

“The Hidden Gems of Whiteface Mountain

By John Haywood

When someone hears the name [Whiteface Mountain](#), they often think of skiing, Oktoberfest, or the drive to the summit with the stunning views. What many don't realize is that Whiteface is home to well-over a dozen waterfalls! Here, we'll cover the waterfalls of Stag Brook!

On the eastern slopes, among the ski runs and slides, Stag Brook flows down to meet the West Branch Ausable River. Home to over a dozen waterfalls in just over a half mile, Stag Brook is one of the most waterfall-saturated waterways in the Adirondacks.

The moderate hike along Stag Brook begins by parking in the main parking lot, then crossing the bridge that spans the river. Hikers will find a dirt road leading straight up between the main building on the left and another building on the right. This dirt service road comes to a “T” where the trail register can be found at the trailhead. There have also been signs pointing the way to Stag Brook in the past.

After signing in, the out-and-back trail climbs steeply up at first, then comes to an intersection where a trail branches off to the right and down toward the base of the main waterfall, Stag Brook Falls.



Whiteface Mountain as seen from the waters of Lake Placid.



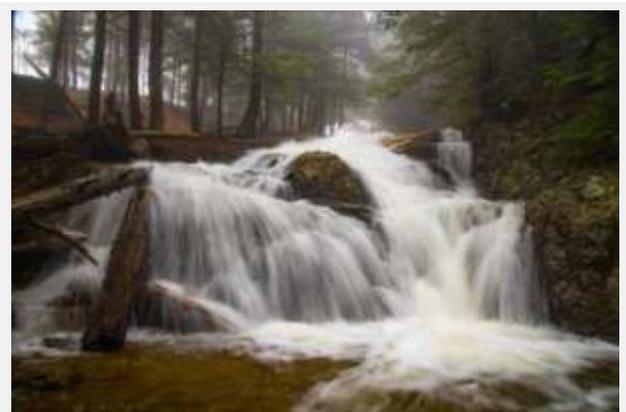
Stag Brook Falls

This 40-foot cascade forms at the head of a large gorge that is lush with moss and vegetation due to the constant spray of mist rising into the air. Water begins its descent at a narrow point, then quickly fans out as small imperfections in the rockface catch and deflect it. It then lands in a pool where it spills over a small lip of granite before continuing its journey to the river. A sloping wall of rock partially conceals the falls until you walk to its right where you will fully see the tallest waterfall on the brook, often mistaken as the only one. Stag Brook Falls. Returning to where the trail split to the right, hikers will find the trail also leading up and around the left side of a large boulder. A red blaze, which can be hard to spot at first, marks a tree next to the boulder on the right. Follow this trail up to a lookout where the falls can be observed from about three-quarters up.

The trail continues to parallel the brook to the top of Stag Brook Falls where the real adventure begins! Here, you will find several small waterfalls that form before spilling over the edge, including an 8-foot cascade and another 5-foot cascade that flows into a 10-foot flume.

Continuing, you'll encounter a small waterfall before coming to "Picnic Table Falls", as named in Russell Dunn's Keene Valley Region Waterfall Guide for the presence of a picnic table there that he uses as a reference for hikers. This 20-foot waterfall, which almost seamlessly blends into the surrounding terrain, consists of several smaller cascades that spill over the rock and into a large pool. As the water meanders down the cascade, it appears to bounce back and forth, left to right as it reaches its final drop.

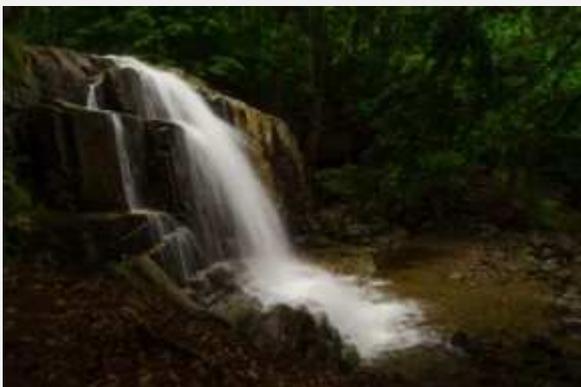
The next waterfall that is encountered has been



The final drop in a 100-plus foot stretch of inclined bedrock. At the head of this section is a 20-foot block cascade.

designated “Footbridge Falls” as a small, wooden bridge bearing the “Whiteface” logo, crosses the brook where a 6-foot cascade has formed at the end of a small flume. This picturesque spot offers a photo opportunity on the other side of the brook, just down from the bridge, where you can see the water flow out from under the bridge and become bisected by a boulder as it spills into a pool below.

As the ascent continues, several more cascades follow, including one that stands 15-feet high. The trail will cross a dirt service road and continue to climb at brookside. After reaching the other side of the road, follow the trail where a very large boulder, lined with bangs of moss and vegetation, rests on the opposite side of the brook. The trail will be marked with both old blue, and newer red, blazes.

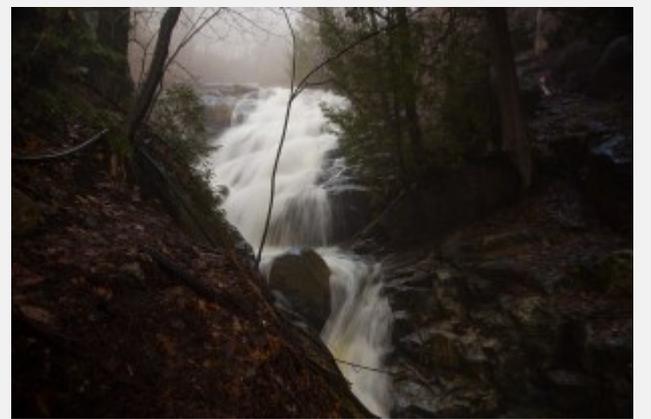


The “Block Cascade”.

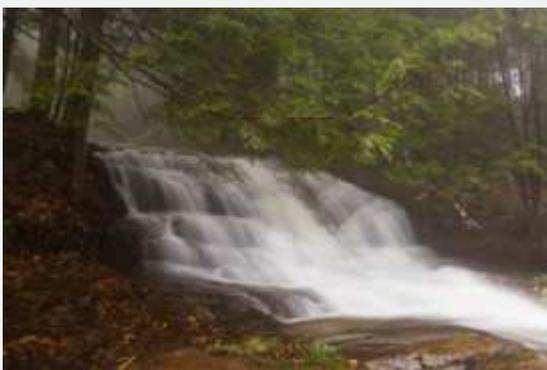
Just past that large, moss-capped boulder, a 15-foot waterfall has formed at the base of a 100-foot inclined section of bedrock. This section contains a series of smaller cascades that would be covered over in times of high water flow. Topping off this section stands a broad, 20-foot block cascade. This towering wall of granite, flecked with gray patches of dried algae, is twice as wide as it is tall, and the water flows primarily over a spot on the left side and into a shallow pool.

# DIG THE FALLS

The trail climbs up the left side of the ledge where several more waterfalls will come into view. Beginning at the top of a six-foot set of “steps”, the water is propelled off the first small ledge while water flows over a second and third in one smooth action, almost as if it were a slide. Above here, water fans out of the width of the brook over a large, smooth, and rounded section of rock before coming to rest in a narrow pool that empties out of its right side.



The final waterfall along the Stag Brook trail.



One of the unnamed waterfalls in the final stretch of Stag Brook.

From here, there are several more waterfalls before the trail ends at a large, narrow gorge littered with small boulders, and 25-30-foot cascade at the far end. This waterfall can be difficult to see in its entirety from the trail however, you may be able to scramble through the gorge to get a better look. Caution must be given.

Please, remember to use care when visiting waterfalls. The rocks are often slippery, and tragedy can strike in an instant. Never get close to the edge of a waterfall, and always wear proper footwear - flip-flops are not proper footwear. Remember, no “selfie” or photograph is worth your life.

This article originally appeared in the Spring 2019 issue of [Peeks Magazine](#) of the Adirondack 46ers under the title “The Hidden Gems of Whiteface Mountain”. Some photos have been added/substituted.

Two of the waterfalls on Stag Brook, as well as one on Whiteface Brook, are included in the [Adirondack Fifty Falls Challenge](#).

For more New York State waterfalls, check out our [NYS Waterfall Map](#).

For more information about Whiteface Mountain, [click here](#).

Note: These are only the beginning of the Whiteface Mountain waterfalls. Check the Keene Valley Region Waterfall Guide for more waterfalls that can be found on all sides of the mountain, including the Stag Brook falls. There are also a number of hiking trails on Whiteface Mountain, including those that lead to the summit.

John Haywood is a photographer, author, and avid hiker. He is also the founder of Waterfalls of Upstate NY and Adirondack Ambassador at Dig The Falls. His writing and photos have appeared in magazines, websites, and books such as the Keene Valley Region Waterfall Guide by Russell Dunn.

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