



Ascutney Trails Association  
P.O. Box 246, Brownsville, Vermont 05037

## Weathersfield Trail

The Weathersfield Trail has undergone two major changes in route since it was initially opened in 1906. Now the trail is protected and should not undergo any more reroutings since the first section is now located on land purchased by the state in 1989 specifically for the trail. The upper section is on land in the West Windsor Town Forest. The trail is blazed in blue and is one-half mile longer than the original trail.

Follow the trail through mixed hardwoods from the parking lot. The trail soon turns left and after a gentle climb turns right (eastward) onto an old skid road. Cross the brook and shortly afterward, bear right at a blue blaze and ascend moderately to Little Cascade Falls (dry at times). Cross the brook at the top of the falls and climb more steeply via switchbacks (please stay on the trail) through tall spruce and hemlock to the lower end of a gorge (0.5mi), beautiful in all seasons with its high moss covered rock walls. Re-cross the brook and climb a short steep section with the help of a wooden stairway to the first viewpoint (1,520 ft). A second view from bare rock slabs is a short moderate climb away.

From here the trail traverses westward over gently rolling, often grassy, terrain for a total of about a half a mile. Intermittent views through the trees can be seen, particularly when the leaves are down. (Snowshoers, there is one pronounced downhill. Don't be misled or doubtful).

Just after crossing an old skid road, the trail crosses a level, grassy, hardwoods section which has a clear view just before swinging right and entering a stand of conifers. The sound of Crystal Cascade now becomes audible. The trail continues through spruce and hemlock, descending slightly, and reaching **Crystal Cascade** and a pleasant view in 1.2 mi. (1,510ft).

The Crystal Cascade, an 84 foot sheer cliff, is a geologist's delight since it marks a stretch of the mountains ring dike origin. It is an exposed section of that rough circle around the mountain where molten magma oozed up to form its nordmarkite core. It digested much of the softer rock it encountered, but some fragments remained suspended as the magma cooled. They show up especially well in the little cascades above the main waterfall.

After reaching the brook just above the falls, the trail turns sharp right and continues up the east side of the brook. It then jogs right, and ascends steeply through a stand of spruce and hemlock, comes back into hardwoods, descends slightly to cross Cascade Brook, and then rises to meet the old woods road which it follows as far as Halfway Brooks (dry at times) at 1.7mi.

The trail now jogs left and begins a moderate-to-steep climb with several elongated switchbacks, first through deciduous forest then conifers with occasional stands of white birch. As the trail makes its last traverse westward, views southward through the trees can be seen. On a clear day, the view includes Mt. Monadnock.



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The grade eases as the trail swings right (north) and begins to zigzag along a nearly level stretch, soon arriving at a Wet Weather Bypass. This option takes off right and loops out and back to rejoin the main trail just before **Gus's Lookout**. The main trail continues to the bare rock slabs of the Lookout (2.3 mi., 2,690 ft) with wonderful views to the south as well as a look at the summit media towers while a second bypass skirts to the left of it, going through the trees.

The trail begins to climb once again, passing below and then above a huge lone boulder before coming to a sign marking the location of dependable **West Peak Spring** (2,750 ft.). It then continues to climb moderately via switchbacks, finally arriving at a grassy, more open area just before the side trail to West Peak (2.6mi). The West Peak lookouts (2,940 ft) with their excellent view are just a short 0.1 mi. away via the side trails.

It's now a short distance around the northwest side of the ridge, ascending moderately most of the way, but with a short, final steep pitch to the ridge top. Turn left to go to the observation platform; right to the true summit (2.9 mi, 3,150ft).

***Distances from the parking lot to:***

- Little Cascade Falls: 0.4 mi.
- Crystal Cascade: 1.1 mi.
- Halfway Brooks: 1.7 mi.
- Gus's Lookout: 2.3 mi.
- West Peak cutoff: 2.5 mi.
- Mt. Ascutney Summit: 2.9 mi, 2,062 ft. ascent