

Sand Lake Falls & Stone Dam Lake

The main feature of this hike is the small and remote Sand Lake Falls in the Black River Wild Forest of the Adirondacks. There is a lean to as well as tent sites at this seldom visited scenic place along the wild Woodhull Creek. The shortest distance to the falls is 4.7 miles from North Lake, although the last leg of the trail was poorly placed and takes hikers through an open wetland. The preferred route to the falls is from the Bear Creek Parking Area.

The other option to hike to Sand Lake Falls is from the Bear Creek Parking Area at the end of Bear Creek Road off NY 28. There is a really rough road known as Mill Creek Road that leads from the parking area. We DO NOT recommend driving this rough road and you will see why as you walk/bike it. It is 6.4 miles from the Bear Creek Parking Area to the Sand Lake Falls Lean To (DEC sign says 7.2 miles). It is 3.4 miles along Mill Creek Road to reach the Sand Lake Falls Trail. You could bike the old woods road if you wanted. The Sand Lake Falls Trail starts at the end of Mill Creek Road at a private land inholding.

Sand Lake Falls from Bear Creek Parking Area

This is the preferred route by hikers to Sand Lake Falls, although it is nearly two miles longer. Starting from the Bear Creek Parking Area, pass by the large kiosk and follow the woods road. At 0.2 miles reach the junction of the Chub Pond Trail on the right. The dirt road is still good, but quickly becomes a quagmire by the second junction at 0.5 miles on the left of the gated Bear Creek Trail also known as the Woodhull Trail. Continue straight on Mill Creek Road.

At 2.2 miles reach a four way junction. The trail to the left is part of the **Bear Creek Trail**, while the trail on the right is the **Gull Lake Trail**. Continue straight on Mill Creek Road. At 2.7 miles reach the junction on the left of the **Bear Creek Trail aka Woodhull Trail**. If you decide to take the Bear Creek Trail instead of the rough road it will add only 0.4 miles on your trip. Continue straight on the rough Mill Creek Road.

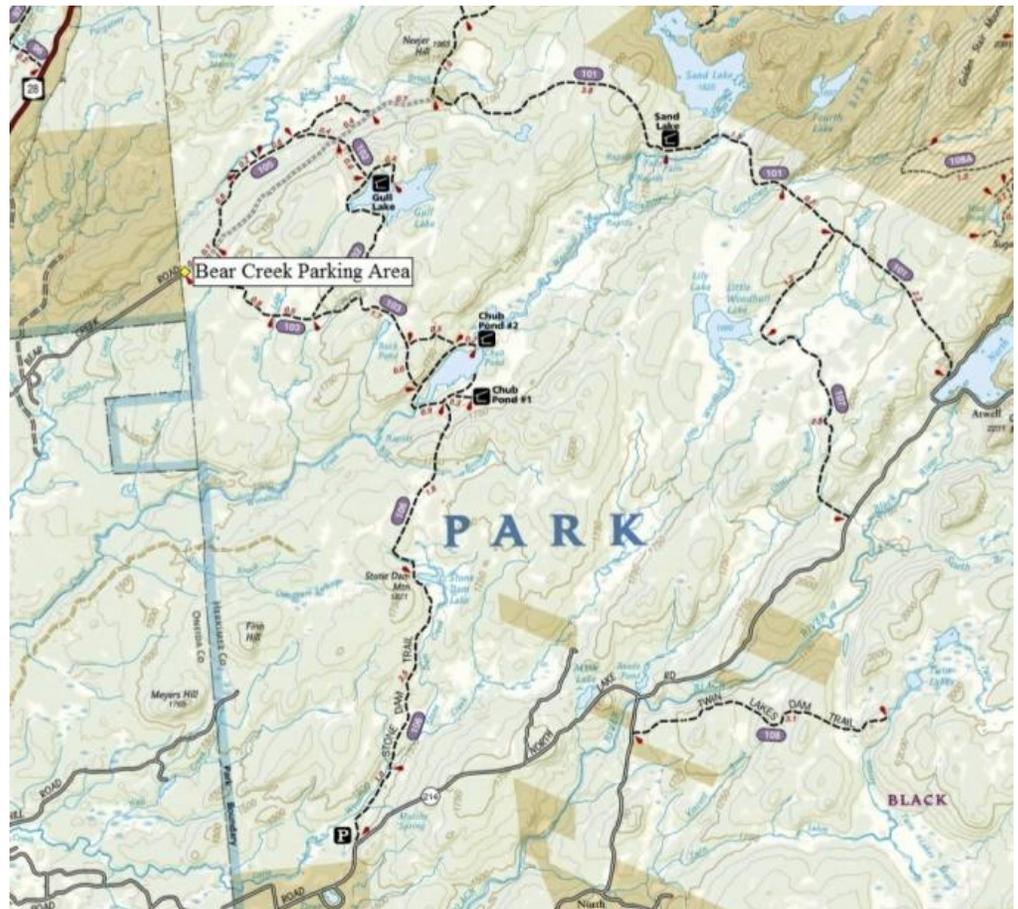
At 3.4 miles reach the end of Mill Creek Road. The Sand Lake Falls Trail continues straight, while to the left is the trail to Bear Lake/Woodhull Lake. You are following blue DEC markers along an old woods road. At 6.4 miles the trail reaches the Sand Lake Falls Lean To. The falls are not visible from the shelter, however they are only about 100 feet away. There are paths that lead to the top of the falls as well as to the large pool at the base of the falls. This is a beautiful place in a remote spot in the Adirondacks.

Bear Creek Trailhead

Directions: From Utica take NY 12 North to NY 28 North at Alder Creek. In Woodgate at the blinking light turn right off NY 28 onto Bear Creek Road. Drive to the end of the road to the large parking area on the left. The GPS coordinates of the large parking area is N43 32.463 W75 06.101.

North Lake Trailhead

Directions: From Utica take NY 12 North to NY 28 North at Alder Creek. After crossing the Forestport Reservoir turn right off NY 28 and then right on Woodhull Road. Soon veer left on North Lake Road. At North Lake, veer left onto North Lake Loop Road. There is a large kiosk and a small parking area as soon as you start on the road. It's 0.3 miles along the dirt road to the start of the trail on the left. There is no good parking near the trailhead. The GPS coordinates of the start of the trail is N43 31.521 W74 56.812.



Stone Dam Lake

The main feature of this hike is Stone Dam Lake in the Black River Wild Forest of the Adirondacks. There is a scenic spot at the bridge over Little Woodhull Creek that is worth a short hike. Part of this trail has been proposed to become the future North Country Trail from North Lake Road to near Stone Dam Lake. The lake isn't very large and it honestly doesn't receive to many human visitors.

From the trailhead along North Lake Road, follow the yellow DEC discs along an old woods road. At 0.4 miles the trail crosses "Mulchy Spring" Brook on a small footbridge. At 0.9 miles you'll reach the footbridge at the scenic crossing of Little Woodhull Creek. This is a great spot for a picnic. After crossing the creek, the trail becomes fainter and a bit harder to follow. You can tell that most visitors on this trail make Little Woodhull Creek as their destination.

At one mile of hiking you'll start to notice large boulders randomly "tossed" in the area. At 1.15 miles the trail passes by "Big Boulder". In another 0.3 miles the trail travels through a very wet section. At 1.6 miles the trail is next to a small "ravine" and will eventually descend into this glacial anomaly. At 1.9 miles the trail reaches a line of large boulders along a hillside and veers right.

From near this point, the trail was relocated closer to the side of Stone Dam Mountain, rather to closer to Stone Dam Creek (as its shown on most topo maps). I read that this was done due to the wetness of the area and the new DEC trail standards to keep trails away from streams whenever possible. At 2.2 miles the trail is ascending Stone Dam Mountain. At just 1801 feet, this "mountain" is nothing more than a small hill. The trail never reaches the "summit", but at 2.7 miles you'll reach an elevation of 1768 feet and the highest point along the trail on the mountain. You'll have winter views to the east and at 2.9 miles is your first view of Stone Dam Lake.

The trail never gets any closer than a couple hundred feet from the lake and we didn't notice any herd paths that lead to the shore. You will need to bushwhack toward the shore. The trail crosses a small stream at 3.2 miles and the Stone Dam Trail continues another 2.3 miles to Chub Pond. From this point the trail becomes fainter and tougher to follow. You will really need to keep an eye on the trail markers. Very few folks take this route to Chub Pond. If you do decide to take this route, be sure to remember that at about 2.1 miles from Stone Dam Lake (just 0.2 miles from Chub Pond), the trail has to cross a large beaver obstacle.

The future **North Country Trail** has been proposed to follow the Stone Dam Trail up to Stone Dam Lake. We are unsure how the builders of the trail will find a route between Stone Dam Lake or even Chub Pond to Little Woodhull Lake and then on to Ice Cave Mountain. There are numerous obstacles for a trail to be built in this area. It will be amazing to see what the trail builders from the ADK-Onondaga Chapter does with this exciting new long distance trail.

Directions:

From Alder Creek, take NY 28 north to just past the bridge over the Black River/Forestport Reservoir. Turn right onto road toward Forestport, then right at bottom of ramp onto North Lake Road. Take North Lake Road into Adirondack Park and there is a trailhead sign plus wide shoulders for parking along the left side of the road. The GPS coordinates of the trailhead is N43 27.416 W75 03.964.