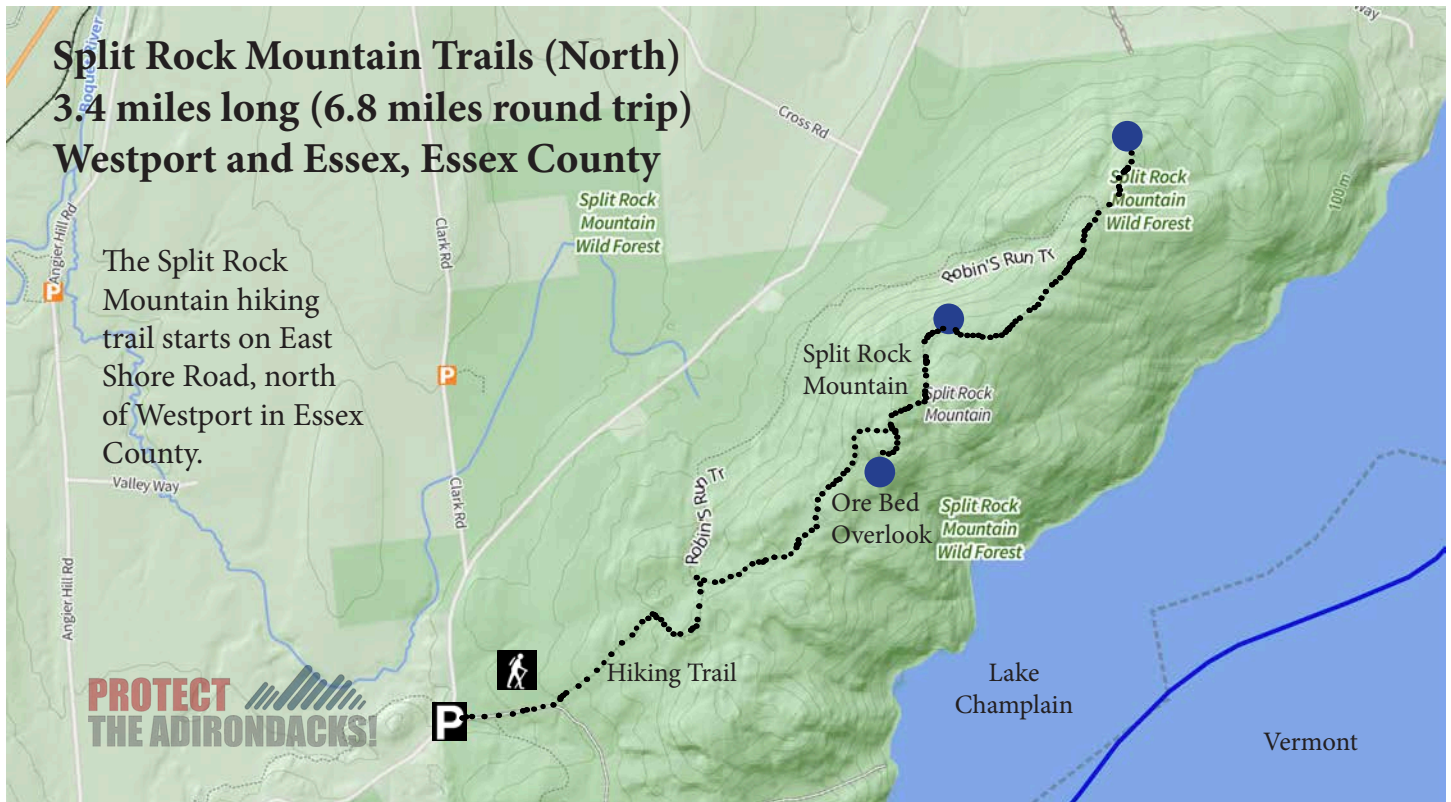


## Split Rock Mountain Trails (North)



Base map courtesy of Adirondack Atlas

The trail network on the north side of Split Rock Mountain leads through beautiful northern hardwoods and oak-hickory forests to a series of scenic overlooks that provide sweeping views of Lake Champlain, the pastoral Champlain Valley, and the High Peaks. This collection of trails are all part of the public Forest Preserve in the Split Rock Mountain Wild Forest in the Towns of Essex and Westport in Essex County. The most popular hike on the north side is the scenic North Rim Trail.

The trailhead parking area is located on the east side of Lake Shore Road, about 6 miles north of Westport. The North Rim Trail can be hiked as an out-and-back trail using the same route or as a loop returning on the Robin's Run Trail. The parking area is large, though on busy days, vehicles park on the roadside. The trail register is on the trail at the rear of the parking area. The trails in this area are well marked and easy to follow.

The 3.4-mile North Rim Trail, including the hike to South Rocks Overlook, leads through numerous erratic boulder pile-ups, several stream crossings, and diverse northern hardwoods and oak-hickory forests to a series of rocky overlooks above Lake Champlain and the Champlain Valley. The North Rim Trail starts intertwined with the 1.7-mile Lewis Clearing Bay Trail, which leads to a network of trails in the southern section of Split Rock Mountain Wild Forest. After a short rise, at about 0.5 miles, the Lewis Clearing Bay Trail splits off to the right, and the North Rim Trail veers left.

### Protect the Adirondacks

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After the fork in the trail, the North Rim trail climbs very gently and passes through beautiful forest areas adorned by several large trees. After about .3 miles with only mild inclines, the trail begins to weave back and forth until arriving at another trail junction with the Robin's Run Trail. Veer right towards the Ore Bed, South Rocks, and North Rim overlooks.

After the trail junction, the North Rim trail passes through a few muddy stretches and beautiful beech-filled forest and is relatively flat. Soon, the trail begins to gain elevation, gently at first, followed by several steep sections.

In just under 1.5 miles, the North Rim trail reaches the trail junction for the Ore Bed Overlook, a 0.2-mile spur-path to the lookout. The lookout is sweet, offering clear views of Lake Champlain to the east and south, farm lands and High Peaks to the west, and Green Mountains across Lake Champlain to the east. The overlook is wide open and has plenty of places to sit and rest, take in the views, and soak up some sun. Don't rush past it.

Back on the main path, the trail climbs some difficult terrain en route to a stretch of trail that carves around Split Rock Mountain's non-scenic and thickly forest-covered summit. This stretch, known as the summit rim, is relatively steep, poorly maintained, and mundane. After about .5 miles, though, this stretch gives way to a smoother trail out that passes by a few interesting features, red elderberry bushes and large erratics among them.

Farther along, the trail begins to switchback. A side trail leads about 0.6-miles to South Rocks Overlook. Soon after this trail, another 0.2-mile spur-trail leads to the Essex (North Rim) Overlook, a large rocky outcrop where the surrounding views of Lake Champlain and the Champlain Valley is filtered through the trees.

Once back on the North Rim Trail, the return hike can either retrace the same route over Split Rock Mountain or utilize the Robin's Run Trail, which is slightly shorter. The North Rim Trail and Robin's Run Trail connect about 1 mile from the trailhead parking area.

The northern trails in the Split Rock Mountain Wild Forest include moderate hikes accessible to people of all ages and conditions, providing that they can walk the distances involved.

**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.**