

Trail Name: Gunstock Mountain Trail & Winter Shortcut Trail

Gilford, NH

Trail Description: Mike Ware

Gunstock Mountain Trail

From the Belknap Mountain Carriage Road's lower parking lot gate, travel down Carriage Road for 100 yards. The trail head is on the left. This trail ascends to the summit of Gunstock Mountain.

The Gunstock Mtn. Trail (blazed orange) climbs steeply at first on a ridge above a stream that lies below to the right. Blue blazes in this area are markers for the State Forest Boundary. At 0.3 mi., cross through an opening in the stone wall, and the trail now travels away from the ridge. At 0.5 mi. the trail bears right and crosses a small stream bed. The trail then ascends through an area of ledge and boulders. At 0.6 miles, bear right to follow Gunstock Mtn. Trail. At 0.7 miles, there is a junction with the Winter Shortcut Trail (blazed green). Here, the Gunstock Mtn. Trail bears right and the Winter Shortcut Trail ascends steeply to the left. The Winter Shortcut Trail provides an alternate route to the Gunstock summit. The Winter Shortcut Trail ends on the Ridge Trail (blazed white), 0.1 mi. from the summit. The Winter Shortcut Trail has somewhat less ledge than the Gunstock Mtn. Trail, and may be better to use during wet or icy conditions.

At the 0.7 mi. point, the Gunstock Mtn. Trail shortly bears right across a small stream bed, bears left at the end of a stone wall and then climbs steeply. At 0.8 mi., turn right just below a large, eroded ledge/boulder area. The trail then shortly bears left ascending to a ledge overlook area. Here there are several paths from the Gunstock Mtn. Trail out to the ledge overlook on the right (east). The ledge overlook has views to the south and west. South is Piper Mt. To the west are views of Lake Winnisquam, downtown Laconia, Steele Hill (Sanbornton), in the distance, Mt. Kearsarge and Ragged Mtn.

At the junction with the ledge overlook paths, Gunstock Mtn. Trail turns 90 degrees left (north) and then passes just left of a wet area. At 0.9 mi. the trail bears right up a steep ledge area. **CAUTION : this area is commonly wet or icy making conditions dangerous.** It can be a scramble to get up in these conditions. At 1.0 mi. the trail bears right and goes through a narrow passage in a boulder strewn area. (NOTE; There is a side path to the left that joins the last few yards of Winter Shortcut Trail.) Shortly above the boulders, Gunstock Mtn. Trail is joined by the Ridge Trail (blazed white), entering from the left. From this point to the summit of Gunstock Mtn. is 0.1 mi., the two trails merge into one, and are blazed with orange and white. Make sure to bear right just below the summit and follow the blazes. This is to avoid the old footpath that exited near pipes and gas tanks of the Gunstock Resort Safety Hut.

On the Summit of Gunstock Mt. you will find the top of the Panorama Quad , the Panorama Restaurant (open only during ski season) ,the Ski Patrol safety hut, the top of the Gunstock Mountain Resort Zip Line , public comfort stations and fantastic panorama views of Lake Winnepesaukee, the Ossipee Range and the White Mountains including Mt. Washington.

Hiking distances and times to Gunstock summit (2245 ft.): 1.1 mi. (1.8 km.), 1140 ft., 1hr:15 min.

Winter Shortcut Trail

The Winter Shortcut Trail (blazed green) begins at a junction 0.7 miles up the Gunstock Mtn. Trail. It leaves left at that junction as an alternate route to the summit by ascending the Winter Shortcut Trail and joining the Ridge Trail to the summit of Gunstock Mountain. The trail ascends left across a ledge, and then climbs through a picturesque wooded area, crossing several small areas of ledge. **Caution: The ledge and rocks are slippery**

when wet or icy. At the upper terminus of the Winter Shortcut Trail, it merges with the Ridge Trail. Taking a left on the Ridge Trail at that junction will take you in 0.1 mi. to one of the best outlooks in the Belknaps, and is well worth the side trip. Now joining the Ridge Trail to the right at that junction you ascend 0.1 mile to the summit of Gunstock.

Hiking distances and times to Gunstock summit (2245 ft.) using the Winter Shortcut Trail: 1.1 mi. (1.8 km.), 1140 ft., 1hr:15 min.