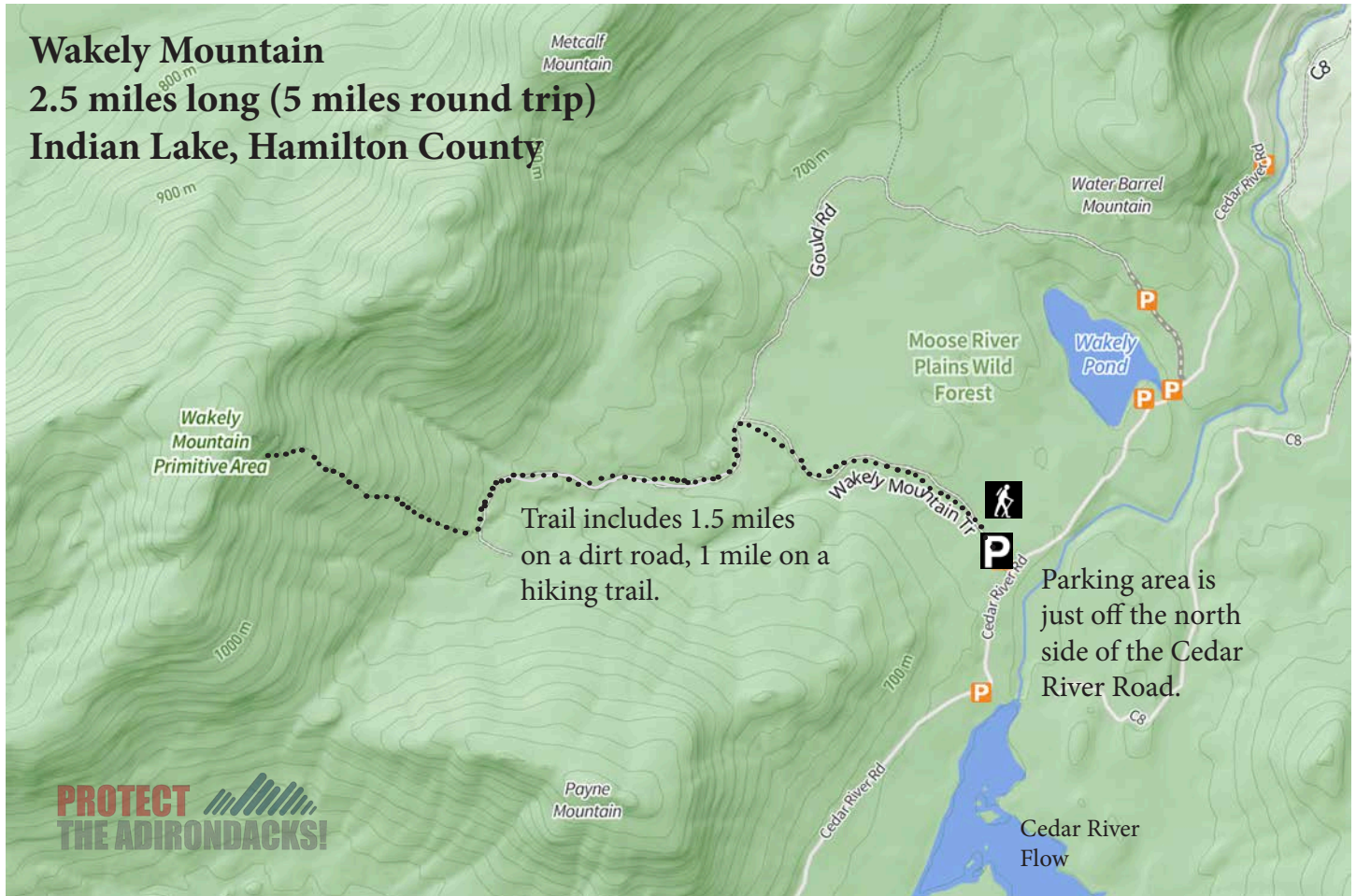


Wakely Mountain



Wakely Mountain is located in between the Blue Ridge Wilderness and Moose River Plains Wild Forest, two of the largest areas of the Forest Preserve. It is a 2.5-mile-long hike of medium difficulty that rewards hikers with panoramic views from one of the tallest firetowers in the Adirondacks. The trailhead is located near the end of Cedar River Road, which intersects Routes 28/30 about a mile north of the hamlet of Indian Lake. The hike begins in a mixed hardwood forest that transitions to a high elevation spruce forest that surrounds the summit. The hike is 2.5 miles each way. The summit is 3,744 feet in elevation.

Wakely Mountain is part of the Firetower Challenge. The trail is well worn and clearly marked.



The trailhead is just off the Cedar River Road, several miles beyond where the pavement ends. The trail is functionally divided into two halves. The first section is a gradual climb along an old logging road. The trail is wide and well defined in this section. The second half is steeper, like a staircase in many sections, which ascends to the summit. This division is marked by a trail sign that directs hikers to the final mile of trail.

A quarter mile from the trailhead register and parking lot, the trail runs on an old dirt road that crosses a loose-stone covered culvert that drains a large wetland. After the culvert, the trail passes through hardwood forests of varying ages, some forest stands are dominated by young narrow beech and birch, interspersed with stands of conifers. The footing is often rough due to loose stones and occasional washouts. At about .75 miles there is a short foot bridge across a stream.

A trail sign marks the last mile to the summit, which is a steady climb up the mountain, over steep sections where almost all the elevation gains are made. The trail is sheer and eroded with no shortage of footholds. This section begins in the same hardwood forest as the first stretch along the old road, before transitioning to a beautiful high-altitude spruce-boreal forest that surrounds the summit. The trail leading up to the summit has some significant muddy areas.

Just before the summit, along the trail, there is a large platform in a cleared area for helicopter access that also offers a good view from the platform. The summit of Wakely mountain is 3,760 feet in elevation, the same elevation as Blue Mountain. An opening in the thick forest on the summit has been cleared and contains the firetower, a picnic table in a grassy area, and an old Forest Ranger/fire observer cabin. There is a privy on the summit.

Wakely Mountain firetower is one of the tallest in the Adirondacks. It is in good condition and accessible. It provides a stunning panoramic view. To the west the forests and lakes of the Moose River Plains and West Canada Lakes Wilderness area spread out seemingly forever. To the north Blue Ridge and Blue Mountain can be seen. To the northeast the western High Peaks are visible. To the south Snowy and Pillsbury Mountains stand tall. Wakely Mountain is an enjoyable hike, not overly challenging, but requires a steady effort, with a big pay-off at the end from the excellent views from the firetower. The hike out follows the same trail as the hike to the summit.

Help Protect the Forest Preserve and Be Prepared When You Hike: Please follow “carry in, carry out” rules for all trash and follow **Leave No Trace** principles when hiking in the public Forest Preserve and other wild areas. The 7 Leave No Trace principles are: 1) Plan ahead and prepare ; 2) Stay on hiking trails and camp at designated areas; 3) Dispose of human waste and trash properly; 4) Leave what you find; 5) Minimize campfires; 6) Respect wildlife; 7) Respect other hikers. **Educated and prepared hikers do not damage the environment or need search and rescue unless injured.**