



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

Brownsville Trail

Once arriving at the Brownsville Trailhead there is a parking area available with a sign at the upper end marking the start of the trail. The adjacent landowner requests that ALL DOGS be kept on leash until well onto the trail.

While this is a “family” trail, a few parts, such as above the quarry and near the bottom, are steep and rough. Be sure to bring water as there is no spring on the trail.

White blazes mark the trail which proceeds up the field and soon enters the woods. Follow it on a moderate grade up the mountainside to a steep section of about 200 feet after which the trail joins the Norcross Quarry Road (0.3mi) where it levels out to an easy grade and reaches the former Norcross granite quarry in 1.1 miles (1,420ft). Features of the quarry include enormous derrick booms of Carolina pine, the web of rusty steel cable used to anchor and to move them and an endless amount of waste rock or grout -- just right for the porcupine dens! Slabs of this grout, where supported just right, go “BOING!” when struck.

Beyond the grout pile, the trail turns sharply left and climbs steeply, up through boulders and ramparts, crosses a rocky chute, then eases off. Soon a short side trail (1.2mi), marked in blue, leads to the Quarry Top Lookout, 150 feet above the base. Prominent in the view is the village of Brownsville and a straight line of trees and fence rows -- the Windsor/West Windsor town line, one of the old “range lines” by which Vermont was originally divided into holdings.

The trail now follows a short saddle then climbs moderately through an open evergreen forest. As it does so, glimpses of ski runs off to the right can be had. When the trail nears the top-most ski run (1.6mi), it makes several switchbacks, partly over rough terrain, to gain Knee Lookout (2.0 mi, 2,370ft) with its easterly view of Windsor, the covered bridge and the Connecticut River Valley. The sharp division at the crest between evergreens and hardwoods was caused by the 1938 hurricane: evergreens, then covering the south side were flattened, whereupon hardwoods were the first to make a comeback.

Entering hardwoods, the trail ascends moderately via switchbacks along the ridge’s north flank to reach the North Peak (2.3mi, 2,660ft, no view). The trail then follows the ridge on an easy grade, through hurricane slash and a burned over area, to the North Peak Lookout (2.4mi). In addition to the westerly view, Brownsville Rock can be seen to the south up on the summit ridge.

After a short, easy stretch, the trail, at 2.5 miles, bears left, switchbacks up through the hardwoods, hits the escarpment at a big slab, passes on through a “tunnel” of thick spruce, along the ridge, and then joins the Windsor Trail (2.9mi) at a sharp bend just below all the bare rock leading to the Stone Hut site.

From the Hut site (3.0mi, 3,110ft) take a short side trail to the right to find Brownsville Rock, with its view to the north and west. Note the three-way split to the front right of the Rock, up top.



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Years ago some Dartmouth students sank a deep hole in the granite, chinked it full of black powder, and then set it off. Perhaps they were hoping to stir up a little excitement in Brownsville -- but without success. On a clear day, Killington, Camels Hump, Pico, and Mansfield can be seen. The small trickle-fed pool down under the Rock provides some tolerable, but not dependable water. There is also a little shelter down there, under the overhang, along with the entrance to the "Lemon Squeezer."

From the Hut site, it's a short, easy walk south along the summit ridge to the viewing platform located just before the actual summit (3.2mi, 3,150ft).

Distances from the parking lot to:

- Norcross Quarry Road: 0.3 mi.
- Norcross Quarry: 1.1 mi.
- Quarry Top Lookout: 1.2 mi.
- Knee Lookout: 2.0 mi.
- North Peak Lookout: 2.4 mi.
- Windsor Trail Junction: 2.9 mi.
- Stone Hut site: 3.0 mi.
- Mt. Ascutney summit: 3.2 mi., 2,400 ft ascent