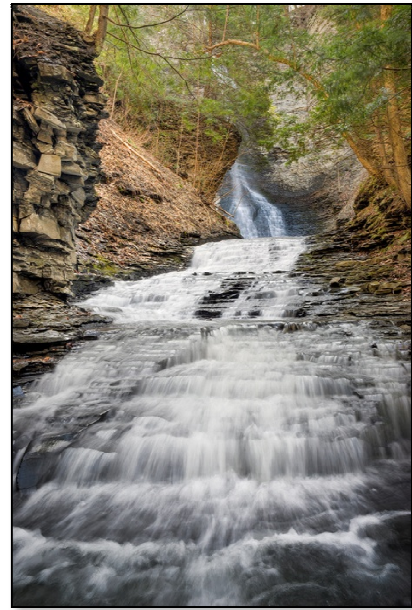


## LICK BROOK FALLS

**Description:** Three significant waterfalls in a narrow gorge; part of the Sweedler Preserve.

**Location:** Lick Brook Falls is located on a private preserve managed by the Finger Lakes Trust. The trail system is part of the Finger Lakes Trail and the North Country Trail systems.

**Directions\*:** There are two entrances. The main, upper entrance is located at the top of the gorge near the intersection of Townline Road and Sandbank Road. To find the lower entrance, proceed south from Ithaca on Elmira Road (State Routes 13 and 34). Just after passing the entrance to the Robert Treman State Park the road widens to 2 south bound lanes; stay in the left lane for SR 34, which splits to the left after crossing Enfield Creek. You immediately pass under a bridge; look for a small left turnoff that allows you head back toward Ithaca on SR34. Just before passing back over Enfield Creek, look to the right for a break in the guard rail that is the entrance to the lower parking area. A look at this location in Google Earth will resolve some of the confusion.



**Photography:** The base of the lowest waterfall offers many opportunities for creative compositions. There is a wide expanse of relatively flat bedrock with many cracks and fissures that can be incorporated into the image foreground. You will be wading in the water if you wish to get close the waterfall; it can be photographed from the trail, though.

The second waterfall is well seen from a view point off the Blue Trail. This is the only practical viewpoint unless you are equipped for some technical climbing.

The base of the upper waterfall is reached by following the stream bed. The gorge is quite narrow in places, almost a slot canyon. There are many small cascades that are easy to traverse, and one of about 12' which is moderately harder. You will be in the water here as well. All the cascades offer good photographic opportunities.

**Accessibility:** I prefer the lower entrance as it provides much better access to the 3 waterfalls, and minimizes the steep descents and climbs needed from the upper parking area. These directions start at the lower parking area. The White Trail parallels Enfield Creek and is easy to find. There are white blazes on some trees, and in places wooden stakes with a white tip. The trail is well worn and can be followed without needing to find the markers.

Although all three waterfalls can be viewed and photographed from the trail, the real enjoyment comes when you get up close to the base of the lower waterfall, or get into the water to follow the gorge to the base of the upper waterfall. As always, proper footwear is imperative.

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

Lower Falls (50') – The White Trail leads to a railroad bed and the south end of a trestle as the track crosses Cayuga Inlet. (The tracks are bright and well polished so seem to be active although I have never seen a train here. Be careful, of course!) Follow the trail north across the trestle; once across, the trail immediately turns right to follow the base of the hill. You reach the base of the lower falls in ½ mile of flat ground. The trail crosses Lick Brook just as it enters the forest; there is no bridge so you must be prepared to enter the water. I have not seen so much water that this is difficult.

Alternatively, you can avoid wading the stream by staying on the railroad track until crossing a second trestle (which crosses Lick Brook) and again taking an immediate right turn to reach the base of the waterfall. (I have been here many times when no water is flowing in the Lick Brook streambed here, but found ample water at the actual waterfall. Don't get discouraged if you see no water. If you listen carefully, you may be able to hear the waterfall.)

Middle Falls (25') – From the base of the lower falls, the White Trail and Blue Trail split; follow the Blue Trail to the right and up the steep slope. Look to the right for a point of land that overlooks the top of the lower falls. To your left is the middle waterfall. There is no easy way to reach the base of this waterfall, except perhaps some technical climbing from the base of the lower falls. Still, the view here is excellent!

Upper Falls (95') – Return to the Blue Trail and continue uphill. Look to the right for a small trail that leads down to the stream bed. It's not far, roughly 100'. At this point you can reach the base of the upper waterfall by following the stream bed. The gorge is narrow in places, and you will need to walk in the stream bed. When the water flow is high, access may be impossible. There are many small cascades which are easy to surmount and one 12' cascade which requires a bit more care. The image above was taken from a point at the top of this 12' cascade looking toward the base of the upper waterfall.

There are viewpoints on the Blue Trail where you can get images of the top of the upper waterfall. I found these viewpoints less interesting photographically, and in some cases may require that you to climb down some steep embankments to avoid intervening foliage and branches. These locations best accessed from the upper parking area.

In Spring, I have found blocks of ice the size of refrigerators in the stream bed. I suspect these fell off the gorge walls so a great deal of caution should be exercised during and after cold weather.

Web: Finger Lakes Trust: <http://www.flt.org/>  
Sweedler Lick Brook: [http://www.flt.org/protected\\_lands/protected\\_lands1.php?id=29](http://www.flt.org/protected_lands/protected_lands1.php?id=29)  
Trail map: <http://www.flt.org/getres.php?id=347>  
Finger Lakes Trail: <http://www.fingerlakestrail.org/>  
North Country Trail: <http://www.northcountrytrail.org/>