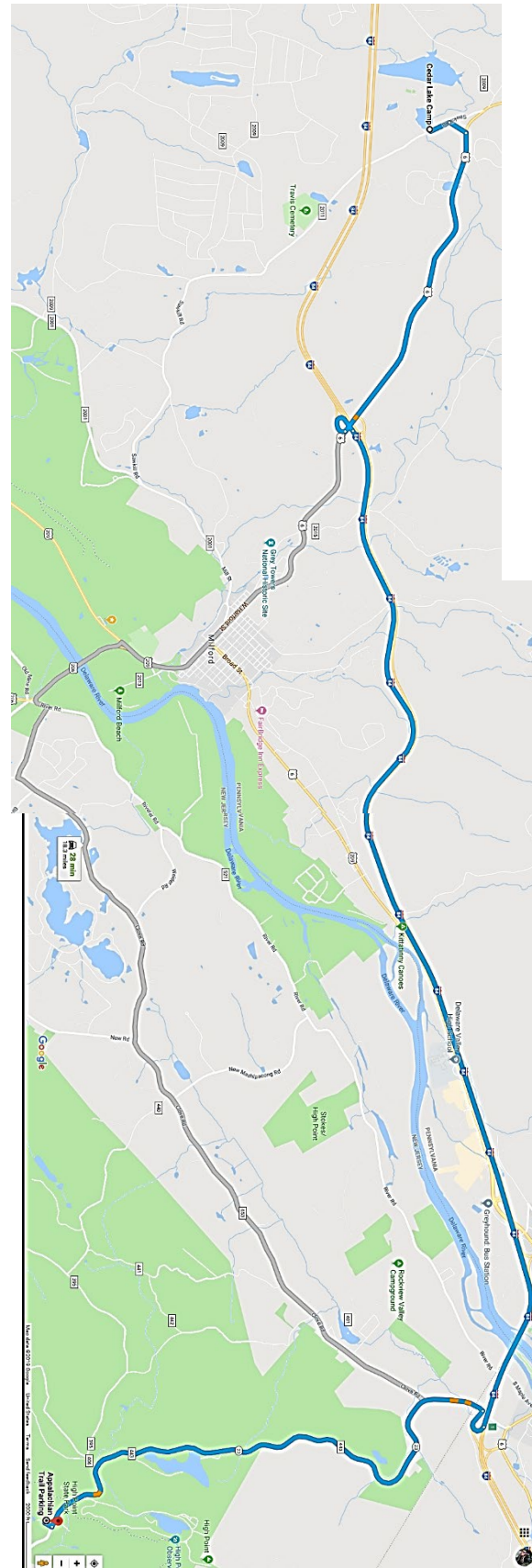
Scenery/Points of Interest Most of the trail winds through a mature hardwood forest, while some exposed or rocky areas showcase a scrub forest, where the trees only reach 30 to 40 feet instead of the usual 70 to 90 feet of canopy.

Elevation Changes The trail gently rises and falls for the first two miles, starting from NJ State Route 23. Between 2.9 and 3.0 miles south of Route 23, there is a 150-foot climb. The trail then descends two hundred feet to a small brook at 3.8 miles and immediately ascends another 150 feet before ending at Deckertown Turnpike.

Driving Directions from Camp Nah-Jee-Wah to AT Trailhead

20MIN 16.9MI | Est. fuel cost: \$1.84

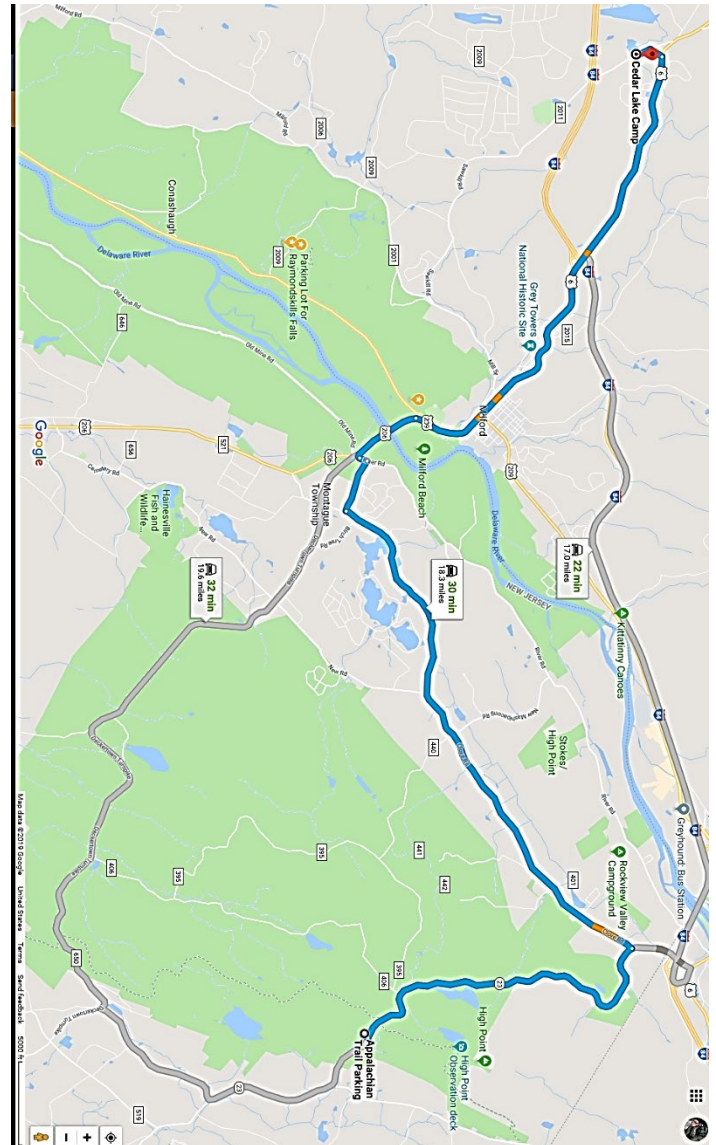
1. Head out of Cedar Lake Camp and turn left northwest on Sawkill Rd. Toward Bridge Rd.
 - a. Then 0.21 miles, 0.21 total miles
2. Take the first right onto Bridge Rd.
 - a. If you reach Grand Army of the Republic Hwy. You have gone about 0.2 miles too far, 0.16 miles, 0.37 total miles.
3. Turn right onto Grand Army of the Republic Hwy./US-6 E. Continue to follow US-6 E.
 - a. Then 2.69 miles, 3.06 total miles
4. Merge onto I-84 E. toward Port Jervis (Crossing into New York).
 - a. Then 8.89 miles, 11.95 total miles
5. Take EXIT 1 toward US-6/Port Jervis/Sussex/NY-23.
 - a. Then 0.31 miles, 12.25 total miles
6. Turn left onto County Hwy-15 (Crossing into New Jersey).
 - a. Then 0.07 miles 12.33 total miles
7. County Hwy-15 becomes State Route 23/NJ-23.
 - a. Then 4.57 miles, 16.90 total miles
8. AT Parking lot (41.302697, -74.667607, STATE ROUTE 23) is on the right. Look for a small sign for the parking lot just before you turn.
 - a. Your destination is 1/10 miles past High Point State Park Office
 - b. If you reach Greenville Rd., you have gone about 0.7 miles too far.



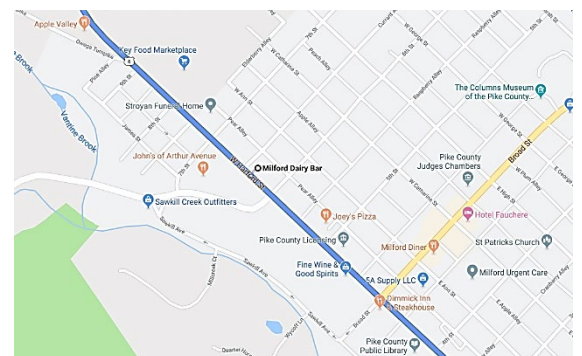
Directions from Trailhead back to Camp Nah-Jee-Wah

31 MIN 18.5MI

1. Go northwest on State Route 23/NJ-23 toward the High Point State Park Office.
 - a. Then 4.15 miles, 4.15 total miles
2. Turn left onto Clove Rd./County Hwy-653.
 - a. Clove Rd is 0.4 miles past Fiddlers Elbow
 - b. If you reach Route 23, you have gone about 0.2 miles too far.
 - c. Then 6.72 miles, 10.87 total miles
3. Turn right onto Deckertown Turnpike/County Hwy-650.
 - a. Deckertown Turnpike is 0.2 miles past Rubin Hill Rd.
 - b. If you are on Red Hill Rd. and reach New Myrtle Dr., you have gone about 0.6 miles too far.
 - c. Then 0.69 miles, 11.56 total miles
4. Turn slightly right onto US Highway 206/US-206 N. (Portions toll) (Crossing into Pennsylvania).
 - a. Then 0.83 miles, 12.39 total miles
5. Turn slightly right onto E. Harford St./US-209 N. Continue to follow E. Harford St. (Portions toll).
 - a. E. Harford St is 0.7 miles past River Rd.
 - b. Then 1.25 miles, 13.65 total miles
6. E. Harford St. becomes US-6 W. as you pass through the town of Milford. This is a good place to stop.
 - a. Then 4.51 miles, 18.16 total miles
7. Turn left onto Bridge Rd.
 - a. Bridge Rd. is 0.1 miles past Senate Rd.
 - b. If you reach Sawkill Rd., you have gone about 0.2 miles too far.
 - c. Then 0.16 miles, 18.31 total miles
8. Turn left onto Sawkill Rd.
 - a. Then 0.21 miles, 18.53 total miles
9. Cedar Lake Camp. 570 Sawkill Rd., Milford, PA 18337-7010 is on the right.
 - a. If you reach Honeywell Rd., you have gone about 0.4 miles too far.



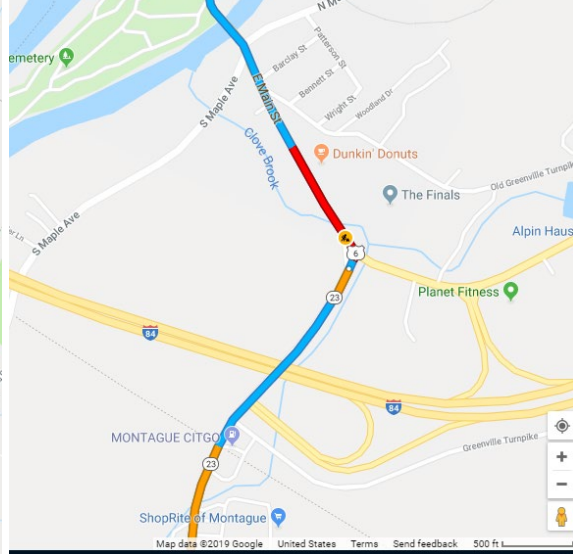
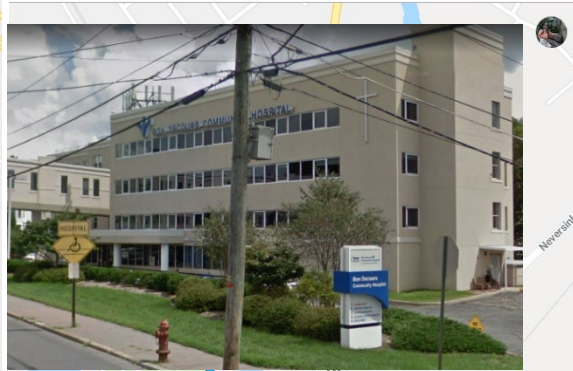
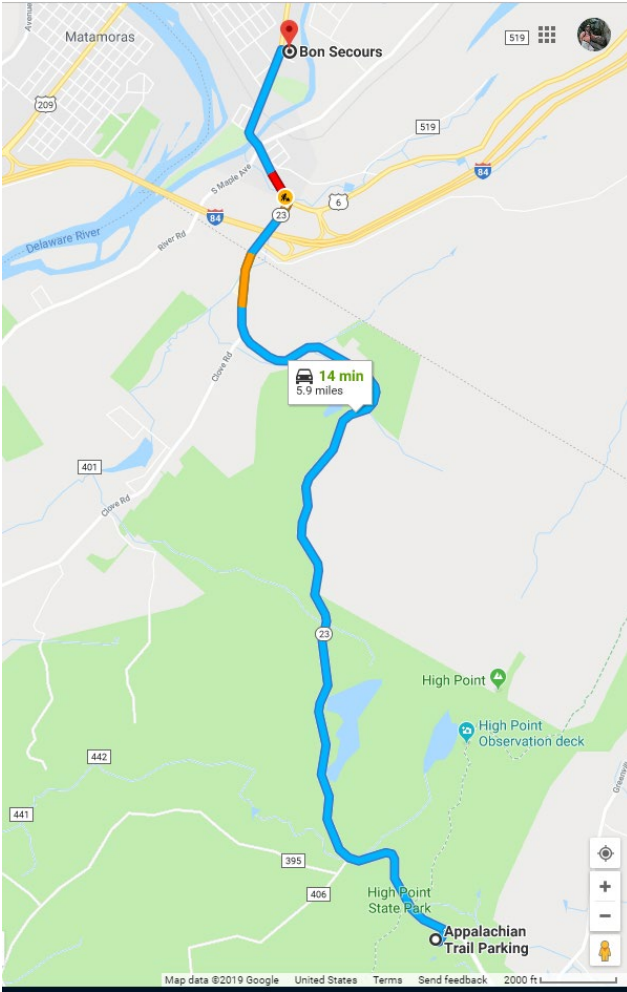
ICE CREAM STOP: Stop at [Milford Dairy Bar](#): 307 W. Harford St, Milford, PA 18337 | (570) 296-6337 for Ice Cream. It is on the right as you are passing through Milford.



For Environmental Emergencies: The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has a toll-free telephone hotline number you can use to report environmental incidents, abuse, and complaints in New Jersey or impacting it. The **1-877-WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)** number can be used in the continental United States.
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/warndep.htm>

To report life-threatening and environmental emergencies, call 9-1-1, local police, or the DEP Hotline.

Nearest Hospital: [Bon Secours Community Hospital](#) 160 East Main Street, Port Jervis, NY 12771 | 845.858.7000



11MIN 5.7MI

1. Turn left out of the AT Parking lot to go northwest on State Route 23/NJ-23 toward the Park Office (Crossing into NY).
 - a. Then 4.57 miles, 4.57 total miles
2. State Route 23/NJ-23 becomes County Hwy-15.
 - a. Then 0.32 miles, 4.89 total miles
3. Turn left onto E. Main St./US-6 W.
 - a. Then 0.85 miles, 5.74 total miles
4. Bon Secours Community Hospital | 160 E. Main St., Port Jervis, NY 12771-2114, 160 E. MAIN ST. is on the right.
 - a. Your destination is just past Skinner St.
 - b. If you reach Pennsylvania Ave., you have gone about 0.2 miles too far.