

# FreeWalkers Walk Plan for LENAPE34 2017

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The Lenape34 starts at the head of the Lenape Trail in the Locust Grove parking lot off Glen Avenue and behind the west side track of the Millburn Train Station. If you have a car, pull into the Locust Grove lot there should be plenty of spaces. Getting off the train from NYC pass the EMS building on the right and look for the Locust Grove entrance to South Mountain Reservation across the street in the woods area (sign may not be obvious). Keep in mind it will be dark out but close to sunrise. If you are planning on walking the entire 34 miles, bring a headlamp or flashlight.

## South Mountain Reservation

We will convene in the Locust Grove lot near the Info kiosk. Train from NYC arrives at 6:43, we will be gathering a few minutes later for a briefing, group photos and registering before leaving around 7:15-7:30 (some of us will wait for the 7:21 NYC train before leaving. You will be given a copy of the latest detailed map. The yellow-blazed trail quickly starts up the mountain which will get your heart rate going. Soon we'll be at the first major milestone, Washington Rock looking out at Millburn and Summit at about full sunrise.

From here we follow the Lenape Trail across the ridge, a typical hiking path in the woods that will take us to Hemlock Falls, open field, a walk across South Orange Ave, Cherry Lane and over a footbridge above Northfield Ave, until you reach an opening and a parking lot on Cedar Avenue. You will have hiked about 5-6 miles moderately hard miles at about 2 mph on average. This is a good spot for entering or leaving the walk because of the easy access to the parking lot and roads.

This section is called the Mayapple area of the reservation. This is a relatively new section cleared and blazed and starts on the far end of the parking lot where you should see the familiar yellow blaze or medallion, as you continue to walk in the same direction. The woods section is about 1/2 mile long and will end at Whitbay Rd, near a condominium complex. **There is a new section that has been finished that goes out to Rt10 Northfield Ave through the woods. (Prior to this we went left into the condos on Kelly Dr which is not necessary anymore.)**

You will continue across Whitbay to follow the new **route** which takes you over low lying areas the across Rt10 (northfield ave) where you re-connect to the main Lenape Trail through neighborhood then to Pleasant Valley Way, right before the underpass to Route 280.

Ahead	Rt10/Mt Pleasant (sidewalk on far side)
Left	Ellison Ave
Straight	Curtis Park (a ¼ mile to Ralph Rd)
Left	Lorelei Rd (turns into Roosevelt Ave)
Right	Elmwood Ave
Left	Pleasant Valley Way (back on Lenape Trail)

Once on Pleasant Valley Way, simply follow the map and look for yellow blazes on various signs zig-zagging through residential neighborhoods until you reach Eagle Rock Ave.

## Lunch and Eagle Rock Reservation

Once under Route 280 you will be out of the reservation and heading to Eagle Rock and Prospect Ave where there is a great Whole Foods for lunch. We recommend everyone taking a break here. Restrooms, Lots of food choices and tables outside and in. This is also a good place to arrange a pickup or to get a ride back, or to start your walk (we're about 9 miles out at this point).

Cross Prospect Ave near the corner and look for the trail into Eagle Rock Reservation or follow the road toward the Highlawn Pavilion. The trail and road converge before the restaurant. (If it's a clear day, it's worth detouring slightly over to the edge of the mountain for a great view of NYC & a 911 Memorial.) The trail closely follows the road on the right side. After a couple miles, you will enter a Verona neighborhood. Look for trail signs along these streets which will lead to Verona Park, a beautiful, popular park (with nice restrooms!). Continue following the park trail at this point until you get to the northwest entrance at the corner of Bloomfield Ave and Pleasant Valley Way. This is a convenient place to meet, park, pick up a ride, or catch a bus. Montclair is too not far away. You are about 12 miles out at this point.

## **West Essex Trail & Mills Reservation**

Next, we cross Bloomfield Avenue and head north to the West Essex Trail, an old rails-to-trails wide path which runs behind neighborhoods. Right after crossing over Rt 23 in Cedar Grove, stop to check out a small river gorge (and old swimming hole) called Devil's Hole. After a mile or so the Lenape Trail blazes will turn right and head toward the road and reservoir. Walk the sidewalk around the reservoir up the hill to the northernmost section where you turn right and follow the trail south along the green steel fence near the power lines. You will soon be walking for several miles in the woods and soon be in Mills Reservation.

The next interesting milestone is Hawk Lookout as the trail climbs up and the trail borders a very impressive quarry cliff. As the name suggests, you will probably be able to see birds and birdwatchers on the other side of the quarry. Nice place to stop, take it all in and take a rest before you head out of the last of the woods.

## **Montclair & Last Chance to Bail**

Coming down from Mills Reservation you will soon be in Upper Montclair. At this point the difficult hiking is done. Now it's pretty flat, mostly sidewalk/street walking from here. You will soon cross the rail line at **Mountain Station** where a train can be caught or you can enter for the final miles of the walk. We're heading to Bloomfield and Montclair for a final break. It has been common in the past stop for a final rest at Brookdale Park near the big flag and rose garden area - near the Grove St entrance. Probably the last good spot to arrange for ride or drop out.

The other suggested alternative stop is Holstens a mile or so further near the corner of Watchung and Broad St. There's food, ice cream and the great Jersey lore of being at the place where Tony Soprano was shot in the last episode. It's a blast from the past on its own.

## **Walking the Town Streets**

There is a good chance you will be crossing the footbridge over the Garden State Parkway at dusk or in the dark as I did last year. Once over the Parkway, look for the trail signs to follow through neighborhoods in Bloomfield, Nutley and Belleville. Keep a sharp eye open for signs and follow the map. The one odd thing about this walk is that it will break for a mile or so to a natural trail which is the old Newark Waterway, a right of way along the Newark water line property. Eventually this breaks back to neighborhood streets near Nutley. Nutley will give way to Belleville and eventually to Belleville Park, the start of the classic Olmstead parks into Newark. Follow signs and the map here because the trail winds in unexpected directions to get you into Branch Brook Park.

## **Grand Parks & Final Miles**

A mile or so into Branch Brook Park you will see the light rail line station. Depending on the time of day, fatigue, and your sense of daring, you have a choice of taking the light rail to Newark or continuing onward to the end. There's only one more choice to make. Follow the full Lenape Trail all the way thru Branch Brook? Or, take the most direct route to downtown Newark (Bloomfield Ave is probably the best choice)? Remember that it will most likely be dark and the area can be dangerous at night. You should not be walking alone for this final section.

Our official end has been Newark Penn Station until recently. Many, like myself, need to catch the Morristown line from the North Broad St Station. No. Broad is about a mile before Penn. Considering the day's effort and the hour, we will take the penalty of a mile or so short but still feel we have walked the Lenape 34 again.