

Trail Name: Ridge Trail

Gilford NH

Trail Description: Mike Ware

Ridge Trail – Description

This white-blazed trail, a segment of Belknap Range Trail, runs from the main parking lot at Gunstock Mountain Resort to the summit of Mt. Rowe, then continues along the ridge to the summit of Gunstock Mtn. A major relocation in 2013 moved the upper part of the trail off the Gunstock ski slopes and into the woods.

The Ridge Trail (blazed white) starts 100 yards north of the Gunstock main lodge, just to the right of the Adaptive Ski Center. It runs up an access road for 0.25 mi., turns left, (marked by a white arrow and cell phone tower sign), and joins the old Try-Me Ski Trail. It takes a turn to the right at 0.3 mi., marked by another white arrow. The trail ascends steeply to reach the communications tower at 0.8 mi. Here the trail traverses the summit of Mount Rowe (elev. 1,690 ft.) and its ridge, with great views of Gunstock Ski Area and Lake Winnepesaukee. There is an Earth Scope Plate Boundary Observation/GPS Station at the top of this ridge, run by UNAVCO, NASA and NSF.

The Ridge Trail continues on the rocky ridge from this point and at 1.2 mi. descends straight (marked with a white-blazed post). On the right, the Mt. Rowe Trail (blazed blue) descends to the Gilford Elementary School in Gilford Village. In 20 yds. down the Mt. Rowe Trail, the North Spur Trail (blazed orange) leaves left to traverse across the ridge to a junction with the Benjamin Weeks Trail (blazed purple). As you descend straight on the Ridge Trail from the white-blazed post, you pass through primarily hardwood growth into a ravine and brook crossing at 1.4 mi. It then ascends back up onto the ridge and an open ledge area with a great view to the north of Lake Winnepesaukee, Mount Shaw and the Ossipee Range.

The Ridge Trail then parallels a ski trail. At 1.7 mi., where it formerly joined a ski trail to the left, Ridge Trail continues ahead on the 2013 relocation; here, also, the Benjamin Weeks Trail (blazed purple) joins from the right. The Ridge Trail climbs at easy to moderate grades through woods to the west of the ski trail, with many short switchbacks. At various points along the steep ascent, make sure to look back to the north, for spectacular panoramic views of the mountains and lakes. Visible are Lakes Winnisquam, Opechee, Winnepesaukee and mountains from Moosilauke, the Sandwich Range, the White Mountain Presidential Range including Mount Washington, and the Ossipee Range.

At 2.7 mi. it turns sharply left and uphill where green-blazed Winter Short Cut, an alternate route for a steep section of Gunstock Mountain Trail, joins from the right. (In the reverse direction, turn sharply right at a cairn at this junction.) Ridge Trail climbs 35 yd. to a junction where orange-blazed Gunstock Mountain Trail joins from the right. (An outlook south can be reached by descending a few yds. on this trail and following an obscure side path 20 yd. to the left.) Ridge Trail and Gunstock Mountain Trail now coincide, climbing steadily and then turning right at an arrow and emerging at the summit in another 40 yd. beside the Safety Services building of

the ski area. Fine views are available from the top of the ski slopes a short distance ahead. To the right a ski trail leads 30 yd. down to the upper terminus of Brook Trail. To descend the coinciding Gunstock Mountain Trail and Ridge Trail, begin behind the left side of the Skier Services building and adjacent restroom (signs and white and orange blazes).

On Gunstock summit you also will find the top of the Panorama Quad, The Panorama Restaurant, the Ski Patrol Safety Hut and the top of the Gunstock Mountain Resort Zip Line.

Distances from Gunstock Mountain Resort parking lot (930 ft.) to

- summit of Mt. Rowe (1,690 ft.): 0.9 mi. (1.5 km), 750 ft., 50 min.
- summit of Gunstock Mtn. (2,250 ft.): 2.8 mi. (4.5 km), 1,500 ft. (rev.200 ft.), 2 hr. 10 min.