

Trail Name: Round Pond - Piper Link

Gilford, NH

Trail Description: Steve Zimmer

Round Pond- Piper Link Trail – Description

Parking location and trail access: access for this trail is from one of three possibilities: 1) Camp Bell in Gilmanton with access using the Round Pond Trail access road (blazed red); 2) East Gilford Trailhead off Bickford - Wood Roads which is off NH11A and using the Fire Road and Round Pond Trail (blazed red); or 3) From the upper parking lot of Carriage Road using the White Trail and 100 yards of the Old Piper Mountain Trail (blazed orange) to access the Belknap-Piper Col.

The Round Pond- Piper Link Trail (Link Trail - blazed lime green) starts at the base of the Mt. Klem-Mack Loop Trail (1680 ft.) on the northeast corner of Round Pond. Following the green blazes, the trail follows north along the east side of Round Pond for 0.1 mi. then descends slightly and winds through a low, area that follows the Round Pond shoreline on the northern side of the pond. The Link trail then joins with the Round Pond Trail (blazed red) at 0.3 mi. and they merge together for 250 yards, as they move away from the pond in a northerly direction. The two trails then part company with the Round Pond Trail (blazed red) bearing right, going north to Gunstock Mountain Resort parking area following the Round Pond Trail and the Round Pond cross-country ski trail and the Round Pond-Piper Link turning left (west). The Link Trail continues for another 0.2 mi. with a slight descent. Then the trail ascends and moves around the north side of Suncook Mountain. At the 1.25 mi. mark, you may notice a small rock cairn and some flagging to the left, which is an old, now unmaintained trail, to Suncook Mountain's summit and continuing southeast toward Camp Bell in Gilmanton. The Link Trail continues to lose some elevation here and then turns north for 70 yards and then heads west again.

At mile 1.4, you may notice another small rock cairn and flagging here to the right, another old, now unmaintained, trail that heads toward another logging road and the East Gilford Trailhead parking area on Wood Rd. Both of these old trails show on the Dave Roberts map. The Link Trail then meanders for another 0.1 mi. to its junction with the Boulder Trail (blazed blue) at 1.5 mi which ascends steeply up Mt. Belknap to the right. The Link Trail continues southward now for 0.2 mi. of level walking through a beautiful old beech forest and then ascends for a short time, then descends gently southward toward some lovely views of the Piper/Swett Mountain ridge to the south and views to the southeast toward Camp Bell and Manning Lake at 1.75 mi. Here the trail turns more westerly as it traverses the side of Mt. Belknap, crossing a few streams along the way. After the last stream crossing at 2.0 mi., the trail decidedly ascends, sometimes steeply, to head to the col between Mt. Piper and Belknap Mt. **At one point there is a dangerously steep part of the trail with loose rock and poor footing. This section is short, 50 yards, but caution is advised. Take your time and watch your foot placement. The rock is shifty and very slippery when wet.** Once over the steep rocky area, the trail continues to ascend moderately to arrive at its end and junction with Old Piper Mountain Trail (blazed orange) (1850 ft.)

Distance from Mt. Klem –Mt. Mack Loop trailhead (1680 ft.):

- to Piper-Belknap col (1850 ft.) 2.25 mi. (3.6 km), 200 ft., 2 hrs.

