

PLATTEKILL FALLS

Description: Impressive 70' waterfall on Plattekill Creek.

Location: Platte Creek flows through Platte Clove. 'Clove' has the same root as 'cleave', and represents a cleavage, or opening, in the Catskill Mountain escarpment. There are the only 2; the better known Katterskill Clove is just a few miles farther north. There are several alternative spellings: Plaat Clove, Plaatekill, Platterskill.

Directions*: Reaching Plattekill Falls is made somewhat difficult by the fact that the most direct route to the falls, Platt Clove Road (County Route 16) from West Saugerties is seasonal. It is officially closed from Nov 1st to April 15th and is neither maintained nor plowed during this time. If you are travelling in snowy conditions, not uncommon before Nov. 1 and after Apr. 15th, avoid this route. I have driven this road early in the closed season without difficulty. However, in early Spring, after following the approach from Tannersville, I have found the top blocked by large piles of snow left by the highway department. If you arrive at the base of Platt Clove Road and find it closed, simply follow Manorville Road north to Palenville (4½ miles), turn west up Katterskill Clove on SR23A to Tannersville (7 miles), where you can pick up CR16 (Railroad Ave) in the middle of the village. The parking area for Plattekill Falls is only about 6½ miles from Tannersville.

Photography: In some ways, Plattekill Falls is a bit of a teaser for waterfalls in this area. It is easy to reach and the biggest photographic problems you will face are 1) the high dynamic range of a location which sunlight rarely fills evenly, and 2) the spray from the waterfall when the flow is high. In low flow conditions, you can follow the stream bed farther east to the top of another substantial waterfall, and there is yet another farther along. I have yet to find routes to the base of these additional waterfalls, and am not sure if they have names.

Accessibility: The best parking is close to the short trail that leads down to the base of the waterfall. Look for signs indicating access to the Long Path. This is merely a wide shoulder area on the south side of CR16, with room for only 3 cars. There is ample additional Long Path parking only a few hundred yards downhill.

At the small roadside parking area, look east toward a small, red poet's cottage. Enter the driveway and follow the path to the left. This is private property, so proceed quickly and quietly through this area. Do not disturb the 'poet'. The path is well marked and drops steadily to the base of the waterfall. There are markers along the trail, which I believe is maintained by the Platte Clove Community nearby, a welcome contribution.

The 2 ½ mile drive from the base of Platte Clove at Manorville Road to Platte Kill Falls at the top



* Use the accompanying KML file to generate your own driving directions in Google Earth!

may be one of wildest I have ever made. The road is barely wide enough for 2 cars, and fairly steep (18% in places). On the right, the road is bordered by sheer rock cliffs and on the left, a drop of almost a thousand feet. The wildness of this part of Catskills is characterized in Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*, and *The Headless Horseman*. Irving visited this area in 1809, and the character Ichabod Crane is modeled after a school teacher, Jesse Merwin, whom he met in nearby Kinderhook.

Web: There are few references to this location:

<http://www.catskillcenter.org/vhikes/platte0.html>

<http://www.nynjtc.org/region/long-path>

<http://www.nynjtc.org/product/guide-long-path>