

<b>Day:</b> Friday	<b>Start Time:</b> 8:30 am	<b>End Time:</b> 4:30 pm
<b>Co-Leader:</b>	<b>Co-Leader:</b>	<b>Limit:</b> 12 people
<b>Transportation:</b>	<b>Driver:</b>	<b>Radios:</b> 2 / <b>First Aid Kit:</b> 1
<b>Fees:</b> \$14 Transportation Fee	<b>Travel Distance:</b> 64 RT	<b>Travel Time:</b> 90 Min RT

## Hike to Stairway to Heaven on the Appalachian Trail

Discover the Appalachian Trail's stunning and diverse part in northern New Jersey. Hike along boardwalks, across a suspension bridge, through hardwood forests, past fields of wildflowers, alongside train tracks, near a cow pasture, and over a boulder field before steeply ascending more than 1,100 feet up the “Stairway to Heaven” to reach one of the best viewpoints in NJ: Pinwheel Vista. At the top, you can see the Kittatinny Mountains in the distance, farms in the valley below, and the High Point Monument on clear days. Then, turn around and retrace your steps.

This is a moderate hike, with the trail surface varying from easy boardwalks to flat, hard-packed areas, dirt, and some challenging rocky sections. The “Stairway to Heaven” includes rock slab steps with switchbacks leading up to Wawayanda Mountain.

This is an out-and-back hike covering 7.4 miles. We will proceed at a moderate pace of about 2 miles per hour, slowing down on the uphill sections with occasional breaks. Hiking shoes or trail runners are required. We may stop at Heaven Hill Farm for ice cream depending on the group's time and interest.

- Bring standard hiking gear: hat, food, water, hiking stick, and sturdy hiking shoes.
- 90 Min / 64 Miles R/T from Camp
- 8:30 am ~ 4:30 pm

### Logistics:

- 8:30 am Depart from Camp
- 8:30 am – 9:15 am Travel from Camp to Trailhead
- 9:15 am – 9:30 am Gear Check and Prep
- 9:30 am -3:00 pm Hike
- 3:00 pm 4:30 pm Travel back to camp with a stop for ice cream

### Map:

- Digital Map:
  - [Appalachian Trail - Pochuck Boardwalk, NJ](#) 2017: Trail Conference **Free**
  - [Northern New Jersey Highlands \(Wawayanda & Bearfort Ridge - Map 152\)](#): \$4.99
  - [2021: Trail Conference Northern New Jersey Highlands \(Combined Map, with A.T. Corridor Map\)](#): 2021: Trail Conference \$14.99
- Paper: [Northern New Jersey Highlands Trails Map 2021](#) - 13th edition (Four-map set, maps #150, 151, 152 & 153) \$15.95

**Books:**

- [50 Hikes in New Jersey](#)
- [Hiking the Jersey Highlands](#) has the popular short route (only 2.5 miles round trip) from the Rt 94 parking to Pinwheel. Route 94 parking provides an alternative with a slightly shorter hike if the Route 517 parking is full.

**Restrooms:** None. Gas stations and fast food are in Butler (more options) or Vernon.

**Parking:** [41.234733, -74.480867](#) [Pochuck parking **SEE NOTES**]

Rt 287N to exit 52B for Rt. 23 Butler. Follow 23 for a while to 515N. It is left onto 644 (Vernon Crossing). Right on 517.

A sign features a hiker symbol, followed by another sign indicating the parking area. Parking is available along the shoulder along the right side of Route 517. Space is limited, 10 to 12 cars. Follow a short pathway along the road to a trail kiosk and take a right to start on the boardwalk.

–Alternate lot for boardwalk: [41.231694, -74.462111](#)

–Route 94 Parking lot (closer to Stairway/Pinwheel Vista): [41.219472, -74.455083](#)

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**\*\*NOTE\*\* The Pochuck trailhead is in a residential area that is experiencing issues with the parking situation. Please be respectful of the residents and their property. As always, Leave No Trace – trash or otherwise. Parking illegally in the area may generate a ticket.**

On weekends and holidays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., NO PARKING is enforced on Carol Drive, Meadowlark Drive, Ann Place, Cove Court, Vlietstra Drive, Thistle Avenue, Ivy Place, and Old Glenwood Circle. Parking on these streets requires a permit for residents. If parking along Route 517, please obey all posted signage and utilize the striped parking spaces.

Notes: This area is popular with everything from short hikes to AT thru-hikers, so do not expect solitude. We did not see anyone from Canal Rd to Rt 94, however. That section was also the most overgrown, so you will want to wear long pants or use bug spray for protection (though, oddly, bugs were almost nonexistent on this hike).

Until you start up the mountain, most of this hike is in full sun. You will move in and out of shady areas, but plan accordingly in hot weather. The only reminder that you are still in NJ is some road noise from Route 94.

## Websites of interest:

- <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/new-jersey/stairway-to-heaven-and-pochuck-valley-via-appalachian-trail>
- <https://www.njhiking.com/best-hikes-in-nj-stairway-to-heaven-appalachian-trail>
- <https://njskylands.com/odhikepochuck>
- [YouTube: njHiking.com](#) / [YouTube 2](#)

**Wildlife spotted:** Tons of adorable turtles in the large pool of green muck by the boardwalk. Look for them along the bank and in the water; they are not easily visible as they're covered in muck. I noticed a small water snake on the way back. Many turkey vultures were soaring on thermals at Pinwheel Vista.

- <https://www.njhiking.com/stairway-to-heaven-pochuck-valley-to-pinwheel-vista/>



# JOE 2025 Information Packet for Hike to Stairway to Heaven on the Appalachian Trail

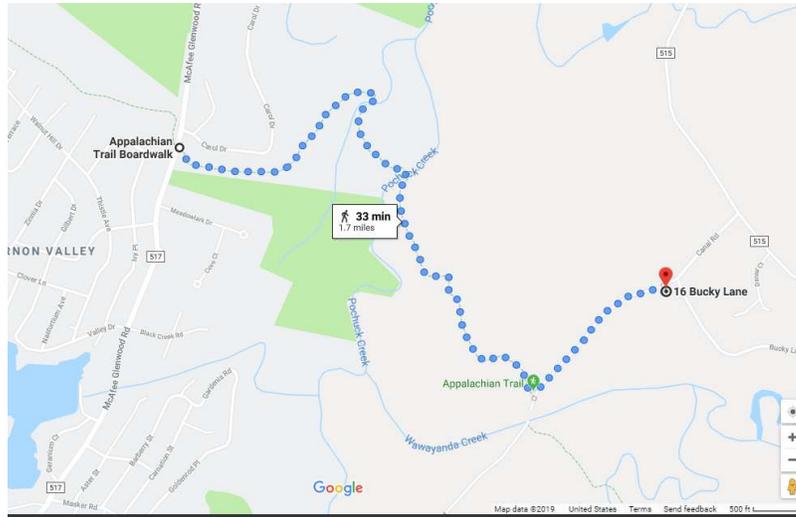
## Appalachian Trail Boardwalk

Appalachian Trail, Glenwood, NJ 07418

- ↑ Head south on County Rd 517/McAfee Glenwood Rd toward Meadowlark Dr  
● Continue to follow County Rd 517  
0.9 mi
- ↙ Turn left onto Maple Grange Rd  
1.8 mi
- ↙ Turn left onto NJ-94 N  
0.7 mi
- ↙ Turn left onto Prices Switch Rd  
0.6 mi
- ↙ Turn left onto Bucky Ln  
● Destination will be on the left  
0.6 mi

## 16 Bucky Ln

Vernon Township, NJ 07462



Trail Description

**Stairway to Heaven: Pochuck Valley to Pinwheel Vista**

**Hike Directions:** *Overview:* AT (WHITE) – BLUE spur trail – then backtrack. Follow the WHITE blazes of the Appalachian Trail for the entire route, except for the BLUE side trail to the vista.

**0.0** – The first mile is easy hiking on a boardwalk through a marshy area. There may be turtles in the large green pool of muck crossed on a wooden bridge.

A little further, cross Pochuck Creek on the Pochuck Suspension Bridge.

**1.0** – The boardwalk ends; start walking in the forest.

**1.3** – Walk through an opening in a wooden fence to a woods road. (The woods road is a bicycle path. Look left, and there is a sign. On maps, the path may be marked “Canal Road.”) Turn RIGHT down the woods road, cross the bridge, then quickly turn LEFT to continue on the Appalachian Trail. [The woods road continues straight]

The Alternate Parking area is at the end of Canal Road (Woods Road). See the pic above.

Continue through a mix of forest and fields with tall grass. Some areas are on plank walkways, and there is a wire fence to cross on a stile (steps over a fence). However, the last time we hiked this, the fence was down.

**2.2** – Climb over or around a stile, immediately walk across railroad tracks, climb another stile, and enter a cow pasture crossed on wooden planking. Wawayanda Mountain – which you will hike up – is before you.

Be careful when crossing tracks. LOOK BOTH WAYS AND LISTEN!!

There may be cows in the pasture, so be nice to them if they are there, and watch where you step!

**2.3** – Cross another stile (careful as you go over; you practically stand on the road on the other side). Cross busy Route 94 into the hiker’s parking lot.

The trail is easy until you reach the woods. Shortly after that, you pass through a large boulder field, and the trail becomes very rocky and starts climbing steeply. Notice that rock slabs are placed as steps along the way—the “Stairway to Heaven.”

**3.1** – “Annie’s Bluff” – a limited viewpoint near a large rock after a steep climb. Easy to miss.

**3.6** – At the HUGE pile of rocks (HUGE!!), turn LEFT and follow the BLUE spur trail. It is marked with BLUE blazes that are not obvious. This side trail can be easy to miss; look for the rocks. [There was a sign for the lookout at one point, and maybe there will be again...]

Follow BLUE and to a rock outcrop called Pinwheel Vista. There are several places to sit and take in the view of the mountains and the valley below. On a clear day, the High Point Monument may be visible. When done, retrace your steps back to the parking lot.

Complete hike details, photos, and videos are on our [Stairway to Heaven](#) page.



Boardwalk through Pochuck Valley



Pochuck Suspension Bridge



Canal Rd.



Cross a cow pasture on wooden planking. Wawayanda Mountain is in front of you.

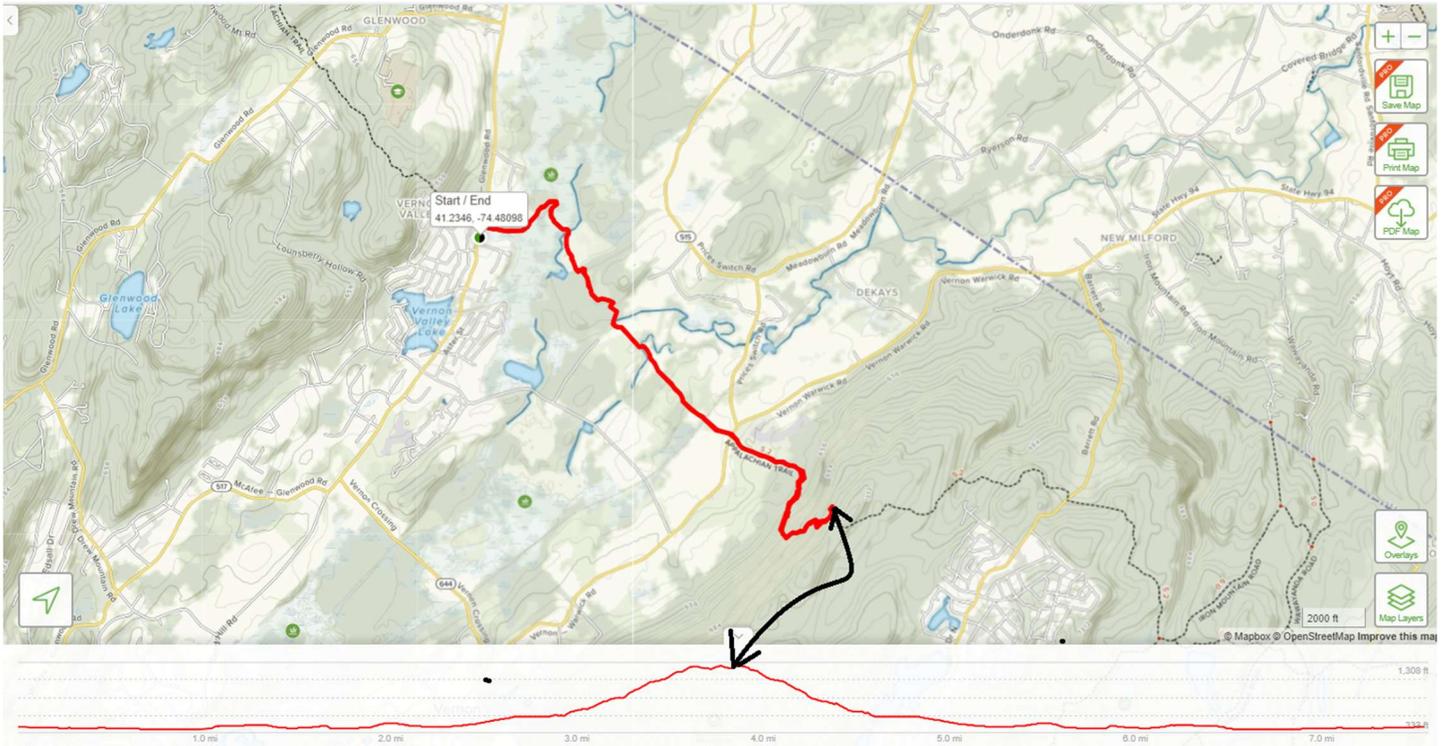


Boulder Field



Part of Stairway to Heaven

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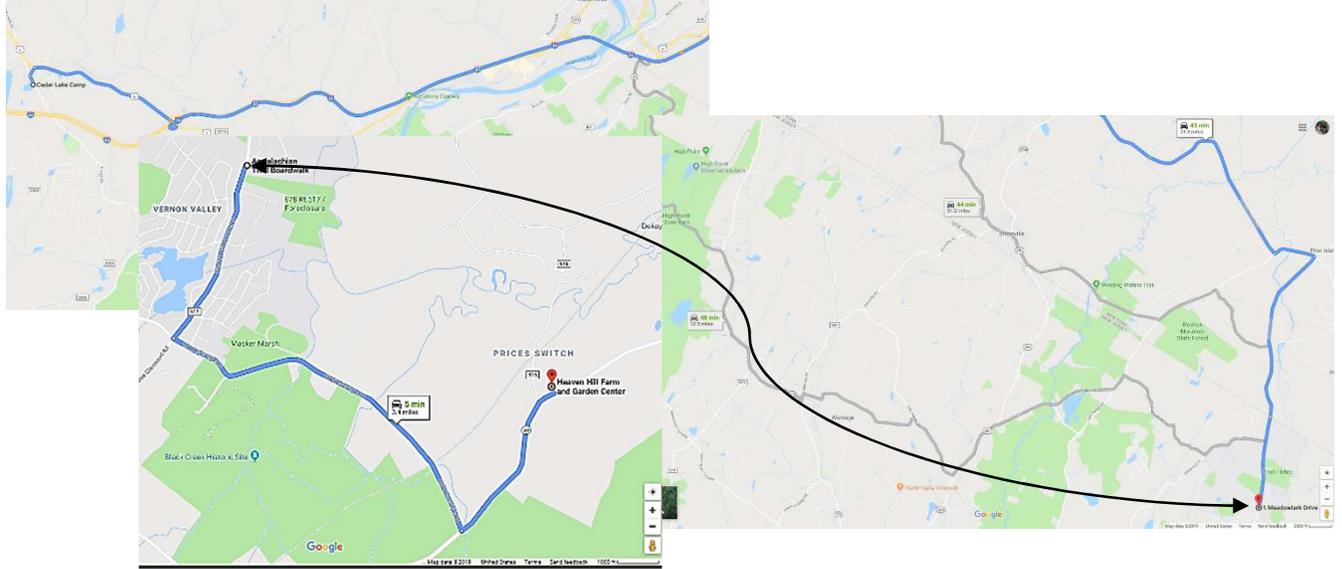


- Distance: 7.4 miles out and back
- Moving Time: 3 to 3.5 hours
- Total Time: 3 to 4 hours
- Avg Pace: 23:54
- Calories: 1,526
- Elevation Gain: 1,096 Ft
- High: 1,224'
- Low: 391'
- Grade Avg Grade: 5% (3°) / Max Grade: 52% (27°)



# JOE 2025 Information Packet for Hike to Stairway to Heaven on the Appalachian Trail

a. Your destination is just past the AT Scenic Trail.



JOE 2025 Information Packet for **Hike to Stairway to Heaven on the Appalachian Trail**

Nearest hospital: **St. Anthony Community Hospital** | 15 Maple Avenue, Warwick, NY 10990 | 845.986.2276

<https://www.wmchealth.org/service-line/emergency-services>

