

Day: Friday	Start Time: 8:30 am	End Time: 4:30 pm
Co-Leader: Niles Seldon	Co-Leader: Ariel Kohane	Limit: 15 people
Transportation: Van B	Driver: Niles Seldon	Radios: 2 / First Aid Kit: 1
Fees: none	Travel Distance: 32 Miles One Way	Travel Time: 45 Min One Way

Hike to Stairway to Heaven on the Appalachian Trail

Gorgeous and diverse section of the Appalachian Trail through northern NJ.

Hike boardwalks, a suspension bridge, hardwood forest, fields of wildflowers, train tracks, a cow pasture, a boulder field... before steeply climbing 1100+FT the “Stairway to Heaven” to one of the best viewpoints in NJ: Pinwheel Vista. Once on top, the Kittatinny Mountains are visible in the distance, farms in the valley below, and on a clear day, High Point Monument. The turnaround and go back the way you came.



Moderate Hike. Trail surface ranges from super-duper-easy-peasy boardwalks to flat, hardpacked to dirt to serious rocky sections. The “Stairway to Heaven” is a series of rock slab steps with switch-backs up Wawayanda Mountain.

This is an out and back hike for a total of 7.4 miles. We will go at a moderate pace of about 2 miles an hour and a bit slower up the hill with periodic breaks. Hiking shoes or trail runners required. Depending on time and interest of the group, we could stop at [Heaven Hill Farm](#) to ice cream.

- Bring standard hiking gear: hat, food, water, hiking stick, and sturdy hiking shoes
- 45 Min / 32 Miles from Camp
- 8:30 am ~ 4:30 pm

Logistics:

- 8:30 am Depart from Camp
- 8:30 am – 9:15 am Travel from Camp to Trailhead
- 9:15 am – 9:30 am Gear Check and Prep
- 9:30 am -3:00 pm Hike
- 3:00 pm 4:30 pm Travel back to camp with a stop for ice cream

Map: #116 of the [North Jersey Trails](#) map set.

Books: [Hiking New Jersey](#) has a detailed description and a diagram of the 7.4-mile route. [50 Hikes in New Jersey](#) and [Hiking the Jersey Highlands](#) has the popular short route (only 2.5m round trip) from the Rt 94 parking up to Pinwheel. Route 94 parking provides for an alternate with a slightly shorter hike to be used if the Route 517 parking is full.

Restrooms: None. Gas stations and fast food in Butler (more options), or Vernon.

Parking: [41.234733, -74.480867](#) [Pochuck parking **SEE NOTES**]

Rt 287N to exit 52B for Rt. 23 Butler. Follow 23 for a while to 515N. It is left onto 644 (Vernon Crossing). Right on 517.

There is a sign with a hiker symbol, then another to denote the parking. Parking is on the right side of 517, along the shoulder. **Room is limited** – somewhere between 10-12 cars perhaps. Follow a slight path along the road to a trail kiosk and turn onto the start of the boardwalk.

–Alternate lot for boardwalk: [41.231694, -74.462111](#)

–Route 94 Parking lot (closer to Stairway/Pinwheel Vista): [41.219472, -74.455083](#)

****NOTE**** The Pochuck trailhead is in a residential area that is experiencing issues with the parking situation. Please be respectful of the residents and their property. As always, Leave No Trace – trash or otherwise. Parking illegally in the area may generate a ticket.

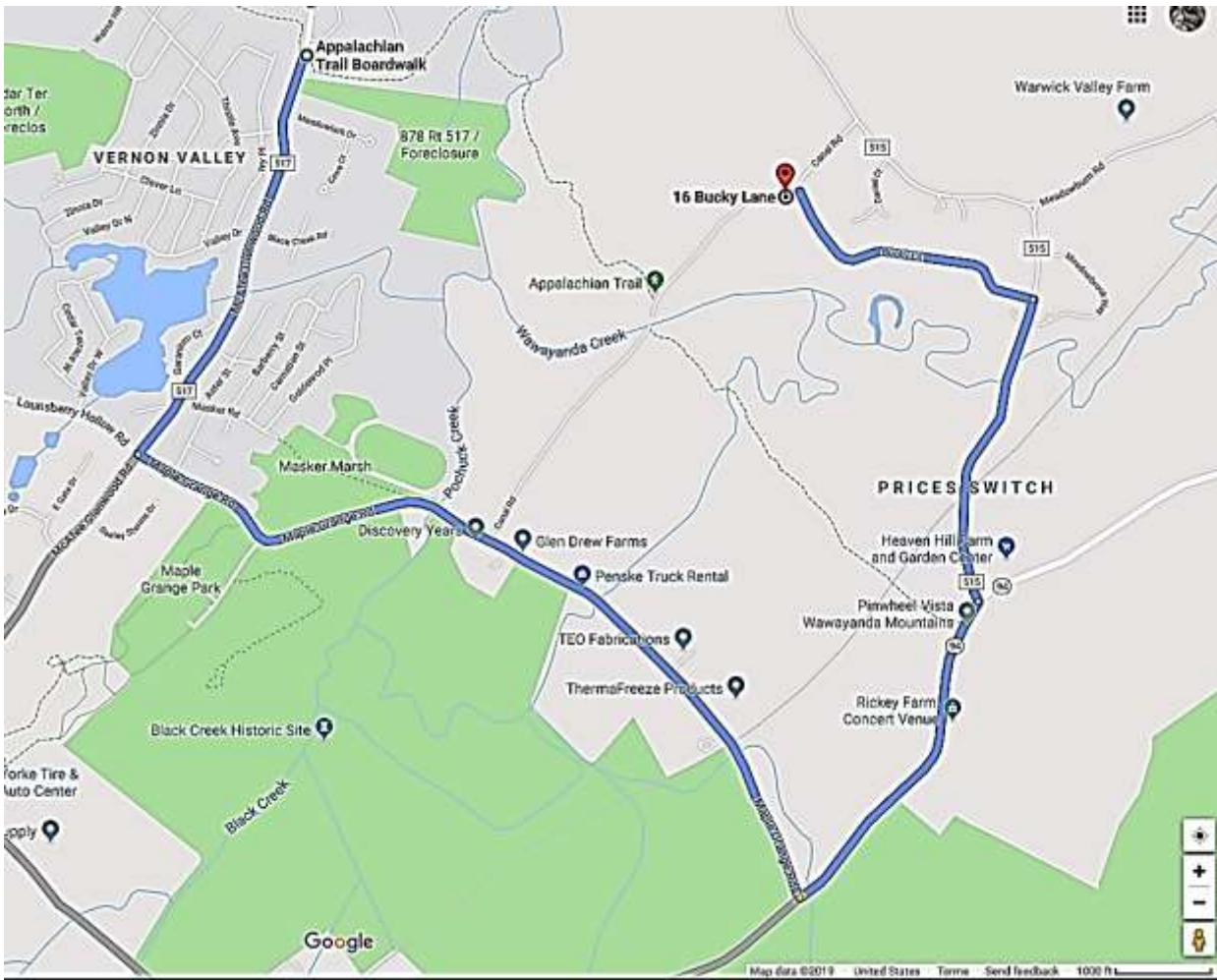
Weekends/Holidays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. NO PARKING is in effect on Carol Drive, Meadowlark Drive, Ann Place, Cove Court, Vlietstra Drive, Thistle Avenue, Ivy Place, and Old Glenwood Circle. Parking on these streets is permit-only for residents. If parking along Route 517, obey all posted signage and utilize the striped parking spaces.

Info: [Parking Restrictions By Pochuck Boardwalk](#); [Vernon Police Press Release](#) and ["Vernon puts parking restrictions on roads near Appalachian Trail"](#)

Notes: This is a popular area (everything from short hikes to AT thru-hikers), so don't expect solitude. We didn't see anyone from Canal Rd to Rt 94 however. That section was also the most overgrown; you'll want long pants or bug spray to be safe (though, oddly, bugs were almost non-existent on this hike.)

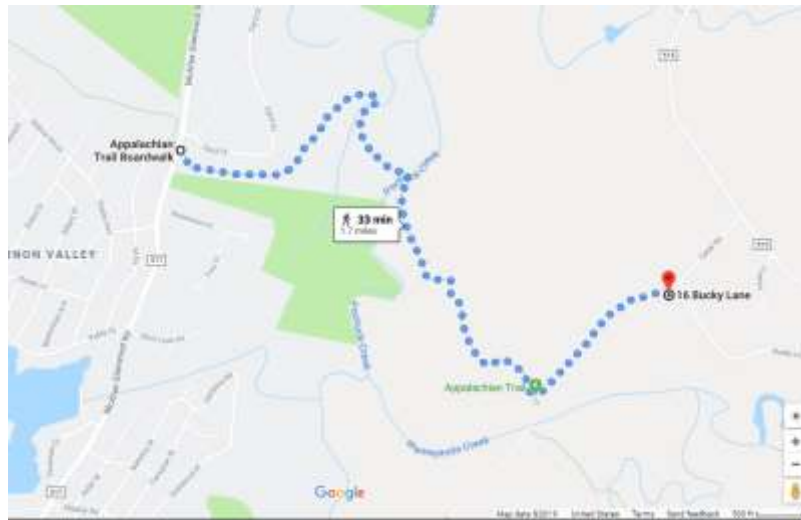
Until you start up the mountain, a large portion of this hike is in full sun. You do pop in and out of shady areas but plan accordingly in hot weather. Some road noise from 94 is the only reminder that you are still in NJ.

Directions to alternate parking from primary parking:



- Appalachian Trail Boardwalk**
Appalachian Trail, Glenwood, NJ 07419
- ↑ Head south on County Rd 517/McAfee Glenwood Rd toward Meadowlark Dr
 - Continue to follow County Rd 517
 - 0.3 mi
 - ↙ Turn left onto Maple Grange Rd
 - 1.2 mi
 - ↙ Turn left onto NJ-94 N
 - 0.7 mi
 - ↙ Turn left onto Prices Switch Rd
 - 0.6 mi
 - ↙ Turn left onto Bucky Ln
 - Destination will be on the left
 - 0.2 mi

16 Bucky Ln
Vernon Township, NJ 07462



Trail Description

Stairway to Heaven: Pochuck Valley to Pinwheel Vista

Hike Directions: *Overview:* AT (WHITE) – BLUE spur trail – then backtrack. Follow the WHITE blazes of the Appalachian trail for the entire route, except for the BLUE side trail to the vista.

0.0 – The first mile is easy hiking on a boardwalk through a marshy area. There may be turtles in the large green pool of muck crossed on a wooden bridge.

A little further, cross Pochuck Creek on the very large Pochuck Suspension Bridge.

1.0 – Boardwalk ends, start walking in a forest.

1.3 – Walkthrough an opening in a wooden fence to a wide woods' road. (The woods road is a bicycle path, look left, and there is a sign. On maps, the path may be marked "Canal Road.") Turn RIGHT down the wood's road, cross the bridge, then quickly turn LEFT to continue on the Appalachian Trail. [The woods road continues straight]

The Alternate Parking area is at the end of Canal Road (Woods Road). See pic above.

Continue through a mix of forest and fields with tall grass. Some areas are on plank walkways, and there is a wire fence to cross on a stile (steps over a fence). However, the last time we hiked this, the fence was down.

2.2 – Climb over or around a stile, immediately walk across railroad tracks, then climb another stile and enter a cow pasture that is crossed on wooden planking. Wawayanda Mountain – which you are going to hike up – is in front of you.

Be care when crossing tracks. LOOK BOTH WAYS AND LISTEN!!

There may be cows in the pasture, so be nice to them if they are there and watch where you step!

2.3 – Cross another stile (careful as you go over, you are practically standing in the road on the other side). Cross busy Rt 94 into the hiker's parking lot.

The trail is easy until the woods. Shortly after that, pass through a large boulder field, and then the trail becomes very rocky and starts to climb steeply. Notice that slabs of rock are placed as steps along the way – the "Stairway to Heaven."

3.1 – "Annie's Bluff" – a limited viewpoint, near a large rock after a bit of a steep climb. Easy to miss.

3.6 – At the HUGE pile of rocks (HUGE!!) turn LEFT and follow the BLUE spur trail. It's marked with BLUE blazes that are not obvious. This side trail can be easy to miss, look for the rocks. [There was a sign for the lookout at one point, and maybe there will be again...]

Follow BLUE and to a rock outcrop called Pinwheel Vista. There are several places to sit and take in the view of the mountains and the valley below. On a clear day, High Point Monument may be visible. When done, retrace your steps back to the parking lot.

Complete hike details, photos, and video on our [Stairway to Heaven](#) page.

Gorgeous and diverse section of the Appalachian Trail through northern NJ...

Hike first on boardwalks through marshy areas and over the Pochuck Suspension Bridge, then through hardwood forest, tall fields of wildflowers, over train tracks, a cow pasture (watch for cow pies!) and a boulder field.

All of this before steeply climbing up Wawayanda mountain on the “Stairway to Heaven” – lots of stone steps up and switchbacks – to one of the best viewpoints in NJ: Pinwheel Vista. You can see the Kittatinny Mountains in the distance, farms in the valley below, and on a clear day, High Point Monument is visible.



Boardwalk through Pochuck Valley



Pochuck Suspension Bridge



Canal Rd.



Cross a cow pasture on wooden planking. Wawayanda Mountain in front of you.



Boulder Field



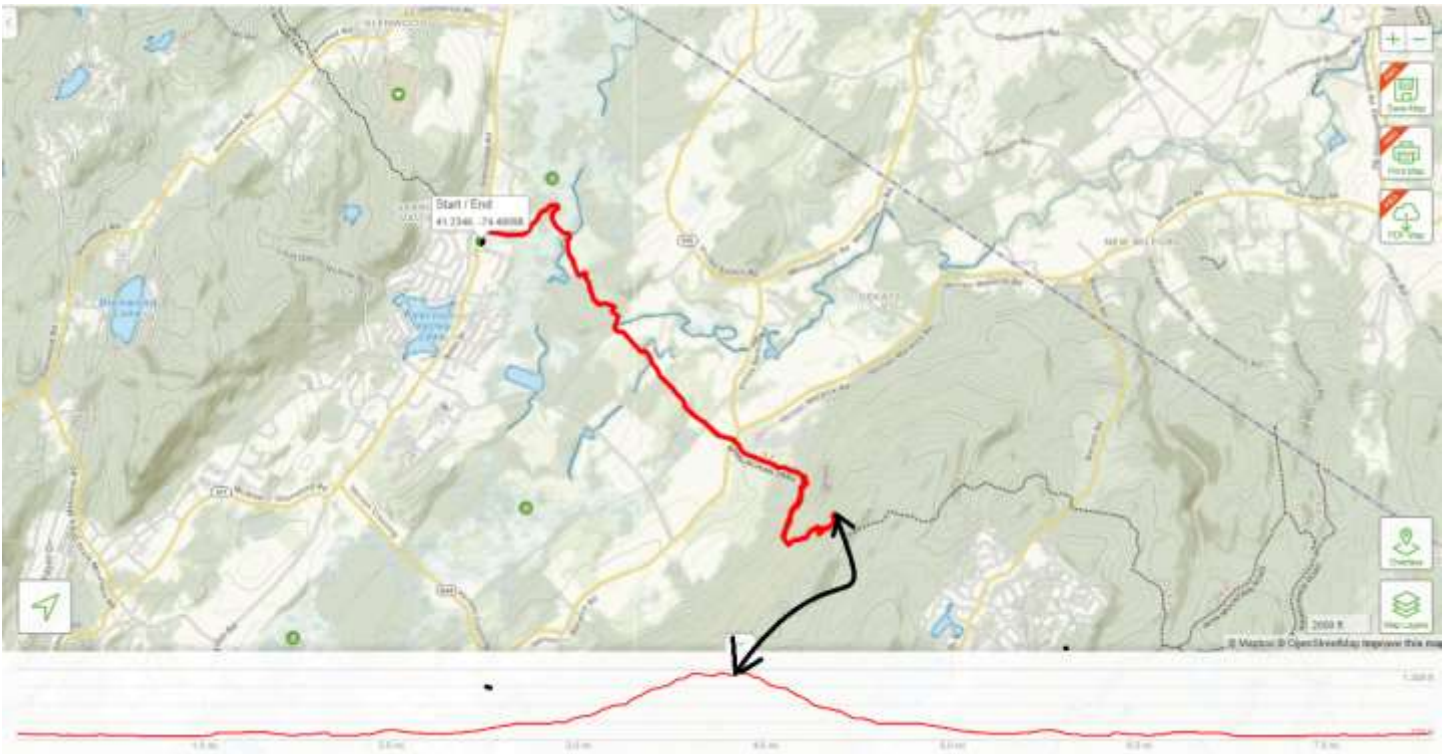
Part of Stairway to Heaven

Wildlife spotted: Tons of *adorable* turtles in the large pool of green muck in the boardwalk section. Make sure you look for them along the bank and swimming, they aren't obvious as they are covered in muck. Saw a small water snake there on the way back. Lots of turkey vultures catching thermals at Pinwheel Vista.

<https://www.njhiking.com/stairway-to-heaven-pochuck-valley-to-pinwheel-vista/>

Flora & Fauna

Marshland with tall grass, wildflowers, and Jersey hardwood forests characterize this area. There is also the occasional deer.



- Distance: 7.4 mile out and back
- Moving Time: 3 to 3.5 hours
- Total Time: 3 to 4 hours
- Avg Pace: 23:54
- Calories: 1,526
- Elevation Gain: 1,096 Ft
- High: 1,224'
- Low: 391'
- Grade Avg Grade: 5% (3°) / Max Grade: 52% (27°)

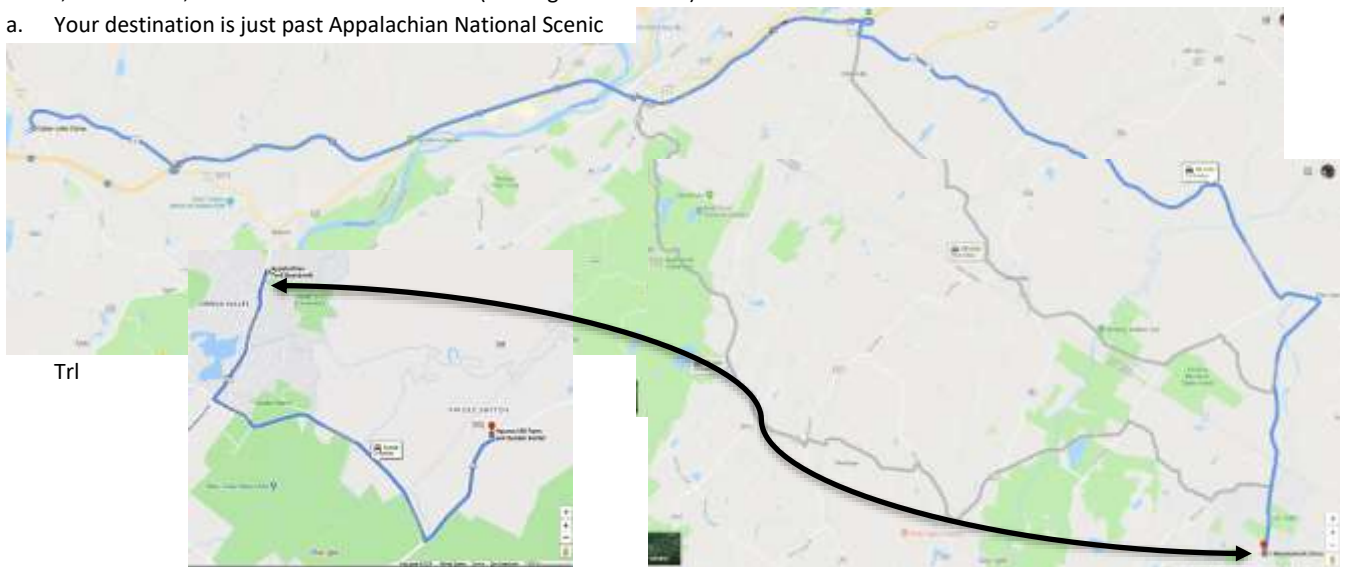
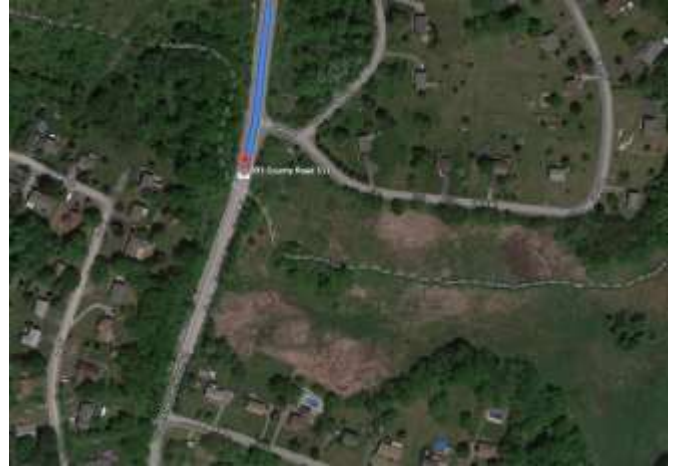
Websites of interest:

- <https://www.njhiking.com/best-hikes-in-nj-stairway-to-heaven-appalachian-trail/>
- <https://www.njhiking.com/stairway-to-heaven-pochuck-valley-to-pinwheel-vista/>
- https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g46885-d8671189-Reviews-Stairway_to_Heaven_Trail-Vernon_New_Jersey.html
- <https://operationalaska30.com/2016/03/17/trip-report-stairway-to-heaven-pochuck-valley-to-pinwheel-vista-nj-3-6-16/>
- [YouTube: njHiking.com](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjHiking.com)

JOE 2019 Information Packet for Hike to Stairway to Heaven: Pochuck Valley to Pinwheel Vista

From Cedar Lake Camp, 570 Sawkill Rd, Milford, PA 18337 to 41.234758, -74.480919 (near 1 Carol Dr., Glenwood, NJ 07418)
40MIN 40MI / Est. fuel cost: \$2.66

1. Head out camp and turn left out of driveway going northwest on Sawkill Rd toward Bridge Rd.
 - a. Then 0.21 miles 0.21 total miles
2. Take the 1st right onto Bridge Rd.
 - a. If you reach Rt. 6 you've gone about 0.2 miles too far
 - b. Then 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. Take the ramp to merge onto I-84 E toward Port Jervis (Crossing into New York).
 - a. Then 13.01 miles 16.07 total miles
5. Take the Mountain Rd exit, EXIT 2 in NY off Rt. I-84
 - a. Then 0.35 miles 16.42 total miles
6. Turn left onto Mountain Rd/County Hwy-35.
 - a. Then 0.21 miles 16.62 total miles
7. Turn left onto US Highway 6/US-6 E.
 - a. Then 1.10 miles 17.72 total miles
8. Turn right onto County Route 1/County Hwy-1.
 - a. County Route 1 is 0.2 miles past Grenville Turnpike. If you reach Breezy Ln, you've gone about 0.1 miles too far
 - b. Then 3.71 miles 21.44 total miles
9. Turn right onto Route 284/NY-284/County Hwy-1.
 - a. Then 0.01 miles 21.45 total miles
10. Take the 1st left onto County Route 1/County Hwy-1.
 - a. If you reach Farms Rd, you've gone about 0.5 miles too far
 - b. Then 5.12 miles 26.57 total miles
11. Turn left to stay on County Route 1/County Hwy-1.
 - a. Then 0.72 miles 27.29 total miles
12. Turn right onto Glenwood Rd/County Hwy-26 (Crossing into New Jersey).
 - a. Glenwood Rd is 0.1 miles past Firehouse Ln. If you are on County Route 1 and reach Kay Dr, you've gone a little too far
 - b. Then 3.04 miles 30.33 total miles
13. Glenwood Rd/County Hwy-26 becomes Route 517/County Hwy-517. | Heaven Hill Farm is 3.5 miles / 5 min extra one way
451 State Route 94, Vernon, NJ 07462
 - a. Then 1.56 miles 31.89 total miles
14. 41.234758, -74.480919, 880 ROUTE 517 is on the left (Parking for Trailhead)
 - a. Your destination is just past Appalachian National Scenic



Nearest hospital: **St. Anthony Community Hospital** | 15 Maple Avenue, Warwick, NY 10990 | 845.986.2276

<https://www.stanthonycommunityhosp.org/emergency-dept>

