

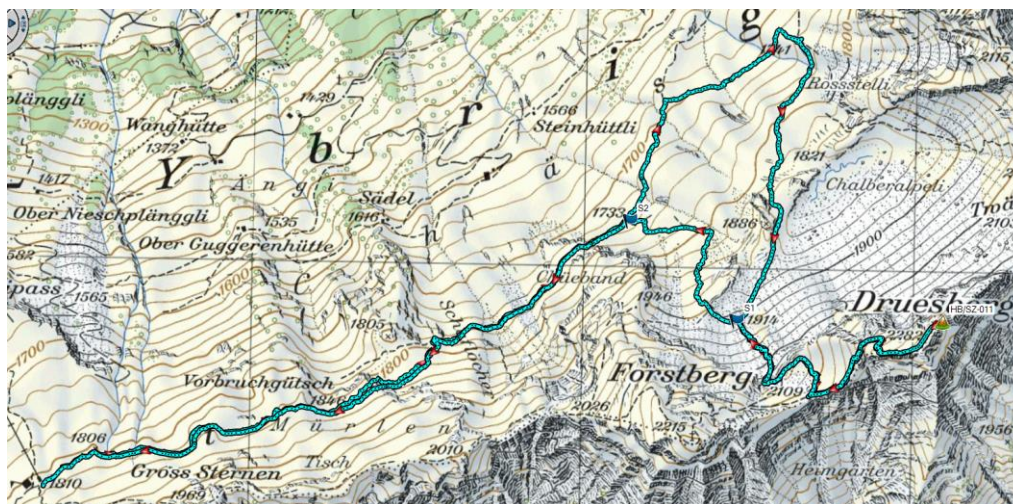
HB/SZ-011 Druesberg

Paul HB9DST, Sept 12, 2015

Summary: A challenging T4 activation, but it's easier if you avoid my mistakes. One thing that makes this summit attractive for many people is that it is reasonably close to Zurich and is easy to reach by car or with public transportation.



Here I circled the "shortcut" from waypoints S1 to S2 on the map below that I initially missed.



The loop to the right was an unnecessary detour as you can read below.

I've been to the Hoch-Ybrig area numerous times in both summer and winter. Your eyes are immediately drawn to Forstberg and Druesberg, which dominate the horizon in this skiing area. Druesberg looks very formidable, and at one point I asked Hugo HB9AFH if it was possible to activate it, and he said I should have no problem doing it. Well, today I finally wanted to meet the challenge.



Druesberg (the peak to the left) as seen from the Weglosen parking lot. Many people do the entire 1200 meter hike starting from here.



Druesberg (left) and Forstberg (right) as seen from the Seeli cable car station (where the Sternen chair lift starts). These two summits dominate the surroundings.



Druesberg (in the center of the photo) as seen from the Sternen chair lift summit station where my hike started.

Most of the entries in hikr.org and my hiking books recommend starting at Weglosen, a large parking lot at the cable car, hiking to the Druesberghütte and then continuing on to Druesberg itself. This, however, involves an ascent of more than 1200 meters. Thus, I rode one cable car from Weglosen to Seebli and then a chair lift from Seebli to Sternen station, bringing me to 1810 meters. Riding up and down required an all-day ticket that cost me CHF 26.00.

The signpost at the summit station says Druesberg is 2 hours and 15 minutes away. I think they are being very optimistic and you should plan more time than that. The first half of the route goes up and down and you end up losing a little bit of altitude before you get to a key point, waypoint S2 at Point 1733. This is where the most direct route turns heading up. (I took this route on the way back, and I must also say that in spots it is very poorly marked with blue/white painted stones). However, it is possible to miss this turnoff -- I did it. Right at this spot there was a big muddy area, and my eyes were focused on keeping my feet dry and so I missed the indicator painted on a rock (and not with a standard sign). I kept on the trail towards the Druesberghütte but eventually determined I must have missed the turnoff. So I crossed a meadow, gaining some altitude, until I reached the actual path that goes from the hut to the summit. I estimate that I lost about a 100 meters of altitude and at least a half hour of time.



I was so busy trying to avoid this mud pit in the middle of the trail that I failed to notice the sign painted on the rock in the background. At this point (waypoint S2), it's a straight shot up to Druesberg (center background).

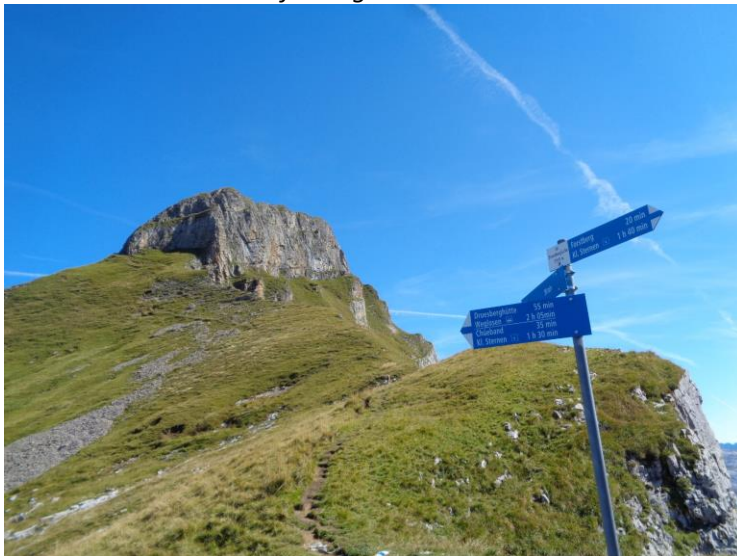


Keep your eyes open for this painted stone at waypoint S2. It indicates where the most direct route to Druesberg turns off from the main trail that leads to the Druesberg Hut.

At the waypoint marked S1 at Point 1814 I came to the point where the shortcut would have brought me. At this point I picked up the intended trail again, and here it also started getting quite steep through rock and gravel. I also have an informal rule that the number of spots with chains is an indication of how difficult a trail is. There were two spots where the chains were absolutely necessary.



The first section of chains below at around Point 1914. You grab onto them so you can traverse this short section with its narrow footing.



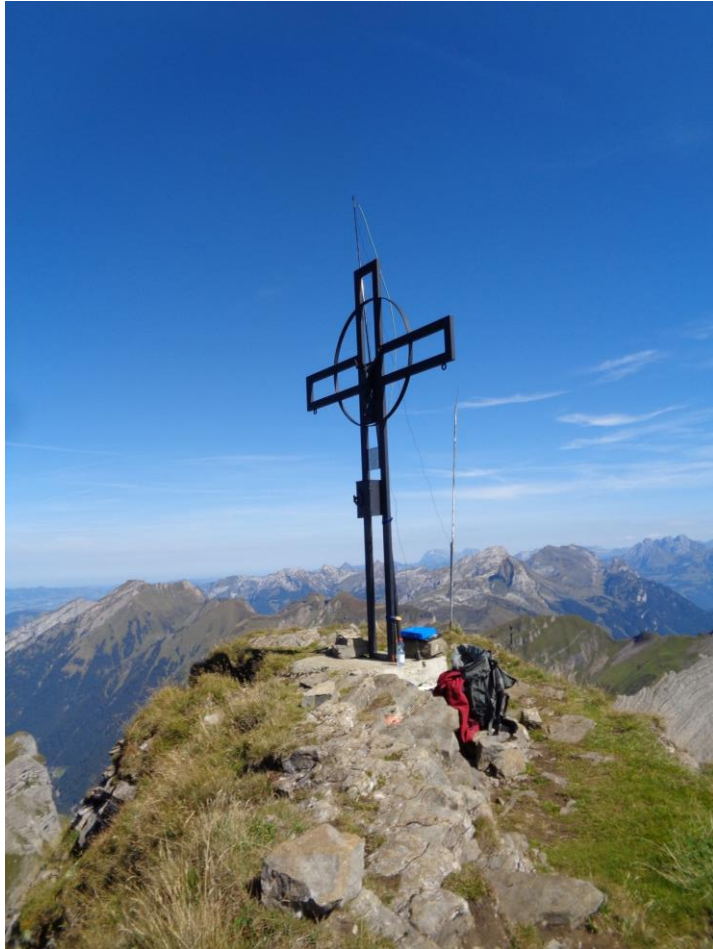
Druesberg as seen from the saddle between it and Forstberg (Point 2109). There's another tough half hour ahead of you.



The second chained section comes shortly after the saddle. This first part, shown here, is a very steep set of rock "steps" and requires you to pull yourself up using the chains.

When you get to the saddle between the two summits (Point 2109), you initially think most of the work is done. Wrong! There's another half hour of hard work ahead with the most difficult sections of the hike to come. This includes a second chained section, and at the bottom few meters it's almost straight up.

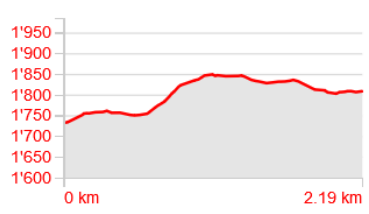
As I approached the summit, I saw the cross but also a pole that looked as if it could be the mast for a vertical antenna. It turned out not to be another SOTA activator but rather some sort of flagpole. The activation zone is relatively small, and on a crowded day it might be tough to find space for a dipole or even an end-fed without disturbing people.



The relatively small activation zone with steep dropoffs on all sides. Here my mast is lashed to the summit cross, although I could have used the "flagpole" in the background.

The hike up to the summit, with my "detour", took a few minutes over 3 hours, was 5.7 km with an ascent of 714 meters.

As for the trip back... At waypoint S1 (Point 1814) the sign indicates that you can take the trail back to the chair lift at Sternen (1 hour 5 minutes posted) or take the trail all the way down to Weglosen (just over 2 hours). I wasn't too keen about hiking down the 1200 meters. But I had forgotten about the many ups and downs of the trail back to the chair lift, and in my tired state the 147 meters of ascent on the way back were very tiring. A good alternative might be to park at Weglosen, take the cable car / chair lift to Sternen, but on the return hike down to the parking lot instead of taking the lifts.



On the way back, from waypoint S1 to the cable car station, there is a 147 meter ascent waiting for you after what is already a tiring hike.