

HIKE NO 7: DELAWARE

DISTANCE: 6.42 mi

TIME REQUIRED: 4.5 - 5.5 hours

ELEVATION GAIN: 665 feet

DIFFICULTY: Moderate.

SUMMARY

This hike traverses most of the southern border of the reservation along the banks of the Delaware River. Beginning at the intersection of Crawford and Hankins Road, the hike begins on the red-marked Ten Mile River Trail and yellow-marked Tusten Mountain Trail. After reaching the trail register for the Tusten Mountain Trail, the red and yellow trails depart right but we will continue straight ahead on Tusten Road before reaching the trailhead to the Conklin Lookout Trail. Our hike follows the Conklin Lookout Trail all the way to its end, climbing the steep northern flank of Tusten Mountain. At the end of the Conklin Lookout Trail, you will then retrace your steps back to the hike’s start point, with a short walk along the Erie Railroad. Those taking this hike may be disappointed to learn that it is an “out and back,” but the amount of scenery, historical locations and points of interest along the way more than make up for it.

Those with an interest in history or a talent for photography will appreciate this hike. The previous three centuries in this area was considerably busier than it is today. The area around the Stone Arch Bridge was once the center of the Town of Tusten, which functioned as a center of trade for the predominant industries in the area. Prior to that it was a colonial outpost - the “Ten Mile River Settlement” - which is famous for being the site of a terrible tragedy in 1763 - the Ten Mile River Massacre.

Along the way, our hike will cross the Stone Arch Bridge over the Ten Mile River, pass by the former Erie Railroad’s “Bridge Number Nine,” visit numerous short term TMR camp sites, and we will get a great view of it all from atop the northern flank of Tusten Mountain. Due to the lower elevation of this area as opposed to the rest of TMR, the fall leaves tend to stick around a week or two longer than on the rest of the reservation. In addition, the concentration of bald eagles in this area is one of the highest in the United States and you may even have an opportunity to see the other living symbol of our nation’s freedom: the elusive and shy timber rattlesnake. All these provide excellent opportunities for the aspiring or veteran photographer.

TRAILHEAD DIRECTIONS

From Headquarters, make a left turn out of the front entrance onto CR-26 (Crystal Lake Road) and follow until its end at an intersection with CR-23 (Lumberland - Mt Hope Turnpike). At the intersection, make a right turn onto CR-23. Follow CR-23 for 2.6 miles before making a left turn onto Brook Road (a town maintained gravel road). Follow Brook Road for 1.4 miles to its end at an intersection with the paved NY-97.



Picture 1

Make a left turn onto Route 97 and follow for 0.76 miles before reaching Crawford Road. Just before reaching the turn, a large brown sign that states “Ten Mile River Access” will be on your right. Make a right turn onto Crawford Road and follow to its end with its intersection with Hankins Road and the Tusten Mountain Trailhead [Picture 1]. A parking lot for both the Tusten Mountain Trail and the adjacent National Park Service’s Ten Mile River Landing is located at this intersection.

NOTE 1: *Brook Road is maintained by the Town of Tusten for most of the year, excepting the period from December 1st to April 1st. During this time, simply follow CR-23 until its intersection with Route 97. Follow Route 97 for about 2 miles and make a right onto Crawford Road.*

NOTE 2: *The entirety of the Tusten Mountain Trail is open to the general public under an agreement between the National Park Service and our organization. Please be respectful of the right of the general public to use this section of our camp.*

DESCRIPTION

Our hike begins by following the joint red marked TMR Trail and the yellow-marked Tusten Mountain Trail along a maintained gravel road [Picture 2]. The Ten Mile River’s confluence with the Delaware River is on your left hand side.



Picture 2



Picture 3

After 700 feet, you will see the “Stone Arch Bridge” on your left [Picture 3] and the beginning of Tusten Road. Continue to follow both trails over the bridge. The Stone Arch Bridge was built in 1896 by William Hankins, the landowner at the time, presumably to serve the needs of the gristmill right past the bridge.

A “gristmill” is simply a mechanism by which grain is turned into flour. Before the advent of electricity, most of the machines that performed the actual milling were powered by water. The gristmill in this location was quite extensive, as the ruins of the mill extend into the woods about 100 feet beyond the road. Think about the amount of activity that once occurred here and marvel at the ability of the forest to quickly reclaim the land. Once an active commercial center, a few piles of stones are all that remain of once large buildings and workman’s voices have been replaced by the wind blowing through the trees.

Immediately thereafter, the Arch Bridge lean-to site is located to the left of the road. It is a very popular campsite - particularly in the autumn [Picture 5]. It is also a great spot for fly-fishing.

In 1763 the area in and around the Stone Arch Bridge was the site of a terrible tragedy - the Ten Mile River Massacre. There was once a considerable colonial settlement located here. Captain Bull, the son of Teedyuscung and the chief of the Minsi tribe of the Lenni Lenape, slaughtered all 22 inhabitants of the small settlement, presumably as they slept. Captain Bull was avenging the death of his father who had met his end a few days earlier when white colonists burned down his home. Only two boys managed to escape the slaughter and were able to make it to the fort upriver at Cushetunk, near present day Narrowsburg. A more detailed account of the massacre is attached to the back of this trail guide, appended from James Quinlan's "History of Sullivan County" written in 1873.



Picture 5

For those that are interested in a good ghost story or who have an interest in the paranormal may find the following video interesting. A group named "Catskill Paranormal" investigated the area in and around Arch Bridge in 2011, seeking to hear what secrets the victims of the Ten Mile River massacre have to tell. A video of their experience can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnyuXqVRi6k>



Picture 6



Picture 7

Continuing along the trail, the Pines tent site is passed at 0.26 mi. [Picture 6], and shortly thereafter another part of the remains of the gristmill comes into view [Picture 7], both on your right. Follow the combined Tusten Mountain Trail and the Ten Mile River Trail only until both trails turn right into the woods and away from the road at 0.65 mi [Picture 8]. At this intersection, **continue straight ahead on Tusten Road, leaving both the yellow-marked Tusten Mountain Trail and the red-marked Ten Mile River Trail.** The Delaware River will continue to be on your left hand side as you proceed on Tusten Road.

The yellow-marked Tusten Mountain Trail is a loop trail and although the trail is entirely on Ten Mile River property it is open to the public and maintained by the National Park Service. The hike proceeds up the south face of Tusten Mountain and visits the remains of what was once a substantial bluestone quarrying operation. The guide, written by the NPS,



Picture 8

is attached to the back of this trail guide. Combining the Tusten Mountain Trail with this hike is possible by those with the motivation to do so, although it would make for a long day. It is perhaps best to make the decision to hike the Tusten Mountain Trail on the way back rather than at first. It will add about an additional 1.5 hours and 2.0 miles to the hike described here.

Continuing on Tusten Road downhill, the Erie Railroad's "Bridge Number Nine" will soon come into view on your left [Picture 9], before reaching the Conklin Farm Lean-to site at 1.04 mi. [Picture 10]. The Conklin Farm Lean-to site is perhaps the most popular campsite in this section of the reservation, and with good reason. The view of Bridge Number Nine from the river's shoreline and against the surrounding landscape make for one of the author's favorite views at Ten Mile River. There are four lean-to's and a latrine located here. In the center of the campsite, there is an old piped spring that runs all year, except during prolonged dry spells. Note that the water is not safe for drinking without treatment and is a bit sulfurous.



Picture 9



Picture 10

Leaving the Conklin Farm Lean-to's, continue on Tusten Road. Note the beginning of the blue-marked Conklin Lookout Trail (CLT) right past the latrine, which will continue to follow Tusten Road and is marked with three blue TMR Trail markers in a triangle pattern. Now following the CLT, pass the Conklin Farm Tent Site at 1.16 mi. The tent site is actually two distinct campsites, with the first one on your left and the second one on your right.

At 1.28 mi., the town maintained portion of Tusten Road comes to an end at a three-way intersection [Picture 11]. Following the road to the left will take you underneath Bridge Number Nine and to our "River Tent Sites" and makes for a quick and highly recommended side trip. The River Tent Sites are numbered 1 - 10 and are spread out among a football-sized field. It is a great spot for bald eagle watching and is a popular site for those troops choosing to take a canoe or rafting trip on the river. Arrangements with a local vendor for a canoe or rafting trip, complete with transportation, can be made with the Council Camping Department (212-242-1100).



Picture 11

Our hike and the CLT will continue right. You are now entering what was a very seldom-visited section of Ten Mile River property until the CLT was laid out and marked in the Fall of 2015. It is without question - at least in your author's mind - the most unique section of the entire reservation and makes for

an exciting trip. The land was purchased in late 1969 to expand our footprint on the Delaware River and was never developed nor used.

Immediately after making the right turn, a large open field is traversed [Picture 12]. Being a large open field, there are no trail markers between the beginning and end of the field, a distance of about 200 yards. To continue on the CLT simply walk across the field, bearing right. Bearing left will allow you to continue on Tusten Road, **but this is not recommended**, as most of what remains of the road is flooded. At the end of the field, note the trail markers indicating an abrupt right turn uphill on a wide foot trail at 1.46 mi. Follow the wide trail for about 100 yards before turning left into the woods onto a foot trail [Picture 13]. Now the real physical exercise of today's hike will begin.



Picture 12



Picture 13

Note 3: The next section of our hike traverses a known and active timber rattlesnake habitat, an endangered species in New York State. They are active between April 15th and October 15th each year, and prefer deciduous forests in rugged terrain. Timber rattlesnakes are venomous, but also extremely docile and shy and will do everything they possibly can to avoid human contact. Contrary to popular opinion, they will not pursue or attack a human unless deliberately provoked.

To minimize chances of a negative experience with this elusive elapid, do not attempt to climb any of the open rock faces in this area. They blend in extremely well with the surrounding landscape so keep your eyes open to avoid stepping on them and do not place hands or feet in areas which you cannot see. Do NOT bring dogs on this section of the hike; their curious nature could result in a tragic experience. A timber rattlesnake's venom is rarely fatal for humans, but it will kill a dog.

With all that being said, I have hiked this trail dozens of times and I have yet to have had an encounter with one. I have attached a fact sheet prepared by the NYSDEC about timber rattlesnakes for further information.

Continuing on the CLT, ascend and descend a ridge and arrive at a stream crossing and stonewall at 1.60 mi. [Picture 14]. Note the changing landscape in this area. Glacial erratics (large boulders left by the last ice age) begin to appear, as if someone randomly placed them here.

At 1.83 mi., a great example of a glacial erratic is right along the trail [Picture 15]. Notice the stone (man made pile of stones) cairn atop the erratic.



Picture 14



Picture 15



Picture 16

Who went through the trouble of placing them atop the boulder and for what reason? It is and remains a mystery.

The ascending and descending of the hollows in the ridge continue, until the CLT rejoins Tusten Road at 2.27 mi. as a right turn [Picture 16]. Look for this turn when the Erie Railroad Motorman's Cabin comes into view [Picture 17] and at a point where the trail takes you within 100 feet of the railroad track. There was once a westbound track and an eastbound track here. This is the site of the now removed "Tusten Crossover," or a set of switches that allowed a train to switch from one track to the other. The building served a dual purpose - to allow an empty train's staff members to spend the night on an overnight journey and to provide shelter and equipment for the railroad switchman.



Picture 17

In the glory days of railroad travel, the railway we have been paralleling since we left the Conklin Farm was one of the busiest rail corridors in the United States, connecting downtown Manhattan with Chicago. Interestingly, it was faster to get to Ten Mile River from Manhattan in the 1930s via the Erie than by car today in the 2010s, making the trip in about 2 hours and 45 minutes. Hoboken Junction is about 122 miles from here (a left turn on the track) and Chicago is 878 miles (a right turn on the track).

Continuing on the CLT, the welcome respite of flat terrain is quickly dashed with a steep uphill section, gaining about 200 feet in elevation over about a ¼ mile [Picture 18]. An intersection is reached at 2.62 mi. with an overgrown tote road that goes off to the right steeply and eventually off property [Picture 19]. Stay to your left and straight ahead to remain on Tusten Road and the CLT.



Picture 18

As you continue to climb, the rock formations to your right will continue to grow in size [Picture 20], as the river seems to fade away below you as you continue to gain elevation. Finally, Paulele Point is reached at 2.78 mi., right along the left side of the trail. The view from Paulele Point is exceptional and is a great



Picture 19



Picture 20

spot for photos with the Delaware River 400 feet below. Be careful going off the road and marked trail here, a fall from the rocks of Paulele Point can be fatal.

From Paulele Point, the next part of the CLT is the most scenic. I have deliberately left the more dramatic photos of this section out - the photos are a poor substitute for experiencing this section in person. There are three separate tremendous rock walls to the right of the trail, one of which (Collier's Wall) features a perennial waterfall about 50' high. As of 2017, there was a bald eagle's nest high in the trees to the left of the trail. Keep an eye out for it.

The CLT ends at the end of Ten Mile River property at a former bluestone quarry [*Picture 21*] and this spot is easily recognized by the upside down triangle formation of three blue TMR Trail markers [*Picture 22*]. This is a great spot to have lunch or take an extended break.



Picture 21



Picture 22

Note 4: There is a cave entrance right along the trail in between Paulele Point and the quarry [*Picture 23*]. I have included a picture of the two-foot high cave entrance to allow scout leaders to know what to look for in the hope that they prevent scouts from going near it. It should go without saying that the cave is completely off limits and very dangerous.

After reaching the quarry and taking a break in sufficient length, turn around and retrace your steps back to the Erie Railroad Motorman Cabin. Upon reaching the cabin, turn left onto the gravel railroad track swath [*Picture 24*]. The railroad, although no longer being open for any sort of passenger service, is now operated by the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railway. There is freight service in each direction three times per week, six trains per week total. The train typically passes through this area late



Picture 23



Picture 24

at night on Friday and Saturday nights, the point at which most troops staying overnight at the Conklin Farm or the River Tent Sites realize this is still an active railway. It goes without saying that one should walk well to the left side of the tracks. Continue to walk along the railroad tracks until you reach Bridge Number Nine [Picture 25]. This bridge, a “through truss” design, was built in 1904 and is actually the fourth bridge erected by Erie at this location with the first having been built in 1848. The prior three bridges were knocked down and their footings washed out by the rough rapids underneath at various times in between 1851 and 1903.



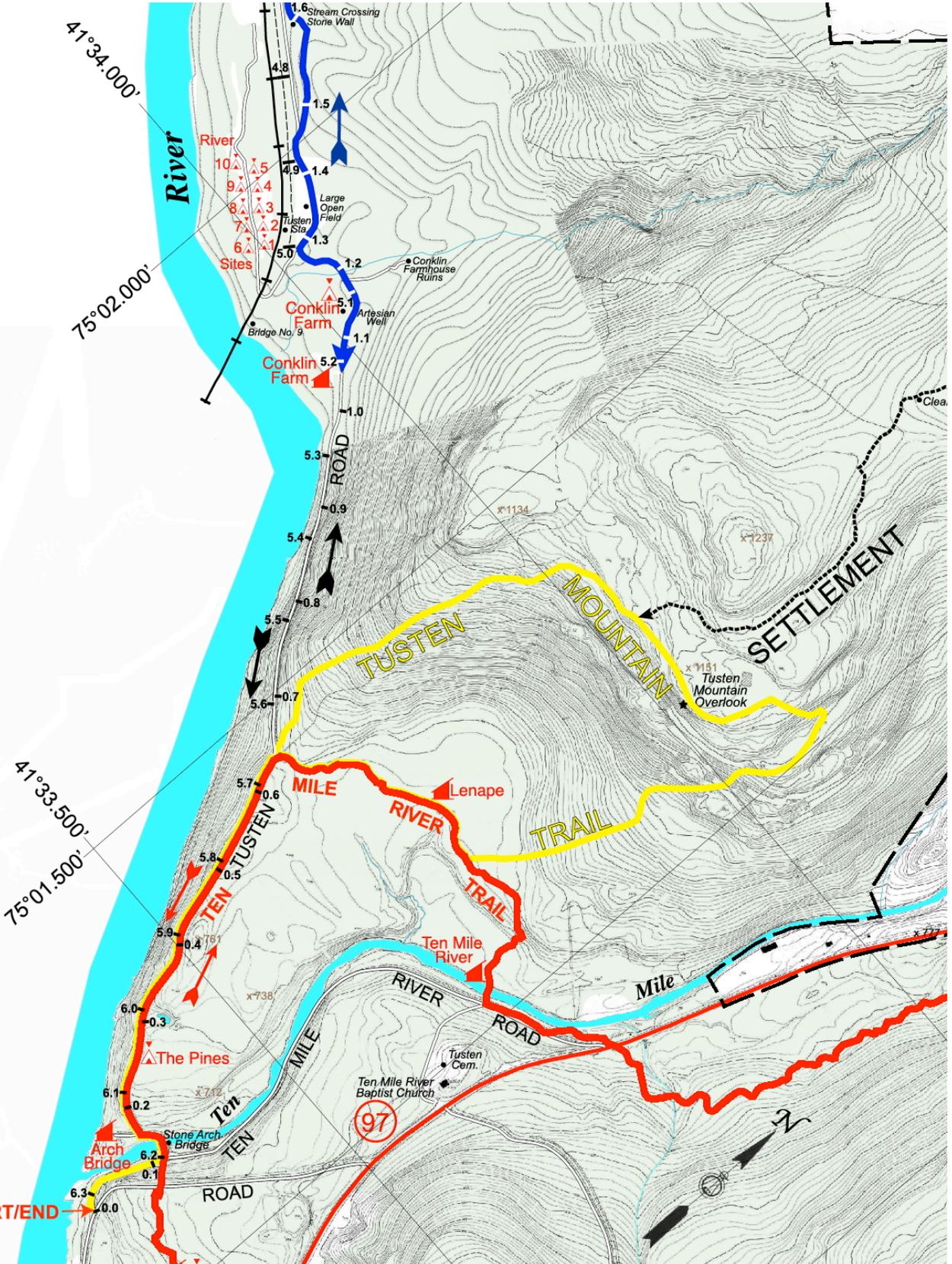
Picture 25



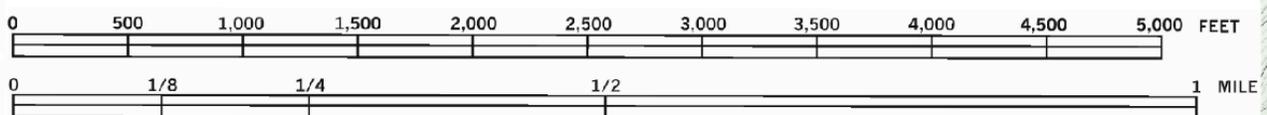
Picture 26

Note 5: Do not attempt to cross the railroad bridge. There are wooden planks to the right of the track, hammered in between sections of railroad ties, which give the illusion of being safe to walk upon. They are not. The drop from the top of the bridge to the rapids below is about 50 feet, which would be fatal if a plank was to give way. DO NOT BE STUPID. Observe it safely.

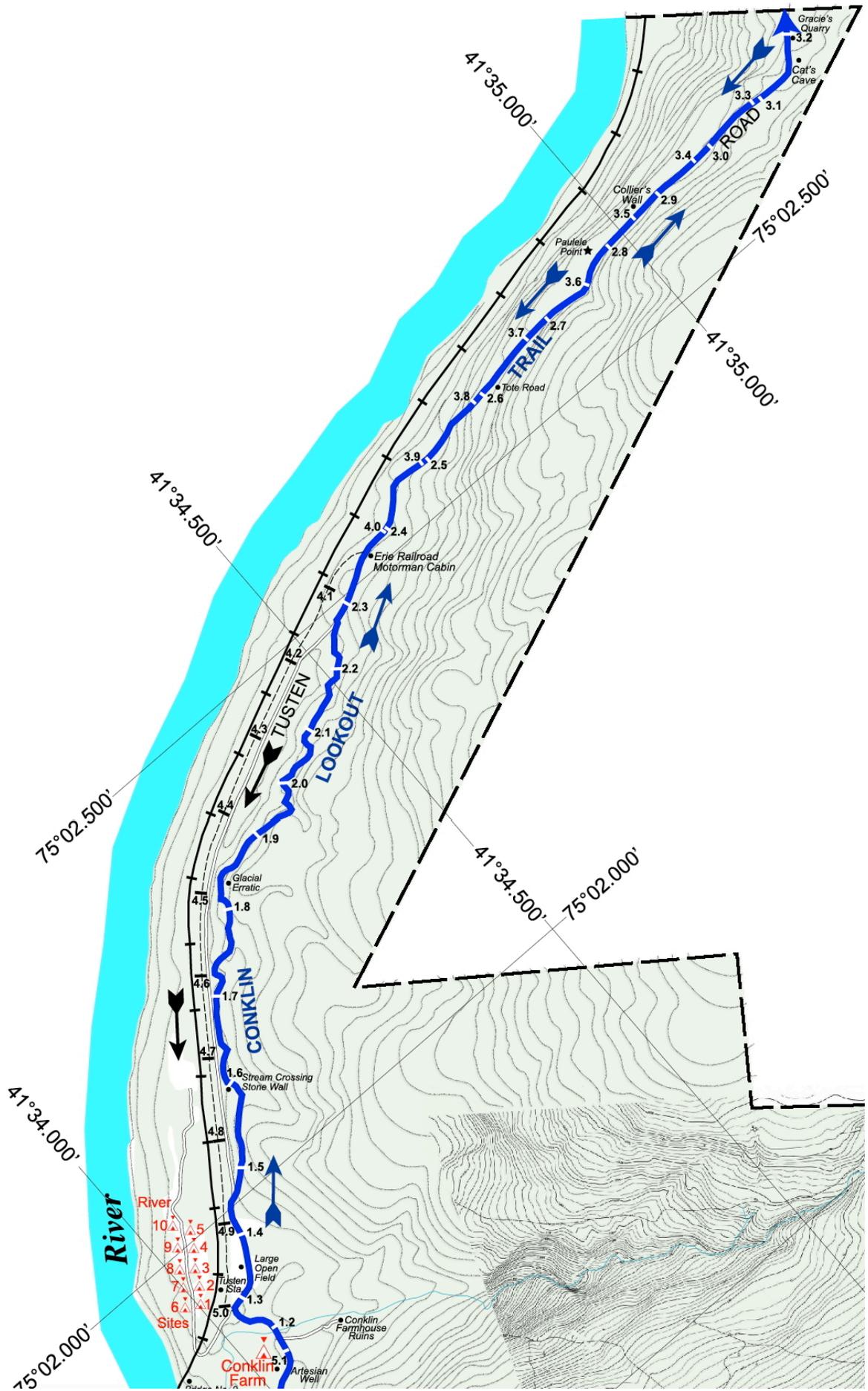
Right before arriving at the bridge, take note of two large concrete blocks to the left of the tracks [Picture 26]. At the blocks, you can make a left turn back onto the marked CLT / Tusten Road and head back towards the parking area, 6.42 mi. from the hike’s beginning.



SCALE 1:1,200



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

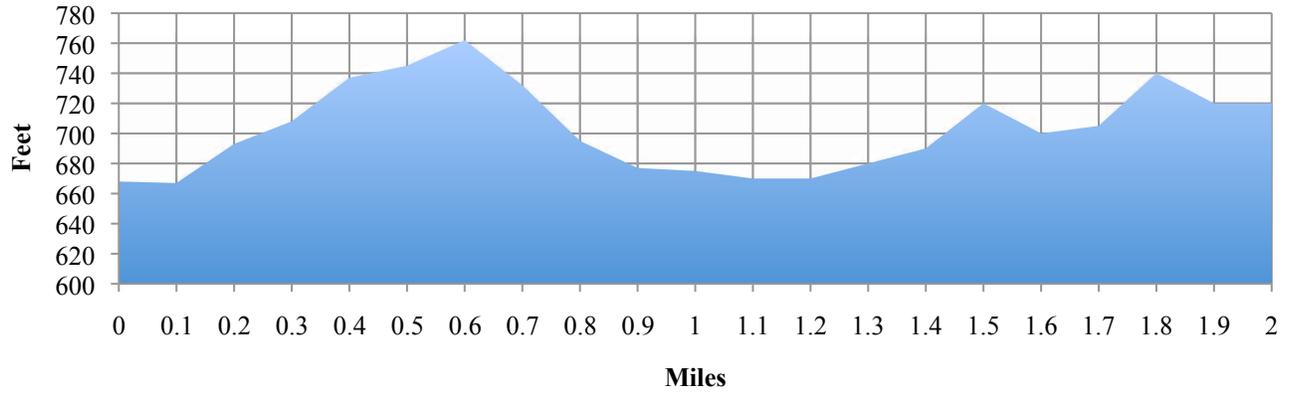


Hike Summary

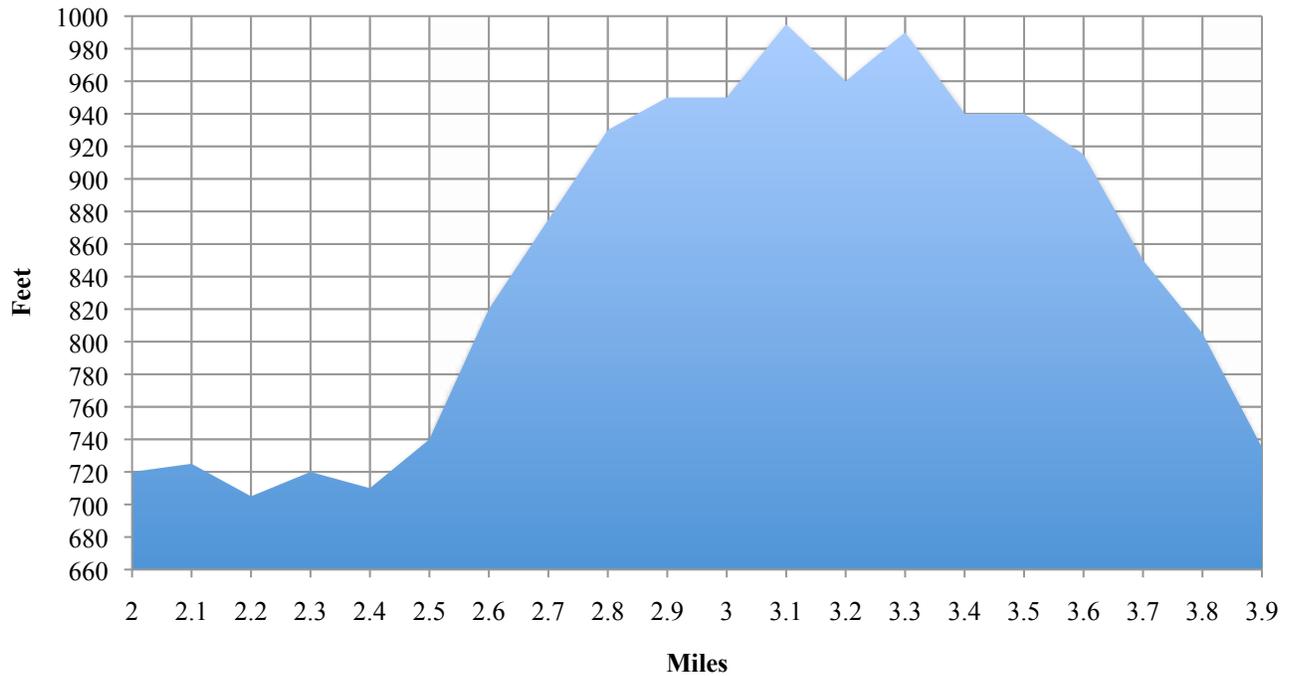
- 0.00 mi. Intersection of Crawford Road and Ten Mile River Road (Trailhead).
- 0.13 mi. Cross Stone Arch Bridge.
- 0.26 mi. Pines Tent Site on your right.
- 0.65 mi. Red-marked Ten Mile River Trail and yellow-marked Tusten Mountain Trail turns right. Stay straight on Tusten Road.
- 1.04 mi. Conklin Farm Lean-to site on your left. Blue-marked Conklin Lookout Trail begins.
- 1.16 mi. Conklin Farm Tent site on your left.
- 1.28 mi. Turn right on Tusten Road. Walk across field, bearing right.
- 1.46 mi. Abrupt right turn uphill.
- 1.60 mi. Stream crossing and stonewall.
- 1.83 mi. Pass large glacial erratic.
- 2.27 mi. Conklin Lookout Trail rejoins Tusten Road.
- 2.62 mi. Overgrown tote road. Stay to your left and straight ahead to remain on Tusten Road and Conklin Lookout Trail.
- 2.78 mi. Paulele Point (lookout) on your right.
- 3.20 mi. Conklin Lookout Trail ends at former bluestone quarry. Turn around and retrace your steps back to the Erie Railroad Motorman Cabin.
- 4.04 mi. At Erie Railroad Motorman Cabin, turn left onto gravel railroad track swath. Walk well to the left side of the tracks.
- 5.00 mi. Right before arriving at Bridge Number Nine, turn left at two large concrete blocks back onto the blue-marked Conklin Lookout Trail and Tusten Road.
- 5.10 mi. Conklin Farm Tent site on your right.
- 5.65 mi. Join red-marked Ten Mile River Trail and yellow-marked Tusten Mountain Trail coming in from your left.
- 6.05 mi. Pines Tent Site on your left.
- 6.16 mi. Cross Stone Arch Bridge and turn right onto Crawford Road.
- 6.42 mi. Hike ends at intersection of Crawford Road and Ten Mile River Road.

Trail Elevations

0.0 mi. - 2.0 mi.



2.0 mi. - 4.0 mi.



4.0 mi. - 6.3 mi.

