



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

## Windsor Trail

Once arriving at the trailhead, the trail itself is marked with white blazes. A double blaze means a sharp turn or “caution.” The side trails are marked in blue. It is 2.5 miles to the Stone Hut site on the north summit, a climb of 2,520 feet which takes 3 to 4 hours on the average. There are two 39-degree cold springs about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way up, with no dependable water above that. The going is steep although with good footing and no rock climbing.

From the Trailhead (0.0 mi., 630ft), the trail follows the southern boundary of an open field, passing a snowmobile trail part way up on the left. Beyond the field’s upper edge, it passes through birches and pines, enters the woods, and at 0.2 mi. Goes through a small clearing which was an old sawmill site. Immediately afterward, the trail enters forest with a ravine on the left and begins an increasingly steep climb on a wide woods road (bulldozed out of the old trail in 1965) to a short spur on the left (0.8 mi, 1,280ft.) which leads to **Gerry’s Falls** where Mountain Brook tumbles over a cascade of slippery granite ledges.

George Nelson Gerry (1886-1931), a noted ornithologist, was one of many who liked to hike the mountain and fish its brooks. He asked that his ashes be scattered in one of them. A bronze plaque with the following inscription serves as a memorial:

*The truth at the heart of nature  
The light that is not of day  
Why seek it afar forever  
When it cannot be lifted away?*

Continuing past the side trail, the road soon crosses the right branch of the brook and then follows the left fork upstream a short distance before swinging to the right (0.9mi) and slabbing westerly along a ridge until it re-crosses the right fork (1.1mi, 1,710ft). The bank to this point was so steep that the first builders used “corduroyed bridges” to cross several of the rockiest gullies. Here, originally, as a great corduroyed trestle, 6 to 8 feet high on the down side. The trail curves around to the left and a few hundred feet later takes a sharp left across 2 tiny brooks. At 1.27 miles the trail makes a sharp right away from the brook. (You are now more than halfway to the Stone Hut site.) The trail then continues over and around a low shoulder of the mountain to Halfway Spring (1.6mi, 2,260ft) and the site of the Chase and Carpenter loggers’ cabin.

Here there is a choice of routes of about equal length (0.2mi). The original 1857 route (abandoned after the 1883 forest fire and reopened in 1968) is off to the right. This alternative route continues to a spring and **Log Shelter** (1.75mi), built in 1968 by the Ascutney Trails Association. The open faced, 14x16 foot Log Shelter and inside fireplace were built by some 20 ATA members in the summer of 1968. A floor was added in 2004. It rejoins the main trail a little above the Log Shelter (1.8mi).

From Halfway Spring, the main trail (1903 route) turns sharply to the left and ascends steeply to the south to a junction with the **Blood Rock Trail** (1.7mi). Climbing steeply, the blue-blazed Blood Rock Trail reaches Blood Rock in about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile. In 1925, a landslide bared this big



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expanse of white rock, clearly visible from Route 5 north of Windsor. Some young men set out at once to locate it, taking various tools with which to be the first to carve their initials upon it. One of them, Houghton Hoisington, hammered with a hand axe. The head came off. While he was pounding it back on again, his hand slipped. The blood cut his wrist and blood spurted everywhere. Hence the name: Blood Rock. Here there are good views to the north. The trail then swings west, climbs a shallow draw, climbs up a steep bank and rejoins the Windsor Trail (0.5mi).

Turning to the right at the Blood Rock Trail Junction, the **Windsor Trail** (1903 route) follows a long, straight stretch on an easy grade. At the next switchback it rejoins the 1857 route as it climbs past the upper end of the Blood Rock Trail (2.0mi), continues up to the junction of the Futures Trail (2.2mi), then goes through Spruce Tunnel and on to a side trail (the Castle Rock Trail) on the left (2.4mi) which leads to **Castle Rock**, a broad slab-sided table from which the summit ledges and the Connecticut River Valley may be viewed. Here in this narrow ravine, once stood Sumaco Lodge, made of poles and boughs by some workers at the Sullivan Machine Company in Claremont. A Boy Scout shelter once stood down here as well. A short distance beyond, the trail is joined from the right by the Brownsville Trail, with which continues to the open area of the Stone Hut site (2.5mi, 3,110ft) on the summit ridge. From this site, the trail continues through the woods past the Weathersfield Trail junction to the true summit (2.7mi, 3,509 ft). Just before the junction with the Weathersfield Trail is an observation tower (built in 1989) with a 360° panoramic view of the White Mountains, Green Mountains, Berkshires, and Taconics.

***Distance from the parking lot to:***

- Gerry's Falls side trail: 0.8 mi.
- Halfway Spring: 1.6 mi.
- Log Shelter via alternate route: 1.75 mi.
- Blood Rock Side Trail: 1.7 mi.
- Futures Trail junction: 2.2 mi.
- Castle Rock side trail: 2.4 mi.
- Stone Hut: 2.5 mi.
- Summit: 2.7 mi. 2,520 ft. ascent