

# Skylake Hiking Guide Revised 2021

The Skylake trail system was originally designed to give hikers a continuous primary trail from Woodbrier on the north extending 5.6 miles to the summit of Grimes Nose on the south end and Skylake's highest elevation.

Through the years secondary trails have been added to the primary trails, e.g. Sid's (McKnight) Slopes (Deerpath to Woodbrier Trail), the path alongside the pasture fence, and the Chastain's Challenge trail. The total length of the trails inside Skylake is now nearly 12 miles.

Although the trail system utilizes green belt area almost exclusively, it does in a few places pass close by existing homes. Please respect the privacy of your neighbors and remain on the pathway.

The primary trail system is divided into 8 segments which begin and end where the trail crosses a paved road, which allows a hiker to access the trails at many locations, called "trailheads", and to complete a shorter or longer hike, as desired.

The footpath is generally easily recognizable and well traveled, but it is also marked by white 2" x 4" blazes at eye level on trees. Further guidance is provided by trail signs along the trail where the trail makes a sharp turn or intersects another trail. Trails are marked in dotted lines on the general Map of Skylake.

Points of interest along the way include York Falls and picnic area, York Creek, Lake Sautee (upper Lake) Red Barn, pasture, Bonnie's Bottoms, Sky Lake (lower lake), and the Observation Tower on Grimes Nose.

A popular enhancement of your trail experience is the placement of tree identification tags on a few dozen samples of tree species in our forests. These are found mostly alongside the most popular trail segments (the level ones).

## Primary Trails

### **(1) Woodbrier Trail** - .6 mi – Moderate (R-2)

Trailhead is on the summit of Woodbrier roadway ( Woodbrier Gap) about 100 yards north from the intersection of Pinecrest. The trail begins through pine and laurel thicket and gradually the slope moderately descends downhill until bottoming out and intersecting with an old logging road. The trail leaves the roadbed to the left after 150 yards crossing stream several times over footbridges. The lower section has several stands of large white pine and red and white oak. The stream becomes more active at lower end with several cascades and small

waterfalls. The trail will intersect with Sid's Slopes Trail on the left and Old Still Trail on the right. Trail exits onto lower Woodbrier less than 75 yards north of where Woodbrier intersects with Sautee Trail. Notes: There is no parking at either end of this trail. Also, Wes Bartlett and Lee Seltzer found many metal parts to an old buggy or wagon and other relics which will be on display at the Library. At the lower end of Woodbrier Trail the hiker is treated to one of the most pleasant cove sites in Skylake, with fast moving mountain stream bordered by large white pine, poplar and oaks, and rhododendron.

**(2) Littleberry Trail** - .6 mi. – Moderate (R-2)

Trail head is across Woodbrier roadway from the lower section of Woodbrier Trail and approximately 75 yards north from where Woodbrier roadway intersects with Sautee Trail roadway. This trail is moderately uphill with one strenuous climb of about 100 yards as the trail approaches the exit onto Sautee Trail roadway. Trail begins gradually uphill following a dry streambed on the left through a stand of large white pine, then crosses old roadbed (a barbed wire fence tracks along the old road bed for a short way and continues uphill. You will descend momentarily then cross two ravines before beginning the final steep climb. The trail exits on Sautee Trail. Note: This trail is named for the Cherokee Indian named "Littleberry" who sold 490 acres to Jesse Monroe in October 24, 1825, and Littleberry is the earliest recorded owner of property that is now in Skylake.

**(3) Littleberry Trail continued**- .6 mi.- Moderate (R-2) Trailhead is on Sautee Trail approximately 100 yards downhill from Point Blue. A gentle downhill trail takes the hiker across stream crossings and through large stands of timber at the lower end. Trail exits Sautee Trail (where Sautee Trail ends intersecting with Blue Ridge). The trail follows along the road downhill to creek that feeds York Falls (Note: We have found no name for this all important creek for Skylake.)

**(4) York Falls Trail** - .8 mi. Easy (R-1) /The part of this trail extends from Blue Ridge Drive and travels adjacent to creek and down to York Falls and picnic area. Lush vegetation is abundant, and a Chinese Chestnut tree in the picnic area near the millstone and pieces of an old mill. This is perhaps the most favorite areas for residents and especially the children to play in the stream at the bottom of the falls. York Falls may have been named for a family owning land in the area or perhaps part of Skylake property, but we have found no evidence of that.

**(5) York Falls Lower Trail** - (R-1) - The trail picks up from the York Falls picnic area across the footbridge then along the creek through "Blue Ridge Bog". These wetlands sometimes flood during heavy rains which cause vegetation to be scrubby. The trail climbs gently along the wetlands and bog, then approaches "Rubbing Noses Rock" on the left, and a barbed wire fence tracks on the right side. Cross the stream and follow the old logging road used in the early 1900's for the remainder of this trail. This very scenic section of our trail system skirts the south side of Lake Sautee (upper lake). Most of this trail is along north and east-facing ridges

canopied under thick Rhododendron and Mountain Laurel with glimpses of the lake. The trail emerges on Cherokee Trail roadway at the dam.

### **(6) Lake Trail – 1 mi. – Easy (R-1)**

This trail begins at the upper dam and extends around the south side of the barn and the parking area. It proceeds to the foot bridge over the creek which is bold at this point. Exiting the foot bridge and to the right is “Lulu’s place”, a seating bench overlooking the bend in the creek (thanks to Luanne Powell). Proceed along the creek into the enchanted forest and fern glade of “Bonnie’s Bottoms”. The trail switches back and forth across the creek and wetlands with several foot bridges and then makes a switch back to begin the hike along the old logging road. At the switch back there is an approach trail leading out to Woodland roadway. The main trail skirts along the south side of Sky Lake along the old logging road and intersects with the Clubhouse Trail that crosses the lake from main bridge. Lake Trail continues toward the right along the lake and exits on Lower Gap Road. This last section of the Lake Trail was the site of summer camp cabins and there are remnants of them on the upper side of the path as well as remnants of old road bed between two rows of cabins. The Lake Trail is perhaps the favorite trail of hikers in Skylake.

### **(7) – Ken Clark Memorial Trail -.5 mi. – Strenuous – (R-3)**

The Ken Clark is named for a former Skylake Resident who worked extensively on the trails. There are 1-2 parking spaces on Lower Gap Road to access the Ken Clark Trail or the Lake Trail. From the end of the Lake Trail, Ken Clark trailhead is directly across Lower Gap roadway. There is an old spring box on the left just as you start the trail. The trail intersects and ends at “Ax Head Gap” as it intersects with Grimes Nose Trail.

### **(8) – Grimes Nose Trail - .6 mi. (R-3)**

This trailhead begins at Woodland Lot W15 and intersects with the Ken Clark Trail at Axe Head Gap. It is a steady and sometimes strenuous climb to the top of Grimes Nose and the reward is a tower viewing platform for a fantastic 90 degree view of the North Georgia mountains to the west of Skylake. This is the termination of Grimes Nose Trail. There is an approach trail near the top between lots Y-1 and Y-2, however there is no parking.

**Note: The hike from the main trails from Woodbrier Trailhead, down to Littleberry, York Falls, Lake Trail, Ken Clark Trail, and Grimes Nose Trail carries hikers from the top northern part of Skylake property to the most southern and highest elevation at the tower at the summit of Grimes Nose. The trail system covers approximately 5.6 miles.**

## **New or Secondary Trails**

**(9) - Old Still Trail** - .10 mi. - Easy (R-1)

This trail is a short spur off Woodbrier Trail, crosses Woodbrier roadway, continues, and at present dead ends and does not proceed through the Greenspace onto either Northwind or Hawks Nest roadways. Watch for the remnants of the old Bussey Moonshine Still near the edge of a beautiful little stream. This is a pretty walk through the rhododendrons, especially when they are in bloom. Parking for 1-2 cars where the trail crosses Woodbrier.

**(10) Sid's Slopes Trail** - .5 mi. – Moderate (R-2) - This is a relatively new trail and named after Sid McKnight, a Skylake resident forester. It begins at the intersection of Sautee Trail and Deerpath Drive roadways, continues northwesterly through greenspace, and across Quail Run and Pinecrest roadways, and terminates at the intersection with Woodbrier Trail. Watch for fox den on this trail.

**(11) Roz Memorial Trail** -.5 – Easy (R-1) – Beginning at the barn, walking at the base of the dam (but above the spillway outflow pipe) and skirt along the pasture and split rail fence to the grass below the pool parking lot. Of course, horses grazing in the pasture is the notable scenery here, plus the creek at the base of the dam. Across Sautee Trail at the end of the path where the grass starts is a sign “Roz’s Plaque”. Look a little further into the woods to find the bronze and concrete Memorial Plaque. There is also an old iron loop used to tie up horses nearby. This is close to the old location of the first horse barn and Rosalind (Roz) Klausman was the beloved riding instructor from 1951-1966.

**(12) Mail Trail** - .2 - Easy (R-1)

The trailhead is to the right if facing the postal center and carries the hiker on the west side of the tennis/pickleball courts terminating at the Swimming Pool.

Note: There is a short spur trail leading from the intersection of Sautee Trail and Deerpath roadway to the Postal Center.

**(13) Clubhouse Trail** - .3 mi. – Easy (R-1) -From Postal Center to Lake Trail

Beginning on the left of the Skylake Postal Center it is an easy walk descending just below the main roadway and on the upper side of the tennis/pickleball courts. It travels past and just below the Guardhouse and intersects with the steps and path to the Clubhouse. It continues across the Clubhouse driveway, down the steps on the east end of the Clubhouse and on across the foot bridge #1 to intersect with the Lake Trail.

**(14) Carla Lewis Trail** -.2 mi.- Easy (R-1) – Trailhead on Cherokee approximately 250 yards south of Muir Drive through Greenspace and exits onto Laurelwood between lots X43 and X42. Carla Lewis was a niece of “Roz” Klausman, she attended the summer camps in the 1950’s, and has a second home here in Skylake.





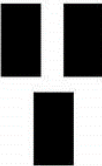

**(15) Chastain Challenge Trail** –1.2 –Strenuous (R-3) – Named for Harry Chastain, a former Trail Chief who helped develop the trail. Trailhead starts at Muir Drive and Ridgeland and exits

onto Blue Ridge Drive between lots K-19 and K-20. Parking for 1-2 cars above lot K-20. About 1/3 of the way from Blue Ridge Drive there is a bench overlooking a small waterfall. This serene spot is “Tinker’s Time Out”, and is named if after Tinker Bachant, a former longtime resident of Skylake. She was very active on the Natural Resources committee for many years and a fierce supporter of maintaining a natural environment in Skylake.

### A Word about our trail legacy...

Trails are one of our greatest assets here in Skylake, and they have for the most part been developed and maintained as a result of many hard physical man (or woman) hours of volunteers over the years. Our Trail Troupers currently are Wes Bartlett, Trail Chief, Frank Sharits, Gordy Powell, and Luanne Powell, and much thanks goes to them for the amazing improvements they have done over the last several years. There is finally a limited budget for trail expenses, but those of us who are unable to physically help these much sacrificing volunteers can help in so many other ways. Please consider donating a memorial seat or bench, supplies for foot bridges, signage, or helping in other ways to continue this important work. Through your help trails can be made safer and more accessible to more people. Enjoying our beautiful forests and woodlands is prescription for boosting our health and well being. Any donation can be made to Skylake POA, but be sure to designate it is for trail upkeep or for a bench to honor a loved one.

### How to Read Trail Blaze Markings

<p>CONTINUE STRAIGHT</p> 	<p>START OF TRAIL</p> 	<p>RIGHT TURN</p> 
<p>SPUR LEADING TO A DIFFERENT TRAIL</p> 	<p>END OF TRAIL</p> 	<p>LEFT TURN</p> 

When the trail continues across a roadway the pavement will have arrows and dashes to help guide to the next trailhead.