

## PLOTTER KILL PRESERVE

**Description:** Three excellent waterfalls on the Plotter Kill: Upper (60'), Lower (40') & Rynex Falls (40')

**Location:** The full name is the Almy D. Coggleshall Plotter Kill Preserve, after Almy Coggleshall, a member Schenectady County Environmental Advisory Council and prime mover in creation of the trail system here.

**Directions\*:** The Plotter Kill is west of Rotterdam, NY along State Route 159, the Mariaville Road. For those travelling a distance, Exit 25A of the NYS Thruway to I-88 is the closest exit. As you leave the toll booth, take the immediate right hand exit (also #25). Turn left on SR7 (Duanesburg Rd) to the traffic light at Burdeck St. (<1 mile). Turn left and go another ½ mile to SR159 and the Stewart's Shop. Turn left again; the Plotter Kill is 3.8 miles along. Look for the main parking entrance on the right about 0.4 miles after passing Coplon Road.



**Note:** If you are using the Google Earth KLZ files to develop a route, Coplon Road is shown as Plotterkill Trail, go figure. The street sign says Coplon Road.

**Photography:** There are 3 waterfalls worth visiting here. The tallest and easiest to reach is the Upper Falls, with the Lower Falls and Rynex Falls being somewhat more difficult.

Upper Falls (Top): Follow the Red Trail to the Plotter Kill and cross the narrow bridge. Turn right and walk downstream about 50 yards.

Upper Falls (Bottom): Continue on the Red Trail about 300 yards. Where the Red Trail makes a distinct turn to the left just above the Rynex Creek ravine, look to the right for the hidden Yellow Trail that is a hair pin turn to the right and down to stream level. At the bottom, to the right, you must bushwhack along the water to the base of Upper Falls.

Lower Falls (Top): At the base of the Yellow Trail, turn left. The top of the Lower Falls is only a few yards ahead.

Rynex Falls (Top): Back to the top of the Yellow Trail, continue along the Red Trail. You will descend to the stream bed of Rynex Creek and the top of Rynex Falls.

Lower Falls and Rynex Falls (Bottom): There are no marked trails to the base of these waterfalls, which are very close together. There are several options. You can follow the Red Trail another 300+ yards where it descends to stream level, then bushwhack back. You might also start from the Coplon Road parking area, but the trip upstream on the Red Trail is a bit longer.

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

My preferred route is to take the Blue Trail from the main parking area as it leads directly to the point where Plotter Kill and Rynex Creek join. You have a nice, though somewhat obstructed view of the Lower Falls, and can see, through the trees, Rynex Falls. The ravine slope is only moderate and the descent can be managed with some care.

After climbing back out, the Blue Trail can be followed to the right, passing good views of the Upper Falls, until it joins the red Trail near the footbridge, or followed back to the parking area.

**Accessibility:** The travel directions above lead to the main parking area, which has parking for a dozen cars. There is a large trail map posted at the trail head. A link to a printable version is below. The main parking lot is not plowed out in winter, so parking can be problematic. Once snow arrives, the plow creates embankments too big for even four wheelers to cross. On occasion I have parked on Coplon Road and walked back to the main entrance. There is another designated parking area ½ mile down Coplon Road.

All the trails here are wet and muddy, with trail erosion exposing many tree roots and loose rocks. The Blue Trail is not travelled often and is a bit harder to follow in places. The blue trail blazes have not been repainted in a while and can be hard to find. As you travel from the main parking area to the two lower falls, the Blue Trail appears to enter the backyard of private property; look for a 90° left turn here.

Winter makes all aspects of this location treacherous. There are water seeps that make the trails slippery, and bush whacking up stream beds tricky. I have fallen through ice in these stream beds several times. I have spoken to people who have managed to climb down to the base of the Upper Falls from the Red Trail, even in winter. This is incredibly risky! Use the Yellow Trail even though a bit farther away.

There is no cell phone signal down in the ravine and it is spotty elsewhere. Help is not a phone call away, and rescue will be slow as there is no simple route to the ravines.

**Web:** <http://www.schenectadycounty.com/FullStory.aspx?m=194&amid=769>  
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