

## Azure Mountain



Azure Mountain is a 0.9-mile hike north of Paul Smith's. The trail is entirely on public Forest Preserve in the Debar Mountain Wild Forest Area. The trailhead parking lot is off of the Blue Mountain/Keese Mills Roads between Paul Smith's and St. Regis Falls. Azure Mountain is a moderate hike to a 2,518-foot peak with a wide-open summit and firetower that provides sweeping views of the northern Adirondacks.

The parking lot is on the west side of the Blue Mountain Road and is marked with a sign for the Azure Mountain Trailhead. The trail begins on an old dirt road at the back of the parking area. After a few hundred yards, the trail arrives at the trailhead register and information kiosk. After the register, the trail is a flat path hemmed in by an immature beech and maple forest with a thick understory of ferns. The trail is well worn and easy to follow and is marked with red trail markers.

After about 0.3 miles, the trail reaches an abandoned campsite, distinguished by a small firepit that was once part of an old foundation. The clearing around the firepit is open and sunny. Shortly after the campsite, the trail begins to ascend.

For the last half mile, the trail climbs gradually. Lone large glacial erratics start to appear alongside the trail in

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the forest. The trail then winds through a large array of jagged bedrock that provides a scenic rest stop.

After this point, the trail is steep. A side trail leads to the first scenic vista. The forest at this point has larger trees at the higher elevations. After a steady climb, the trail levels out for the final ascent to the summit.

As the trail approaches the summit, the thick understory of ferns in a beech and maple forest transitions to impenetrable stands of spruce, white pine, and maple. The trail winds over exposed bedrock, and a stone staircase leads the way to the firetower. Grassy areas are lined with rocks to stabilize and protect these fragile mountaintop habitats, so please stay on the trail or rock surfaces.

The Azure Mountain summit provides stunning views from the open rock and the firetower. The High Peaks are visible in the distance, and vast wetlands and forests spread out below. The historic firetower was renovated in July 2018 for its centennial anniversary and it provides expanded views of the Deer River area to the north.

The hike down follows the same route as the hike in.

**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.**