



Hiking the Sullivan Catskills

a trail guide for every pace





The trails here do not perform for you. They invite you in.

Sullivan County hides its trails the way it hides its best spots: in plain sight, down a gravel road, past the farm stand and around the bend. Wide marshes. Hemlock hollows. Ridgelines that open to the sky. Waterfalls that sound before they come into view. This county rewards the walker who pays attention.

The guide below covers trails for every ability level, from a half-mile waterfall stroll to an all-day summit push on Balsam Lake Mountain. Some begin in the parking lot of a state campground. Others find their trailhead at the end of an unmarked gravel road. All of them offer something real.

Pull on your boots. The river sets the pace from here.

How to Read This Guide

Each trail entry uses the following information to help you choose the right walk for the day.

Easy	Short distance, minimal elevation gain. Accessible to most hikers including families and beginners.
Moderate	Some elevation gain and/or longer distance. Good fitness helps. Most hikers in reasonable shape handle these well.
Strenuous	Significant elevation gain, steeper terrain, longer distance. Come prepared and take your time.
Very Strenuous	Long distance and/or major elevation gain. Experienced hikers with solid conditioning. Full-day commitment. Start early.

All trails in this guide are located within Sullivan County, New York. No activity fees or advance reservations are required for any trail listed here.

Note on Dogs: All trails listed here welcome leashed dogs. Please clean up after your pup.



Easy Trails

Big nature in small doses. These walks ask little and give a lot: waterfalls, lake loops, wetland wanders. Bring the kids. Bring the grandparents. Bring whoever needs a breath of clean Catskill air.

Alder Lake Loop

Ability Level: Easy — 1.7 miles round trip

A gentle wander around a gem of a Catskill lake. Stonework ruins of the old Coykendall Mansion greet you at the trailhead. The path curves clockwise around the water, crossing small bridges over inlet streams. Popular for fishing and camping too. Families with young hikers love it here.

Type: Loop

Est. Time: 1 hour

Elevation Gain: Minimal

Highlights: Historic mansion ruins, quiet lake, beaver activity, bridges over inlet streams

Location: Alder Creek Road off Beaverkill Rd, Livingston Manor area

Parking: Large lot at end of access road (gate may be closed seasonally; parking outside possible)

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: The access road is not always well maintained. Check conditions before visiting.

Basha Kill: Tower Trail

Ability Level: Easy — 2.3 miles round trip

Flat and wide, this trail rolls through one of the largest freshwater wetlands in the Hudson Valley. The Basha Kill draws serious birders from across the region. Watch great blue herons lift off in slow arcs. Listen for red-winged blackbirds in the reeds. The observation platform near the mile mark rewards with a wide marsh panorama.

Type: Out and Back

Est. Time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Elevation Gain: Negligible

Highlights: Observation tower with marsh views, exceptional birding, wetland wildlife

Location: Haven Road off Route 209, Wurtsboro

Parking: Parking area at end of Haven Road (left off Route 209, approx. 1.7 miles south of Exit 113)

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Trail can be wet and muddy. Wear waterproof footwear after rain.



Russell Brook Falls

Russell Brook Falls

Ability Level: Easy — .3 miles round trip

Short, sweet and sonorous. This half-mile walk through hemlock shadow leads straight to the sound of rushing water. Russell Brook tumbles over a mossy ledge into a plunge pool below. Come in spring when snowmelt pushes the falls to full voice.

Type: Out and Back

Est. Time: 30 minutes

Elevation Gain: Minimal

Highlights: Waterfall with upper and lower viewing angles; peaceful hemlock forest

Location: Russell Brook Road off Morton Hill Road, near Livingston Manor

Parking: Lower parking area on Russell Brook Road

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Russell Brook Road is unpaved and not always well maintained. Drive slowly.

Walnut Mountain: West Lake Loop

Ability Level: Easy — 1.0 miles round trip

A short, satisfying spin on wide carriageways through hardwood forest. Walnut Mountain is a quiet local favorite. The West Lake Loop gives first-timers a low-commitment taste of the trails here with enough nature to feel like a real walk in the woods.

Type: Loop

Est. Time: 30 to 45 minutes

Elevation Gain: Minimal

Highlights: Shaded hardwood forest, peaceful atmosphere, gentle terrain

Location: Main parking area, Walnut Mountain Park

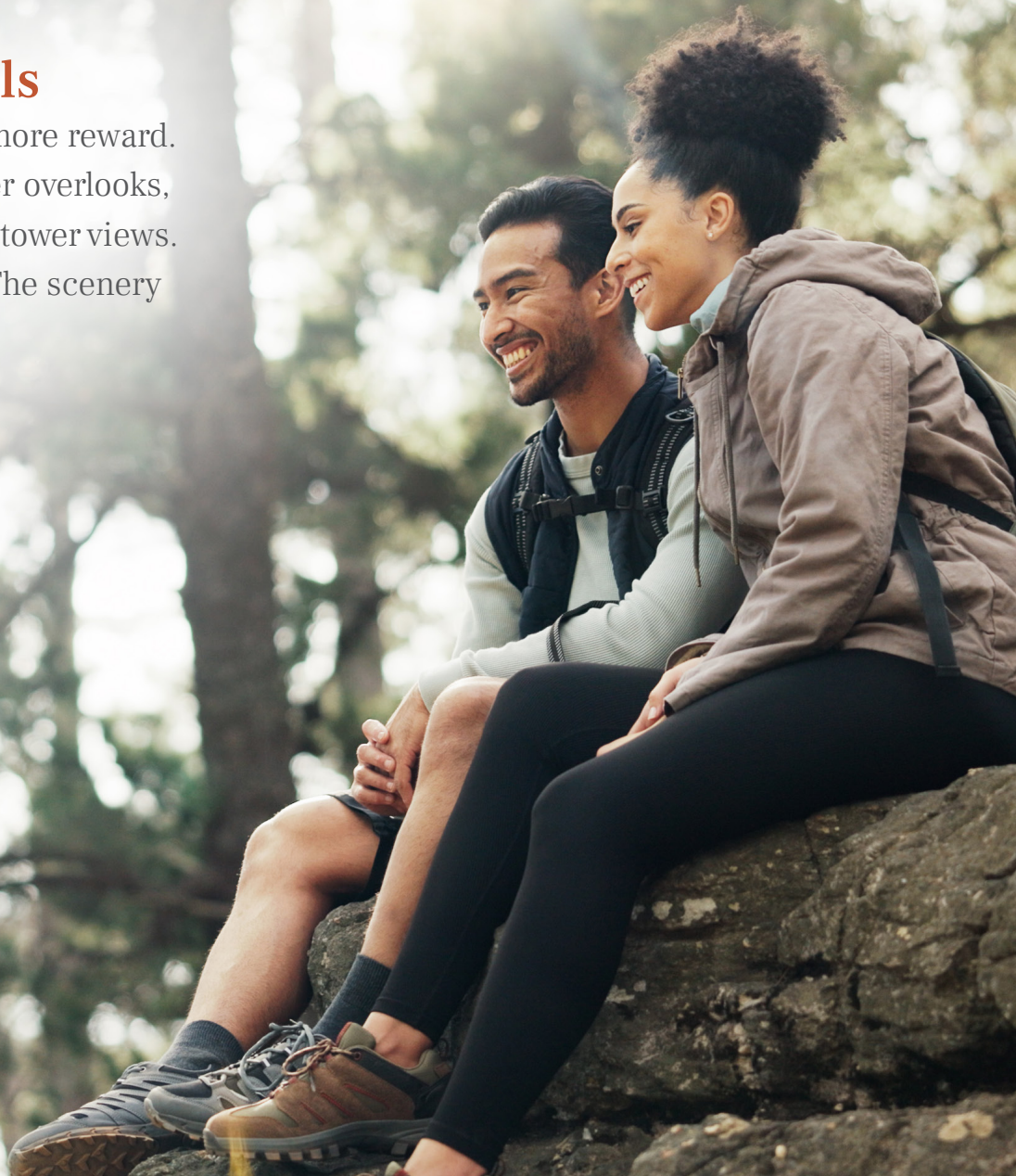
Parking: Main lot at trailhead

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Multiple loops available for those who want to extend their outing.

Moderate Trails

A little more hill, a lot more reward. These trails deliver river overlooks, waterfall loops and fire tower views. You earn the scenery. The scenery earns the walk.



Jensen Ledges

Ability Level: Moderate — 2.1 miles round trip

A short but dramatic hike to a series of rocky ledges above the Delaware River's Big Bend. The views down to the water are the kind that make you stop mid-sentence. A cascading stream crosses the trail just before the ledges. Stone cairns mark the first overlook. Wild and a little wild-feeling. Worth every step.

Type: Out and Back

Est. Time: 1.5 to 2 hours

Elevation Gain: Significant gain over short distance

Note: Bouchouxville Road is scenic but rough. All-wheel drive with higher clearance recommended. Timber rattlesnakes are native to this area. Stay on the trail and do not reach into rock crevices.

Highlights: Delaware River panorama from stone ledges, cascading stream, historic stone quarry remnants

Location: Bouchouxville Road off Lordville Road, north of Long Eddy near Route 97

Parking: Parking area at end of Bouchouxville Rd

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Neversink: Denton and Mullet Brook Falls Loop

Ability Level: Moderate

4.6 miles round trip

Two waterfalls for the price of one. This loop through the Neversink Unique Area moves through laurel groves and evergreen forest to Denton Falls on the Neversink River, then swings back via Mullet Brook Falls. The river sings the whole way. Muddy in wet weather. Worth it anyway.

Type: Loop

Est. Time: 2.5 to 3.5 hours

Elevation Gain: Moderate with some steeper pitches

Highlights: Denton Falls on the Neversink River, Mullet Brook Falls, laurel thickets, bridged stream crossings

Location: Katrina Falls Road off Route 17, Exit 109 (east or west)

Parking: Small lot at end of Katrina Falls Road (3.5 miles from Exit 109E)

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Bridges can be slippery from rain and moss. Use caution. River rocks near falls are slippery; current runs fast especially after rain.

Red Hill Fire Tower

Ability Level: Moderate

2.6 miles (round trip via Dinch Road)

The climb earns the view. Red Hill rises steeply through mixed forest to a restored fire tower that volunteers staff on summer weekends. Climb the cab for a 360-degree sweep of the Catskill highlands. On a clear day the horizon seems to go on forever. One of five restored Catskill fire towers and well worth the ascent.

Type: Out and Back

Est. Time: 2 to 3 hours

Elevation Gain: 840 feet gain (20% average grade near summit)

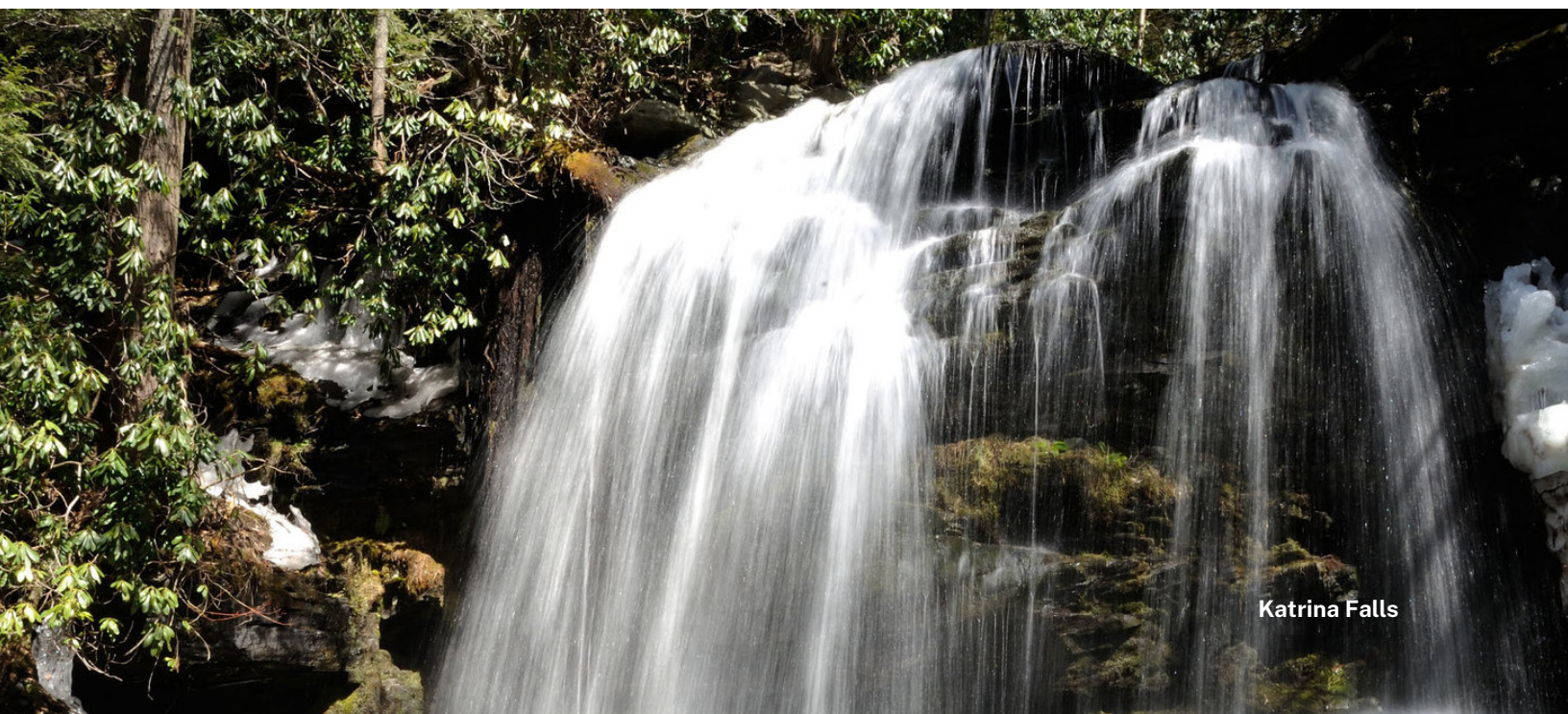
Highlights: Restored fire tower with 360-degree views, historic observer's cabin, volunteer stewards on summer weekends

Location: Dinch Road off Red Hill Road, near Grammsville

Parking: Small parking area at end of Dinch Road (unpaved; SUV or high-clearance vehicle recommended)

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Dinch Road is sometimes gated. If closed, add 0.6 miles each way from roadside parking at Rudolph Road intersection. A second trailhead on Denning Road near Claryville offers a longer but equally scenic approach.



Katrina Falls

Trout Pond Out and Back

Ability Level: Moderate

3.0 miles round trip

Russell Brook Falls greets you at the start. Trout Pond rewards you at the end. In between: a gentle climb through mixed forest past wildflower pockets and stream crossings. Swim (or fish) at the pond. A classic Catskill half-day. Bring lunch.

Type: Out and Back

Est. Time: 2 to 2.5 hours

Elevation Gain: Gradual with some uphill

Highlights: Russell Brook Falls, Trout Pond with sandy beach area, dam overlook

Location: Russell Brook Road off Morton Hill Rd, near Livingston Manor

Parking: Lower parking area on Russell Brook Rd

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Russell Brook Road is unpaved. Drive slowly.

Tusten Mountain Loop

Ability Level: Moderate

3.1 miles round trip

Start at the Delaware River and climb through a landscape shaped by centuries of quarrying. Stone piles, old quarry pits and a river overlook mark the way. The Delaware glints through the trees from the lookout at the high point. History underfoot and big water below. A true Sullivan Catskills walk.

Type: Loop

Est. Time: 1.5 to 2.5 hours

Elevation Gain: Moderate gain with some steeper spots

Highlights: Delaware River overlook, historic quarry sites, lean-to and tent camping nearby

Location: Crawford Road off Route 97, between Narrowsburg and Barryville

Parking: Lot at end of Crawford Road, 0.3 miles from Route 97

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: Tusten Road is closed to vehicles from December through March.



Delaware River



Strenuous Trails

For hikers who know their legs and trust the climb. The summit views on Balsam Lake Mountain are some of the best in the Catskills. Take your time. Bring more water than you think you need.

Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower

Ability Level: Strenuous

4.3 miles round trip

The westernmost peak in the Catskill Park. The fire tower at the summit delivers a full-compass view with nothing blocking the sky in any direction. The climb is steep and honest. Earn it. The Catskill Peaks stretch east. The Delaware River Valley opens to the west. Balsam Lake Mountain stands alone up here, and the view proves it.

Type: Out and Back / Loop

Est. Time: 3 to 4 hours

Elevation Gain: 1,208 feet gain (ascent averages over 25% grade on the steepest section)

Highlights: Fire tower with unobstructed 360-degree views, westernmost Catskill summit, lean-to near summit, spring on upper trail

Location: End of Beaverkill Rd via Exit 96 off Route 17, through Lew Beach and Turnwood

Parking: Parking area at end of Beaverkill Rd

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: A demanding ascent. Take breaks and bring plenty of water. Fire tower cab open weekends in summer.

Very Strenuous Trails

All-day adventures on serious terrain. These trails reward experienced hikers with wild ridgelines, deep gorges and waterfalls that take a whole morning to reach. Plan ahead. Start early. Go slow.



Alder Lake to Millbrook Ridge (Beecher Lake Overlook)

Ability Level: Very Strenuous

8.6 miles round trip

Start at a serene mountain lake and climb to one of the Catskill Highest Hundred. Beaver meadows line the lower trail. The upper ridge breaks through the treeline at 3,450 feet. At the far end of the ridge a lookout reveals Beecher Lake below, home to the Dai Bosatsu Zendo Buddhist monastery. The land here carries a long history of contemplation. Hikers feel it too.

Type: Out and Back

Est. Time: 5 to 7 hours

Elevation Gain: 1,280 feet gain (Millbrook Ridge reaches 3,450 feet, on the Catskill Highest Hundred list)

Highlights: Alder Lake, beaver ponds, beaver meadows, Beecher Lake Overlook, Catskill Highest Hundred summit, historic Coykendall Mansion ruins at trailhead

Location: Alder Creek Rd off Beaverkill Rd, via Exit 96 off Route 17

Parking: Large lot at Alder Lake trailhead

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: A full-day commitment. Start early. Bring plenty of food and water. Trail can be wet and muddy. Portions of Millbrook Ridge Trail are steep with loose footing.

Neversink: Three Falls

Ability Level: Very Strenuous

8.4 miles round trip

Three waterfalls. Eight-plus miles. Real Catskill terrain. This is the full Neversink Unique experience. Denton Falls, High Falls and Mullet Brook Falls each have their own character. High Falls demands a steep descent to the river and a steep climb back out. The reward is a roaring curtain of water in a deep gorge. Save this one for a clear day and a willing body.

Type: Loop

Est. Time: 5 to 7 hours

Elevation Gain: Several significant uphills; descent to High Falls drops nearly 500 feet

Highlights: Denton Falls, High Falls (dramatic gorge), Mullet Brook Falls, deep forest, bridged stream crossings

Location: Katrina Falls Road off Route 17, Exit 109

Parking: Small lot at end of Katrina Falls Road

Dogs Allowed: Yes, leashed

Note: The descent to High Falls is steep with loose rock and pine needles. River rocks are slippery. Current moves fast especially in spring. This is a serious hike. Plan accordingly.

What to wear and bring

The Catskills have their own weather. Fog settles in the hollows. Rain comes fast off the ridges. The trails run wet into June. Dress and pack accordingly, and the woods will take good care of you.

Footwear: Wear trail runners or hiking boots with ankle support and good traction. Waterproof shoes are worth it in the Catskills, where mud season runs well into spring and wet rocks are the rule near any stream.

Layers: The Catskills run cool even in summer, especially at elevation. Pack a moisture-wicking base layer, a mid-layer fleece and a lightweight rain shell. Weather moves fast on the ridges.

Water: Bring more than you think you need: at least 0.5 liters per mile. Hydration packs or insulated bottles both work well. Do not drink from streams without filtration.

Food & Snacks: Carry energy-dense snacks such as trail mix, nuts or energy bars for any hike over two miles. For longer outings, pack a real lunch.

Navigation: Download the trail map before you leave. Cell service is unreliable in much of Sullivan County. Carry a paper map or screenshot the route.

Sun Protection: Sunscreen and a hat matter even on overcast days. Bring sunglasses on open ridge trails and fire tower summits.

Insect Repellent: Ticks are active spring through fall in the Catskills. Apply repellent before heading out and do a full-body tick check after. Tuck pants into socks on brushy trails.

First Aid: Carry a basic kit with bandages, blister treatment and any personal medications. Know where you are and who to call. Emergency: 911.

Headlamp: Always pack one, even for day hikes. Hikes run long. The forest goes dark fast.

Trekking Poles: Optional but helpful on steeper trails like Red Hill and Balsam Lake Mountain.

Leave no trace

The land here belongs to everyone who comes after you.

Sullivan County's trails stay wild because people treat them that way. Follow these seven principles and leave the forest better than you found it.

Plan Ahead and Prepare: Know the trail, check the weather and pack the right gear. Arrive self-sufficient.

Stay on the Trail: Walk single-file on established paths. Shortcutting tramples native plants and widens erosion. Muddy trails need rest, not detours.

Pack It In, Pack It Out: Every wrapper, core and peel comes home with you. Leave the forest cleaner than you found it.

Leave What You Find: Rocks, wildflowers, feathers and fungi stay where they are. Photographs last longer.

Minimize Campfire Impact: Use existing fire rings only. Never leave a fire unattended. Cold and dead means cold to the touch.

Respect Wildlife: Watch from a distance. Do not feed animals. Store food securely. Timber rattlesnakes live on some Sullivan Catskills trails. Give them space and they will give you the same.

Be Considerate of Others: Yield to uphill hikers. Keep voices low. Let nature be the loudest thing out there.

Pick Up After Your Dog: Dogs are welcome on every trail in this guide. Bag and pack out waste. Other hikers and the ecosystem will thank you.



What more awaits?

Come see us.

For more on trails, events, lodging and everything else worth doing in the Sullivan Catskills, visit sullivancatskills.com.

Trail data sourced from sullivancountyhiker.org. Conditions change seasonally.
Always check current trail status before heading out.