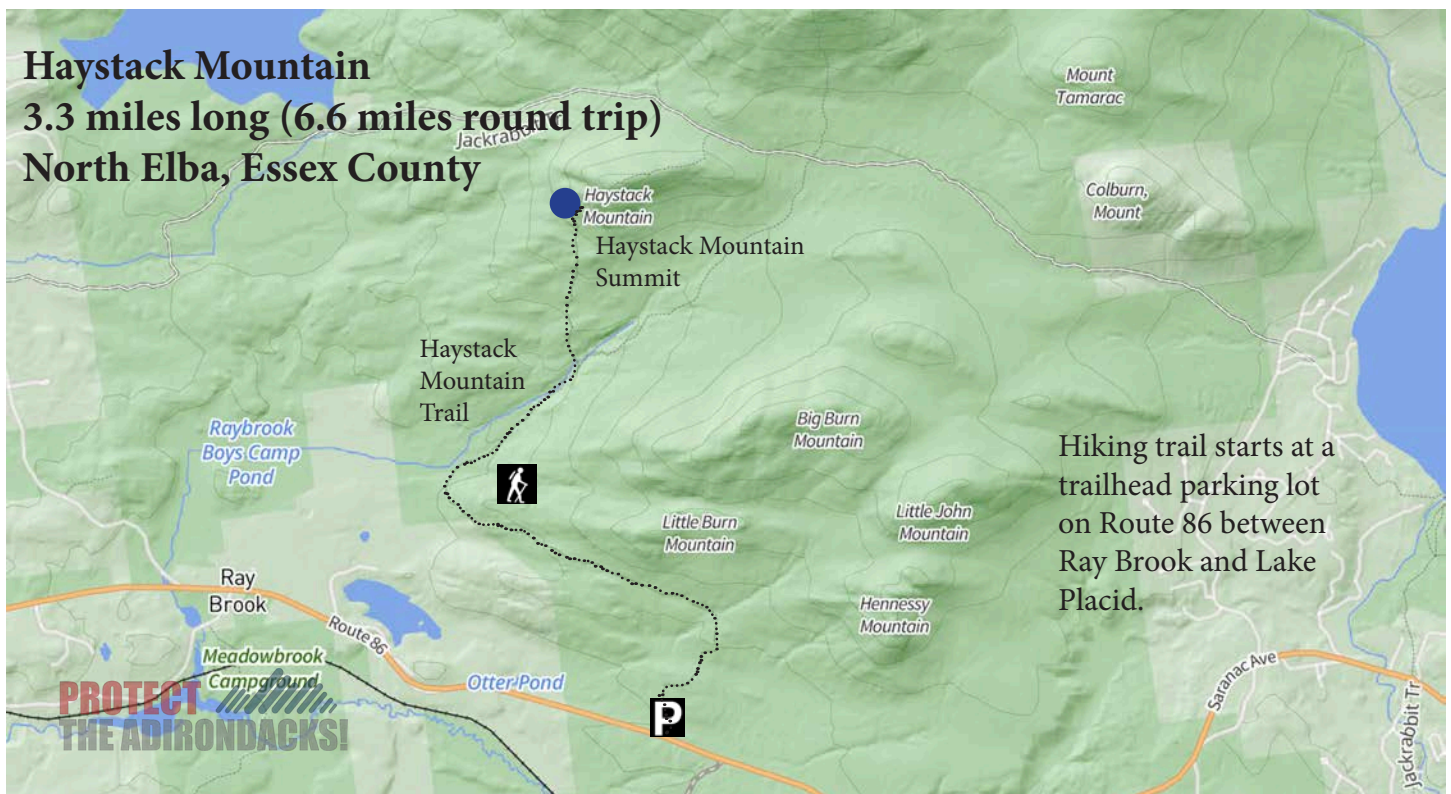


Haystack Mountain



Haystack Mountain is a 3.3-mile hike starting between Ray Brook and Lake Placid. The trail is on public Forest Preserve in the McKenzie Mountain Wilderness Area. The trailhead parking lot is off of Route 86, just east of Ray Brook. Haystack Mountain is a spur trail off of the McKenzie Mountain trail. Haystack Mountain is a medium-sized mountain at the end of a moderately long out-and-back trail that offers from its summit excellent views to the south and east.

The trail to both Haystack and McKenzie mountains begins through a tall red pine forest that supports a high population of red squirrels. The trailhead register is near the parking lot. The trail is easy to follow and clearly marked. Within a few hundred yards, this forest gives way to a predominantly maple, ash, and beech hardwood forest. The ash trees here are particularly prominent, not the case in every stand of Adirondack hardwoods. For the first couple miles, the trail follows the base of a ridge, which runs almost perpendicular to the trail as it departs from the far side. This ridge is home to beautiful mossy and grassy hardwoods.

The trail parallels a large, cold, clear and rocky stream for a long stretch. The trail for this section is flat, occasion-



ally trending gently upwards. Not far before the junction, the trail passes an old foundation and ruins of a building.

At about the 2-mile mark, the trail to Haystack Mountain breaks off to the left from the trail to McKenzie. The summit of Haystack Mountain is about 1.3 miles. Soon after the trail junction, the trail crosses Little Ray Brook at the location of an old dam, which features a cage-filter that was the beginning of water piping that serviced the buildings of the old foundations encountered earlier.

From this point, the trail climbs to the summit of Haystack Mountain. The trail begins with a gradual ascent, but the last mile is an almost constant ascent, which is steep with a few minor scrambles in the steepest parts.

Haystack Mountain does not reach the elevation for a substantial boreal forest on the summit. The forest remains hardwood for the entirety of the climb, mixing slightly with conifers at the summit. The summit itself is rocky with grassy trails through ferns and grasses, leading to outcrops provide wide-open views to the east.

Help Protect the Forest Preserve and Be Prepared When You Hike: Please follow “carry in, carry out” rules for all trash and follow other **Leave No Trace** principles when hiking in the public Forest Preserve and other wild areas. The seven 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.**