

Forest View North and South

The Forest View Trail connects the Northern Connecticut Land Trust's (NCLT) Whitaker Woods property on Wells Road in Somers to trails on Soapstone Mountain with access to the summit (see Soapstone Area map). Although the trail crosses Mountain View Road, it is not recommended that hikers park there due to limited parking and poor sight lines for cars coming down Mountain View Road. Better options are to park at Whitaker Woods and hike uphill to Soapstone Mountain with a car spotted at the upper or lower Shenipsit State Forest Soapstone parking areas off Gulf Road, or an up and back hike from Whitaker Woods. The one way distance from the Whitaker parking area to the top of Soapstone is approximately 3.5 miles depending on your route through Whitaker's with an elevation gain of 750 ft. The section of trail south of Mountain View Road includes two stream crossings. The Town of Somers has received a DEEP grant to construct new bridges at both crossings suitable for both equestrians and hikers to replace foot bridges built as Boy Scout projects in 2004. Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2017.

From the Whitaker Woods end, the Forest View Trail begins at the Whitaker Woods boundary at the end of the Spur Trail (see the Whitaker Woods section for a description of Whitaker Woods trails). Between Whitaker Woods and the Shenipsit State Forest, the trail follows a narrow corridor of town owned land. Please respect the private property on both sides by staying on the marked trail. The trail crests a hill behind homes on Miller Drive then descends to Mountain View Road. At the end of the downgrade the trail follows an old road on a causeway across a low spot. Look for the stonework on both sides of the road. Imagine the time and effort it took to build these old roads and stone walls when men relied mostly on oxen, horses and their own muscles to do the heavy work. When you reach Mountain View Road, walk uphill a short distance looking for the point where the trail re-enters the woods on the south side of the road. South of Mountain View Road the trail passes through a wet area before crossing the two bridges and ascending to the state forest boundary. At the top of the ridge the trail turns to the left at the end of a stone wall and continues to an old road used by ATV's, hikers and equestrians. The Forest View Trail ends at this point. To continue to the top of Soapstone Mountain turn left on the old road ascending a hillside to another intersection at the top. Turn right at this tee and continue to where the CFPA blue blazed Shenipsit Trail crosses within sight of the gravel forest road. Turn left on the Shenipsit Trail and follow it to the top of Soapstone Mountain. The observation tower at the top of Soapstone Mountain has been closed due to safety concerns. A local group is currently (2017) working to raise money to renovate or replace the tower.

The Forest View Trail as well as the main trails in Whitaker Woods are open to horses as well as hikers. If you see riders approaching, move off to the side of the trail and wait quietly for them

to pass. Do not make sudden moves or reach out to touch the horses as you may spook them. Always ask the riders permission before approaching a horse.

As always do not leave trash on the trail. Please clean up after your pets and keep them on a leash at all times. Equestrians are asked to police the trail within two days after their ride to remove any manure which may have been left in the trail.