

## Slide Mountain elev. 4,180'

*Elevation gain: 1,780 ft*

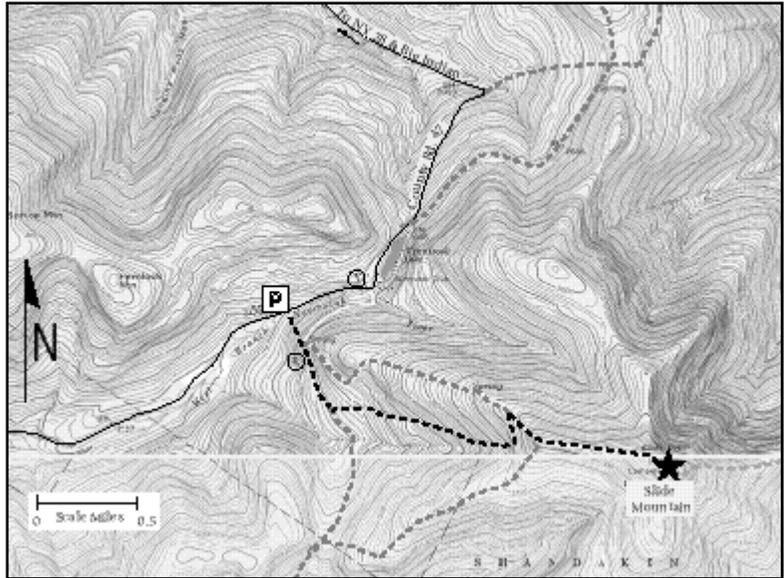
*Length: 5.1 miles.*

*Difficulty: Strenuous.*

*Time: 4 ½ Hours.*

### **Description:**

From the parking area, proceed east on the yellow-blazed Phoenicia-East Branch Trail, which crosses the West Branch of the Neversink River on rocks, and then climbs on a rocky footpath, reaching an old woods road in 0.4 mile. Follow the yellow-blazed trail as it turns right and runs along the level woods road. In another third of a mile, after passing a spring to the left, you will reach a junction with the red-blazed Wittenberg-Cornell-Slide Trail, marked by wooden DEC signs. This red-blazed trail will be your return road, but for now, continue ahead along the old road, following the yellow markers. The road briefly narrows to a footpath and then descends to cross a stream on a wooden bridge.



About a mile and a half from the start, you'll reach another junction - this one, with the blue-blazed Curtis-Ormsbee Trail. This trail was named after two well-known hikers, "Father" Bill Curtis and Allen Ormsbee, both of whom perished in a snowstorm on Mount Washington, N.H. in June 1900 (a marble monument at the junction commemorates this tragic event). Turn left here and follow the blue blazes of the Curtis-Ormsbee Trail.

The trail climbs to the top of a large rock and then continues to ascend. After a short, steep section, it reaches a viewpoint to the north from a rock outcrop on the left side of the trail. Just beyond, you'll pass the DEC sign that marks elevation 3,500 feet - above which camping and fires are not permitted.

In another 0.2 mile, in a flat area, a yellow-blazed side trail on the right leads about 200 feet to an outstanding viewpoint over Table, Lone, Rocky and Balsam Cap Mountains. This is a good spot to rest and take in the view.

When you're ready to continue, backtrack to the main trail and turn right, continuing to follow the blue blazes. The Curtis-Ormsbee Trail soon resumes its climb, and in another mile it ends at a junction with the red-blazed Cornell-Wittenberg-Slide Trail. Turn right and follow the red trail, which once served as the road to a fire tower on the summit, as it proceeds on a relatively level path along the summit ridge. In about half a mile, you'll reach an excellent viewpoint to the left of the trail, with the Blackhead Range clearly visible in the distance. Continue ahead and you'll soon reach the actual summit (elevation 4,180 feet), marked by the remains of the foundation of the former fire tower. There are no views from here, but just beyond, you'll come to a large rock ledge which overlooks Cornell and Wittenberg Mountains to the east. You've now climbed about 1,800 vertical feet from the trailhead, and you'll want to spend some time enjoying this spectacular view. Another interesting feature which you will want to check out is a plaque just below the summit ledge in memory of John Burroughs, a naturalist who lived nearby, who often climbed these mountains.

## *Slide Mountain*

After you've spent some time resting, retrace your steps and follow the red trail back to the junction with the Curtis-Ormsbee Trail. This time, though, continue ahead at the junction, following the red blazes. The trail will soon bend sharply to the left, and then to the right. After these two sharp turns, the trail continues down the mountain on a wide but very rocky path. This route offers no views and is much less interesting than the Curtis-Ormsbee trail that you used to climb the mountain, but it is also shorter and faster.

In about two miles from summit, the Wittenberg-Cornell-Slide Trail ends at a junction with the yellow-blazed Phoenicia-West Branch Trail. Turn right and follow the yellow trail along the old woods road for 0.3 mile, then turn left, leaving the woods road, and continue following the yellow blazes back to the parking area where you began the hike.



### **What's in a name**

Slide takes its name from a landslide that occurred many, many years ago down the north side of the mountain. The Slide Mountain Wilderness encompasses more than 47,500 acres, making it the largest and most popular wilderness area in the Catskills. Extensive foot trails provide access to the remote exterior.

Slide may have been to John Burroughs what Everest was to Sir Edmund Hillary or what Denali was to Bradford Washburn. The man and mountain are inextricably linked. Burroughs wrote reverently about this, the tallest of the Catskills. He looked admiringly from afar at the peak that reminded him of a "gigantic horse (that) has got his head down grazing" long before he dared to try to sit on its back. In his essay, "The Heart of the Southern Catskills," the turn-of-the-20th-century naturalist and poet wrote that Slide had "been a summons and a challenge to me for many years."

At long last, he climbed. His ascent and writings are said to have "introduced Slide Mountain to the world." Slide is now regarded, and rightfully so, as one of the most enjoyable outings in the Catskills.

### ***Directions to Trailhead :***

From Hunter, take Rt 23A east to RT 214 South to Rt 28. Proceed west on Rt 28 for about 30 miles to the hamlet of Big Indian. Turn left and proceed south on County Route 47 for about six miles to a hairpin turn in the road, then continue for another two miles, past the Winnisook Club, to a parking area for Slide Mountain, marked by a wooden sign, on the left side of the road.