

RIDE NO. 16 HILLTOWN RUNAROUND

Mileage = 38

Elevation Gain = 2,531

Category = Moderate

Here's a very nice ride in the Helderbergs of southern Albany County. It dips down into Schenectady County, too. In Dutch, helder means bright and berg means mountain - the bright mountains!

To drive to the starting point, take I-90 east to Exit 4, SR 85, Slingerlands Bypass, and go south for 11.2 miles, passing through New Salem. Continue on SR 85 for eight-tenths of a mile more and bear right, uphill, on SR 157. In another eight-tenths, make a hard left on CR 311, Beaver Dam Road, which climbs sharply in a switchback. In 1.6 miles, Beaver Dam Road becomes CR 303, which comes in from the left as Pinnacle Road. In an additional five-tenths of a mile, you'll see an informal pull-off on the right where you can park. It's just before the sign marking the line for the Town of Berne.

While this undulating ride is mostly along the top of the Helderberg Escarpment, starting at a sea-level elevation of 1,397 feet, it descends to Duaneburg (for a Stewart's lunch stop if you wish), which is at an elevation of 705 feet. Naturally, it climbs back up the escarpment to return you to the starting point, so it provides a pretty good workout. Still, it's not overly arduous (there I go, making another subjective evaluation). The cumulative elevation gain is 2,531 feet, or 66.1 feet per mile on average. You'll be rewarded with many fine views in a predominantly rural setting. At one point you can see the Catskills to the south; at another, to the north, the Adirondacks (if you've picked a clear day). Very little of this rural land is farmed. The soil and terrain don't make for viable farming in this day and age. Incidentally, at cue sheet line 5, you pass Nature Center Way on your left. It's an unpaved road that leads in a couple of tenths of a mile to a new environmental education center that's worth stopping to see. It exists thanks to the financial and planning generosity of Fred and Martha Schroeder. Fred, who has probably led more hikes for the Adirondack Mountain Club than anyone else (Martha is also an enthusiastic hiker), was the Director of the Albany Boys Club for a number of years and spent many summers counseling at the camp on Thompson's Lake, the site of the Center. It's on State land and is really an extension of John Boyd Thatcher State Park. Thatcher was a mayor of Albany. The Schroeders named the Center after his widow, Emma Treadwell Thatcher, who donated the land for the Park to the State.

Another aside: the hiking trail known as Long Path, which originates at the George Washington Bridge and goes north beyond Thatcher Park (and may someday connect to the Northville-Placid Trail to Lake Placid), passes through Thatcher Park; in fact, you parked your car near the point where it crosses Beaver Dam Road (look for turquoise-colored trail markers).

START: CR 303, BEAVER DAM RD., THATCHER PARK (1,397 FT. MSL ELEV.)

1	GO W ON CR 303	1,397'	-	-
2	R ON SUTO RD.	1,338'	0.7	0.7
3	R ON SR 157	1,257'	1.2	1.9
4	L ON CR 256, KETCHAM RD.	1,250'	0.1	2.0
5	PASS NATURE CENTER WAY - L	1,384'	1.0	3.0
6	R ON SR 157, THOMPSONS LK. RD.	1,404'	0.7	3.7
7	PASS SR 157A, WARNERS LK, RD. - L	1,397'	1.2	4.9
8	L ON SR 156, BERNE-ALTAMONT RD.	1,333'	0.6	5.5
9	R ON CR 260, WITTER RD.	1,363'	0.6	6.1
10	R AT END ON SR 146	1,037'	1.7	7.8
11	L ON CR 261, BELL RD.	978'	0.4	8.2
12	L AT END ON CR 253, BOZEN KILL RD.	590'	1.2	9.4
13	PASS WHITE RD. - R	803'	1.5	10.9
14	PASS COLLITON RD. -R	987'	1.2	12.1
15	PASS WEST WIND RD. - L	1,010'	1.1	13.2
16	STR8 ON CROW HILL RD. (CR 253 GOES L)	1,007'	0.3	13.5
17	R AT END ON CR 74, SCHOHARIE TPKE.	942'	0.7	14.2
18	PASS CR 125, WEAVER RD. - L	884'	0.3	14.5
19	PASS BOZENKILL RD. - R	898'	0.7	15.2
20	L ON DUANE RD.	902'	0.8	16.0
21	R AT "T" ON DUANE LAKE RD.	906'	0.1	16.1
22	L AT END ON CR 121, NO. MANSION RD.	902'	0.8	16.9
23	L AT END ON US RT. 20	807'	0.7	17.6

24	STEWART'S ON R AT JCT. W/SR 7	705'	0.9	18.5
25	GOL (SOUTH) ON SR 7		-	-
26	L ON CR 125, WEAVER RD.	741'	0.9	19.4
27	R ON CR 74, SCHOHARIE TPKE.	884'	1.0	20.4
28	L ON CR 131, CHADWICK RD.	1,042'	1.5	21.9
29	BECOMES CR 252, KNOX CAVE RD.	1,109'	0.5	22.4
30	PASS CR 253, BOZEN KILL RD. - L	1,134'	0.3	22.7
31	PASS WILTY RD. - R	1,196'	0.5	23.2
32	R AT END ON CR 259, BEEBE RD.	1,199'	0.8	24.0
33	PASS CHURCH RD. - R	1,201'	0.4	24.4
34	X SR 146, TOWNSHIP RD.	1,280'	0.9	25.3
35	X CR 262, MIDDLE RD.	1,307'	0.9	26.2
36	L ON CR 255, KNOX-GALLOPVILLE RD.	1,253'	1.0	27.2
37	R ON SR 156, BERNE-ALTAMONT RD.	1,185'	0.7	27.9
38	PASS CR 254, PLEASANT VALLEY RD. - L	1,059'	1.7	29.6
39	L ON SR 443, BERNE	1,007'	1.4	31.0
40	PASS TABOR RD. - L	1,106'	0.8	31.8
41	PASS TURNER RD. - L	1,202'	0.8	32.6
42	PASS CR 2 - R	1,201'	1.0	33.6
43	L ON SR 157A	1,204'	0.8	34.4
44	PASS WARNERS LK. RD. - L	1,204'	0.4	34.8
45	PASS SAW MILL RD. - R	1,343'	1.5	36.3
46	R ON CR 303, BEAVER DAM RD.	1,329'	0.7	37.0
47	REACH STARTING POINT	1,353'	1.3	38.