

- Uses:* Hiking, snowshoeing, skiing (some portions steep and suitable for advanced skiers only)
- Ownership:* This trail crosses private property and is available for public use through the generosity of the landowners. Some portions of the trail network are open to trail users by permission of the landowners, others are managed for public access through a conservation easement with the Upper Valley Land Trust, and some are on town property. In all cases, please respect landowners' privacy, stay on the trail, and Leave No Trace.
- Distance:* French's Ledges Trail: 1.5 miles • Farnum Loop: 1.2 mile
Numerous other trails of varying lengths

Directions

From Route 120 in Meriden, NH, turn west at the yellow flashing light onto Main Street and go 0.8 miles, over the hill past Kimball Union Academy (KUA) and down to a covered bridge. Turn left onto Colby Hill Road, going through the covered bridge.

North Trailhead: From the covered bridge go 0.4 mile on Colby Hill Road to a small pull-off on your left for the start of the French's Ledges Trail.

Middle Trailhead: From the covered bridge go 0.9 mile on Colby Hill Road and turn left onto Columbus Jordan Road. Parking will be on your right along Columbus Jordan Road, half a mile from its junction with Colby Hill Road. The blue-blazed Farnum Loop Trail enters the woods about 25 yards from the parking area across a mowed field to the west. On the other side of the road, to the east, is a yellow-blazed connector trail that links with the French's Ledges Trail, bringing you to the Ledges in just over three-quarters of a mile. Continue on Columbus Jordan Rd. to the **South Trailhead**.

During non-school hours, parking may be available for access to the eastern portion of these trails at Plainfield Elementary School.

Description

The red-blazed French's Ledges Trail ends at the bald top of French's Ledges, where you can take in spectacular 360-degree views of Croydon and Grantham Mountains, Mt. Ascutney, and the village of Meriden. Yellow- and blue-blazed trails provide alternate, shorter routes up to the Ledges, while these and a number of unmarked trails allow for endless combinations of routes for exploring and exercise.

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To explore the Plainfield Town Forest's Farnum Lot, with its views of Mt. Ascutney and an active beaver meadow, follow the blue-blazed 1.2-mile loop trail encircling the lot; and a number of other unmarked trails cross the property. The Townsend and Farnum Lot properties are contiguous with several hundred acres of surrounding undeveloped land – providing not only trails for recreation, but also excellent habitat and species biodiversity, including mink, fisher, deer, and many bird species.

French's Ledges and other Townsend Trails:

The entire Townsend trail network is perfect for hiking and snowshoeing, and most of it is readily accessible to cross-country skiers as well. Nevertheless, the very northern end of the French's Ledges Trail is somewhat steep and thus suitable only for skiers with advanced skills. Additionally, the final section of the French's Ledges Trail, on Kimbal Union Academy property and leading up to the Ledges themselves, is decidedly too steep and narrow for skis. However if you travel on snowshoes with crampons, ascending this final section on foot is well worth the climb to the top of the 1,310-foot-high Ledges for the fine views that will be your reward.

