

Swede Mountain

Round-trip Distance: 1.9 mi (3.1 km)

Elevation change: 241 ft (73 m)

Summit Elevation: 1,904 ft. (580 m)

Difficulty: (1) An easy hike with minimal elevation gain along switchback paths of formerly logged forest.

Maps: Trails Illustrated Map 743: P29 / Silver Bay 7.5'

GPS Coordinates: N 43° 44' 33.009" W 73° 35' 17.749" (Trailhead)

N 43° 44' 12.403" W 73° 35' 34.196" (Summit)

Tower height: 47 ft (14 m)

Hunting season trail closure:

Note: The trail has an annual hunting season closure from September 10 to December 16 inclusive. Please respect the pre-existing agreements held by the owner of the private property the trail traverses. Violation of this closure could lead to revocation of the public recreation easement.

Built in 1918, Swede Mountain Fire Tower is an Aermotor model LS-40 47 ft. fire tower with seven flights of stairs and is one of two standing publicly accessible fire towers in Warren County. It came out of service in 1968. The view from the fire tower offers sweeping vistas to the north and west toward Gore and Crane Mountains, along with dramatic views of Brant Lake. Warren County constructed the trail, and restored the fire tower and will be maintaining both.

An agreement between NYSDEC, The Nature Conservancy and International Paper in 1995 transferred control of the fire tower to Warren County. Since then, representatives from Horicon, Hague and Warren County have worked tirelessly to bring the trail and tower to public access. Lyme Adirondack Forest Company granted a public recreation easement through their lands, however, a pre-existing agreement with hunting clubs requires the trail to be closed annually from September 10 to December 16. The hiking public is asked to respect the trail closure agreement. This agreement is part of the creative solutions used to overcome financial and physical challenges to open the trail and restore the fire tower.

NY Sen. Dan Stec and Assemblymember Matt Simpson had the vision and persistence to achieve this project, recognizing that the only cure for "fire tower fever" is to hike more fire tower trails. The Warren County team of Superintendent of Public Works Kevin Hajos, Director of Parks and Recreation Tim Benway, and the hardworking Parks and Recreation crew did heroic work preparing the trail and restoring the fire tower. Volunteers led by the Forest Fire Lookout Association -- New York Chapter put in many hours trail clearing and trail hardening and provided assistance to the local community members who have spearheaded and supported this project from its inception.

Please respect private property and stay on the marked trail.

Trailhead: The trail begins at a highway turnout serving as trailhead parking on the right on NY 8 along North Pond located 11 miles from the Brant Lake Post Office. The turnout as trailhead parking is on the left 5.5 mi from Hague. Sight distances are limited and vehicles travel at high speed on NY 8. Use caution upon entering and exiting the parking area. There is no overflow parking. Vehicles parked on the roadway represent a serious safety hazard and will be ticketed and possibly towed.

From the parking area, look for the pond's west end outlet and the Warren County sign identifying Swede Mountain Fire Tower Trail. Climb over the heavy gauge wire cable highway guard rail barrier. Look for the cleared path below the beaver dam. Climb down and rock hop the pond outlet across to the opposite side to a very steep but very short (approximately 25 ft) climb. Climb to the county's signs above. This is the biggest climb of the route. From here the trail is level with occasional trailside timber harvest slash followed by a series of hiker-friendly switchbacks through recently logged forest. These newly opened areas are lush with raspberry bushes offering delicious treats at certain times of the year. The climbing is barely noticeable over these long well-designed switchbacks. At 0.6 mi on the left there is a fine open rock with delightful valley views to the south and southeast. Just beyond at 0.8 mi, after a brief dip down and climb up in cedar and hemlock woods, the trail joins an old service road leading to the summit. Be alert at this location on your way down to be certain to follow the trail and not the old service road. On the right the remains of the fire observer's cabin lay in ruins with a collapsed roof. A controlled burn and removal of unburnables is planned. Straight ahead at 0.9 mi is the summit clearing and fire tower.

Trail in winter: Aside from the initial short and steep climb above the pond outlet, this route is excellent for snowshoers of all abilities, especially beginners. Skiing is not recommended due to the route's very short length and off-trail trespassing prohibition.