



Backpacking 101

With Leave No Trace certification

[Click for Registration Details](#)

July 25-27, 2025

Finger Lakes Trail

Crystal Hills Branch

to/from [Moss Hill Lean-To](#)

South Bradford State Forest

Northern terminus of the

[Great Eastern Trail](#)

Gather & park

[The Y at Watson Woods](#)

9620 Dry Run Road

Painted Post, NY 14870

Moderately Strenuous

2 Days on Trail, 1 camping night

14-mile round trip (7 per day)

1,000' elevation gain (Day 1)

[See: Hike Difficulty Scale](#)

Friday, July 25 - Optional

Optional: Overnight room reservation

[Click here for Booking Inquiry](#)

Saturday, July 26

8:00 am Crew Breakfast & depart

Hike to Moss Hill Lean-To

Overnight camp at/near lean-to

Sunday, July 27

Return Hike to Watson Woods

Post-trek group snack & debrief

4:00 pm wrap-up, maybe sooner

Your Guide

[Tim Holahan](#)

FLTC Hike Leader

NYS DEC Certified Guide

FLT End-to-End Thru-hiker (2023)

Adirondack 46r, Eagle Scout, Scoutmaster

200+ trek experiences

\$ 180 per participant

Min 6 participants, Max 12



FLTC Backpacking 101 is a guided, group backpacking experience for beginners that includes pre-trek coaching & planning.

Experienced backpackers may also participate.

FLTC Trek Goals

- ☐ Experience a Wow!
- ☐ Goldilocks Challenge
(not too little, not too much)
- ☐ Avoid illness & injury
- ☐ Look forward to more

Your Responsibilities	Trek Guide Responsibilities
Review this trek plan	Develop a trek plan
Review & agree to Code of Conduct	Assemble a Trek Crew from registrants
Advise Guide of medical or health history that would be relevant to an emergency medical response.	Prepare map & plan for each crew member.
Participate in 1-hour pre-trek crew video call	Water filtration & crew 1st-aid kit
Trail meals & snacks	Pre-trek breakfast & post-trek snack
Prepare & test gear. On-your-own pack shakedown walk with self-photo shared.	Gear lists & planning guidance & coaching.
Contribute to a favorable group experience for all.	Leave No Trace workshop & certificate
	On-trail guidance for crew safety & experience.

Trek Plan

When	When	What
Pre-trek Planning	July 3, 2025	Registration Due by July 3, 2025 - Waiver - Photo release - Emergency Contact
	To be scheduled	Crew Video Call - Code of Conduct - Health & Medical awareness
	On-your own	Pre-trek Prep
		Advise guide of health matters relevant to an Emergency Medical situation
		Shakedown Walk (selfie photo)
Friday night July 25	On your own	Optional stay @ Watson Woods
Saturday July 26	8:00 am	Gather & crew breakfast Crew estimates & plans the day
	Trail Time	7 mile hike with 1,000' ascent Relaxed pace Lunch Leave No Trace (1-hr rest break)
	Evening & Overnight	Moss Hill Lean-To Campsite
	11:40 pm	New Moon sets (Dark skies)
Sunday July 27	5:55 am 7:00 - 8:00 am	Sunrise Relaxed breakfast Crew to estimate & plan the day
	Trail Time	7 mile hike with 1,000' descent Lunch en-route Relaxed pace
	Approximately 3 pm	Post-trek debrief
		Depart

Packing List

Backpack

- Well fit to body; holds 100% of gear
- 2-3 Water Bottles
(SmartWater 1-liter recommended)
- Water Filter (E.g. Sawyer squeeze)
- Trekking poles (optional)
- Sit pad (optional)

Sleep system

- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping Pad
- Tent or Tarp (Lean-to may be full)
- Pillow (optional)

Trail Clothes

- Raincoat, rain pants, or poncho
- Boots or running shoes
- Shorts or trail pants
- Hiking shirt, t-shirt is fine
- Liner socks & wool socks
- Extra underwear, liner socks

Camp Clothes

- Shorts, long-sleeve shirt
- Fleece or puffer jacket
- Winter Hat
- Slides / sandals (optional)

Trail Kitchen

- Food bag & 50' light paracord
- Stove & fuel
- Matches / Lighter
- Cook pot (750 ml recommended)
- Mug or Cup
- Spoon

Gear Bag

- Headlamp
- Privy kit (TP, trowel, hand sanitizer)
- Map (provided)
- Trash bag (1-quart Ziploc)
- Personal Health History document
- Compass (a map will be provided)
- Cellphone (battery pack optional)
- 1st Aid Kit
- Comfort Kit (meds, lotions)
- Insect repellent
- Pocket knife (small)
- Notepad & pencil/pen

Suggested Menu

This is a common menu for long-distance through-hikers on FLT and Appalachian Trail. It is simple to prepare and works on the trail.

Hikers are free to customize their own menu yet are advised to consider weight, cooking time, cleanup complexity, and trash. We will carry out 100% of our cooking trash.

Breakfast **400 calories**

Oatmeal
Granola Bar
Tea Bag

Lunch **400 calories**

Must be simple.

Flour tortillas (2-3)
Peanut Butter (squeeze pouch)
Craisans

Dinner **1200 calories**

Knorr sides (Rice)
Instant Potatoes
Flour tortilla (1-2)
4 cups of water = 1 liter

Snacks **1000 calories**

Protein Bars
Beef Jerky / Sausage
Mike & Ike candy
Cajun Mix / Corn Nuts

Start & End
Watson Woods

Campsite
Moss Hill
Lean-to

Map

Miles Description of trail from north to south

- 0.0 Northern terminus of FLT-Crystal Hills Branch(CHB)/Great Eastern Trail (orange blazes). Trail begins on FLT main trail map M13 between access points 4 & 5, just before a small tributary (before Cotton-Hanlon boundary). The white-blazed FLT/NCT crosses tributary, turns left (N), and goes uphill. Right (S) about 200' on Crystal Hills Branch Trail (CHB) leads to Moss Hill Lean-to with picnic table, fire ring, and outhouse. Reliable stream, but during dry times water may exist only in pools. High water levels in the spring or after heavy rainfall may make this stream impassable. Cross the stream. Begin ascending.
- 1.0 Cross Bailey Rd (shoulder parking). Descend, then begin a fairly level section. **Fall hunting closure here** ftmap.cc/CH1
- 2.3 Begin long descent.
- 3.0 Trail turns left (SE) off unmaintained forest road.
- 3.8 Blue blazed side trail goes left 0.9 mi NE to Meads Creek Rd/CR 26 (pull-off parking). Orange trail continues descending south.
- 4.5 Exit the woods and turn right. Follow west edge of field.
- 4.7 Left (E) on Wixon Rd (limited shoulder parking to the southeast on Wixon Rd before Meads Creek bridge).
- 4.9 Turn right (S) on Meads Creek Rd/CR 26.
- 5.0 Turn left (E) off the road (limited shoulder parking). Pass through open gate. Trail is across a field, then turns right (S) into the woods. Begin ascending.
- 5.6 Turn right (S) at T on the Huff & Puff trail, blazed orange and white. This is part of the YMCA at Watson Woods trail system. Begin descending.
- 6.0 Exit woods and turn right (SW) on Dry Run Rd (shoulder parking ahead on Woodcock Rd). White house on left is a replica of the childhood home of Thomas J. Watson, Sr. (long-time President and CEO of IBM). Nearby is the one-room school, operational from 1839 to 1957, which Watson attended as a child. Northbound hikers will notice "Posted" and "Private Grounds" signs at this trailhead; you have permission to hike the Crystal Hills Branch through the YMCA grounds.
- 6.1 Turn left (SE) on Woodcock Rd (good shoulder parking). Thomas Watson attended the one room Red School House on right. Woodcock Rd from here to Manning Ridge Rd is seasonal and used as a snowmobile trail in winter.
- 6.3 Turn left (NE) off road at sign for Meditation Trail (part of the YMCA at Watson Woods trail system). Begin long, moderate ascent (orange paint blazes above yellow discs).
- 6.7 Pass Overlook Trail (red discs) on left which goes 0.1 mi to Hillside House at the Watson Woods YMCA. Follow Meditation and Overlook trails, curving to the right.
- 6.9 Overlook trail (red discs) leaves on left. In 100' turn right on Reed's Ridge trail (blue discs and orange blazes).

