

SECTION 18: LINCOLN GAP TO ROUTE 17

SNAPSHOT:

This section includes a fun, challenging traverse and descent from Lincoln Gap, an open traverse of the rolling Sugarbush Golf Course with beautiful views, and a meander through the woods of the Mad River Valley.

LENGTH: 11.3 miles

DIFFICULTY:

Reaching the beginning of this section at the top of Lincoln Gap requires a sustained climb on the Lincoln Gap Rd. from the end of plowing either in Lincoln or Warren. The initial descent on the Trail from Lincoln Gap is very steep and can be challenging, even with deep snow. Between this initial descent and West Hill Rd. the route is rolling with a few unbridged stream crossings, presenting intermediate difficulty. If breaking trail, this section can take considerable time and backcountry equipment with skins is highly recommended. Crossing the Sugarbush Golf Course is easy skiing unless a crust has developed or there is deep unbroken snow. The golf course can be windy. From the Golf Course to Rte. 17 is intermediate, involving some snowplowing and herringboning.

DIRECTIONS TO TRAIL

ACCESS/EXIT POINTS (south to north):

1. Lincoln Gap Rd. - Warren

The upper sections of Lincoln Gap Rd. are unplowed in winter. From either Lincoln or Warren, drive up as far as the road is plowed, park, and then ski up the unplowed road to the CT trailhead. Northbound the CT trailhead is just to the east of the northbound Long Trail trailhead.

2. West Hill Rd. - Warren

From Rte. 100 in Warren take West Hill Rd. approximately two miles west and up hill to West Hill House, a B&B. There are several parking slots available to skiers on the south side of the B&B. Please do not occupy the parking spots directly in front of the B&B without securing permission from the proprietors. To head south on the CT pick up the Trail directly behind the B&B. To head north follow West Hill Rd. 100 yards north and east past the intersection with Inferno Rd. Cross to the north side of the road and follow the CT onto the Sugarbush Golf Course.

3. Sugarbush Access Rd. - Warren

From Rte. 100 in Warren take the Sugarbush Access Rd. west and uphill for approximately two miles. Just before the intersection with German Flats Rd. there is a parking area for skiers on the SOUTH side of Sugarbush Access Rd. across from the Sugarbush Inn. DO NOT park in the lot behind Sugarbush Inn. To find the CT northbound from the parking area, cross Sugarbush Access Rd. just east of the Inn into a large field and look for blazes heading north-northwest. To head south on the CT look for blazes along the east side of the parking area that will direct you past some townhouses and onto the golf course.

4. German Flats Rd. - Fayston

From the intersection of Rtes. 100 and 17 in Waitsfield take Rte. 17 west approximately two miles and turn left (south) on German Flats Rd. Go south approximately 0.5 miles to where the CT crosses the road. Limited parking is available at the corner of Hiddenwood Road just south of

the CT crossing. A convenient larger parking area is available at the Fayston Elementary School, just 0.1 miles farther south on German Flats Road.

5. Rte. 17 - Fayston

From the intersection of Rtes. 100 and 17 in Waitsfield, take Rte. 17 west approximately three miles to a driveway on the right (north) side of the road for Battleground Condominiums. As you enter the Battleground complex, turn right BEFORE crossing a covered bridge, and park on the right hand side of the road by the "visitor parking" sign. Do not block access to the dumpster. This is the ONLY designated parking for CT users. Please do not park near the entrance to Battleground nor on any other road in the complex. To ski south, walk back to the Battleground entrance, cross to the south side of Rte. 17 and look for CT blazes heading east along the field/forest edge.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION:

From the top of Lincoln Gap (0.0) the CT heads north a couple of hundred feet east of the Long Trail trailhead up to Mt. Abraham. The first section includes a few short, very steep descents past large boulders and through mixed hardwood and coniferous forest. After approximately 0.5 miles, the route levels out and heads north and then northeast generally following the contour along the flank of Mt. Abraham mostly within the Green Mountain National Forest. This section includes several unbridged stream crossings and a few moderate climbs and descents. The Trail rises slightly to go through a small notch (2.5) and then turns east and runs downhill on an old logging road across private property to West Hill Rd. (3.7). (The unbridged crossing of Bradley Brook roughly just before reaching West Hill Rd. can be challenging if the brook is not frozen.) At West Hill Rd. turn left (north) and walk a few hundred yards along the road. The CT cuts into the woods on the left and leads to the backyard of West Hill House Bed and Breakfast.

From West Hill House follow West Hill Rd. 100 yards north and east past the intersection with Inferno Rd. Cross to the north side of the road and follow the CT onto the Sugarbush Golf Course. Turn right (east), and follow the contour along the edge of the course and to the left of a clump of trees. At the top of the hill enter the woods to the right. The Trail climbs along the fairway and then bears right uphill towards a grove of birches. Continue straight, staying on the fairway, and then enter a short section of woods. At the top of the slope the Trail opens up to offer expansive views north and east. Cross the slope toward a clump of trees. Head downhill and across Golf Course Rd. (4.9) to the left of the clubhouse. Ski through a small grove of apple trees. Turn left (north) and stay on the eastern edge of the fairway. At the next road crossing (Norwegian Lane), turn left, and after about a hundred yards turn right (north) and re-enter the golf course. Bear right, past a granite marker for the 11th hole. Go down a steep hill, and cross a bridge. Take a right and go uphill on a winding woods road. Stay left along the edge of the course, and then turn right on a road. From here the Trail climbs gently along the left edge of the fairway, then crosses a small bridge, and continues climbing along the right edge of the fairway. At the top of the hill, look back for a beautiful view of the Sugarbush ski area. Turn right at the granite marker for the 14th hole, cross the fairway, and take a left up a small hill. The Trail takes another left at the end of a line of evergreens, and then traverses the edge of the Sugarbush Pavilion. The Sugarbush Access Rd. parking area (6.2) is adjacent to the Pavilion.

To continue north on the CT, ski through woods along the east side of the parking area and cross Sugarbush Access Rd. into a large field between the Sugarbush Inn and Southface Condominiums. The Trail heads northwest across the field, crosses a bridge over a beaver pond, and then heads north again, re-entering the woods. The CT ascends to a plateau in an evergreen stand and then descends a steep hill leading to a series of beaver ponds. The Trail follows the chain of ponds, paralleling German Flats Rd., which can be seen to the left. A short distance

beyond the beaver ponds, the Trail takes a left onto a driveway and re-enters the woods to the right. It emerges onto Sugar Hill Rd. (7.4) and follows it up a hill past the Sugar Run Condominiums. Part way up the hill, the CT bears left (north) into the woods. Ski north more-or-less following the contour on a Class IV road. Watch for a left turn off the road that will take you downhill on a long S curve. The Trail continues gradually down and across the hill. Watch for another sharp left turn, where the Trail drops steeply down to a bridge before crossing German Flats Rd. (9.4).

Cross the road and pick up the Trail on the other side, climbing steeply. The Trail enters a mature evergreen woods and gently rolls along past a few houses. After a final stretch through some sharp dips, the CT enters a meadow below Mad River Barn (10.5). When you reach the Mad River Barn buildings, please walk across the parking lots and resume skiing where the CT enters the woods on the left (west) side of the brown "Annex" building. Do not ski behind (south of) the Mad River Barn. The trail quickly makes a short steep climb and levels out, meandering through the woods and entering a field opposite the Battleground Condominiums. Follow the CT on the left (west) side of the field as it curves around to meet Rte. 17 (11.3). The next section of CT heads north into the woods directly across Rte. 17 from this point.

DISTANCE TO LANDMARKS:

Mileage Northbound	Landmark	Mileage Southbound
0.0	Lincoln Gap	11.3
2.5	Small notch	8.8
3.7	West Hill Rd.	7.6
4.9	Golf Course Rd.	6.4
6.2	Sugarbush Access Rd. parking	5.1
7.4	Sugar Hill Rd.	3.9
9.4	German Flats Rd.	1.9
10.5	Mad River Barn	0.8
11.3	Rte. 17	0.0

SIDE TRAILS AND LOOPS:

Where the CT crosses German Flats Rd. it is coincident with the Mad River Path Association's Mill Brook Trail providing an opportunity for a side trail excursion east to Marble Hill Rd. Contact the Mad River Path Association (802-496-7284) for information on trail conditions.