

HIKE NO 2: BLACK ASH SWAMP LOOP

Distance: 2.91 miles
Elevation Gain: 172 ft
Time Required: 2 - 3 hours
Difficulty: Easy

SUMMARY

This is a great introductory day hike at Ten Mile River. The hike begins on the main TMR Trail (marked with red markers) at the Ten Mile River Scout Museum in Headquarters and travels around the east side of Turnpike Pond. Continuing on the TMR Trail towards Camp Aquehonga, this hike crosses Crystal Lake Road (CR-26) before turning onto the Black Ash Swamp Trail (marked in blue). After the Black Ash Swamp Trail is completed in its entirety, the hike continues back onto the TMR Trail to return to the loop’s start point at the Museum.

The hike has two significant viewpoints, one on the shore of Turnpike Lake and the other at the south end of the Black Ash Swamp.

TRAILHEAD DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

The trailhead is located across from the front of the Ten Mile River Scout Museum, on the main camp service road. Cars can be parked directly in front of the museum, the Trading Post (located to the right of the front of the museum in the old commissary building) or in the very large parking lot next adjacent to the camp service road near the Administration building. [Picture 1]



Picture 1

DESCRIPTION

BEGIN the hike on the TMR Trail following the Headquarters Service Road 160 degrees SSE (If standing with your back to the door of the museum, you would turn left). The TMR Administration Building is immediately passed on your right, about 100 yards distant from the service road. Shortly thereafter, the Hearst A and B cabins are passed on your left.



Picture 2

After about 1000 feet, the TMR Trail continues on the Headquarters Service Road and makes a sharp right hand turn. [Picture 2]

After the turn, an intersection is reached where a sign is posted. [Picture 3]

Continue to follow the trail straight ahead, towards HQ Cabins 10 - 14. At this location you will notice a large field to your right and an older looking brown wooden building on your left.

The well building and the field both are both a small part of Ten Mile River's early history. Shortly after the property's purchase in 1927, President Franklin Roosevelt selected Ten Mile River as one of the first sites for part of his "New Deal" Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The program operated from 1933 to 1942 during the Great Depression in the United States for unemployed, unmarried men from relief families. The Corps did a tremendous amount of work at Ten Mile River constructing roads, firebreaks, forestry work, and dams. The field to your right was the CCC camp's parade field and the brown wooden building housed the camp's water well pumps. Interestingly, the well building is the only building left at TMR from the days of the CCC camp and still suits its original purpose.



Picture 3

After passing the well building and the field, the trail continues on the winding Headquarters Service Road. HQ Cabin 14 is passed shortly thereafter on your left and HQ Cabin 13 is passed on your right. The TMR Trail then leaves the Headquarters Service Road after a little more than a ¼ of a mile from this hike's beginning at the Museum. Follow the red markers across the short bridge atop the dam's spillway that holds back Turnpike Pond. [Picture 4]



Picture 4

The waterfall made by the dam's spillway is about 10 feet in height, and can best be observed right before crossing the dam. The spillway forms the beginning of Dunn Brook, which leaves TMR property and eventually drains into the Delaware about ten miles south of this location.

Note: Dunn Brook is named for the family of Thomas Dunn, one of the first settlers in this area. He served in George Washington's Continental Army as a private during the Revolution. Sadly, shortly after his enlistment ended, his wife and several children were slaughtered by the Lenni Lenape near his home in Flat Brook NJ. He moved to Tusten in 1809 and he and what remained of his family lived in the area around Turnpike Pond. More about Thomas Dunn and his family can be found in Quinlan's History of Sullivan County on pages 640 - 641.

After crossing the dam, the TMR Trail makes a sharp left turn, almost exactly true magnetic north (about 10 degrees NNE). Although this part of the trail is extremely well marked, it makes several abrupt turns after relatively short distances for the next 0.70 miles. The trail moves away quite a bit

from the lakeshore and travels through large stands of different varieties of pine trees.

At 1.0 mi, the trail makes a significant left hand turn at a large sycamore tree, heading back towards the lakeshore. Sycamore trees are rare at Ten Mile River. This particular tree is estimated to be about 100 - 150 years old - relatively young for a sycamore - left undisturbed they can live for over 400 years! [Picture 5]



Picture 5

The trail then reaches a great viewpoint on the north side of Turnpike Lake at 1.15 mi. [Picture 6]

From this location, the Health Lodge can be seen on your right and the dam crossing and Headquarters cabins can also be seen. Evidence of beaver activity can be seen all over this marshy area and as of this guide's writing (2017) there is a bald eagle's nest nearby. If you are quiet and keep conversation to a minimum, you may be lucky enough to see a beaver swimming in the lake or a bald eagle overhead.



Picture 6

For the next 0.38 mi, the trail makes several more abrupt turns - be sure to pay attention to the markers. The lake will slowly begin to fade away behind you and the stream feeding it will become visible [Picture 7].



Picture 7

At 1.53 mi, the trail leaves the woods and makes a left onto Ponderosa Parkway, a camp service road. [Picture 8] After passing the yellow pipe gate, the road and trail emerge onto Crystal Lake Road (CR-26) at 1.55 mi. The

TMR Trail and our hike continue directly across Crystal Lake Road. Look for the numerous red TMR Trail markers.

Shortcut Back to Headquarters - if the hiker was looking for a fast hike around Turnpike Lake only, you can get back to Headquarters easily from here without having to retrace your steps. Once reaching Crystal Lake Road, turn left onto the highway. After walking about 50 yards and crossing the small highway bridge over the outlet of



Picture 8

Black Ash Swamp, you will notice blue trail markers on the trees directly past the bridge on the left side of the road, the beginning of the short Turnpike Lake Trail. Following this trail for its entire length (0.6 miles) along the western side of Turnpike Lake will take you back to the Headquarters Area, ending by the Health Lodge. Once passing the Health Lodge (on your left) the Museum is another 0.20 mi ahead, also on your left.

Once crossing the road, the TMR Trail now begins the most significant ascent of this loop, gaining about 150 feet in elevation on the remains of the old Camp Aquehonga access road. Camp Aquehonga was formerly located on the western side of Half Moon Lake before the camp was moved to the east side of the lake in the early 1960's. As you ascend, note the unnamed stream immediately to your left. The Black Ash Swamp drains into this stream, and is one of the sources of Turnpike Lake.

Optional Side Trip - An optional side trip can be taken from this location to visit old Camp Aquehonga. The main red marked TMR Trail continues in a northerly direction, through the remains of of the camp which was closed in 1959. Old fireplaces and chimneys are still standing throughout the area, and the outlines of old campsites can be seen. The most significant structure in the old camp is the water tower, which can be observed visually from a safe distance. The water tower is unstable and no attempt should be made to climb it. More information about old Camp Aquehonga can be obtained from the museum directly.



Picture 9

At 1.85 mi the junction with the blue marked "Black Ash Swamp Trail" is reached. There are 3 blue trail markers nailed to a large tree noting this junction to your left. [Picture 9] There is also an old telephone pole with a sign that states "Red Trail" at this location. [Picture 10] This loop hike now leaves the red marked main TMR Trail and makes a left onto the blue marked Black Ash Swamp Trail (almost exactly 270 degrees W).



Picture 10

The trail junction can easy to miss if you are not careful. Logging has occurred fairly recently in this area. Be sure to follow only the blue plastic trail markers, and ignore any blue painted stripes or dots you may come across on some trees (these are meant for loggers).

Shortly after making the left turn off of the red marked TMR Trail and onto the blue marked Black Ash Swamp Trail, a great viewpoint of the Black Ash Swamp is reached at 1.90 mi. [Pictures 11, 12, 13]



Picture 11



Picture 12



Picture 13

The swamp is one of the most beautiful areas at Ten Mile River, and has been left in its complete natural state. Staying on the trail, turn left and cross the stream (almost exactly 180 degrees S).

Formerly, there was a bridge at this location, the remains of which can be seen slightly downstream to your left. [Picture 14] Be careful crossing, particularly after the spring snowmelt or after a heavy storm.

After another short distance, the trail turns onto the remains of an old road, still heading almost due south (180 degrees S), at 2.15 mi. It can best be described as a “Mountain Laurel Highway”, as large stands of mountain laurel are located on both sides of the trail. [Picture 15] The mountain laurel blooms in early to late May and lasts for about a month every year.

At 2.35 mi, note the tote road that crosses the trail to your right and left, and continue to stay straight. [Picture 16]



Picture 14



Picture 15



Picture 16

At 2.57 mi, the Black Ash Swamp Trail ends at another intersection with the red marked TMR Trail. The trail’s end is marked once again by three blue markers, much like the trail’s beginning. A trail register is located on your left at this location. Make a left onto the TMR Trail here to head back towards Headquarters, approximately 110 degrees ESE. [Picture 17]



Picture 17

At 2.65 mi another tote road is crossed. Continue to stay straight on the TMR Trail. *[Picture 18]*

At 2.80 mi, the trail emerges from the woods back onto Crystal Lake Road. *[Picture 19]* Continue to follow the markers back to the Museum on the Headquarters Service Road to this adventures end at 2.91 mi. *[Picture 20]*



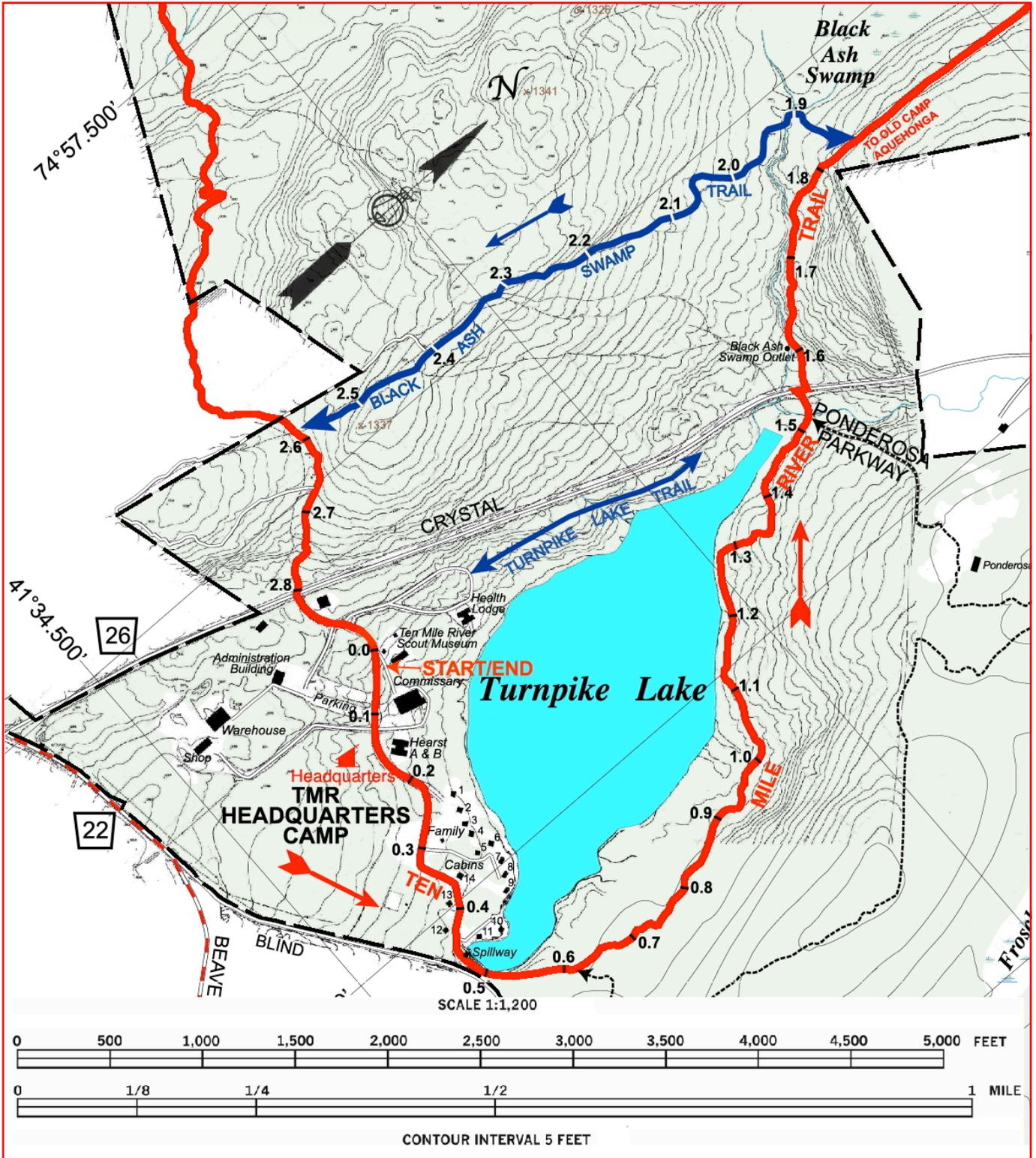
Picture 18



Picture 19



Picture 20

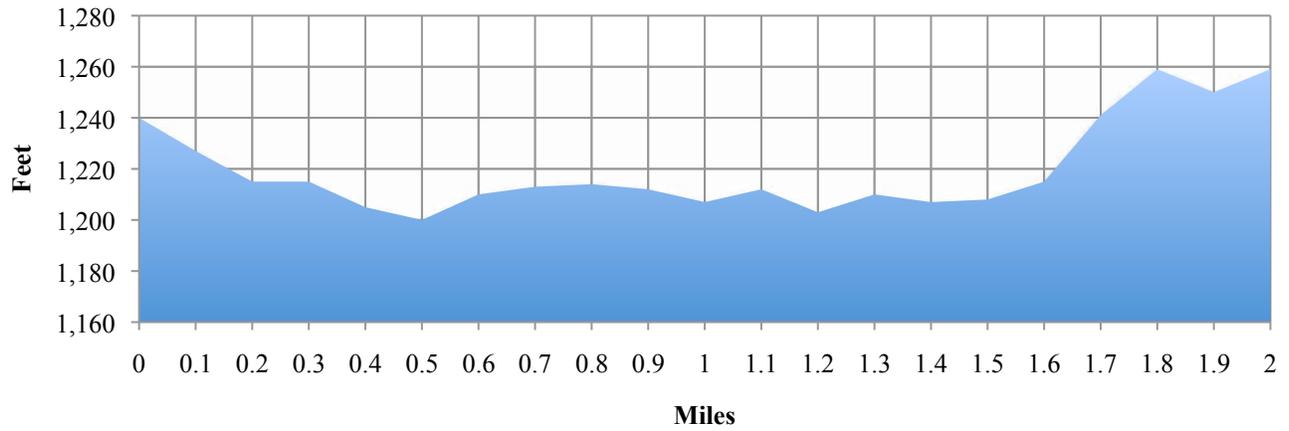


Hike Summary

- 0.00 mi. Ten Mile River Scout Museum. Get on Headquarters Service Road/T.M.R. Trail
- 1.0 mi. Significant left hand turn at a large sycamore tree.
- 1.5 mi. Great viewpoint of Turnpike Lake.
- 1.53 mi. Left turn onto Ponderosa Parkway.
- 1.55 mi. Cross Crystal Lake Road.
- 1.85 mi. Get on Black Ash Swamp Trail
- 1.90 mi. Great viewpoint of Black Ash Swamp.
- 2.15 mi. Trail turns onto remains of old road.
- 2.35 mi. Cross tote road.
- 2.57 mi. Black Ash Swamp Trail ends. Get on T.M.R. Trail.
- 2.65 mi. Cross tote road.
- 2.80 mi. Cross Crystal Lake Road.
- 2.91 mi. Ten Mile River Scout Museum.

Trail Elevations

0 mi. - 2 mi.



2 mi. - 0 mi. (End)

