

FAVORITE HIKES: LEN ULBRICHT

My two favorites are each end of the 20 mile Escarpment Trail in the northern Catskills of NY. The northern end Black Dome range, el.3500-4000 feet, is lower than the Whites, but provides 10 or so miles of magnificent outlooks east to the Hudson River valley, a pastoral setting of rolling farmland for miles and miles, and west to several Catskill wilderness mountain ranges. The Black Dome range provides loop hikes for some segments, others require car spotting. The southern end, the North Lake South Lake area el. 2000-2500 feet, has been a favorite artists destination since the early 1800s. The relatively easy 7 mile loop has only a 500 foot elevation gain, but rocky outcrops along the way offer inspirational views of the two stage Kaaterskills Falls, sharply cleaved valleys and the broad expanses eastward to the Hudson River valley. There's also a state campground and swimming at North Lake. Though I haven't done it, the Escarpment Trail looks to be a good 2 or 3 night backpack end-to-end.