



Favorite Hikes on the Finger Lakes Trail

Rock Rift Fire Tower Map M28

By: Donna Coon

Type: *loop* **Length:** *6.9 miles* **Rating:** *strenuous* **Terrain:** *varied*
Elevation gain/Loss: *1100ft* **Comments:** *recommend downloading map. Although trail is well blazed there are directions on the back of the map that make it much easier to navigate the trail.*

This hike has it all, rolling wooded terrain, a significant climb and descent, and a gentle stroll along the scenic Cannonsville Reservoir. The trail passes through woods and meadows. You might see signs of bear. There will be evidence of the past: a fire tower waiting to be restored, a paved road slowly disappearing beneath dirt, grass and moss, reminding you that it once led to farms and villages that were displaced in the mid 1960's to provide needed water to New York City.

Start your hike from the parking area at the junction of NYS 10 and NYS 268. Choose the direction in which you wish to start your hike.

If you stay on the same side of the road as the parking area and follow the blue trail west along the inside of the guard rail it will continue down along the reservoir and come back up to NYS route 10 crossing route 10 and continuing up the hill. You will reach the junction with the Main Trail and white blazes after a total of 2.1 miles on the blue trail. This junction is at mile point 8.4 on map M28. Signs indicate which way to the tower, but make sure you are heading east and continuing uphill. (Do not turn left.) Then follow the white blazes for 2.1 miles to the fire tower. (Be alert there are a few turns in here where the map directions are very helpful.) Before the fire tower you will enter a stone quarry. Be aware of warning signs concerning the quarry. After reaching the fire tower the trail goes to the right of the tower. Head south and downhill until you come to the register at this point you will turn right heading northwest following white blazes back to your car.

If you cross the road and follow the white blazes up the hill you will be following the map directions backwards from mile point 13.2 to the blue trail at mile point 8.4. This path follows white blazes slightly up hill and east and then heads southeast paralleling NYS route 10 although you will be far enough away and mostly in the woods as to not be bothered by traffic noise. After 0.7 of a mile you will cross a private dirt driveway with a slight jog to the left and cross a field entering the woods on the far side. In 0.5 miles you will turn left at the register and head North up hill. (A local bear does not seem to like this register and has done damage to it a few times.) The blue trail to the right



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going downhill goes back to NYS Route 10 east of where you are parked. Continue uphill 1.5 miles to the Fire Tower. After reaching the tower follow the white blazes for 2.1 miles to the junction with the blue trail. At this point follow the blue trail for another 2.1 miles back to your car. The blue trail will continue downhill across NYS RT 10, along the reservoir and back up along NYS 10 back to your car.



IMPORTANT: Trail conditions may have changed since the above map was created. Before you hike, check the Trail Condition Notices for map Mxx on the FLT Website (fingerlakestrail.org) for latest conditions.