



Speaking of Balance...Discover Tripod Rock

Tripod Rock is located about three miles from my home in the Pyramid Mountain Natural Historical Area in the borough of Kinnelon and Montville Townships in New Jersey. There are more than 1000 acres, including trails, fields, forests, rock outcroppings and wetlands, providing a wide range of geological and ecological experiences.



How Big Is It?

The boulder weighs 170 tons and is balanced two feet above the bedrock on three smaller boulders. It is 15 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 8 feet high. There is a triangular crest running the length of its top. The point of contact between the main boulder and its support stones formed an approximate 3-4-5 triangle.

How Did It Get Here?

The accepted theory is that the Wisconsin glacier dropped this boulder from not too far away and is probably made from quartzite; Kittatinny Mountain's bedrock. Over the last 18,000 years or so, smaller rock and sand particles that were underneath it eroded away, leaving the boulder and its legs smaller slabs of rock that it came to rest on. Someone has inserted other types of rock under the boulder, to replace the smaller support rock that now crumbles and erodes.

How Old Is It?

The rock dates back at least two glacial cycles, or over 100,000 years. The local legend is that it was levitated into position by Native Medicine.

Who Lived In This Area?

This wilderness land was used as a hunting, fishing, and gathering site for over 10,000 years by Native Americans, including the Lenape Indians, who were encountered by the first European settlers over three hundreds years ago. Many of these first explorers, traders, and settlers who discovered this special corner of old Pequannock were of Dutch extraction. Surveyor's stones and enduring stone walls still mark the homestead farms and woodlot boundaries.

Spiritual Interest

About 30 feet away from Tripod Rock stands a boulder arrangement which appears to form a triangle. Two large boulders balanced partially on two smaller stones for the base. The apex is about 15 feet away and in the form of a smaller rock. The apex of the triangular configuration points to a hill forming the horizon. Intriguingly, it has been observed that this sightline forms the setting point of the sun on the summer solstice.

Allison Para, assistant naturalist for Pyramid Mountain, says that although park personnel believe that Tripod Rock is glacial, their opinion about the two smaller ones (two "Solstice Stones") is ambiguous. "We believe the Solstice Stones were placed there (by Native Americans) because it was probably a ceremonial site. The sun sets between those two rocks."

It is said that the Tripod Rock Spiritual Energy Vortex reaches maximum energy at Summer Solstice. Every year hundreds of people are drawn to the site for a spontaneous sunset observance. Many find it an extraordinary place to meditate, manifest and pray.

People who are sensitive to such energies state that they experience a strong sensation of peace and power at the site. It is considered to be part of a ley line connecting to the Montauk pyramids and then to the ancient site of Atlantis.

How To Get To Pyramid Mountain

You can reach the park by taking Interstate 287 to the Main St. Boonton exit, then head west about a half mile to Rte. 511 (Boonton Ave.) and then north several miles to Pyramid Mountain County Park which is on the left by Mars Industrial Park on the right. There are good maps available at the Park Office and the trails to the Rock are well blazed.

The easy hike to the Rock takes about a half hour. If you make the Solstice Pilgrimage, remember to carry a flashlight for the hike back. The park officially closes at sunset so you may want to park across the road.

Sources

1. Tripod Rock Organization: www.tripodrock.org
2. New Jersey Northwest Skylands: www.njskylands.com
3. Map of trails available at:
<http://www.parks.morris.nj.us/parks/pyrmtnmain.htm>