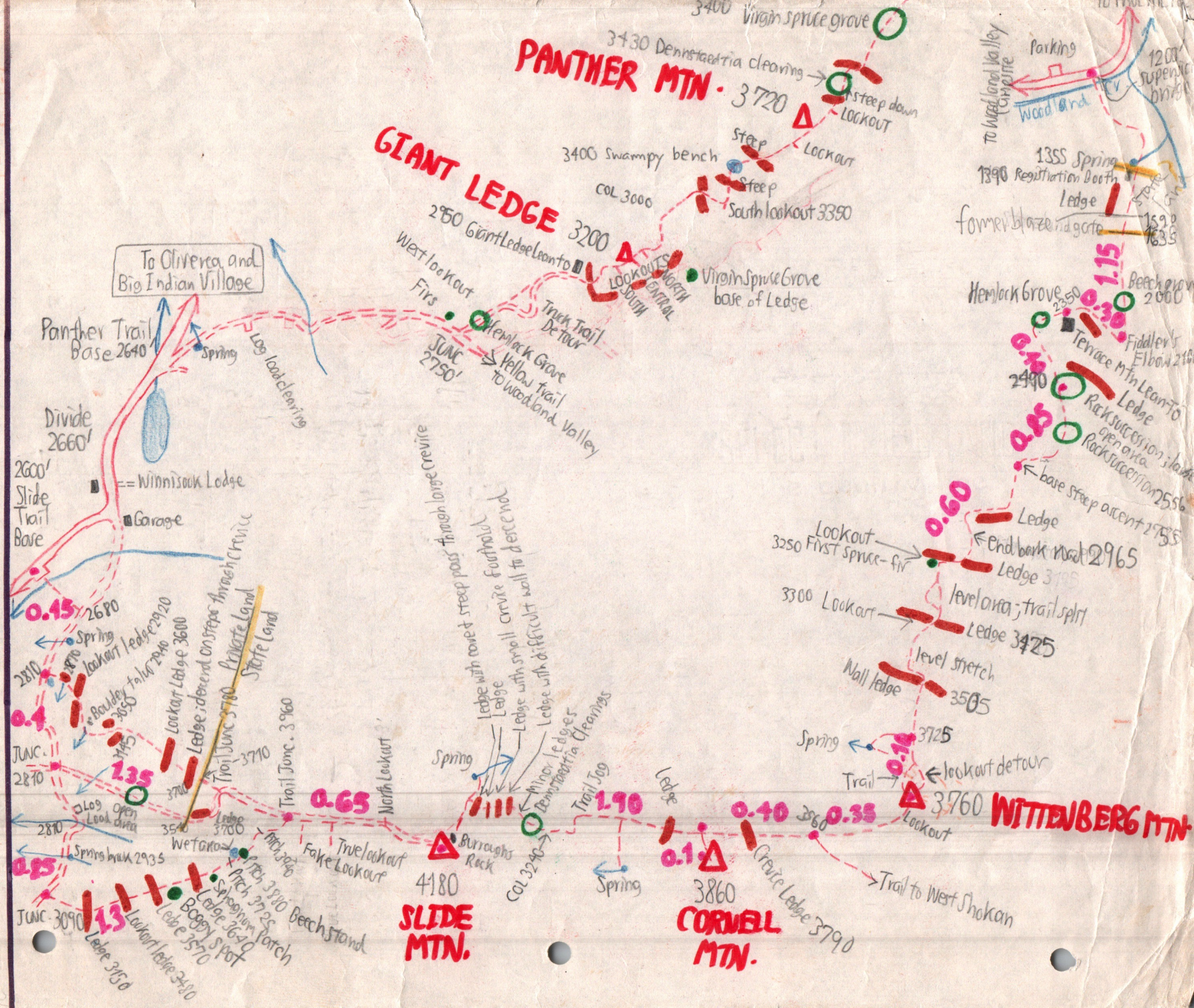


TRAIL PLAN: SLIDE-CORNELL-WITTENBERG-GIANT LEDGE-PANTHER 161-25



Notes on Slide-Cornell-Wittenberg

With Dr. ^{Norman} Richards

6/29/70 11-26

1. Transect #6 (Base of Curtis trail near Denning Junction). A 6" fir cored off the transect was 65 years with slow growth starting about 1955. There was some release about 1935, but this may be due to a nearby tree (or trees) dying, rather than logging. The site does not show ^{any} evidence of logging recently, but the fact that no trees are too old and the site ^{is} accessible good would suggest some logging in the past.
2. Denning Trail. Old roads built on contour with little cut or fill as modern roads and on horizontal rocks erode very slowly and remain in good condition. The trails also, after a century of hikers, on flat-lying rocks stand up well, compared to Adirondack trails on steep slopes. Springs often emerge above an impermeable stratum and seep out for long distances along contour as on Denning trail south of the Slide Mt. track trail junction.
3. Fern glades. As in open fields without canopy insulation, the fern glade in early spring before the fronds emerge, tree seedlings are subject to extremes in temperature: heat in day & cold pockets & drainages at night. If a tree seedling gets started in a fern glade and grows high enough to free itself from surface temperature effects, then it may survive. Plants with runners and those that form clones have an advantage (like aspen or beech) since their new shoots out in the open can draw on ^{water & food} reserves of those parts of the plant near the edge of the clearing. Hence, it may not be the shading effect of fern fronds that inhibits tree reproduction, but rather the extreme temperature fluctuations. Seedlings do emerge in even more shaded areas under parent trees. Perhaps there is some chemical substance in the dead fronds that inhibits tree

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11-27

growth of trees, yet no seedlings are visible in May which soon die off.

4. Deer and Porcupine. Porcupines live often around ledges, and will eat young shoots as well as bark. Porcupine damage is apparent above the Curtis 1st ledge where, for one, a hemlock has a strange shape. Deer have become very abundant, since above the 1930s and favor Hobblebush, red maple & balsam. They eat just the growing tips and many saplings are required to fill one deer per day. If deer browse is heavy in spruce & fir reproduction, spruce is encouraged since deer prefer the balsam. Porcupine droppings are pellets like those of deer, but are elongate rather than spherical. The white heavy larger droppings on rocks may be fox or bobcat. The entire Curtis trail is heavily browsed. Ferns are not browsed.

5. Spruce on Curtis Trail. An 11" spruce with several saplings near it is located about 50 ft N of the trail between the 1st & 2nd ledges. It is below (below) the huge 20+'' PB on the S edge of the trail. A 10'' PB painted with an orange "S" on the N side of the trail is a little above the spruce. The spruce may not be the only one around, but was the only one seen. It is, by count, about 90 years old, and with remarkably consistent growth rate over 60 of those years:

1881-1895	first 1/2 inch radius	(15 yrs) slow start
1896-1902	second "	(7")
1903-1909	third "	(7")
1910-1916	4th "	(7")
1917-1924	5th "	(8")
1925-1932	6th "	(8")
1933-1938	7th "	(6")
1939-1945	8th "	(7")
1946-1949	9th "	(4")
1950-1956	10th "	(7")
1957-1970	11th "	(13-14") slowing down

6. Curtis above 1st ledge [Many ledge tops like this?]

This is a chronic disturbance area by a combination of:

- 1) Porcupine + deer
- 2) Ice, snow + wind
- 3) Mt Ash Canker (fungus) ??
- 4) 1950 Hurricane

What about
caterpillar
defoliation?

7. Blowdowns and Breakoffs. Many of the conifers do not fall during the hurricane but remain standing. Some are snapped off ^{in the middle} while alive. Others die + are snapped off later when dead by milder storms, ice + snow. Others fall over or are blown over.

8. Transect to Curtis #7, 8. Transect #7 is on a poorly-drained balsam flat. Transect #8 is better drained, partly because there is a gentle slope to the ground surface; it is not as level as #7. Conglomerate makes a coarse loam.

9. Transect #3 Beech Slope. A fir dead stump to N of trail is $5\frac{1}{2}$ dm DBH (=22"); if alive, this would be a record for fir in the C's. The ground vegetation is similar under the beech slope as it is under balsam. The site might have been balsam once, by the old + dead fir, but has turned to beech. Deer browse on fir saplings, more than on beech could have aided this change, but the beech is also browsed + started.

10. Transect #4. Fir twigs broken off in winter or early spring scattered on the floor so abundantly on May 1st are probably due to red squirrels.

11. Logging? Tongues of lighter green smaller crowns run up the valley bottom of the E Branch beyond the last clearing, almost up to the nose of the Deer Shanty Spur. A branch of the last clearing runs SE up the slope to about 2500 ft, also suggesting former cleared land or heavy selective logging. This is seen from

Arthur
Conkling, Jr.

Tray
Winnings Mill
1870-
1880 Brook

④
167-29

The South lookouts at about 3900 feet on Slide.

From the N Lookout just W of Slide's summit, a tongue of paler, smaller trees comes up into the col between Giant Ledge and ~~Slide~~^{North} Slide from the west; this is probably the Winnisnook property.

Red Hill, again from the South Lookout, has large cleared areas well up on the slopes. In the last century, potatoes were grown nearly to the summit, and some of the clearings still exist. Some are probably currently farmed.

12. The 19 1/2" Balsam - is on neither of the two South Lookout spur trails, but rather on a third trail-like clearing east of the other two. This trail-like opening appears as a spur trail on May 1st with snow about.
13. Late leafers - Cherries & spruce leaf out late and avoid most late spring frosts. On June 29, balsam new growth is far ahead of spruce.
14. Highest Beech maybe a seedling on the E slope of Slide, on the trail above 4000 ft. The highest grove is, of course, on Cornell 3850.'
15. East slope Slide
By the spring, ³⁸¹⁴ fir are indignant, the forest being mostly PB, MB, MM, B. Fir is more common below on the ledge crests, but scarce on the flats & gentler slopes. About 200 ft above the lower point in the col to Cornell, above the place where the trail turns north, are a young spruce and 2 larger 10" slowly dying. One spruce has a trail marker on it. NO other spruce were seen on the Slide side of the col.
16. Cornell-Slide Col Ridge growth of hardwoods at the west end of the col. Scattered ^{small} spruce start shortly east of the lowest point, but the

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Trees are mainly red maple - PB - PB - Mtn. Ash - Pin Cherry, but no large spruce or fir. Where the trail jogs north, there are views of Slide and of the ridge running SW to Friday from Cornell. There are scattered large dead standing spruce, some large ones blown down, and many young spruce, perhaps outnumbering the fir. The col, then here, was always spruce before 1950 and will continue to be so. The virgin stand at the Spring is an uneven-aged climax spruce stand with fir secondary in dominance ^{and} reproduction.

17. Cornell West Slope - Spruce drops in height fast as one ascends Cornell from the col. Blowdown is in patches ^{on slope} and is not severe at the summit. One ^{dead} spruce measured 8 dm = 32 inches DBH above the wet muck flat; such large spruce are abruptly tapered and only 40-50 ft high at mid-slope while col trees run 80 to maybe 100 ft. Trees at Cornell Summit run to 30 ft.

18. End of Bark Road on Terrace - 1 huge hemlock near end of bark road just below the 1st pitch on Wittenberg's dome is 30+." Other large trees are sugar maple, ash, beech to and over 24" DBH. The road was used probably only for tanbark & not logging, the ^{one} hemlock described above being spared.

19. Fiddler's Elbow - This East slope below Terrace leads to may have been clearcut at one time, since the trees (many ash) are even-aged at 80-100 years (Richards). With no farmland up there, clearcutting could only have occurred for pure stand of hemlock bark removal, or, much less likely, acid wood.

20. Beech Blight - A fungus disease attacking beech can be seen from Highway 28 on Garfield Mtn or far west as Fox Hollow. The dead trees are mostly beech (maybe some old PB). The

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disease has not reached epidemic proportions in the Catskills.
21. Slide Panorama

The peak beyond the N-Dome-Shenkill col as seen from Slide is Huntersfield.

The peak beyond the N-Dome-Big Westkill col is probably Richmond Mtn.