



LETCHWORTH STATE PARK

Gorge Trail

CASTILE, NEW YORK
Hiking Time: 2-8 hours

M **▲** **\$**

William Pryor Letchworth entered business at the age of 15 in 1848, working as a clerk in the saddlery and hardware trade. He soon shifted to the iron products business and was successful enough to retire at the age of 48. He donated his 1,000-acre Glen Iris estate along the Genesee River to become one of the cornerstones of the New York state park system.

Dubbed the "Grand Canyon of the East," the wooded gorge was scraped and shaped by glaciers, leaving some of the country's most dramatic waterfalls in their wake. **The Gorge Trail traces the ravine for seven miles but most folks don't explore past the first three major hydrospectaculars so you will have no trouble slipping away into the woods with your dog in relative solitude.** Your biggest decision on this canine hike will be pinpointing the spot - if any - when it is time to count up your wondrous views and turn around.

The *Gorge Trail* matches Mother Nature's eye-popping moments with its own collection of stone bridges and stairways carved into the cliff walls by Civilian Conservation Corps workers during the Great Depression. An active railroad bridge across the gorge is no mean engineering feat itself although it came at the cost of a much-beloved steel trestle that stood for 142 years before being condemned in 2018.

The footpath is wide and easy to maneuver through the gorge but the builders were not overly energetic on guard rails so take note.



MINNEWASKA STATE PARK PRESERVE

Gertrude's Nose Loop

KERHONKSON, NEW YORK
Hiking Time: 4-5 hours

M **▲** **\$**

If your dog could talk you would hear about this hike for a loooooong time. The state park on the dramatic Shawangunk Mountain ridge is where feuding brothers Alfred and Albert Smiley opened competing vacation houses in the 1800s. When they made nice again the Smileys built a network of carriage roads between the hotels. These wide, carefully graded roadbeds are where you will be doing most of your hiking with Seaman.

The early steps lead to a swimming beach at cliff-fringed Lake Minnewaska. If this was as far as your dog went it would probably be a four-star hike. The Millbrook Mountain Carriage Road then moves through mixed forests onto the open cliffs and Patterson's Pellet, a glacial erratic perched improbably on the edge of a cliff.

The carriage road joins Gertrude's Nose Trail, a narrow footpath that will eventually spend much of its 2.7 miles poking along flat, open clifftops. There are so many mind-blowing views around Gertrude's Nose they actually become ho-hum after awhile.

Take heed of the red blazes - when they lead inland they are taking Seaman away from potentially dangerous crevices in the Shawangunk conglomerate. An occasional rock scramble adds interest to your dog's hiking day, regardless. Pine trees in all shapes and size decorate the clifftops.

Multiple options close the 7.5-mile loop; Seaman will vote for the one that leads back to Lake Minnewaska for a well-earned doggie dip.