

5/13/14

Slide Mountain via Steps Trail (both ways)

161-40

geological, soils, and general notes with Steve Parisiot Chuck Vier Straeten

Geology and Soils

- Humus classified before SCS' new 1960s taxonomy:
 - Mor - acid, infertile
 - Moder - intermediate
 - Mull - less acid, more fertile, with earthworms
- Red patches in Conglomerate are clay soil fragments on flood plains (Are there patches in the matrix or as pebbles?)
- On Steps Trail at ca 3200', red conglomerate ledge, tafissile red sandstone cobble [like Kaynes Hollow outcrop?]
- At about 3500', crumbling conglomerate with gravel on Steps trail.
- 1st ledge (the one with the high step and lookout) is conglomerate below with a sandstone cap. Elevation 3600' at top.
- South spur blowdown exposures at → lean-to sites.
 - E horizon under humus: Spodosol.
 - Steve says SCS never mapped Spodosols in Catskills because no one climbed the peaks to look.
- Strongly-weathered sandstone in a blowdown pit with water table exposed only about a foot down (over)

Vegetation

- Both Trillium spp. in flower together at base of steps trail just off Denning + Woodland Road. Viola mackloskeyi common here and also below just above W-Branch Never sink ford. Also found at North Lake on 5/11/14, (see p 512-7A)
 - SUG stop at ca. 3100'
 - Between ± 3300 and 3400 feet - (3373' Chuk) Kylocomum abundant. Fir repro. abun. under a PB stand. Pass through a small fir-dominated stand at 3413' feet with most roots spreading out, rather than down, on a very bouldery site. Then back to hardwoods.
 - A sea of Erythronium & Claytonia flowers, plus some foot-high VV on a moist terrace extending N from the base of the 1st high (lookout) ledge. Spectacular! Elev. ca. 3550' from previous calculations. B+PB dom. Winnsok stumps here. (see 9 over)
 - Above the 1st high (lookout) ledge, there is NO break in fir dominance. 2nd high ledge, with ice in crevices, is entirely in fir. Fir does not break up until almost the sub seep terrace at 3750'.
- (over) →

Abun. Polytaraxum commune (?)

8. Limonite matrix ^{in conglomerate} above 3900' suggests longer-term weathering (??). Below 3900', sandstone matrix is mainly reddish and younger(??)

9. Steve's soil sample he estimated is 90% sand, way above the Catskills average of 60% to 70% sand in tills. This may be a residual soil, but age still unknown.

5. Many martens fir down & leaning at 30° to 45° angle to south, from a recent (when?) north wind blowdown. Not a continuous stand leaning, only scattered trees, some freshly-cut to clear the trail. On the long 3900' flat E of Curtis-Ormsbee Trail Junction.

6. The blowdown thicket from ca. ^{year} 2000 is growing & now impenetrable. Still somewhat open during previous hike with John Davis in 2011. Ca. 3950 feet.

7. More scattered leaning trees above, at about 4000 feet.

8. The south spur at ca. elev 4050 ft, where Steve took soil samples, has very low diversity. Almost 100% fir with a few birch. Ground has small patches of *Captis* with LL. Mostly carpet bryos: Bazzania, Ptilium, Hypnum imbricatum, and small Sphagnum patches (prob. S. ginsengohmsii but not checked).

9. (H3 continued). Dug well, lined with stones, on the terrace below the high lookout ledge. N side of trail. May date back to Dutch? Any more such wells? < 1 foot deep.

Small brook flowing across the terrace near its north end.

10. On descent. SM at 3235', according to Chuck's altimeter

11. Winnisnook stump where trail turns N-S at ca. 3100' on a lot purchased by SNY in 1980. Present blaze just to N.

Elev. calcs. 7/26/11, p. 163-32

3730' SNY-Winnisnook line	} bare 3585'
3702' crevice ledge steps	
3625' lookout ledge top	
3413 firgrove (see #2)	

↑
p. 165-9

The forest has claimed much of the opening that once accommodated the fire tower. Only one of the four tower leg bases is now visible.