

Princeton Hikes!

Best of Princeton Trails, 2024



Brought to you by the Princeton Open Space Committee

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About Princeton Hikes!

The Princeton Hikes! Program

The Princeton Hikes! program was established by the OSC to provide opportunities for guided group hikes in and around Princeton. The hikes are open to all and both beginner and more difficult hikes are available.

All of the hikes in this booklet have been taken by the Princeton Hikes! group over the past several years. We hope that the book serves as a useful reference for hikers in the area. We encourage submission of new hike ideas and corrections...write to TrailAroundPrincetonMA@GMail.com for information or suggestions.

Here are a few key points about our hiking program:

- All are welcome. We hike at the rate of the slowest participant, but often the hikers split into smaller groups and then wait at intersections for people to catch up. We welcome hikers from all towns, though our 'marketing focus' is the town of Princeton.
- Our normally scheduled hikes occur two Saturdays and one weekday per month, and are typically in Princeton or surrounding towns. Because a major goal of the program is to introduce people to local trails, we do not often go far afield from Princeton. There is a separate private group available in town for more 'adventurous hikes' to places like Watatic, Monadnock, and the White Mountains.
- We hike year-round. In the winter we may require certain footwear, such as microspikes (often!), snowshoes, or cross country skis. Some of our winter hikes are likely to change just before the date to take advantage of snow conditions.
- Dogs are allowed for hikes where the landowner allows them. Some areas, such as Audubon Sanctuaries and DCR Wetland properties, do not allow dogs. In general we ask that dogs are constrained by a short leash; however, this requirement is relaxed if dog behavior permits! Please contact us if you are considering bringing your dog along!

Princeton Open Space Committee

The members of the Open Space Committee (OSC) are town-appointed; the committee's primary goal is to review and implement the [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#). Updates to this report are submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts every seven years, a requirement that qualifies the town to submit proposals for state-sponsored awards and grants. The plan is used to drive improvement projects during the seven year period.

OSC's primary areas of emphasis are:

- Preservation of land in Princeton deemed beneficial for recreational use.
- Stewardship of natural resources, maintenance of the town's rural character, and conservation of its diverse natural landscapes.
- Promotion of private landowner awareness of land conservation and stewardship to explore areas of cooperation that are beneficial for all parties.
- Promotion of the more than 100 miles of trails currently in use in Princeton and neighboring areas.

Trails Around Princeton Program

Trails Around Princeton (TAP) is an ongoing project of the Open Space Committee that seeks to proactively develop, document, and improve the existing network of trails and their connections to one another.

Princeton Hikes!

Difficulty Ratings

- **Difficult:** Difficult means hikes that due to ascent, distance, or footing are as difficult as climbing Mount Wachusett from the North side. That hike involves about 1000 feet of elevation gain, with rocky trails and five miles or more of distance.
- **Moderate:** Moderate generally means the elevation gain is roughly half the elevation of Mt. Wachusett (300-500 feet), with perhaps less distance or easier footpaths.
- **Easy:** Generally under three miles and under 300 feet of elevation gain, with pretty smooth pathways.

Hiking Safely

General

- Walk / Bike / Ride under control.
- Bring water and snacks for longer hikes.
- Choose hikes within your ability.
- Bring map, compass, GPS.
- Dress in layers and bring microspikes or snowshoes if conditions warrant.
- Avoid hiking solo, or at least make sure someone knows your route and expected timeline.
- See more: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/hiking-safety.htm>

Hunting

- Always wear hunter orange during hunting season (September to December).
- See more: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/hunting-in-massachusetts-state-parks-and-forests>

Ticks

- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and long socks when possible.
- Check for ticks after hiking; shower and wash clothing as soon as possible.
- See more: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/tick-borne-disease-prevention>

Stream Crossings

- Several trails involve small stream crossings– check the trail guide for details and be prepared, especially during the spring high water season.
- See more: <https://www.outdoors.org/resources/amc-outdoors/outdoor-resources/crossing-moving-water/>

Trail Etiquette

A summary of key rules to live by while hiking on area trails.

Preserve the Trails

- Stay on marked trails, especially when crossing hayfields or corn fields.
- Avoid using wet sections of the trail, especially if you are biking or riding.
- Remove your own trash, and make yourself feel good by picking up after those less considerate.
- Practice leave no trace practices: <https://Int.org/why/7-principles/>
- Clean up after your animals.

Respect other hikers

- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Keep dogs on a leash or otherwise under control.
- Avoid disturbing ski tracks where possible.
- Bikers yield to hikers. Hikers yield to horses.
- Keep to the right when meeting other hikers.

Other rules

- Respect the privacy of landowners who have generously allowed the public to cross their land. Follow their rules regarding restrictions.
- Resist the temptation to pick wildflowers. Leave them for everyone to enjoy. All vegetation along trails in wetlands is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act.

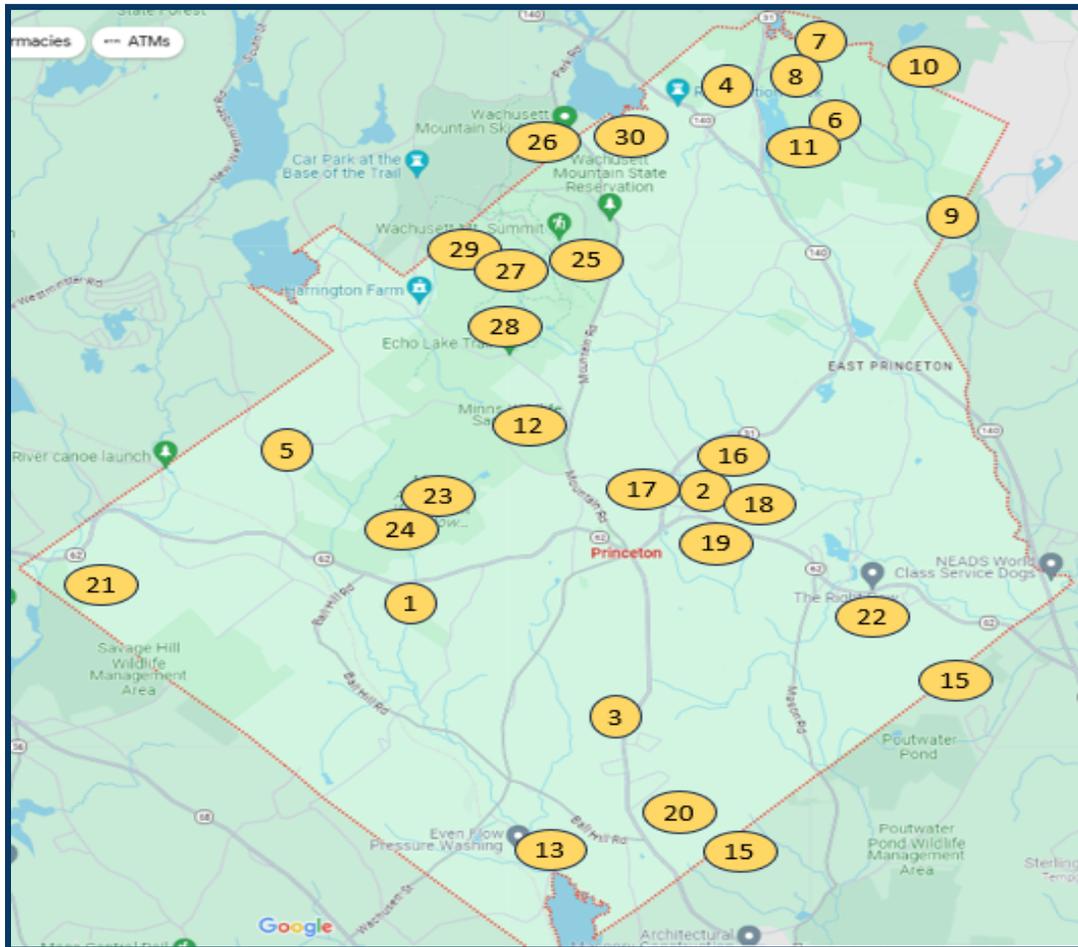
Rev: 12/6/23

Trail Checklist

Collect them all! Here's a printable list of the trails in this booklet:

- Calamint Hill North Trails
- Central Princeton Trails
- Cobb Brook Trails
- Crow Hill to Redemption Rock
- Four Corners
- LSF Wolf Den Loop
- LSF Ball Hill Loop
- LSF Crow Hill North
- LSF Hillbilly Heaven
- LSF Notown Reservoir
- LSF Paradise Pond and Wolf Rock Loop
- Little Wachusett Loop (Minns WMA)
- Lovers Lane to Overlook Road (Rutland)
- Mason Road to Red Fox Farm
- Poutwater Pond from Esty Road
- Princeton Land Trust Bullock McElroy Trails
- Princeton Land Trust Gregory-Alexander
- Princeton Land Trust: Krashes to Russell Corner
- Princeton Land Trust Russell Corner Trails
- Red Fox Farm Trails
- Savage Hill Loop
- Thomas Prince Nature Trails
- Wachusett Meadow North Loop
- Wachusett Meadow South Loop
- Wachusett Mtn East Loop
- Wachusett Mtn North Loop
- Wachusett Mtn Redline
- Wachusett Mtn South Loop
- Wachusett Mtn West Loop
- Wachusett Ski Area to Redemption Rock

Trails Map



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Calamint Hill North Trails | 17. Princeton Land Trust Gregory-Alexander |
| 2. Central Princeton Trails | 18. Princeton Land Trust: Krashes to Russell Corner |
| 3. Cobb Brook Trails | 19. Princeton Land Trust Russell Corner |
| 4. Crow Hill to Redemption Rock | 20. Red Fox Farm Trails |
| 5. Four Corners | 21. Savage Hill Loop |
| 6. LSF Wolf Den Loop | 22. Thomas Prince Nature Trails |
| 7. LSF Ball Hill Loop | 23. Wachusett Meadow North Loop |
| 8. LSF Crow Hill North | 24. Wachusett Meadow South Loop |
| 9. LSF Hillbilly Heaven | 25. Wachusett Mtn East Loop |
| 10. LSF Notown Reservoir | 26. Wachusett Mtn North Loop |
| 11. LSF Paradise Pond and Wolf Rocks | 27. Wachusett Mtn Redline |
| 12. Little Wachusett Loop (Minns WMA) | 28. Wachusett Mtn South Loop |
| 13. Lovers Lane to Overlook Road | 29. Wachusett Mtn West Loop |
| 14. Mason Road to Red Fox Farm | 30. Wachusett Ski Area to Redemption Rock |
| 15. Poutwater Pond from Esty Road | |
| 16. Princeton Land Trust Bullock McElroy | |

Princeton Hikes Writeups

Calamint Hill North Trails

HIKE NAME: Calamint Hill Trails **DISTANCE:** 3.5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles. Bikes, dogs, horses are all permitted.

Trailhead: Princeton. Calamint Hill Conservation Area (CHCA) is located on Calamint Hill Road North off Rt. 62 on the west side of Princeton. There is a parking lot about 0.25 miles up the road on the left. Look for the two kiosks. <https://goo.gl/maps/p36SFZDcv7SocjKD9>

Description:

Between CHCA, Princeton's Boylston Park, and the PLT Appell trails there are approximately 3.5 miles of connected pathways, consisting of three loops. The Appell property, owned by the Princeton Land Trust, lies to the west of CHCA and includes a nice boulder field and a flat walk along an open forest that runs parallel to Calamint Hill North Road. The Boone Trail on the south side of the area provides connectivity to Brooks Station Road. The Elevation gain of this hike is 200 ft.

These are quiet woodland trails with some great viewing areas of a large beaver pond from the east and west sides of the wetland.

- The East Loop features a pretty walk through a hemlock forest and then down to the viewing area, which is closest to the Heron Rookery.
- The West Loop also features a viewing area on the shore of the large beaver pond. Both areas have benches for resting and enjoying the views. Trails are rocky in places but not too steep with the exception of the south side of the west loop (along the stone wall).
- The steep part can be avoided by taking the Appell Loop for an additional 0.7 miles. The Appell Loop is rocky along the south side and through the boulder field, but the north side offers an open forest with few rocks. There is also an exit to Calamint Hill Road near Boylston Park.

There are three other trails in the area that may be helpful when hiking in this area:

- The Fieldstone Farm Trail provides a connection from the route 62 end of Calamint Hill North road to Wachusett Meadow.
- The Boone Trail provides connectivity from the southwest end of the Appell trail down to Brooks Station Road near Mathews Lane and Sam Cobb Lane.

- The [Boylston Trail](#) leads north of Calamint Hill North road down to another beaver pond off South Wachusett Brook, which is very pretty at many times of the year.

Sections of the wetland crossing (East Loop) may be wet in the spring, although bridges span the two significant streams.

Links: [CHCA Kiosk](#)

Hike Details: As you enter the parking area the trailhead is to your left and proceeds down the hill parallel to the road. A few hundred yards down the path, bear left to take the East Loop. This will take you over two bridges and then to the loop junction, bear left to continue around the East Loop. Stop at the viewing area on the way back, where there is a spur out to the pond and a bench.

Upon completing the loop, go left to re-cross the bridges, and at the junction with the West Loop, turn left and follow the loop out to the beaver pond. Again, there is a short spur to the edge of the beaver pond, with a bench and a large rock which has been named 'Princeton Peace Rock.' Return to the loop trail and continue to the stone wall which is the boundary with the PLT Appell Property.

Take the Appell trail around the loop. This threads through some large boulders, and then continues slightly uphill and through an open forest. At the stone wall boundary with the CHCA property, take the West Loop trail straight ahead and continue down through the woods to close the loop, then go straight back to the main trail. Turn left to return to the parking lot.

Other Options to Consider: The trail through Boylston Park is marked with blue blazes and goes about a quarter mile down to South Wachusett Brook which is quite pretty and with lots of wildlife through the different seasons.

There is a connection to the Wachusett Meadow Audubon Sanctuary via the Fieldstone Farm Trail on Hubbardston Road near the beginning of Calamint Hill Road North.

Historical Notes:

The Calamint Hill Conservation Area is part of a larger property known as Fieldstone Farm, or locally as the Smith Farm. This property has over 250 acres of fields and forest that provides lovely views along both sides of Route 62 just west of the town center. This preservation in June of 2016 was achieved by the involvement of many organizations, including the town of Princeton, the Princeton Land Trust, the state Division of Conservation and Recreation, Worcester Water, and private residents. Fieldstone Farm had been owned since 1944 by the Smith family, who operated it first as a dairy farm and later raised pigs. In recent years the fields were cut for hay by a local farmer. The farm has been in continuous production since the 18th century and had long been the town's top open space protection priority.

The Princeton Land Trust acquired the 34 acre Appell property in 2019. This property was given in memory of Laura (Reynolds) Appell. It is designated to be left in a natural state, allowing for trails but no other development.

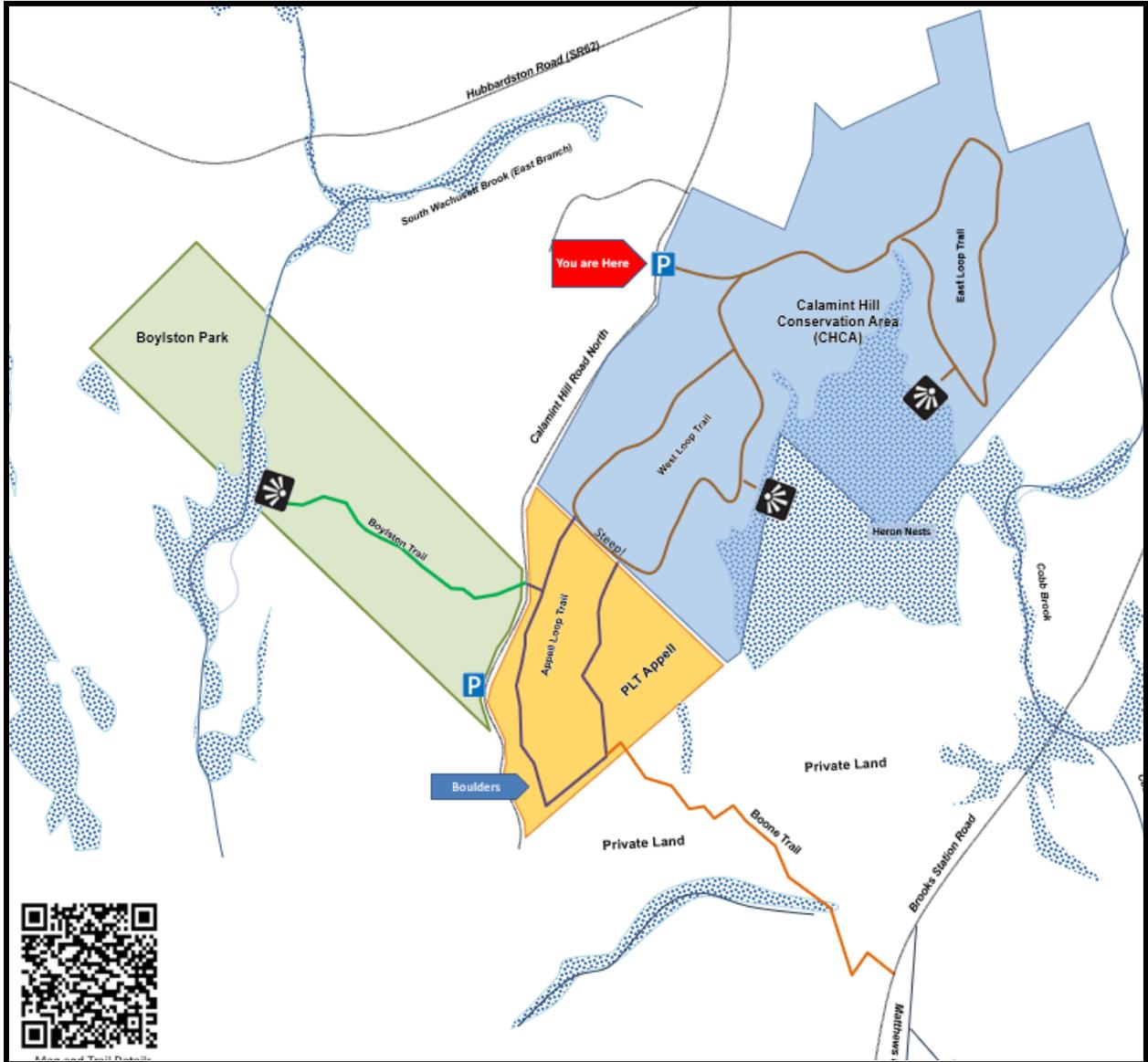
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Trailhead



CHCA Kiosk Download



Central Princeton Trails

Princeton Land Trust

HIKE NAME: Central Princeton PLT Loop **DISTANCE:** 5.0 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles allowed. Horses are not allowed on Hall Field, and dogs must be leashed. Please follow the markers and stay on the trail at all times.

Trailhead: Princeton. Park at Princeton Center. <https://goo.gl/maps/DHZQaqzLHSYK3TGU8>

The hike can also start at Krashes Field or other parking areas shown on the map.

Hike Description: This hiking option is a tour through Princeton Land Trust properties to the east of Princeton Center. Starting at the common, the hike goes down Prospect Street to the Gregory-Alexander Trails. It then travels across Route 31 to the Cary and Bullock-McElroy Trails, crossing Route 62 to the Russell Corner Trails. This route passes by several interesting features including the Gregory Spring, the esker by Krashes Field, the Beaver Pond, and Hall Field. Total elevation gain/loss is 440 feet.

Links: [Large Kiosk and Map for Bullock Property](#)

Hike Details:

From the Princeton Town center, walk down Prospect Street and around the corner to the Gregory-Alexander Trail kiosk, which will be on your right. Proceed down the trail (blue blazes) and optionally take a left to a spur to visit Gregory Spring, which was the first water supply for the center of Princeton,

Return to the previous junction and go left to follow the Gregory Loop over to the Alexander Trail, and proceed down to East Princeton Road (Route 31). This area may be wet at times.

Turn left on Route 31 and then right on Merriam Road, and approximately 200 yards up the hill, turn left onto the Cary Trail and follow it around the horse field and back through the woods and then out to the McElroy Field. When this trail hits the main path, turn left.

At the junction with the loop by a bench, turn left again, and follow the loop around, down by Krashes Field, and climb the ice-age glacial feature known as an "esker," a high and long hill on which the trail continues. There is a lovely overlook at the end of the esker with a bench. The trail continues over small hills through a mixed forest. It leaves the woods into an open field. Cross the field to reach a small opening through several trees that leads to another field.

Exit the Bullock-McElroy property past the kiosk and out onto Bullock Lane.

Take Bullock Lane to the right out to Route 62, and turn left for the short walk down to the Russell Corner Trail Area. The loop trail goes past the kiosk to the right, and continues down through a new-growth forest and to a lovely beaver pond. At the pond there is a spur trail off to

the left that can be taken to go to the dam and another bench. Return and proceed back along the loop, keeping to the left along an impressive rock wall.

Continue down to the Hall Field Trail and walk through the Field (please stay along the border as this is an active hay field). Enjoy the views of Princeton Center.

Exit onto Route 62, cross the road to Route 31, and proceed to the Gregory-Alexander Trail, which can then be followed back to the town common via Prospect Street.

Other Options to Consider:

The hike can be shortened by taking a shorter path through Bullock-McElroy (for example the loop down to the esker can be bypassed) or the Russell Corner Trails (for example by taking the back side of the loop or the Poor Family Trail down to Hall Field (see map).

A simpler way back to the center after exiting the Hall Field is to walk up Route 62, on a path just beside the road on the Hall Field side.

Historical Notes:

The Gregory Spring was the original water source for Princeton Center, and on the way down the hill you may spot a pipe crossing the trail that was used to pump water to the town center. The spring is still running and has been used by neighbors in recent years.

Down by the Beaver Ponds in the Peabody Metcalf property within Russell Corner Trails, check out the large stone wall that is reputed to have been built by Revolutionary war soldiers who were working for local farmers after the Battle of Ft. Ticonderoga and before a prison was build in Rutland. These wider than usual walls were specially built to accommodate the movement of large cannons across Princeton's notorious rocky terrain on the way to Boston and the Fortification of Dorchester Heights in 1776 (???)

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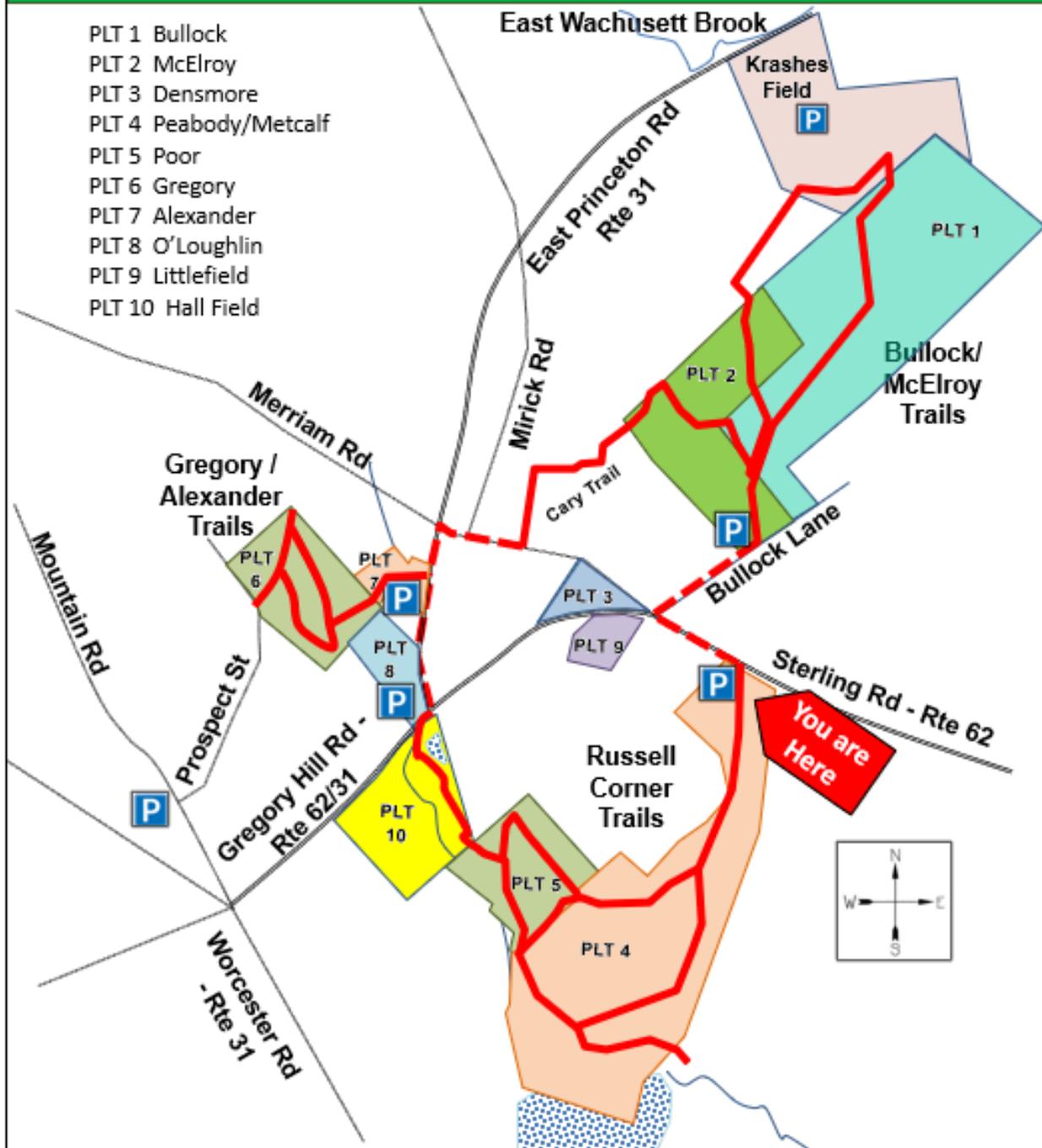


Trailhead



Bullock-McElroy Kiosk Download

Central Princeton Land Trust Trails



Cobb Brook Trails

HIKE NAME: Cobb Brook Loop **DISTANCE:** 2 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy-Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Worcester Road (Route 31) just north of the Princeton Post Office and Monti's Market south of the Mountain Barn. Enter and park against the chain link fence gate.

<https://goo.gl/maps/o9UG4eU1q6XCg1fR9>

Hike Description: These trails head from Worcester Road down to the west to the Cobb Brook area. This hike loops around the trail area, stopping at three spurs that lead to views of beaver ponds or Cobb Brook. The land is shared by Princeton Land Trust and landowner Bruce Jacobson. The elevation change is 175 feet.

The trail can be wet, particularly along the lower section, and there are a few streams that need to be crossed with some caution.

Links: [Trail Map](#)

Hike Details:

From the parking area, follow the blue blazes down Jake's Trail through the open lot to the left of the kiosk and through a short wooded section, and then turn right toward the cell tower. Pass the cell tower and proceed along blue blazes to the T junction.

Take a left at the T Junction, proceeding clockwise around the loop. Pass over a stream crossing and continue straight on the Giard Trail, which stays on the high side of the valley and then goes downhill and joins the lower Cobb Brook Trail.

At the T junction at the bottom of the hill, explore off to the left down the South Pond Trail to the larger beaver pond, where there is a nice viewing area. Return past the Giard Trail and take a left onto the North Pond Trail to check out the smaller pond.

Return to the Cobb Brook Trail and take a left to proceed to the north end of the property, and explore the short Cobb Brook Spur Trail.

Return by taking the Sunny's Slope Trail uphill from the brook, and turning right to continue and then left on Jake's Trail to return to the parking area.

The two beaver ponds are quiet spots with plenty of bird activity. The bridge abutment is a good spot to check out Cobb Brook.

Other Options to Consider

The hike can be shortened by using one of the two connector trails.

Also, at the top of Sunny's Slope where the trail turns to the right, you can continue straight through a small forest and back of the Mountain Barn parking area. From here it is a short walk out to the main parking area.

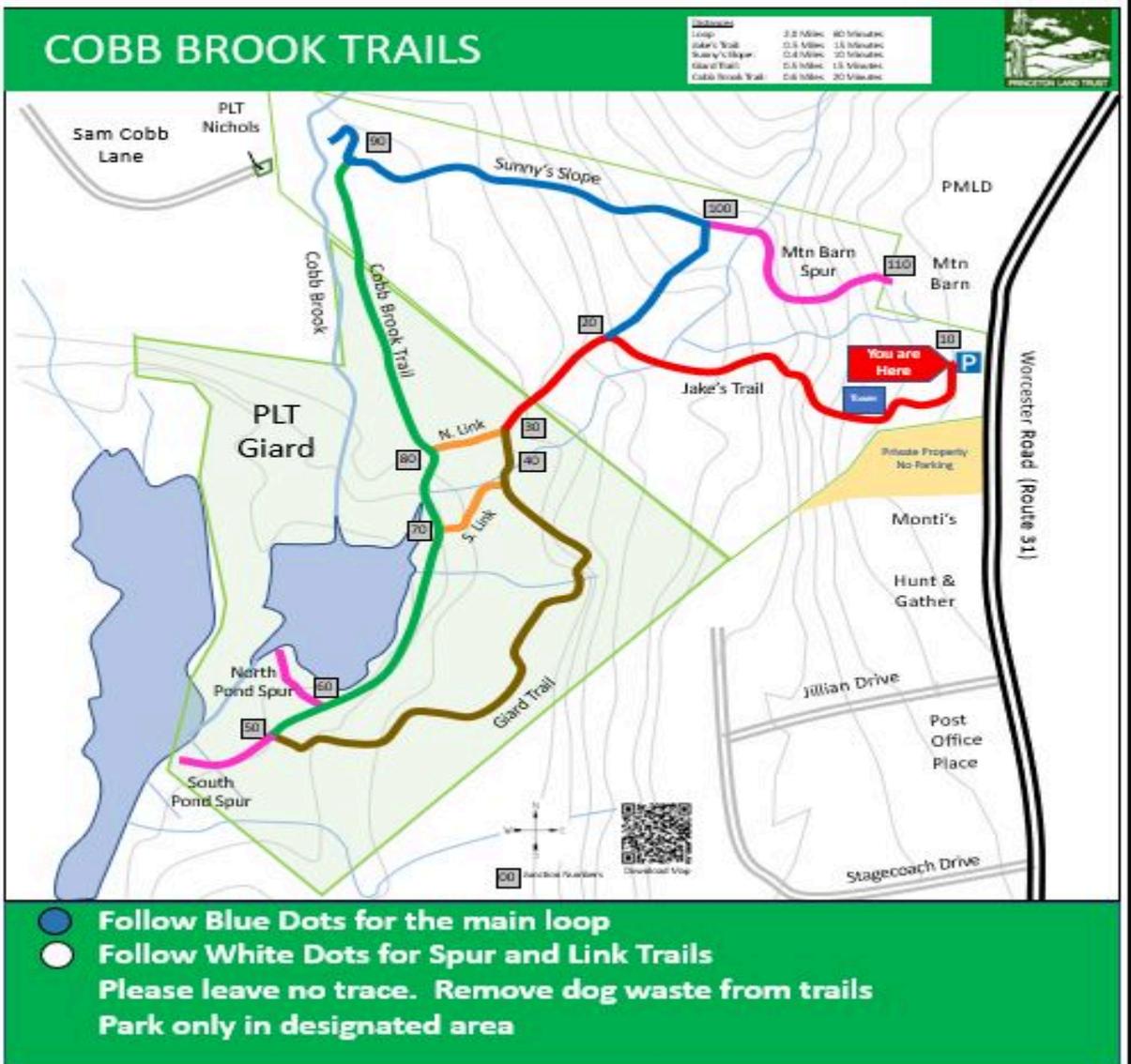
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Trailhead



Cobb Brook Map Download



Crow Hill to Redemption Rock

Leominster State Forest

HIKE NAME: LSF Crow Hill to Redemption Rock **DISTANCE:** 3.6 miles one way

DIFFICULTY: moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles, hiking and bicycles are allowed

Trailhead: Princeton. Ledges Parking Lot at Leominster State Forest, Route 31, 0.3 miles north of Rocky Pond Road . <https://goo.gl/maps/ytjHe6UbNKhwee3q9>

Hike Description: This a hike along the Midstate Trail through a mixed pine and hardwood forest with mountain laurel. The terrain is hilly with some nice views to the east and toward Wachusett Mountain. Total elevation gain is 797 feet.

Links: [Redemption Rock History](#); [Leominster State Forest Map](#)

Hike Details:

From the parking area take the Ledges Trail (red blazes) and follow signs to the right to view the majestic ledges.

Reverse direction back to the main trail and follow the trails around south of the ledges to the picnic area where the Ledges Trail intersects with the Midstate Trail, an area worth exploring (see below). There is a fine view from the top of the ledges if you climb up the Midstate Trail and proceed along the ledge for a hundred feet or so. Then climb back down to continue.

Follow the Midstate Trail left from the ledges (yellow triangular blazes) to the south. The trail is hilly with a variety of views (especially in winter) both east and west. The trail passes through a mixed hardwood and pine forest with mountain laurel in the undergrowth (beautiful in June). The trail crosses a small stream which may be difficult to cross in very wet weather. It then follows along old stone walls. As you approach Route 140 there is a small side trail to a large glacial boulder.

Cross Route 140 and continue on the Midstate Trail to Redemption Rock, a Trustees of Reservations site. Be sure to read the inscription on the rock and visit the information kiosk behind the rock; a QR code is posted that provides links to further information.

To return, retrace your steps along the Midstate Trail or make a loop that includes both trails and some quiet roads. For the loop option,

- After exploring Redemption Rock, walk across the parking area to a small trail through the woods that runs south and parallel to Route. 140. After about 100 yds, cross Route 140 and pick up the trail at the end of the guardrail directly across the road. Follow this trail through the woods, which brings you out to a dirt road.

- Bear right on the dirt road, which leads to Rocky Pond Road, a quiet residential road. Follow this road to the left as it leads to Route 31. Rocky Pond Road continues on the other side of Route 31 where a parking area leads into the trails of Leominster State Forest.
- From the parking area, take Sawyer Run trail which goes through the woods, parallel to Route 31. Take a left turn at the first trail junction to return to the Ledges parking area.

Other Options to Consider:

At the point of intersection of the Ledges Trail and the Midstate Trail you are at the base of the Crow Hill cliffs. There are options to walk along the base of the cliffs (impressive in how massive they are, and you can see icicles in the winter or the rock climbers in the summer) and/or to follow the yellow blazes and Midstate Trail up the steep rocky slope to the top of the cliffs. This part of the trail requires a short scramble over boulders. There is a wonderful rocky view area a few hundred yards along the Midstate Trail at the top of the cliffs with views of Leominster State Forest, Monoosnoc range and Crow Hill and Paradise Ponds.

At Redemption Rock, there is a small trail around the back of the Rock and to the northwest that leads down to Wachusett Pond (about a half mile), where the village of Everettville, a stop of the Underground Railroad, was located. A burial crypt can be seen shortly after crossing a small stream on the way through.

Historical Notes:

Redemption Rock is a colonial-era historic site in Princeton, Massachusetts. In 1676, during King Philip's War, the release of Mary Rowlandson from her Native American captors was negotiated atop this granite ledge (see the link above).

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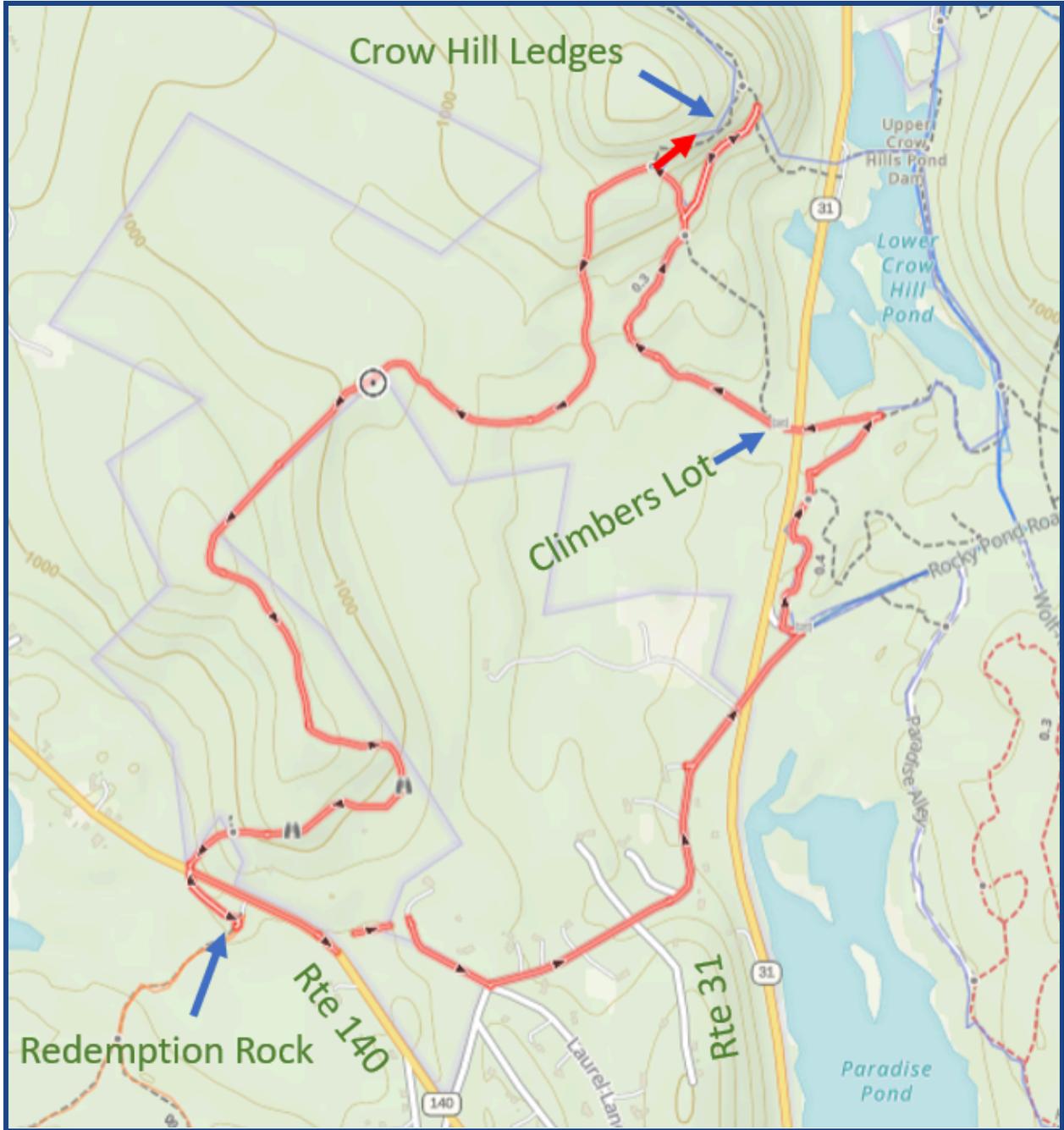
Trailhead



Redemption Rock History
Download



Leominster State Forest
Trailforks Map



Four Corners

HIKE NAME: Four Corners Loop **DISTANCE:** 2.5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. At the kiosk just south of the Gates Road intersection with Thompson/Old Colony Road. There is parking at the edge of the field.

<https://goo.gl/maps/BTjVSFfnTvBEgjzV9>

Hike Description: This is a lovely hike that includes open fields, woodland, road walking and a lovely view of the Ware River and watershed area. Total elevation gain is 200 feet.

Links: [Four Corners Kiosk](#)

Hike Details: The loop can be taken clockwise or counterclockwise. This description will follow the clockwise route. From the kiosk at Gates Road, take the trail across the field to the west. Follow the trail along the edge of the field, turning left and staying along the edge of the field. From this portion of the trail be sure to turn around to see the view of the windmills and Wachusett Mountain.

Enter the woods on the left of the field and follow the Midstate Trail's yellow triangular blazes. The trail passes some vernal pools, a hemlock grove and mixed hardwood forest. The trail begins to follow the edge of the Ware River and comes out of the woods at a gravel road. Turn left and go to the bridge that crosses the Ware river. There are wonderful views of the wetlands and marsh to the north as well as the river to the south of the bridge.

From the bridge, head back to the east along the gravel road. This eventually turns into a quiet, paved road, Old Colony Road. Take Old Colony to the intersection with Gates Road (note the historical marker at the crossroads). Turn right onto Gates Rd, and back to the parking area.

Other Options to Consider:

From the bridge over the Ware river an additional loop can be added that follows some quiet roads. Head briefly west and then follow the road to the south along the river, over the railroad tracks and past some houses. Continue straight on the paved road rather than cross the bridge to Route 62. The paved road turns to the right and passes some swampy land on the left and forest until it ends at Lamphere Road in Hubbardston. Turning right and Lamphere Road will reconnect you with Old Colony Road at the Ware River Bridge.

Another option is to follow Old Colony Road crossing the Ware river at Route 62/Hubbardston Road. Follow the Midstate Trail across Route 62 and up the hill on Old Colony Road extension where the Midstate Trail continues into the Savage Hill Wildlife Management Area.

Another hiking option is to walk south along Gates Road from the kiosk, following the Midstate Trail yellow triangle blazes. Turn left onto Goodnow Road, which is an unpaved closed town road that leads to part of the Wachusett Meadow Audubon Sanctuary where there are many trails to explore.

In addition, there is an informal trail that connects the Midstate Trail to Old Colony Road just after you enter the woods from the field. This route can be used to avoid road walking around the corner from Old Colony Road onto Gates Road, where car traffic can be busy at times.

Historical Notes:

This land was conserved in the early 2000s by a group that included the Town of Princeton, Princeton Land Trust, Mass Audubon, DCR, and others. The 168-acre total lot has been largely left undeveloped, with fields retained for farming by the town and leased to a local farmer.

Long closed to car traffic, Goodnow Road was once a route for stagecoaches on their way from Templeton to Boston. Large stone walls on both sides of the road and many impressive birch trees can be seen along the route.

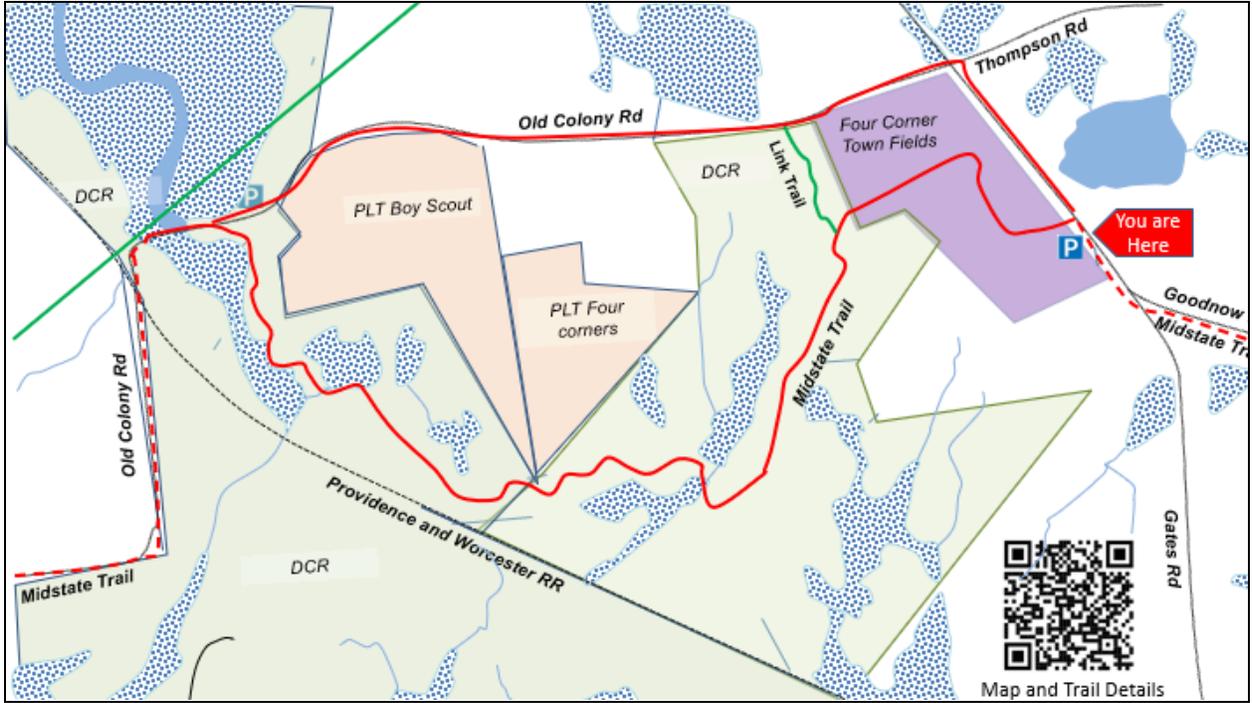
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Trailhead



Kiosk and Map PDF download



LSF Wolf Den Loop

HIKE NAME: LSF Wolf Den Loop **DISTANCE:** 4 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles. Hiking, trail bikes, x-country skiing and dogs are allowed

Trailhead: Princeton. Park at the Rocky Pond parking area of Leominster State Forest along the east side of Rt. 31. <https://goo.gl/maps/i4XVR6Y9g8su7Rfj6>

Hike Description: This is a loop that follows both gravel roads and woodland trails and brings you past Paradise Pond to the extensive rocky cliffs called Wolf Den Hill. It explores the area to the south of Wolf Den Hill, an extension of the cliffs and ledges. Total elevation gain is 300 feet.

Links: [LSF Trail Map](#)

Hike Details: From the Rocky Pond parking area take the gravel Rocky Pond road to Paradise Alley on your right.

Paradise Alley follows along the east side of the pond. There are numerous side access points to the pond. Paradise Alley ends at King Tut's Highway.

Turn left onto King Tut's highway, another dirt and gravel road. Follow King Tut's Highway up the hill and there will be a small trail on the right with signage for Wolf Den Trail. Take that right onto Wolf Den Trail. The trail will split, with Wolf Den Trail (left) going up and over the ledges, and the other (right) walking along the bottom of the ledges. Stay on Wolf Den Trail to the left. This trail climbs and curves through the woods, ending at Wolf Rock Road.

Turn right onto Wolf Rock Rd. to a trail on the right, informally marked "2149" with spray paint. Take this trail due south through the woods until you reach a trail that heads to your right and is marked with pink trail markers. Turn right and follow the pink trail markers. This trail will take you up and down the rocky outcroppings and cliffs that extend from Wolf Den Hill, eventually bringing you to the base of Wolf Den Hill and, ultimately, back to King Tut's Highway.

From there you can go left to return to the parking area via Paradise Alley, or turn right, taking King Tut's Highway out to Wolf Rock Road, turning left onto Wolf Rock Road and Rocky Pond Road back to the parking area.

Due to the many small trails in this area, it is recommended to use a phone GPS app to watch where you are going!

Other Options to Consider:

The Wolf Den area can also be accessed from a small parking lot on Rt. 31, just north of the intersection of Rt. 140 and Rt. 31. From the parking area follow the trail along the southern edge of Paradise Pond, over the bridge and over an odd astroturf spillway. Follow this trail until it ends

at Old Country Road. Turn left onto Old Country Road until it intersects with King Tut's Highway on the left. Turn left onto King Tut's Highway, over a small bridge and up a slight rocky rise in the gravel road. Shortly after this rise is a small, poorly marked trail to the right (there is a sign for King Tut's Highway on the left directly across from this small trail). Take the trail to the right that will bring you to the base of Wolf Rock Hill. If you miss this small trail, just continue on King Tut's Highway and it will intersect with Wolf Den Trail.

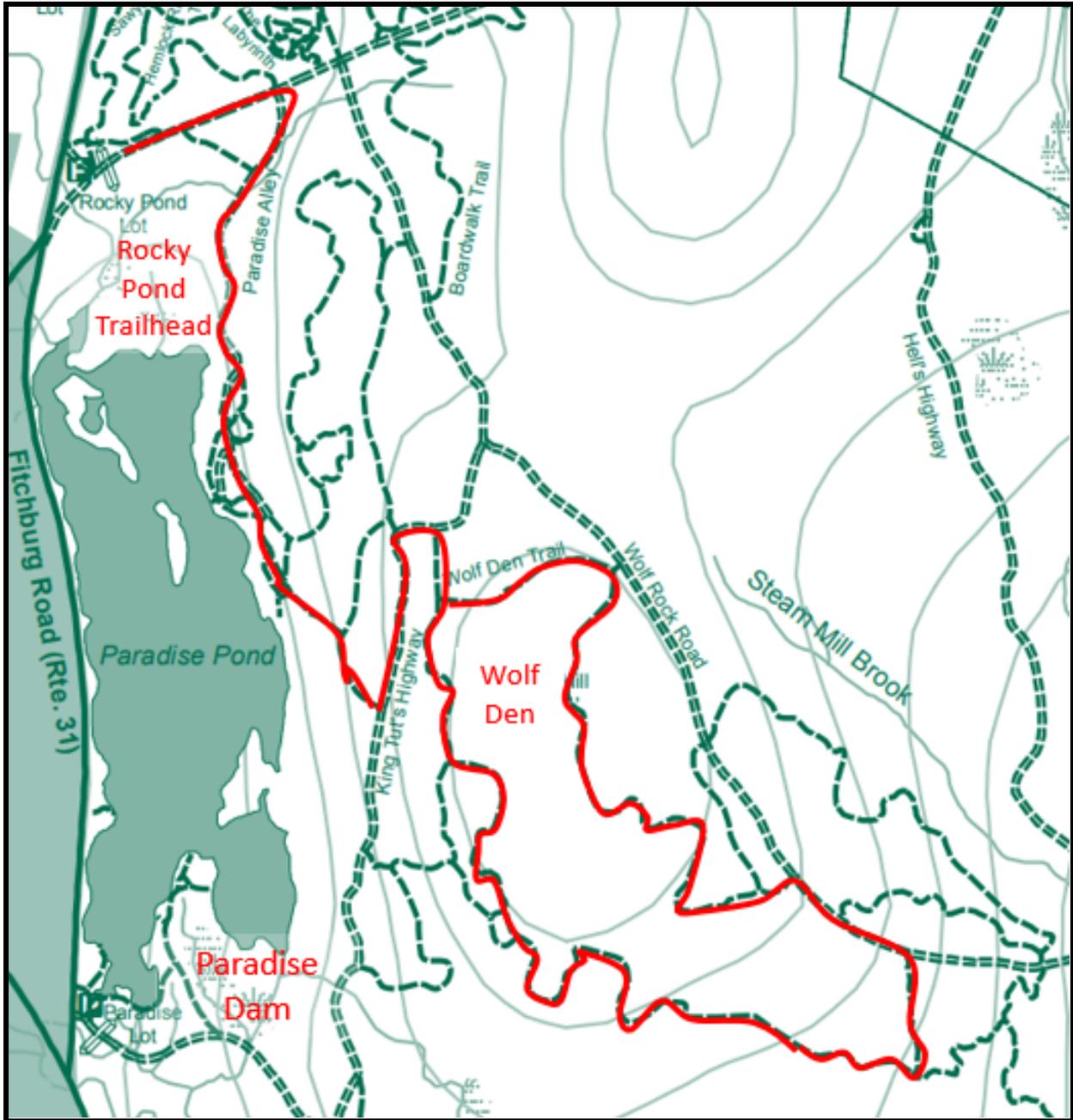
Rev 1/24



Trailhead



Map PDF Download



LSF Ball Hill Loop

HIKE NAME: Ball Hill Loop **DISTANCE:** 4.5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. Leominster State Forest, Rocky Pond Road Trailhead.

<https://goo.gl/maps/i4XVR6Y9g8su7Rfj6>

Hike Description: Hike out along the pretty Crow Hill Ponds and then climb and loop around Ball Hill (no view). Continue east to loop around Rocky Pond, and return along Rocky Pond Road. There are several witness stones along the route which are interesting to check out. Total elevation is 1000 feet.

Links: [DCR Trail Map](#)

Hike Details:

Starting at Rocky Pond Trailhead, walk out the gravel Rocky Pond Road until the intersection with Wolf Rock Trail.

Turn left and follow Wolf Rock Trail past the Crow Hill Ponds and the causeway between the two ponds. Consider stopping over to the picnic area (with restrooms at times). This is also an alternate trailhead in the winter when the gates are open.

At the swim area parking lot, turn right onto Ball Hill Trail. Ascend Ball Hill. Consider bushwacking to the first witness stone near the top of Ball Hill. Red Oak Trail (see map. It is down along the stone wall, where it intersects with another stone wall, just off the Berry Hill Trail)

Turn left on Red Oak Trail and follow it to the second intersection with the Ball Hill Trail (Red Oak Trail continues straight). This is a pretty trail over the hill and through a pine forest.

Return on Ball Hill Trail along the Leominster-Westminster Line, a long stone wall, and ascend to the top of Ball Hill. Then proceed to the intersection with Rocky Pond Trail.

Turn left on Rocky Pond Trail and descend to Rocky Pond. This trail can be wet/muddy at times, and is somewhat rocky, particularly along the back of Muddy Pond. But there are some nice views of Rocky Pond.

Turn right after the pond onto Fenton Road, and then take a second right onto Parmenter / Rocky Pond Road. There is a boat launch area that can be used off Fenton Road to get to the water.

Follow the gravel Rocky Pond Road back to the starting point. Check out the witness stones along the way (on the right).

Other Options to Consider:

A slightly longer hike can be made by taking the Sawyer Run Trail out of the Rocky Pond Trailhead, which winds around the pine trees on the south end of the Crow Hill Ponds.

The hike can easily be shortened by cutting out the loop down Red Oak Trail (instead, stay on Ball Hill Trail) or cutting out Rocky Pond by taking the Limbo Trail, just before Rocky Pond.

A half mile can be added to the hike by taking the Black Bear Trail instead of the Ball Hill Trail. Then loop back via Red Oak to Ball Hill or on Fenton Road directly to Rocky Pond.

Historical Notes:

Boundary Stones, or Witness Stones: In the 1700s, Massachusetts law required towns to construct and maintain stone markers to designate boundaries with neighboring towns. This civic task, which was required to be performed regularly by elected town officials, was referred to as “perambulation.” These stones were generally placed where the town lines change orientation. In Princeton there are around 25 stones still known to exist, five of which can be seen along this route. You will notice years painted or chiseled into the stones going back to the 1800s. With a good GPS it is easy to locate the stones.

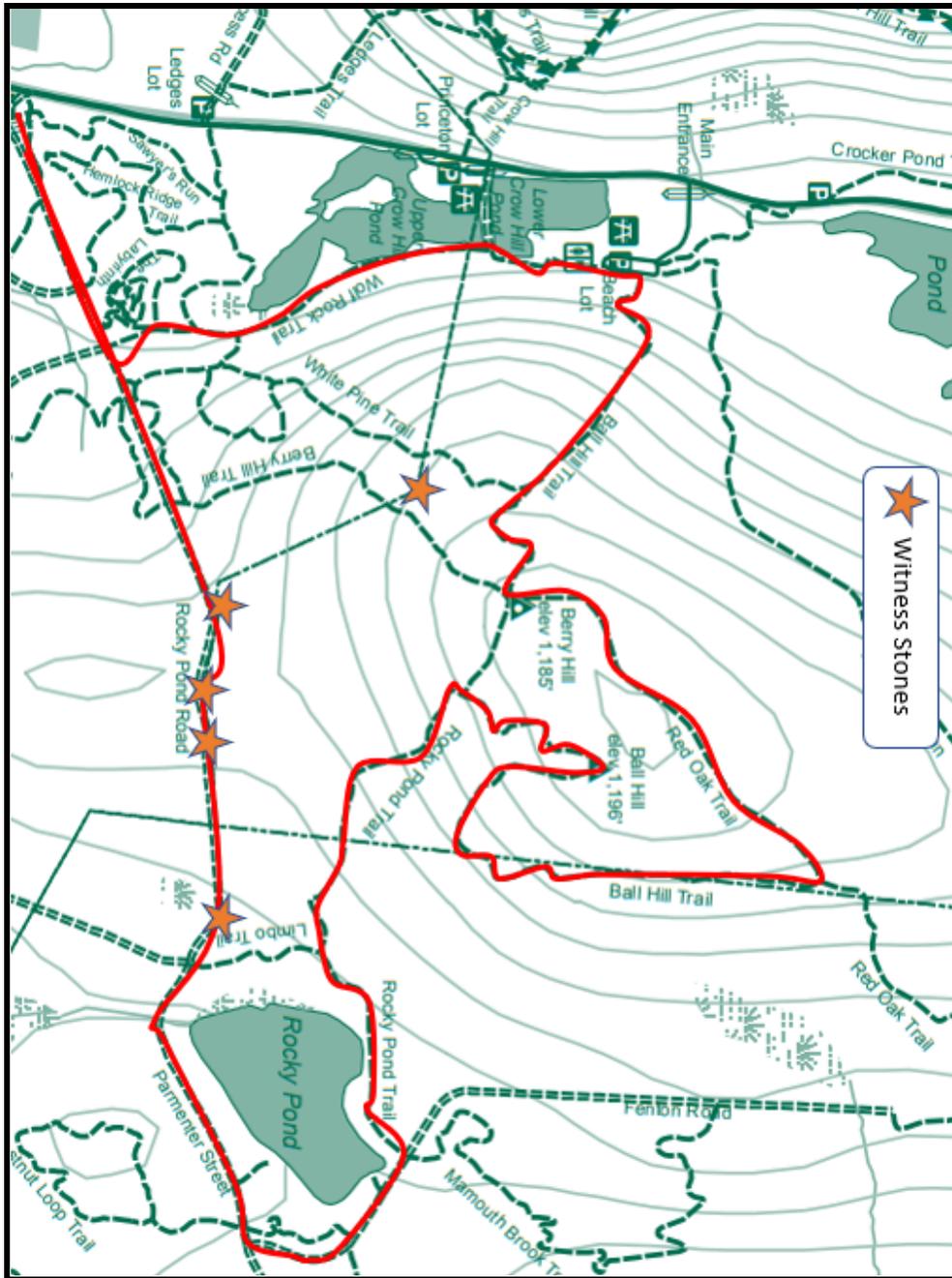
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Trailhead



Map PDF Download



LSF Crow Hill North

HIKE NAME: Leominster State Forest Crow Hills North Loop **DISTANCE:** 3.5 Miles
DIFFICULTY: Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Rocky Pond Trailhead, which is just north of Paradise Pond on the right, off Route 31. This is a large parking lot with room for 20 or so cars.

<https://goo.gl/maps/i4XVR6Y9g8su7Rfj6>

Hike Description: This hike goes to the base of the impressive Crow Hill Ledges (yellow star on map), a favorite rock climbing destination. It then goes over the top of the ledges and then over South and North Crow hills before descending back to the LSF swimming area, and continuing along the Crow Hill Ponds back to the Rocky Pond Trailhead. There are some very nice views along the top of the cliffs. There is one steep rock scramble when ascending the cliffs, and is briefly steep when coming down after summitting North Crow Hill. The hike can be slippery in the fall when the oak leaves coat the trail. Total elevation gain is 650 feet.

Links: [LSF Trail Map](#)

Hike Details:

From the Rocky Pond Parking Lot, take the Sawyer Run trail closest to route 31 North, which enters into a pine forest.

A quarter mile in, before reaching the Crow Hill Ponds, take a sharp left to go down to Route 31, and cross the road to the climbers parking lot. Take the access road (a gravel road) up the hill and proceed along the trail to the bottom of the cliffs. This is a great photo spot and often climbers can be observed scaling the cliffs..

Reverse direction and make your way around to the south/west of the cliffs, and then pick up the Midstate Trail to the north, a sharp right hand turn.

The Midstate Trail goes sharply uphill at this point, scrambling over rocks for a few hundred feet before leveling out at the top of the cliff and bearing right to the cliff side of South Crow Hill. There is a lovely view at this point over Leominster State Forest, with some open rocks that are great for a snack or picnic.

Continue north on the Midstate Trail, passing over North Crow Hill, where there are some nice icicle spots in the winter. Then descend on the far side of North Crow Hill. This area can be slippery in the fall.

Make a sharp right turn onto Old Indian Trail and descend back to Route 31

Cross Route 31 and go slightly to the right, then climb over the barrier to pick up the Crocker Pond Trail. This crosses a brook on a small bridge and then winds its way up to the swimming area parking lot. It can be wet in the spring.

Continue across the parking lot to the south, and pick up the Wolf Rock Trail which skirts the pretty Crow Hill Ponds and returns to Rocky Pond Road. Turn right at that point to return to the Rocky Pond trailhead.

Other Options to Consider:

A shorter option of the hike is to start at the Crow Hill Trail, which is across the street from the Princeton Lot parking area (right at the town line on route 31). This is a steep trail and the area up by the cliffs can be quite rough but saves close to a mile on the total hike. This parking area is closed in the summertime when the swimming area is open.

Historical Notes:

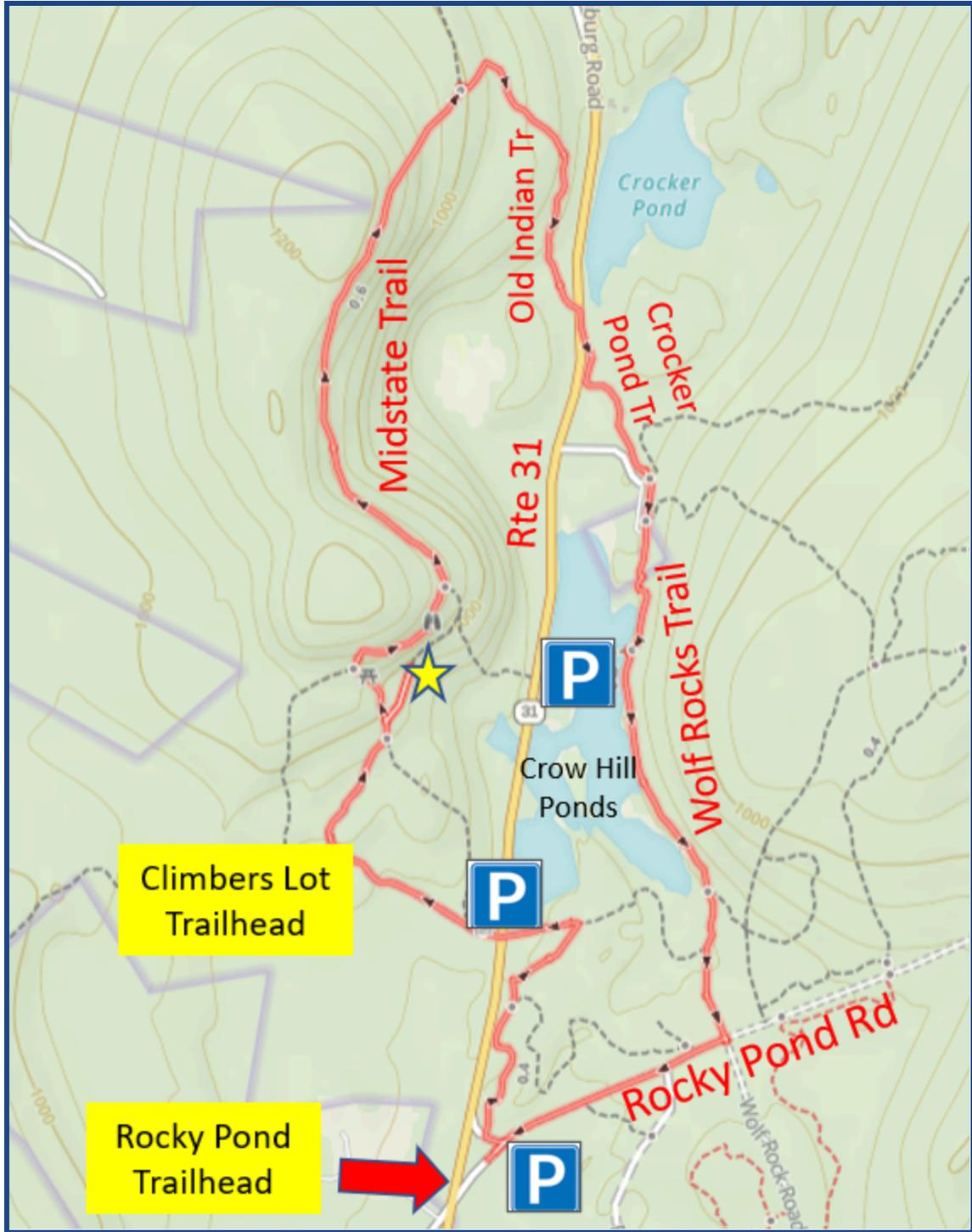
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Trailhead



Map Download



LSF Hillbilly Heaven

HIKE NAME: Leominster State Forest Hillbilly Heaven Trail **DISTANCE:** 4.5 Miles

Difficulty: Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles. Trail bikes and dogs are allowed in Leominster State Forest.

Trailhead: Sterling. Take 140 North toward East Princeton, and turn right onto Leominster Road just before East Princeton Village. Follow the road about a mile and turn left after the pond onto Lucas Rd. Turn right at the turn to go up Justice Hill Road for a hundred feet or so. Park at the Justice Hill Trailhead gate. Please do not block the gate.

<https://goo.gl/maps/soxFL3sYR1GB28xz9>

Description: This area in the southeast section of Leominster State Forest is an interesting level hike through the woods. The trails are mainly maintained by the local mountain biking club and lack blazes and signage. The loop has a number of small ups and downs passing by several bodies of water.

Links: [Leominster State Forest Map on Trailforks](#)

Hike Details:

Enter through the gate and follow the trail, bearing left at two small trail intersections, up to its intersection with Bartlett Road.

Hillbilly Heaven is straight across and is a well-used, but little marked foot trail through a mostly pine forest. It goes over several bridges and past water pools, but is relatively dry year-round. Follow the trail mainly uphill until you reach an intersection with a connecting trail on the left. Stay straight and continue a little further on Hillbilly Heaven which snakes its way around to the intersection with Wolf Rock Road.

Take a right onto Wolf Rock which is a gravel road and follow it a short way to the intersection with Hell's Highway. Take a right onto Hell's Highway and follow it until it turns into Bartlett Rd.

The Brook Trail is a small trail to the left off Bartlett Road which meanders along a pretty brook and returns to the original trail and the gate. If you miss that turn, you will end up at the Bartlett Road and Hillbilly Heaven intersection, turn left to return to the gate

Other Options to Consider:

Just before hitting Wolf Rock Road, a small path goes off to the left and heads out to the Wolf Den rock formation, making a longer 6-7 mile loop. See green line in map. This trail is not well marked, so use of a GPS will make the hike much easier.

After reaching Wolf Rock Road, just to the right and across are two trails, Frick and Frack, which both provide short loops to the north and back to meet up with Wolf Rock.

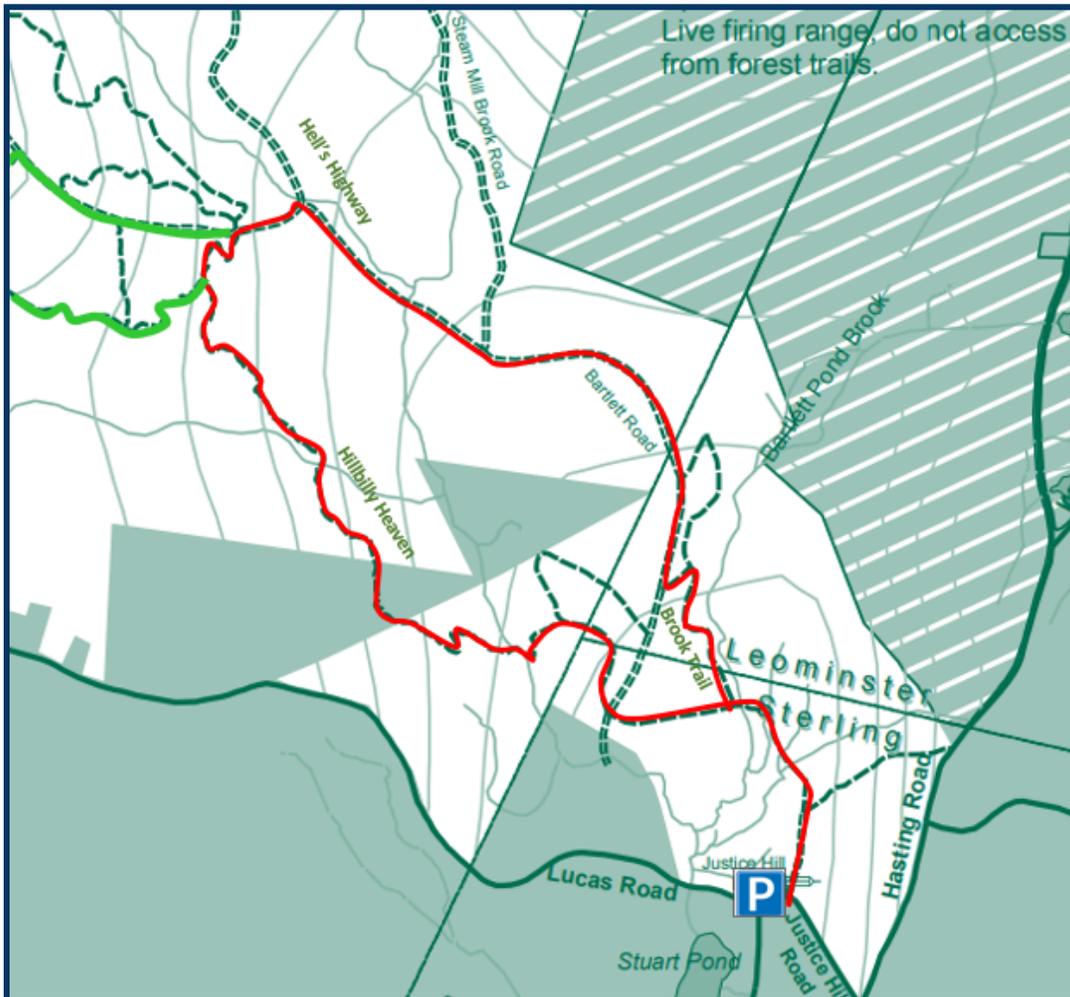
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Trailhead



Trailforks Interactive LSF Map



LSF Notown Reservoir

HIKE NAME: LSF Notown Reservoir **DISTANCE:** 4.1 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy-Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Parmenter Road Trailhead, near 1000 Elm St in Leominster. This is a large parking area. Parmenter Road is a gravel road that cuts east-west across Leominster State Forest and turns into Rocky Pond Road in Princeton. It is gated and closed to vehicles.

<https://goo.gl/maps/7FbtH15xtGNqzXgd8>

Hike Description: This is a fairly level walk along gravel roads and wood paths up to the south end of Notown Reservoir. There is a lovely view from this spot, and the Princeton Hikes group has observed a bald eagle. The trail can be wet year-round. It is a great snowshoe or cross country ski route. Total elevation is 400 feet.

It is useful to track progress on a GPS App in Leominster State Forest because of the number of trails. Signage has been improved recently but not all trails are marked. There are many trails and options if you get off the main trails.

Links: [LSF Trail Map](#)

Hike Details:

From the parking lot, proceed through the gate and down the gravel road past two small trails until Split Rock Trail heads off to the right.

Follow Split Rock Trail (which is a bike trail that actually does go through a split rock) until it connects to a larger trail, and turn right. This runs into Notown Trail and proceeds through the woods up to the south end of Notown Reservoir, which can be seen through the trees.

Turn left on an obvious trail that heads to the water for a view. There are some building ruins at this spot that can be explored.

Return down Notown Trail, and turn right on Notown Road. This snakes around through some scenic woods, and eventually connects to the Organism Trail on the left.

Take Organism Trail, which is an interesting bikers trail that is a high and dry trail which winds (and winds) around through a nice forest before exiting near Split Rock Trail.

At that point, take either Split Rock Trail or bear right to return to Parmenter and then left to return to the parking area.

Other Options to Consider:

The Organism Trail can be avoided, or other LSF trails can be used to explore the area just north of Parmenter Road. A slightly longer path can take you out to Rocky Pond (just visible on the left of the map).

Also, the Notown Trail continues beyond the viewpoint up into the Monoosnoc Range. There is a power line not too far from Notown Reservoir which has some higher views.

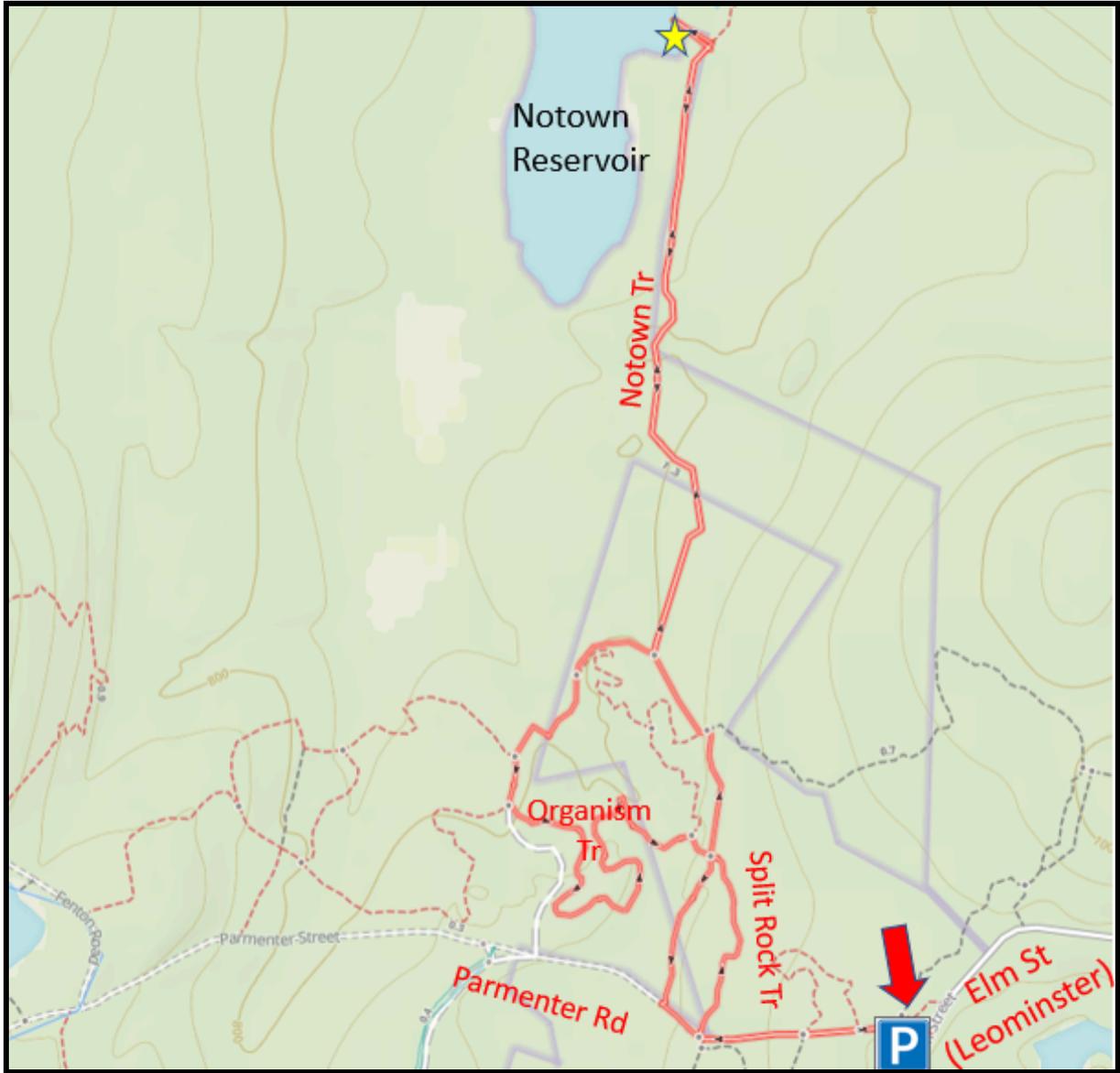
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Trailhead



LSF Map Download



LSF Paradise Pond and Wolf Rocks

HIKE NAME: LSF Paradise Pond Loop **DISTANCE:** 4 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles., Hhiking, trail bikes, x-country skiing and dogs are allowed

Trailhead: Princeton. Park at the Rocky Pond parking area of Leominster State Forest along the east side of Rt. 31. <https://goo.gl/maps/VmKtCUkyvcgKZ9QE6>

Hike Description: This is a loop that follows both gravel roads and woodland trails bringing you past Paradise Pond and down to the dam on the south end. On return, the hike passes over the Wolf Den rocky outcrop. Total elevation gain is 300 feet.

Links: [LSF Trail Map](#)

Hike Details: From the Rocky Pond parking area take the gravel Rocky Pond road to Paradise Alley on your right.

Paradise Alley follows along the east side of the pond. There are numerous side access points to the pond. Paradise Alley continues uphill and ends at King Tut's Highway.

Turn right onto King Tut's highway, another dirt and gravel road. Follow this to Old County Road and bear right to head to the south end of Paradise Pond. Bear right again at the bottom of the hill to pass over a small hill and walk across the dam, a very pretty spot!

Continue past the dam and follow the trail sharply left, returning to Old County Road. Retrace steps up to King Tut's Highway and turn left.

Follow King Tut's Highway up the hill and there will be a small trail on the right. This trail is poorly marked, though there is a sign directly across from the trail identifying King Tut's Highway. Take that to head over to the Wolf Rocks area. The trail will split, with one side going up and over the ledges, and the other avoiding the climb and walking along the bottom of the ledges.

When going over the ledges, stay on the west side of the hill and continue to reconnect with the split trail. Follow this down to the wide gravel road that is King Tut's Highway. Take a right on King Tut's Highway. It will soon intersect with Wolf Rock Road.

Turn left and follow Wolf Rock Road to Rocky Pond Road, then turn left and follow to the parking area.

Other Options to Consider:

To extend the exploration of the area and lengthen the hike, from the south end of the Wolf Den rock outcrop, take a right and follow the N.A.D.S trail out to Wolf Rock Road. Wolf Den Trail can also be taken back off the main gravel road (see map).

This hike can also be reversed, starting from the south end of Paradise Pond, a smaller parking area off route 31 near the intersection with Rte 140.

There are many trails in Leominster State Forest, though trail markings are more scarce in the south area of the forest. It is worthwhile to have a GPS app or a compass and a map.

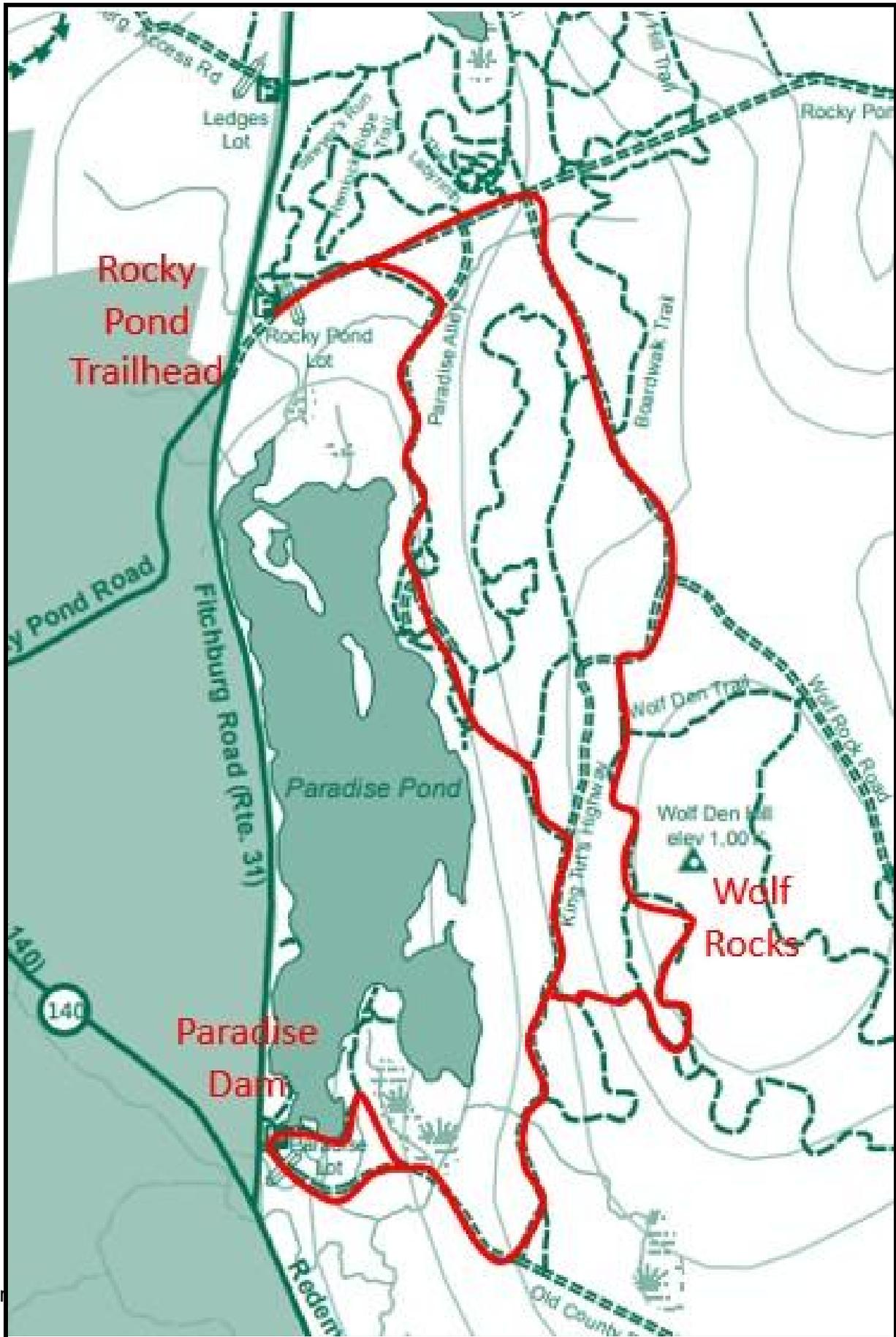
Rev 2/2024



Trailhead



LSF Trail Map Download



Little Wachusett Loop (Minns WMA)

HIKE NAME: Little Wachusett (Minns) Loop **DISTANCE:** 4 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. Park at the gate area at Administration Road off Westminster Road, about one mile up from Mountain Road. Princeton's windmills will be visible at the parking area. <https://goo.gl/maps/ayAi3zxf2SSFsBVQ8>

Hike Description:

This is a lovely hike up through Minns Wildlife Area, which encompasses Little Wachusett Mountain. There are no views from the top but there is good blueberry picking in season. There is a 300 foot ascent up the hill near the start of the trail, which includes hikes along Thompson Road and the Midstate Trail.

Links: None

Hike Details:

Walk back on Westminster Road toward Mountain Road for about a half mile. About 200 feet before hitting Mountain Road, the Little Wachusett Trail starts on the south side of the road (not marked). This trail is steep for about a quarter mile, ascending Little Wachusett for about 300 vertical feet. The trail then winds through an semi-open area, crosses a stone wall and heads to the right. Follow the trail out to some rock ledges and low-bush blueberry bushes. This is a good spot to stop for a while!

The descent is via a fine little path that winds through the pine forest. The trail can be difficult to find, but head down off the ledges to the west (you may find a weak red arrow on a rock showing the way). Then descend through the woods to Thompson Road.

Take a right on Thompson Road, which is a gravel road. This goes out through a large beaver pond with views up toward Mount Wachusett and the Windmill Farm, and descends a hill to the Chapman/Dickens/Midstate Trail (yellow triangular blazes). The Midstate Trail goes left to Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow Sanctuary, but you will take it to the right, toward Wachusett Mountain.

The Midstate Trail starts as the Chapman Trail and turns into the Dickens Trail when it leaves Audubon property. The trail runs for about a mile and hits Westminster Road. A right will take you back to the parking area in about a half mile.

Other Options to Consider:

An interesting half mile can be added by crossing Westminster Road onto Harrington Trail , then proceeding through the windmill farm (Purple Line).

It is also possible to park on the side of Westminster Road down near Mountain Road, where the trail heads up the mountain. A shorter loop can be made by turning left on Thompson Road and returning via Mountain Road.

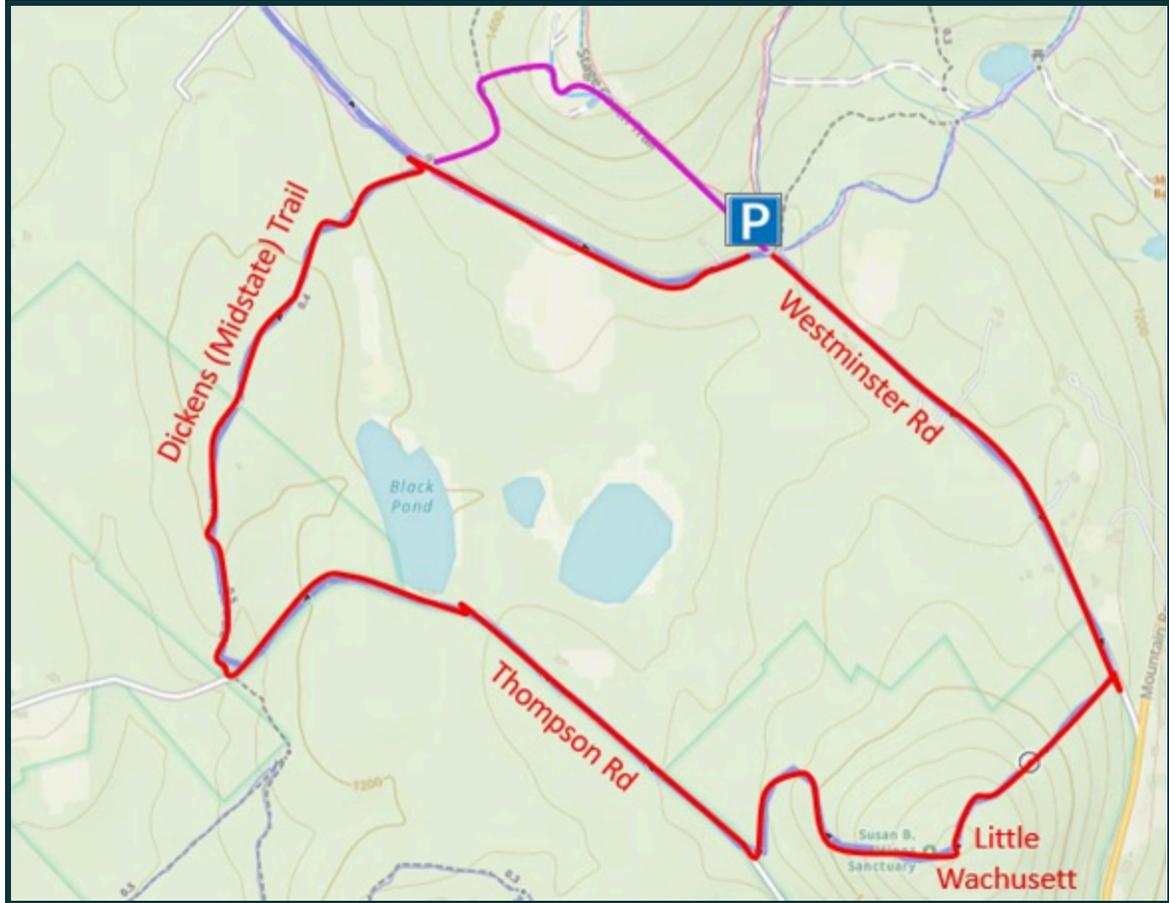
Historical Notes:

Minns Wildlife Management Area (WMA) was one of the first wildlife parks donated to the State of Massachusetts. It was donated by Susan B. Minns, a summer Princeton resident, who was a biologist, philanthropist, and collector, and one of the first women to study at MIT. She was an avid birder, and was very protective of the Little Wachusett Summit, wishing to preserve it for future generations.

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Trailhead



Lovers Lane to Overlook Road

HIKE NAME: Lovers Lane to Overlook Farm **DISTANCE:** 3.5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy-Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. There is a small parking area at the gate at the end of Lovers Lane in western Princeton (off Brooks Station Road). <https://goo.gl/maps/DfvdcT6dvgU6ZSMR8>

Hike Description: This hike is an easy walk with some hills along a gravel road over to Overlook Road in Rutland, and optionally can include a walk through the woods on the Rutland side of the gravel road. Total elevation is 300 feet.

The roads through this area are public roads, however there are signs prohibiting trespassing off the roads onto property owned by the City of Worcester's Department of Public Works.

Links: None

Hike Details:

Passing through the gate, the road turns to gravel and runs down beside the junction of South Wachusett Brook and Cobb Brook to the intersection with Old Mill Road. Old Mill Road originally ran from Ball Hill Road across South Wachusett Brook, past the south end of the Quinapoxet Reservoir and into Rutland. The bridge has long since been removed.

At the bridge abutment, there is a nice view of the reservoir and across the river of some of the residue of the mill that was originally on this site. The area on the other side of the river can be visited from Old Mill Road (off Ball Hill Road) on the Princeton side. This area is a favorite place for birding. There is also a gravel road to the left of the main road that heads a ways along the shore of the reservoir.

This road continues to the right through the forest, and over the train tracks, with a few small hills, before emerging into large fields on Overlook Road in Rutland. At this point the hike reverses direction and returns to the start. Note: this section of rail is still in operation with frequent train usage daily. Other Options to Consider:

There are some undocumented trails on the north (right) side of the gravel road that lead up to the Overlook Farm buildings. With owner permission, a path on the north side leads up to Lilac Hedge Farm.

Historical Notes:

The area on the Overlook Road / Rutland side of the trail was owned by Heifer Project International for many years, providing education in sustainable farming.



Trailhead



Mason Road to Red Fox Farm

HIKE NAME: Mason Road to Red Fox Farm **DISTANCE:** 5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles. No dogs or bikes.

Trailhead: Holden. Drive down Coal Kiln Rd toward Holden (Mason Rd) and past the Mason Farm fields. Use the DCR parking area on the right. <https://goo.gl/maps/5fxtkFGmfW946zY9>

Hike Description: This is a pretty walk up through open field DCR property in Holden up the Princeton “escarpment” to the Red Fox/Hickory Drive area in south Princeton.

This walk is best done in the fall and winter when the field is cut and relatively dry.. It passes over a pretty road to a large uphill field, and then through the woods that are parallel to Oak Circle and Hickory Drive in Princeton. An informal trail then connects to the Red Fox Farm trail system, which also has a public trailhead off route 31. There are a few other trails that can be used to loop around the Red Fox area.

Total elevation is 500 feet.

Links: None

Hike Details:

From the parking area, head into the woods and proceed uphill through a series of pretty, open fields to a stone wall, which is just past the Princeton-Holden line. A wide trail, a popular spot for local residents, proceeds through property owned by the Nimrod Hunting Club.

Watch for the first well-defined trail to the left, and follow it a quarter mile or so until Red Fox Farm trail signs are found. Take the first left onto the Red Fox Loop and follow the trail down to a boulder area. This part of the trail goes along a stone wall and past a recently cleared DCR area...a pretty walk.

At this point, the trail can be followed to the main parking area on route 31, which goes through a pine forest and across two wetland bridges. Or the hiker can continue toward Hickory Drive on the Connector Trail to the Hickory Trail, then turn right to loop back around to the Mason fields. And back to parking.

Because this entire area is used by hunters, hikers need to take precautions during hunting season by wearing bright orange, yellow or red.

Other Options to Consider:

There are several loops that can be explored in the Red Fox area. Hikers can also start from the Red Fox Trailhead in Princeton, making a nice 2 mile hike out through the fields and to Mason Road, and then back.

Princeton Hikes!

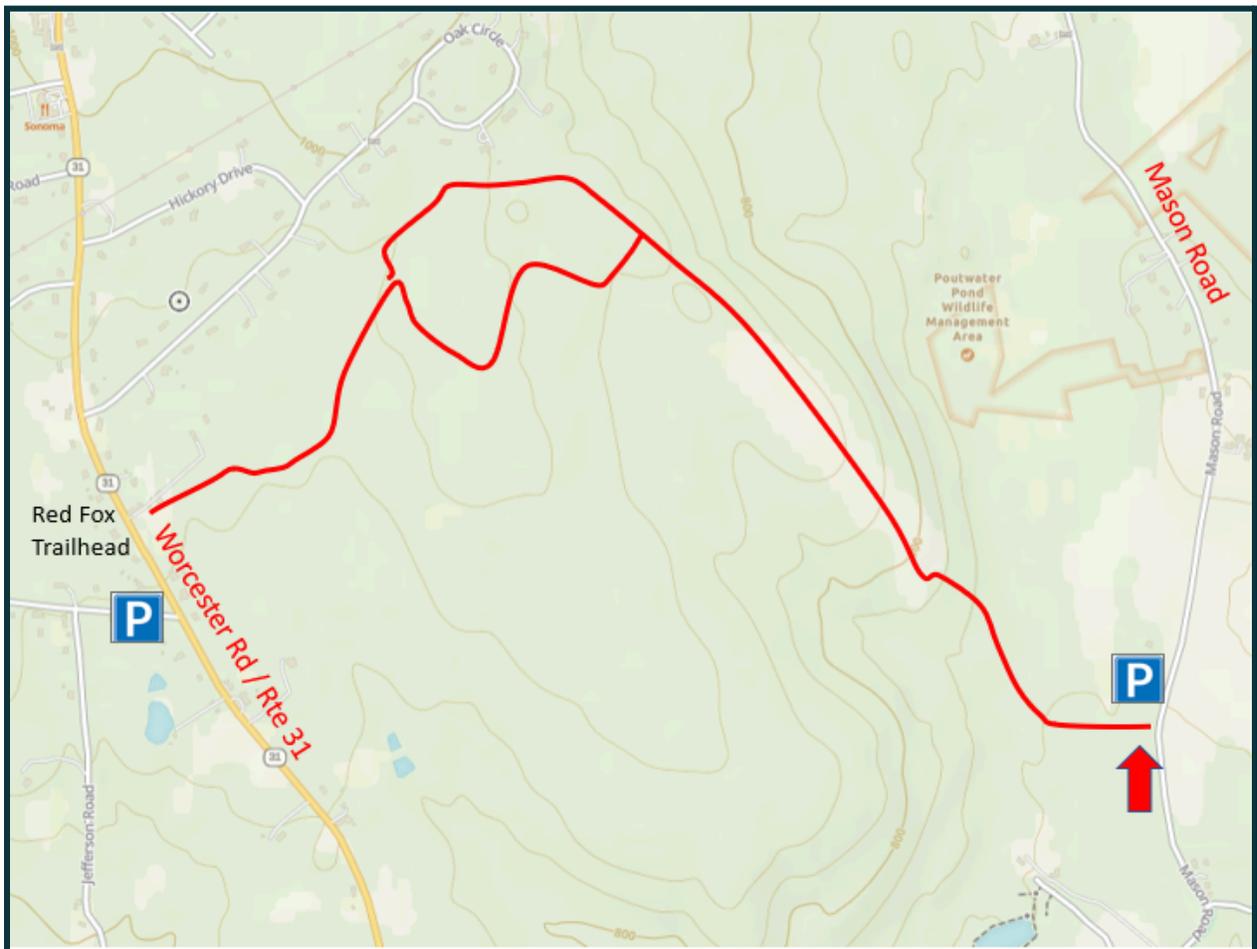
Remember to consider the wetness of the topmost Mason field when making hiking plans!!

Trails on the Princeton side, including Cobb Brook, are also not far from the future Worcester Road trailhead

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Trailhead



Poutwater Pond from Esty Road

HIKE NAME: Poutwater Pond From Esty Road **DISTANCE:** 2.5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles. Dogs and bikes are prohibited.

Trailhead: Princeton. End of Esty Road (south off route 62 toward the Sterling line)

<https://goo.gl/maps/vRwqgP169BaV4rBD9>

Hike Description: Poutwater Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a state Fish and Wildlife park including an isolated bog pond located in Holden, just over the Princeton line. It can be accessed from the end of Esty Road and also from Holden Road in Sterling.

Poutwater Pond is known for its orchids, which bloom in late June. It is also a nice birding spot.

Total elevation is 180 feet.

Links: None

Hike Details:

The easiest route to Poutwater Pond is to start at the end of Esty Road where two gravel roads head south toward Poutwater Pond. Take the road to the right, which leads along a nice pine needle strewn trail. Keep to the left at the first junction to head to Poutwater Pond.

Poutwater Pond is an isolated spot, rich with wildlife and vegetation, and a popular spot for bird watchers. There is a trail leading down to the edge of the pond that skirts the edge for a few dozen feet. During wet weather, much of this area may be under water.

Continue south past the pond for a short walk to Holden Road and the south trailhead. Return via the same route.

Because of the network of dirt roads through this area, a GPS is recommended for this hike. Poutwater Pond may also be accessed from Holden Road in Sterling.

Other Options to Consider:

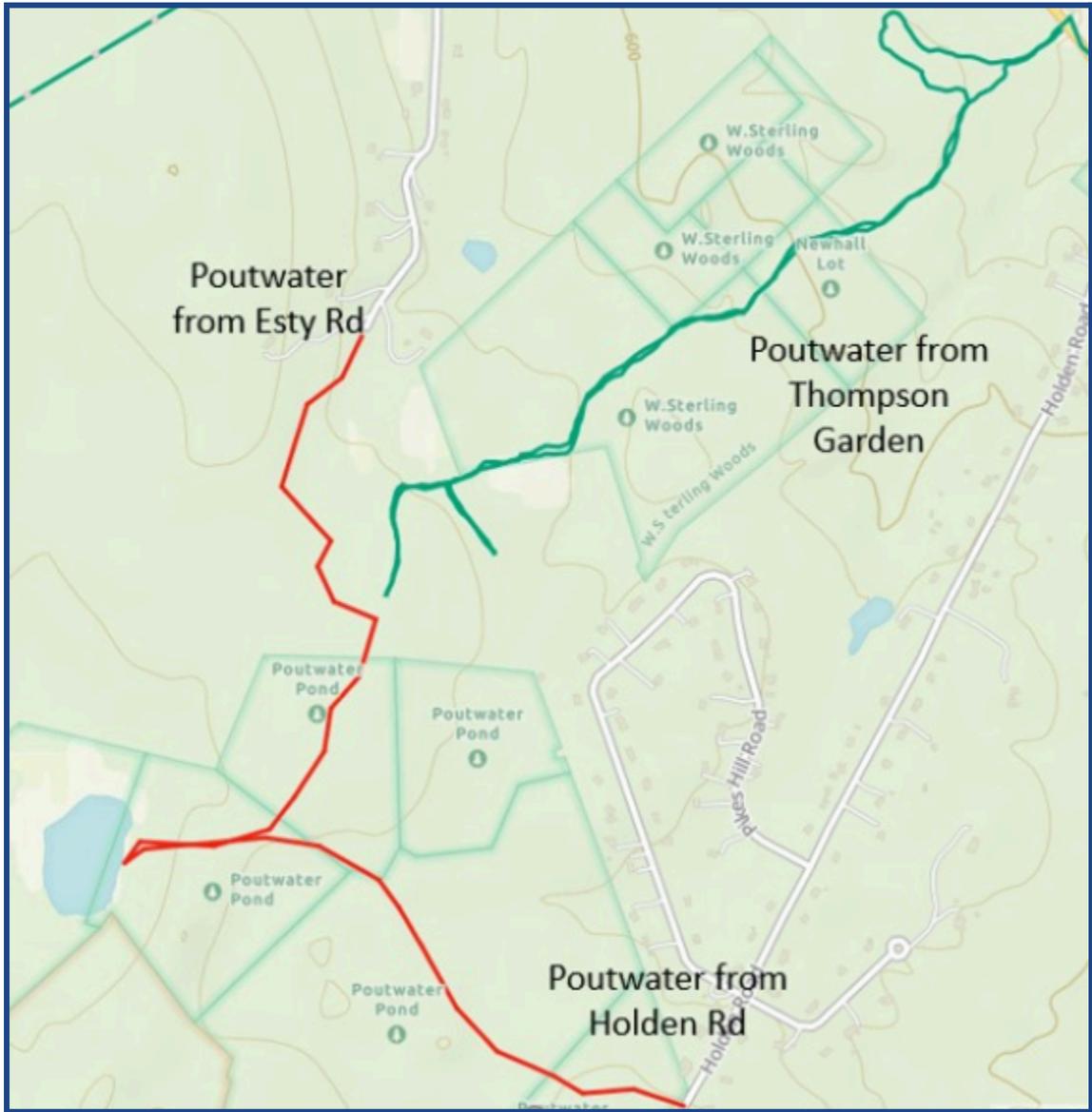
There is a lovely trail heading west to Mason Road (Coal Kiln Road in Princeton) with a marked parking lot at the trailhead. However, the beavers have recently flooded this trail very close to the parking lot. Exploring this trail out and back is a nice added hike after visiting Poutwater Pond. This trail bears to the right just after leaving the pond on the main gravel road.

There is also a path from Thompson Gardens, however it is a bit difficult to find at the start (through the DCR gate, but then a little bushwack to find a gravel road) and it also passes through a large normally unmowed field up toward the main trails. Still an adventure is possible!

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Trailhead



Princeton Land Trust Bullock McElroy

HIKE NAME: PLT Bullock-McElroy Loop **DISTANCE:** 1.1 Miles **DIFFICULTY** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. Bullock Lane, about 200 yards down the lane from Rt. 62. Park in the field. You can also use the trailhead at the Krashes Field parking area. Follow hiking signs to the walking track and then over to the Kiosk. <https://goo.gl/maps/NyCAm1i36c2htJ8q9>

Hike Description: This hike loops around the Bullock-McElroy Princeton Land Trust (PLT) property. It passes over the high esker next to Krashes field and goes through the Bullock and McElroy Fields with a fine view of Mount Wachusett. Total elevation is 153 feet.

These two properties are owned by Princeton Land Trust and were donated for permanent conservation by the Bullock and McElroy families. The Land Trust has pledged to keep the fields cleared to maintain the beauty of the area.

Links: [Bullock McElroy Kiosk](#)

Hike Details:

From the parking area, follow the path through the field to the kiosk, then continue straight down the trail to the second field and then across the field to the stone wall by the forest.

Before the stone wall, bear left and follow the west side of the loop into the woods. The trail winds through a deciduous forest (which can be wet at times). At the next trail junction, take a left through a stone wall, following a pretty broad path down the hill toward Krashes Field.

Continue right around the loop next to Krashes Field and work through the woods (wet at times) and climb the steep side of the Esker. Turn left at the top of the esker to check the view at the end, and then reverse direction and follow the trail back along the top of the esker and gradually down to the forest floor. Notice a large 'basin' on the right as you walk along the esker..

Continue on the loop trail through the woods, turning left at the next trail junction, and return back around to the open field, and continue through the field to the kiosk and the trailhead at Bullock Lane. Turn around at this point at the McElroy dedication stone to get a nice view of Mt. Wachusett.

Other Options to Consider:

Stop by at Krashes Field to enjoy the view of Mt. Wachusett and the playing fields.

The Cary Trail can be used as a spur to walk back over to Merriam Road. With a short road walk back to Bullock Lane, a half mile can be added to the loop. The Cary Trail can be wet at times over a short portion of the path.

The '[Central Princeton Loop](#)' is a five mile trail that visits all three of the Princeton Land Trust properties in the area using the connections to PLT Peabody and Princeton center which show at the bottom of the map.

Historical Notes:

The Esker out by Krashes Field, along with other glacial 'bowls' is a pretty feature, with a high path along the top. The esker and bowls were created about 20,000 years ago when the glaciers plowed through the region. The ice was a mile or two thick at that time.

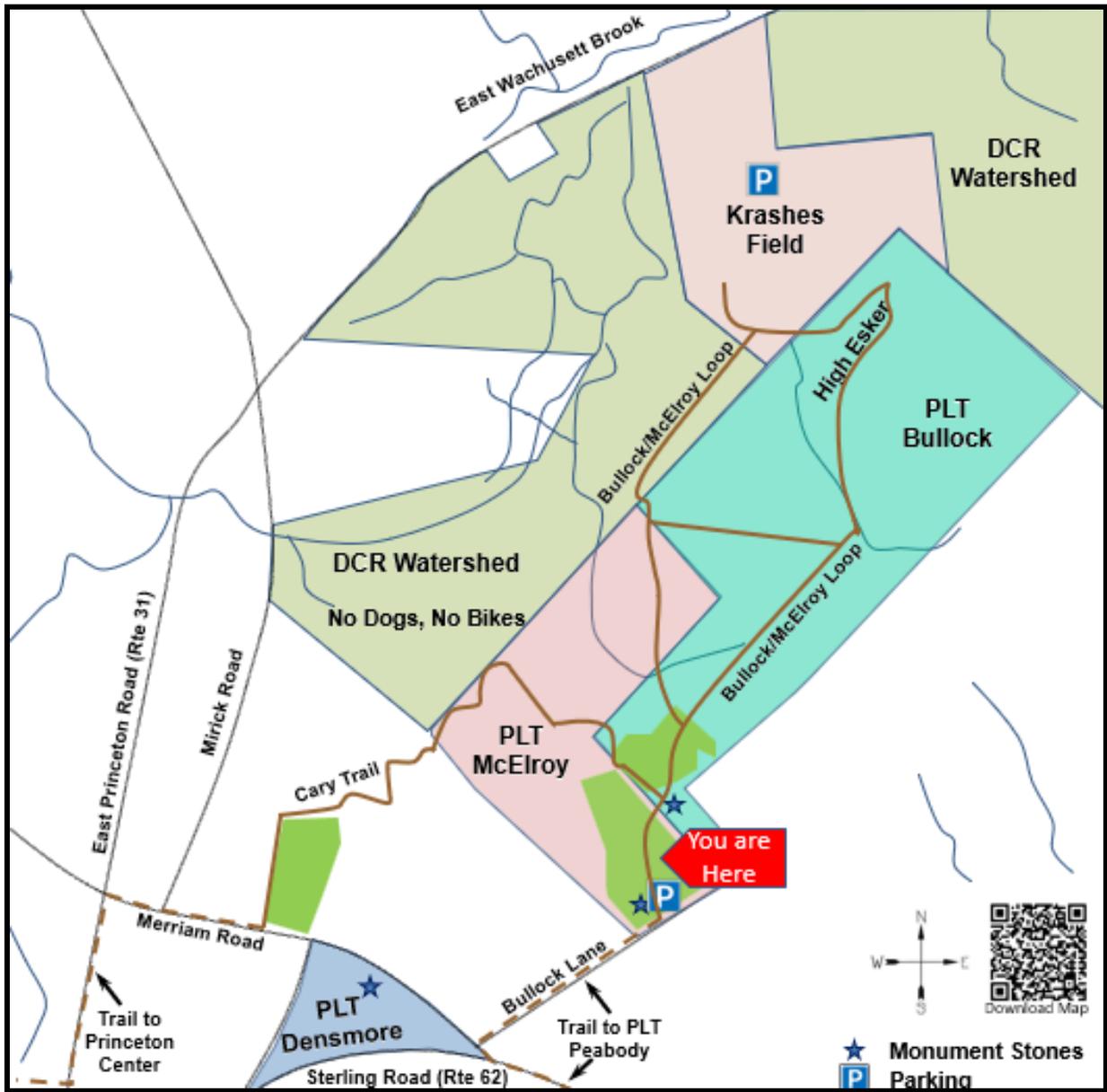
Rev 1/24



Trailhead



Central Princeton Hike



Princeton Land Trust Gregory-Alexander

HIKE NAME: PLT Gregory-Alexander **Distance:** 1 Mile **Difficulty:** Easy

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. There is a small parking area on East Princeton Road (route 31) between Merriam Road and Gregory Hill Road (route 62), near the kiosk. It is also possible to park at the town common and walk down Prospect Street to a smaller kiosk at the top of the property. Elevation gain is less than 100 feet. <https://goo.gl/maps/WoJaXj4ezBkqBZ3VA>

Hike Description: Princeton Land Trust owns two properties in the central area of Princeton, which connect Prospect Street (near the common) with East Princeton Road (Rte 31). Trails have been constructed to allow hiking through this area, and also to connect to the Cary Trail and the PLT Bullock McElroy and Russell Corner trail areas. A five mile 'central Princeton hike' can therefore be made with only a small bit of road walking. Total elevation is 80 feet.

The Gregory-Alexander hike includes a short half-mile loop around the Gregory Property and spurs through the Alexander Property and back up to Prospect Street. There is also a spur trail down to the Gregory Spring and cistern. The trails are rocky but short, and so even though the elevation is slight, hikers going up from East Princeton Road will feel the effort.

Links: [Gregory-Alexander Kiosk](#)

Hike Details:

Starting from the East Princeton Road Kiosk, take the Alexander Trail into the woods and step over the break in the stone wall and onto a trail through a stand of mountain laurel. There is a wet section of trail with stepping stones and then the trail heads up the hill to connect to the Gregory Loop.

At the intersection with the Gregory Loop, take a left and proceed around the top of the loop. This continues on the high side of the property and intersects with the trail coming from Prospect Street. This left-side trail can be taken to walk up to the common if desired.

To continue around the loop, turn right at the intersection, and follow the trail down through the woods until the intersection with the Gregory Springs Spur.

Explore the area by taking a left at this point and going downhill to the Gregory Spring. Return to the main loop and bear left to take the lower part of the loop back to the Gregory Trail.

Return to the trailhead by taking a left on the Alexander Trail.

Other Options to Consider:

The '[Central Princeton Loop](#)' is a five mile trail that visits all three of the Princeton Land Trust properties in the area using the connections to PLT Peabody and PLT Bullock-McElroy from the trailhead on East Princeton Road.

When hiking up from East Princeton Road, consider taking the spur trail up to Prospect Street and walking up to the common. There are some places to buy food on the other side of the common.. Then enjoy the downhill hike back to the trailhead.

This hike can also be done from the trailhead on Prospect Street, starting at Princeton Common (where parking is plentiful!)

Historical Notes:

Gregory Spring is the original water source for the center of Princeton. The spring is still flowing, and pipes from the spring can be found while walking down the trail from Prospect Street.

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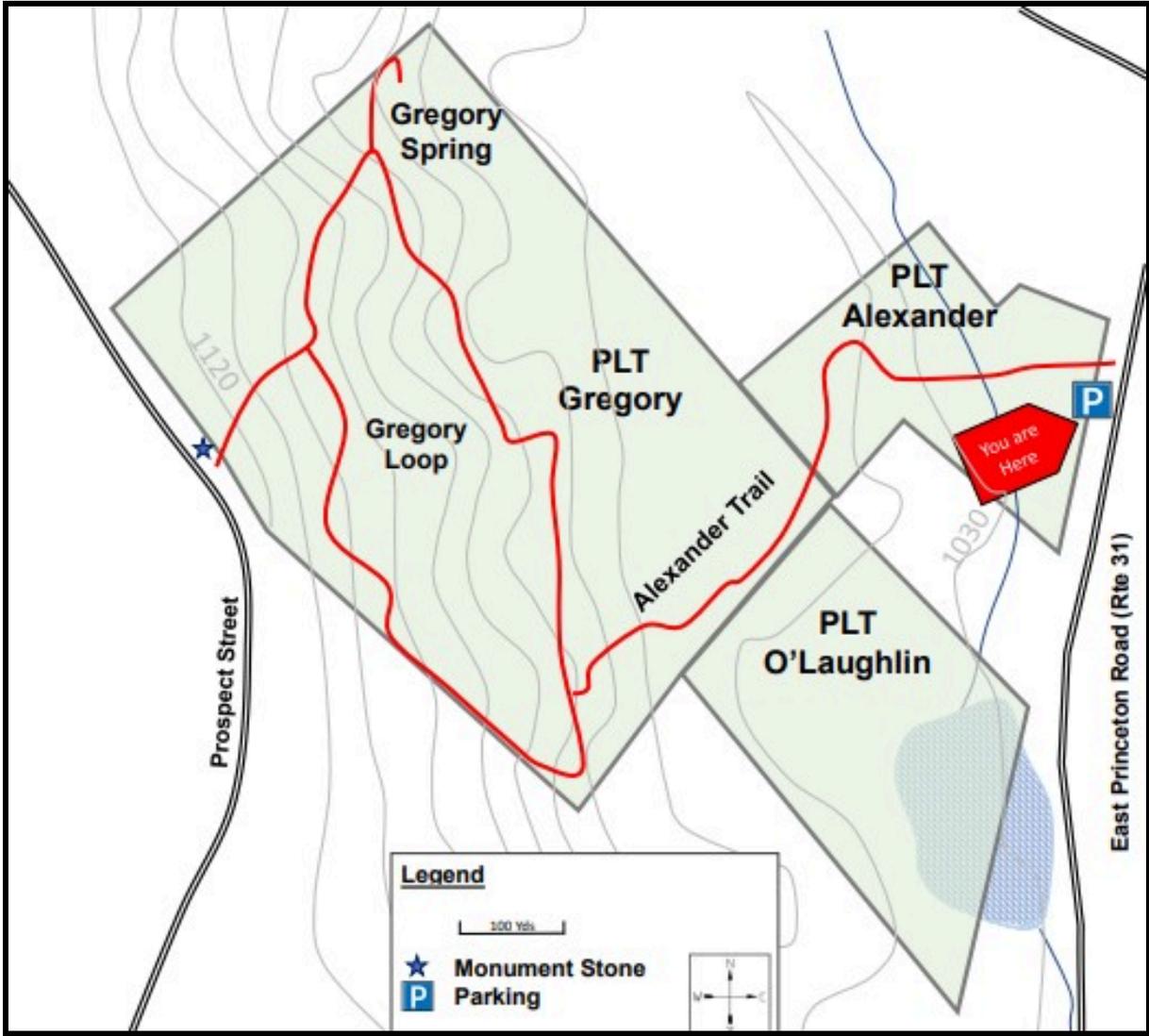
Trailhead



Kiosk PDF Download



Central Princeton Hike



Princeton Land Trust: Krashes to Russell Corner

HIKE NAME: PLT Krashes to Russell Corner Loop **DISTANCE** 3.6 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. Krashes Field parking area. Follow hiking signs to the walking track and then over to the Kiosk. Alternatively the hike can be started at Bullock Lane or at the Russell Corner parking lot on route 62. <https://goo.gl/maps/crsohVvQqFDB4fZcA>

Hike Description: This hike loops around the Bullock-McElroy Princeton Land Trust (PLT) property and then goes across route 62 to tour the Russell Corner Trail area, including the beaver pond at the south end of the property. It passes over the high esker next to Krashes field and goes through the Hall Field, which has a fine view of Princeton Center. Total elevation is 450 feet.

Links: None

Hike Details:

From the kiosk at Krashes Field, follow the path up the hill to hit the Bullock-McElroy Loop Trail. Take a left and work through the woods and climb the steep side of the Esker. Turn left at the top of the esker to check the view at the end, and then reverse direction and follow the trail along the top of the esker, down past the bowl to the forest floor..

Continue on the loop trail through the woods, bearing left at the intersection with the Connector Trail, and then out to the open Bullock field. and Continue through the field to the second kiosk and Bullock Lane. Follow Bullock Lane to Route 62 (Sterling Road) and turn left, then walk down to the Princeton Land Trust Russell Corner parking lot, where a kiosk for that area will be found.

Continue on the Peabody-Metcalf Trail into a new growth forest and then down through the woods to a large open beaver pond with an overlook (Jones Meadow). This is a good spot for birding.

Reversing direction from the overlook, find the trail to the right that heads down to the east end of the pond, to view the beaver dam. This trail can be wet near the dam. Also visible on this side of the pond are some very impressive stone walls, reputedly built by captive British (Scotch-Irish?) soldiers during the revolutionary war.

Return to the main path and turn right to continue on the loop. Instead of continuing on the Peabody-Metcalf Loop at the next intersection, bear left and follow the trails out to the Hall Fields, with pretty views up to Princeton Center.

Cross the fields (these are active hay fields, so stay to the edge near the wall), and exit at the intersection of Route 31/East Princeton Road and Route 62/Gregory Hill Road.

Walk along East Princeton Road to the North (go straight when exiting the field) and then turn right on Merriam Road.

From Merriam, turn left at the edge of the horse field just past Mirick Road, and turn left onto the Cary Trail. Follow the Cary trail through the woods back to the Bullock-McElroy Field Loop trail. Turn left to cross the field, and at the end, bear left to take the westerly side of the loop back to Krashes Field.

Other Options to Consider:

The '[Central Princeton Loop](#)' is a five mile trail that visits all three of the Princeton Land Trust properties in the area using the connections to PLT Gregory-Alexander and PLT Bullock-McElroy. The total hike can be shortened by taking a right from the Peabody-Metcalf trail and following the Poor Family Trail down to Hall Field.

Consider starting the loop at other Parking areas around the PLT properties.

Historical Notes:

The large walls on the east side of Jones Meadow are very impressive, and local legend suggests that they may have been built by captured enemy soldiers working in the area after the battle of Ticonderoga in the Revolutionary war.

The Esker out by Krashes Field, along with other glacial 'bowls' is worth noting. The esker and bowls were created about 20,000 years ago when the glaciers plowed through the region. The ice was a mile or two thick at that time.

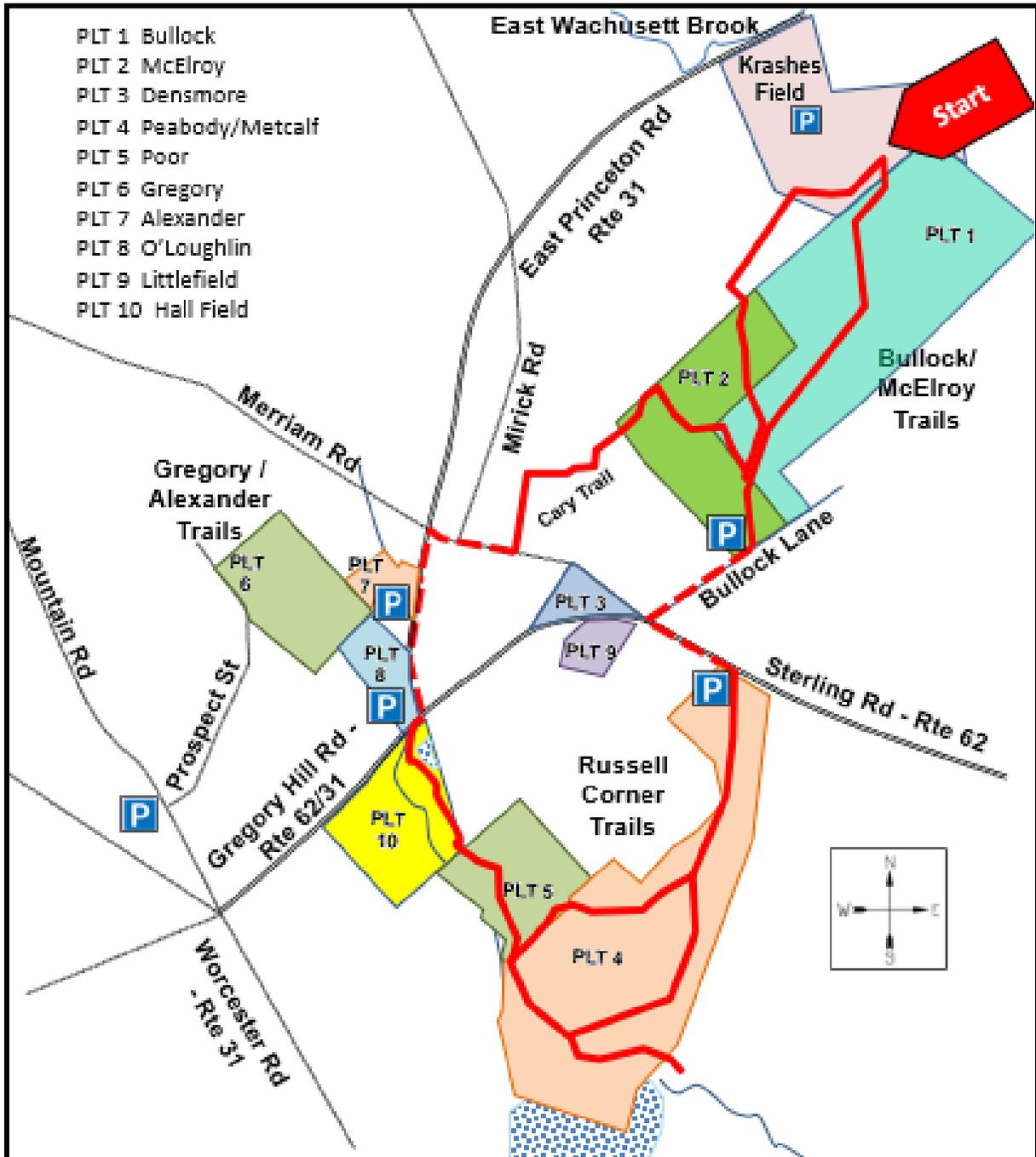
Rev 1/24



Trailhead



Central Princeton Hike



Princeton Land Trust Russell Corner

NAME OF HIKE: Russell Corner Loop

DISTANCE: 2 Miles

DIFFICULTY: Easy

Restrictions: No Motorized Vehicles

Trailhead: From the center of town, take Route 62 east just past Merriam Road. The parking area is on the right (south side of the road) by the Princeton Land Trust sign.

<https://goo.gl/maps/CAV2Z9MgVMA7N9T29>

Trail Description:

A well-used trail through a new growth forest and down to a beaver pond (Jones Meadow), looping back up and around a pine forest. A spur trail at the pond leads over to the beaver dam.

Hike Details:

From the parking lot, follow the blue blazes on the Peabody-Metcalf Loop out through the woods through a new growth wooded area, and then back into the woods. The trail splits, but keep to the left (you will return on the trail to the right).

The trail proceeds down the hill and curves to the right to a stone wall.

Turn left at the stone wall to follow a trail down to the edge of the beaver pond. This path can be followed (a little wet in places) over to the beaver dam. Turn around and return to the main trail.

Continue on the west side of the property up a wide path, following the blue blazes. Turn right to follow the main trail and head up the hill.

The trail proceeds past the Poor Family memorial rock and then joins the original trail. Turn left to return to the parking lot. The 2-mile distance includes the walk to the beaver dam.

Other Trails in the Russell Corner Area:

The hike can be extended by following two additional trails:

- The Poor Family Trail loops from the bottom of the hill around to the dedication stone to meet the main loop.
- The Hall Field Trail goes out to the Hall Field property, with a pretty view of Princeton Center. It makes a nice out and back from the Peabody Loop.

The '[Central Princeton Loop](#)' is a five mile trail that visits all three of the Princeton Land Trust properties in the area using the connections to PLT Gregory-Alexander and PLT Bullock-McElroy.

Historical Notes:

Princeton Hikes!

This hiking area encompasses three Princeton Land Trust Properties:

- Peabody - Metcalf: Donated by descendents of the John and Mary Peabody Family
- Hall Field: Donated by the Bice Family and previously owned by the Charles and Jane Hall Family.
- Poor: Donated by the family of Hustace and Katheryn Poor

Stone walls are a feature of this property. The large walls on the east side of Jones Meadow are very impressive, and local legend suggests that they may have been built by captured enemy soldiers working in the area after the Battle of Ticonderoga in the Revolutionary war. The prisoners also are purported to have built a drainage channel that follows the Peabody-Metcalf Loop on the way down the hill toward the beaver pond.

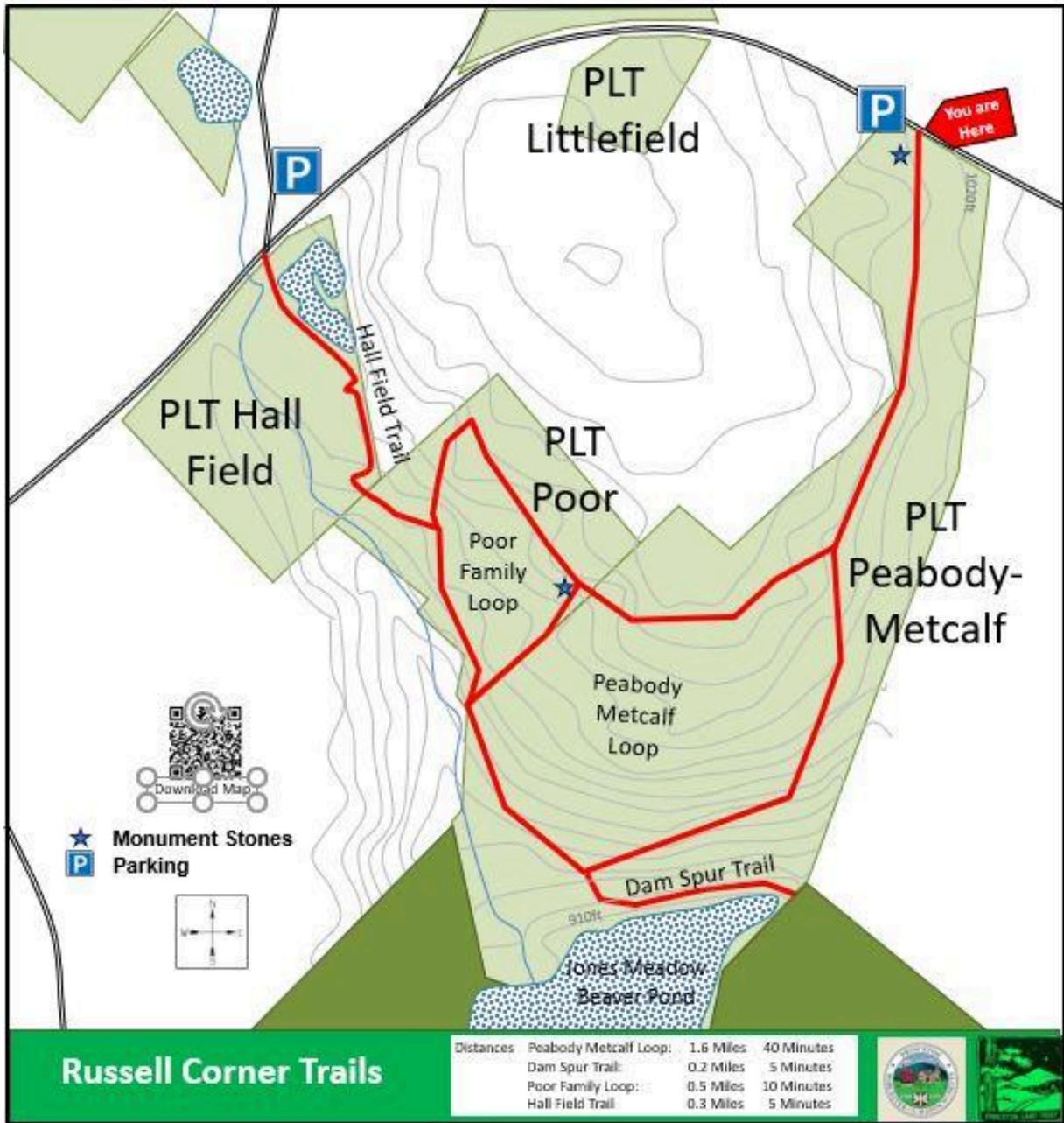
Rev 1/24



Trailhead



Central Princeton Hike



Red Fox Farm Trails

HIKE NAME: Red Fox Farm Trails **DISTANCE:** 1 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Trailhead: Princeton. Park at the corner of Ball Hill Road and Worcester Road (Route 31). The trailhead is on the east side of the road just north of the junction.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/4963ezRKuWoQGAeD8>

Hike Description: This is a flat walk that crosses two wetland areas on private land before entering Princeton Land Trust's Red Fox property. The trail loops south along the property boundary before turning north and then west to complete the loop back. Spur trails connect to trails owned by the Nimrod Hunt Club, which are open for public use. Total elevation of the Red Fox trails is 100 feet.

Links: (None)

Hike Details:

Enter the Red Fox property through the stone wall and follow the trail through the field and around a pine stand.

Cross the wetland and turn right to continue on the trail. This leads to a second wet area with a bridge. Keep to the right to skirt the wetland on the far shore then proceed leftward for a short while until the trail leaves private land and heads into PLT property..

The trail then proceeds to a rocky outcrop, where the loop splits. Follow the trail to the right out to the stone wall separating PLT Red Fox property from DCR property. Follow this until a wider, more established trail is encountered, and then turn back to the left to continue around the loop (or to the right to continue out to thru Nimrod land to the Mason Field.

Other Options to Consider:

Spur trails to the southeast lead through Nimrod and then DCR property down to Mason Road, which is 2.5 miles from the trailhead. This trail goes through a high meadow with some views, and is very pretty in the fall and winter. The field is often quite wet in the spring and may now be mowed until later in the summer.

Also, it is a short (less than .25 mile) walk down Mason Road to the junction with Sterling Road (in Holden). Turn right or left at this junction to find one of two trail heads for Trout Brook Conservation Area that can be reached in less than a quarter mile. The distance from the Red

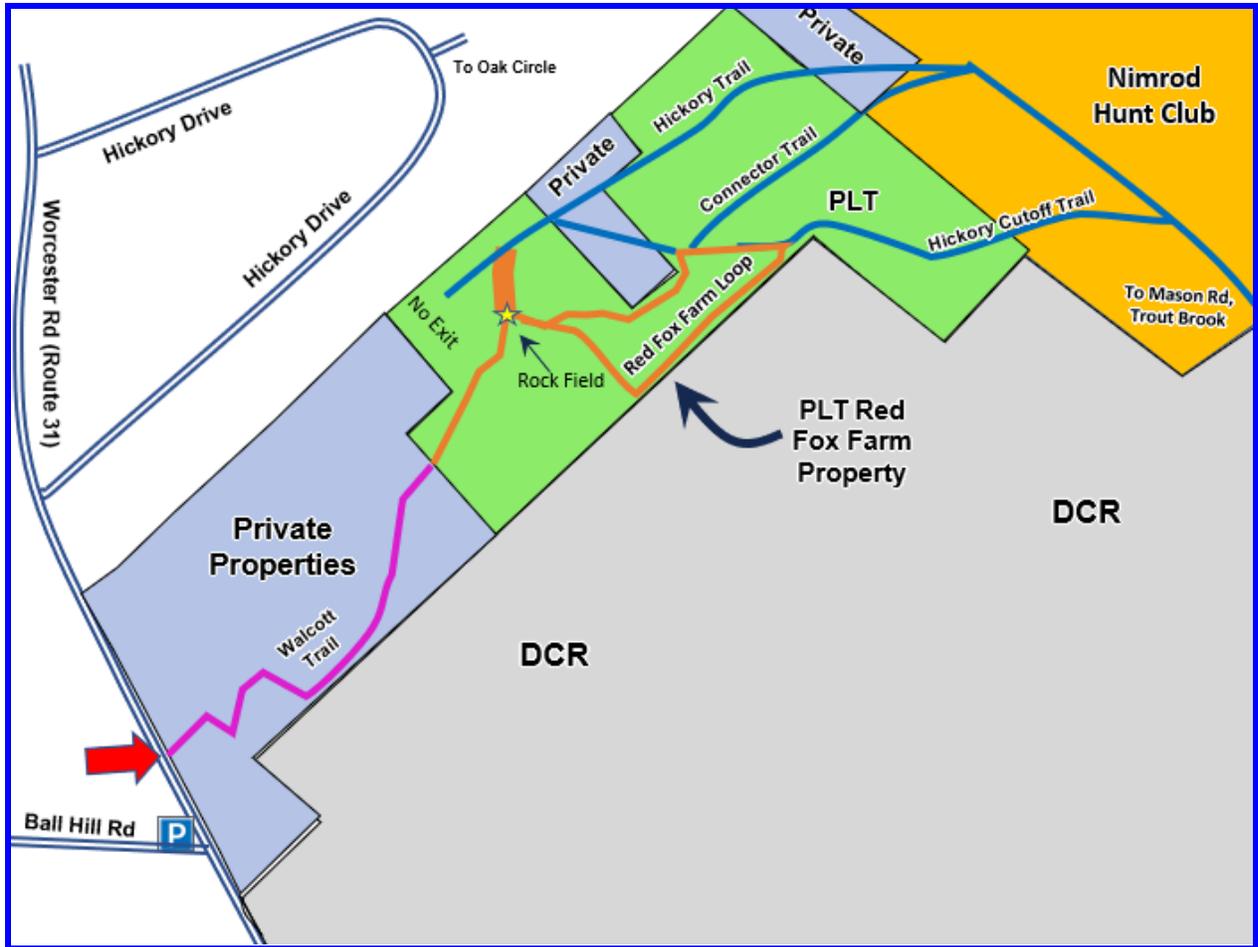
For Farm Trailhead through Trout Brook to Manning Street is 4.5 miles, and to the River Road parking area of the Central Mass Rail Trail is 5.5 miles, and via the CMRT to Oakdale is about 7.5 miles. This makes for a nice, mostly downhill, one way hike from Princeton to Holden or West Boylston.

Nimrod has other trails that connect to Coal Kiln Road and back via DCR land to the Princeton Land Trust Russell Corner area. These areas have been left undocumented at the request of the property owners, but hikers are welcome to explore.

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Trailhead



Savage Hill Loop

HIKE NAME: Savage Hill Midstate Trail **DISTANCE:** 4 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy-Moderate

Trailhead: Princeton. Small parking area at the end of Old Colony Road Extension, which is off Route 62, 4 miles west of the center of town, on the left.

<https://goo.gl/maps/k3BLmRxx5ed51EgU8>

Hike Description: This is an “out and back” hike on the Midstate Trail, which traverses Savage Hill Wildlife Management Area and connects between Old Colony Road in Princeton and Paddock Road in Rutland. It starts on old farm roads and continues on smaller but well-traveled snaking trails. The start of the hike is a gradual ascent, but after the first half mile levels out for the rest of the way. Total elevation is about 300 feet.

Links: (None)

Hike Details:

From the parking lot, follow the yellow triangular Midstate trail signs. There are numerous side trails, so make sure to continue to follow the trail markers through to Paddock Lane. There are stone walls beside the path for much of the distance.

After two miles, at Paddock Road in Rutland, reverse course and return to the parking area.

Other Options to Consider:

The hike can be extended by starting at Four Corners or the pedestrian bridge on Old Colony Road to hike more of the Midstate Trail, or by continuing on the Midstate Trail towards Barre.

A 6.5 mile loop can be made by hiking via Paddock Lane to Bushy Lane to Bigelow Road. Then take Wheeler Road left to Route 62 and turn left to return to Old Colony Road Extension. The area between Bushy Road and Bigelow Road is rough and may be muddy in a few places but crosses a pretty wetland, and is easy to follow. See Green Line on Map.

For people who like to explore, there is plenty of interesting land to the northwest of the trail, including a large wetland. The summit of Savage Hill can be climbed on a rough path that goes from the main parking lot for Savage hill, which is a bit further west on Route 62 from Old Colony Road Extension. This path does terminate near the top of Savage Hill. See dotted purple line on map for an idea of a bushwhack.

Historical Notes:

Savage Hill is a Massachusetts Wildlife Management Area, managed by DCR Fisheries and Wildlife. Passive recreation is allowed throughout. New trails and mapping are not allowed by

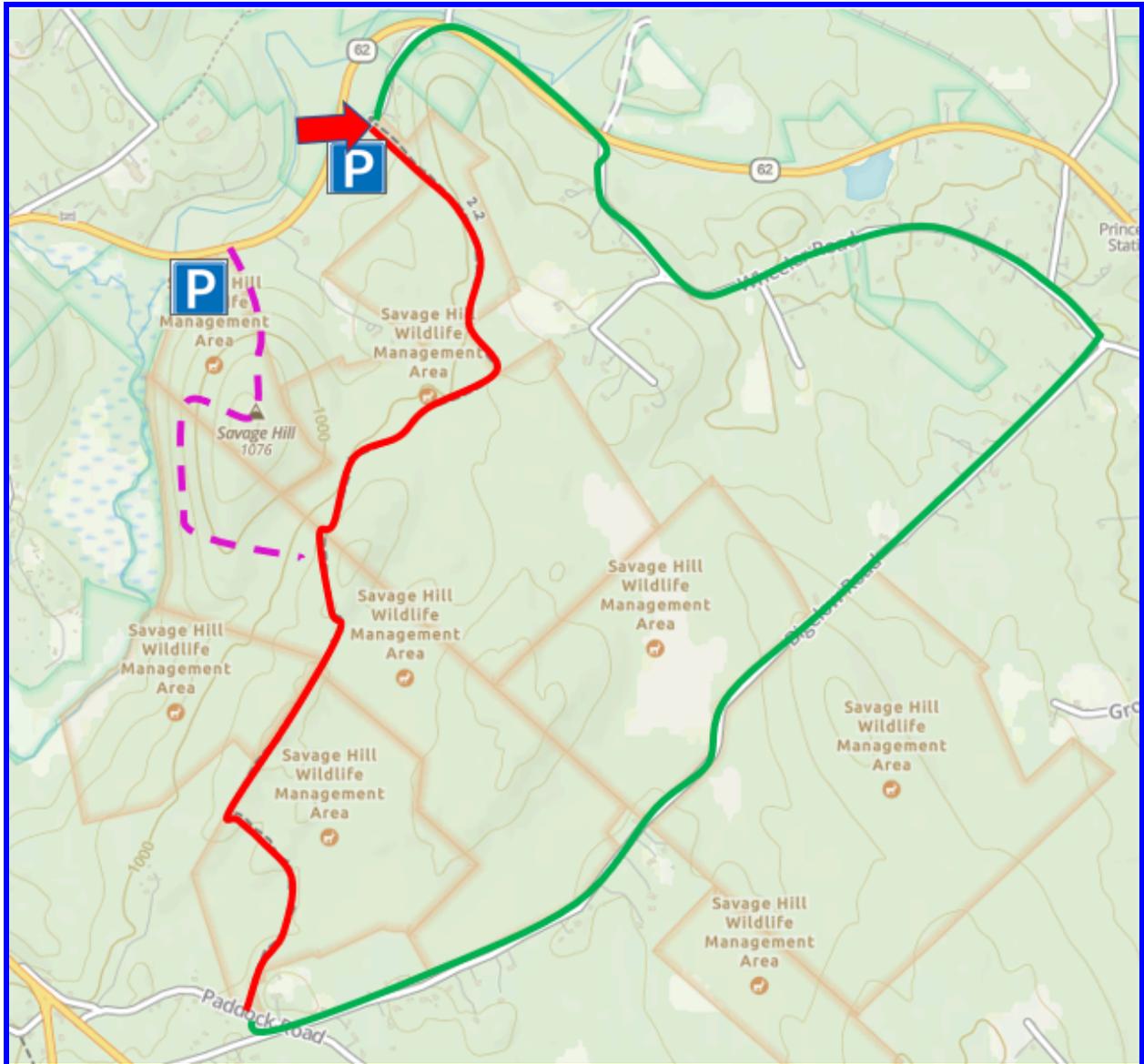
DCR, however there are some small informal trails in the south side of the WMA that can be explored.

This area historically contained a large farm owned by the Savage Family, and was the home of early American Painter Edward Savage. Savage was a self-taught painter who painted perhaps the most well known of the portraits of George Washington's family. His works may be found at the National Gallery, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, and the Worcester Art Museum.

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Trailhead



Thomas Prince Nature Trails

HIKE NAME: Thomas Prince Nature Trail Loop **DISTANCE:** 2 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Easy

Restrictions: Non-Motorized traffic only. Trails are not open during school hours.

Trailhead: Park at the Thomas Prince School (TPS) parking lot off Route 62 east of Princeton. The Laurel Trail (recommended route) starting point is across the field to the left when facing the back of the property. <https://goo.gl/maps/7RmArbYcuypVN27v9>

Description:

This is an easy and relatively flat walk through the town properties behind Thomas Prince School. Students use this area for various activities during the school year. The route described below is a loop around the furthest extent of the property, with a short spur walk down to Babcock Brook. The route goes through laurel bushes, open forest, and a field that is growing back into forest.

Links: [TPS Kiosk](#)

Hike Details:

Walk over to the right of the playground to check out the kiosk and trail map that were designed by TPS students.

Reverse direction and follow the line of the woods behind the ball field to the start of the Laurel Trail, and follow it through a large stand of mountain laurel. The laurel blooms in June and can be a beautiful area! It is also pretty in the winter after a snowfall.

The Laurel path continues and some connector trails branch out to the right, but keep to the left until it intersects with the Circle Trail.

Follow the Circle Trail to the Brook Trail, and take a short walk to the left to check out Babcock Brook. Return to the Circle Trail and take a left.

Follow the Circle Trail until it intersects with the Meadow Trail, and then turn left to follow the Meadow trail around the Meadow loop, then return, bearing left along the side of the large soccer field to the TPS parking lot.

Note: Work is in the planning stage to rebuild the paths near the kiosk with a more accessible trail, and to replace the bridge structures.

Other Options to Consider:

The trails can also be accessed from the kiosk, following a variety of courses.

Follow one of the smaller trails to create a shorter or longer hike. The route can also be reversed to get a different perspective to the area.

There are also a number of passageways in the Meadow that are not on the map, but are worth exploring.

Historical Notes:

The nature trails were the vision of a TPS science teacher, Joanne Blum, and were developed under her direction with a great deal of help from school, town, and Mass Audubon volunteers. Mass Audubon continues to help with trail maintenance.

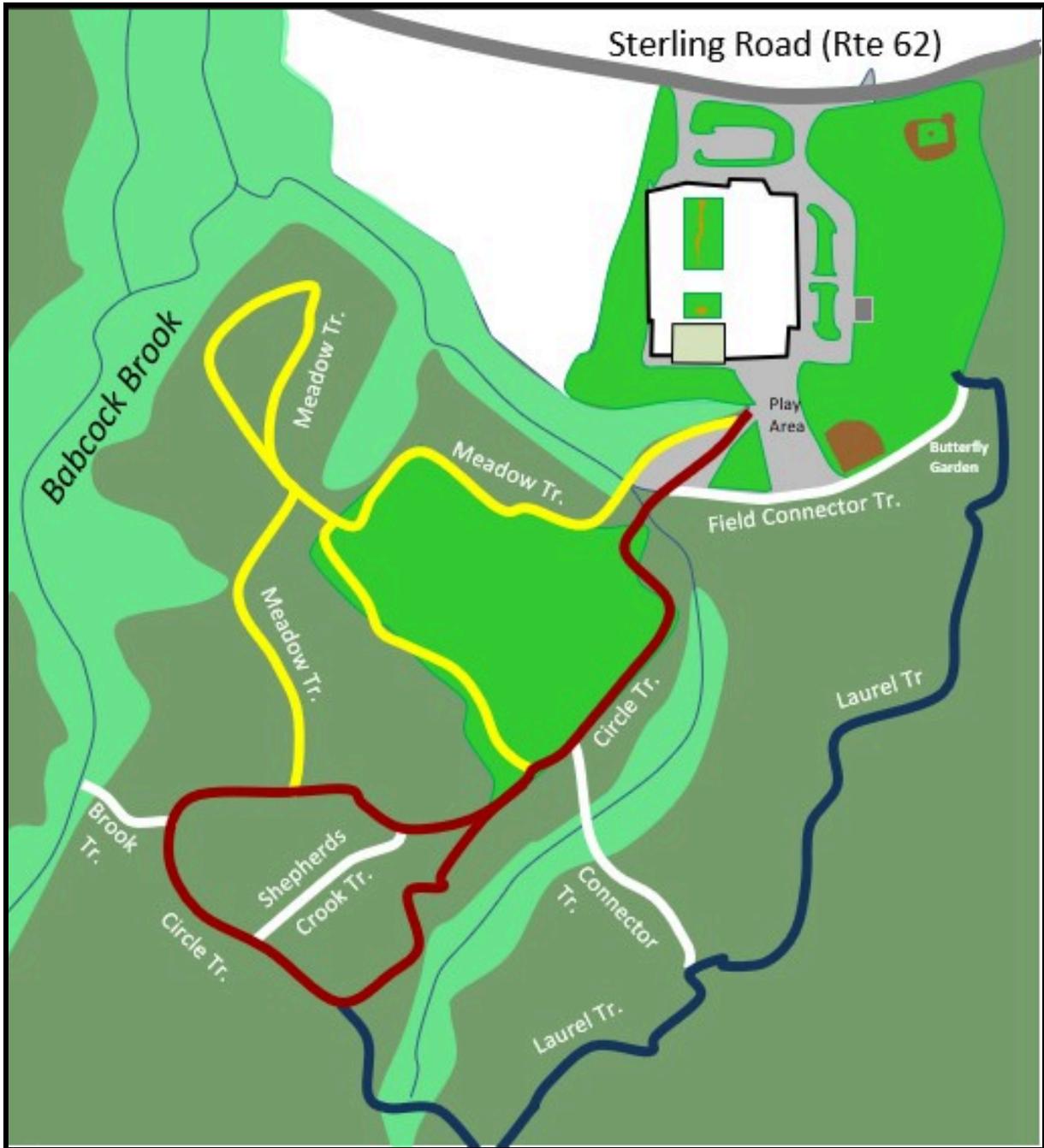
Rev 1/24



Trailhead



Kiosk PDF Download



Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow North

HIKE NAME: Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow North **DISTANCE** 3.3 Miles **DIFFICULTY** Easy-Moderate

Restrictions: No pets, bikes, or motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. At the end of the east side of Goodnow Road .

<https://goo.gl/maps/xNxyKi5uh9EcuVRP9>

Hike Description: This is a tour of the trails on the north-side of the sanctuary property owned and maintained by Mass Audubon. It explores the West Border Trail, then passes by the glacial boulder, goes around the back of Brown Hill and then to the summit, and stops by Otter Pond. The return is via open fields to the north of the main buildings. Total elevation is 340 feet. Admission to Wachusett Meadow is FREE for all Princeton residents and Mass Audubon members but there is a fee for others.

Links: [Wachusett Meadow Information](#)

Hike Details:

Take a left out of the parking lot and go down the paved end of Goodnow road to Chapman Trail and take a right.

Chapman Trail runs parallel to a large area of open fields. About 0.2 miles in, there is a stone wall and an intersection with the West Border Trail.

Turn left on the West Border Trail and follow along the stone wall, turning sharply right and continuing uphill to reconnect with Chapman Trail (Midstate Trail).

Take the sharp right onto Chapman Trail and continue 0.4 miles to the Glacier Boulder Trail. Take a left to the glacier boulder, known in geological terms as an “erratic.” (and take some photos!).

The Brown Hill Loop Trail goes uphill in back of the boulder and continues left around the back of Brown Hill. Take the Summit Trail off the east side of Brown Hill to reach the summit, and then return to the Brown Hill Loop Trail. Take a right and proceed downhill to the Otter Pond area. Take a left on the Otter Pond Trail (not shown on map) to the viewing area where active beaver activity can usually be spotted.

Return to the Brown Hill Loop Trail and complete the loop, returning to the open field north of the main buildings. This part of the trail passes by a very large and noteworthy White Oak Tree.

Return using one of the paths through the field

Other Options to Consider:

Princeton Hikes!

There are several options to consider on the north side. The walk along the West Boundary Trail can be eliminated to shorten the hike. Also the walk around the back of Brown Hill can be avoided by taking the Summit Trail up over the top of Brown Hill and back to the east side.

For more ambitious hikers, the Chapman Trail can be followed up to Mount Wachusett (3.5 miles one way from the parking area.)

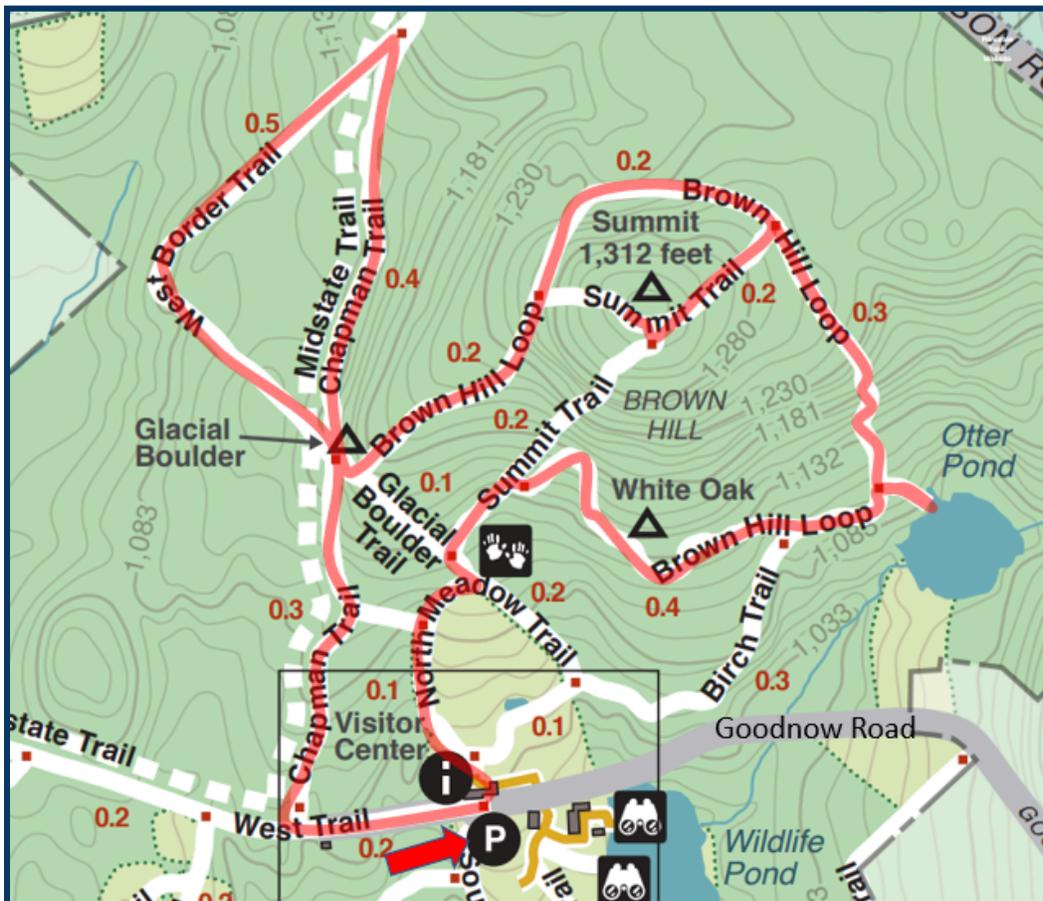
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Trailhead



Wachusett Meadow Info



Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow South

HIKE NAME: Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow South **DISTANCE:** 2.5 Miles
DIFFICULTY Easy

Restrictions: No pets, bikes, or motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. At the end of the east side of Goodnow Road.

<https://goo.gl/maps/xNxyKi5uh9EcuVRP9>

Hike Description: This is a tour of the trails on the south side of the sanctuary and explores the Beaver Bend, Pasture and Fern Forest trails. The return is via Goodnow Road. This is an easy walk through the woods on well-tended paths. There are many benches along the way to rest and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. Total elevation is 250 feet. Admission to Wachusett Meadow is FREE for all Princeton residents and Mass Audubon members but there is a fee for others.

Links: [Wachusett Meadow Information](#)

Hike Details:

Take the Beaver Bend Trail out of the southwest corner of the parking lot, then past the stone wall and through the woods. There is a stop by the side of the wetland/meadow part way along this section. Proceed uphill to hit the Pasture Trail.

Take a left on the Pasture Trail and proceed down a wide path connecting several old pastures. Continue straight on the Fern Forest Trail when the Pasture Trail loops to the right.

Follow the Fern Forest Trail around the far loop, past the Brook Trail and back to the Pasture Trail, continuing down to Goodnow Road. Then turn right to return to the parking area.

Other Options to Consider:

When water levels are low, the brook can be crossed to follow the Brook Loop Trail which adds a half mile to the hike through a deciduous forest. The brook is difficult to cross in the winter.

Also, a nice option is to go left on Goodnow Road during the return to follow the West Trail (which is the Midstate Trail) out to a pretty beaver pond, then turn around and return.

There are additional options along the way. You may want to start the hike with a walk around the meadow in back of the parking lot. Or to stop in at the sanctuary store, where maps, guidebooks, and other merchandise are available.

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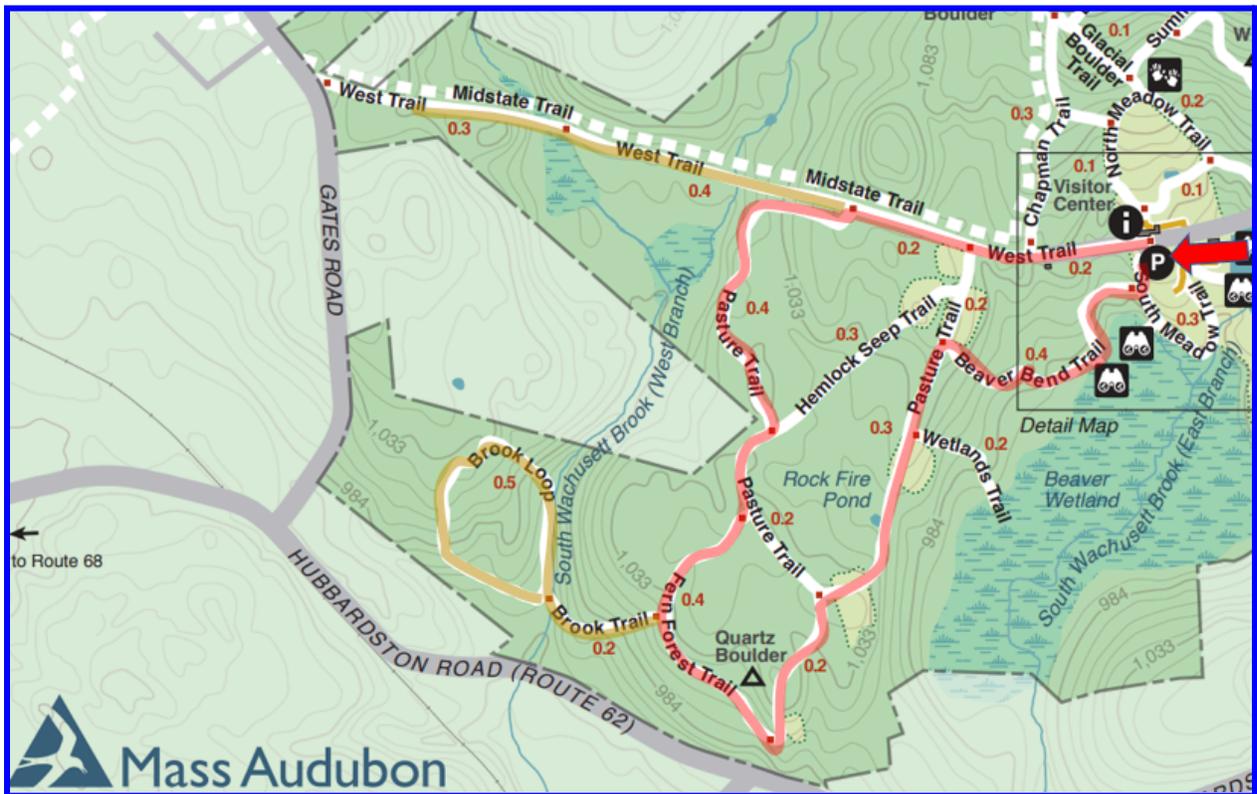
Princeton Hikes!



Trailhead



Wachusett Meadow Info



Wachusett Mtn East Loop

HIKE NAME: Wachusett East

DISTANCE: 3.5 miles

DIFFICULTY: Difficult

Restrictions: Dogs must be leashed. No horses or bikes.

Trailhead: Princeton. Mountain House Trail Head, which is on Mountain Road at the intersection with the top of Gregory Road. There is a parking area along Mountain Road.

<https://goo.gl/maps/WSivGSCgKU8cEArd8>

Hike Description: This is a hike up to the summit of Wachusett Mountain and back around the east side of the mountain. Highlights of the hike are the summit area, the Harlow Outlook, and the Visitor's Center. 700 feet of elevation gain.

Links: [Full Wachusett Mountain Map](#)

Hike Details:

From the parking area, cross the road and hike up the Mountain House Trail. This is a moderate, rocky hike from the highest trail head on the mountain. The Mountain House trail crosses the Bi-Centennial Trail, the Loop Trail, and the Link Trail before reaching the mountain summit. Enjoy the views from the summit and the informational kiosks. Note that photos on the tower structure identify all of the surrounding hills.

To complete the loop, descend the Pine Hill trail to the paved 'Down' road. Turn left on the paved 'Down' Road and stop at the Harlow Outlook, a stone shelter with nice views. Continue down the road, turning right at the intersection with the 'Up' Road. There are some nice views along this route, down the ski trails. Follow the paved road to the Visitor Center and stop in to learn more about the history, geology, plants and wildlife associated with the mountain. Wachusett Mountain also offers many educational programs that are presented at the Visitor's Center.

From the Visitor's Center, take Pine Hill to start and before the steep ascent of Pine Hill turn left onto Bicentennial Trail, a rocky traverse that takes you back to Mountain House Trail. Take a left turn to return to the parking lot.

This hike is rated difficult because of the rocky Bicentennial Trail.

Other Options to Consider

Several options can be considered to shorten or lengthen the hike. Some are:

For a shorter but steeper descent, use the Pine Hill Trail, which cuts directly down to the Bicentennial Trail. At the intersection with Bicentennial, you can go left to visit the Visitor Center or right on Bicentennial to complete the loop (Purple on Map).

For a slightly longer and prettier ascent, take the Bicentennial Trail left (southwest) to High Meadow, an open meadow with a viewing area. Take the High Meadow Trail to the right to climb to the ridge, and then a right onto Jack Frost to return to the Mountain House Trail (Green on map).

You can also start and end at Echo Pond Road, which is next to the Mountainside Cafe on Mountain Road. Walk up past Echo Pond and then take High Meadow Trail up toward the summit.

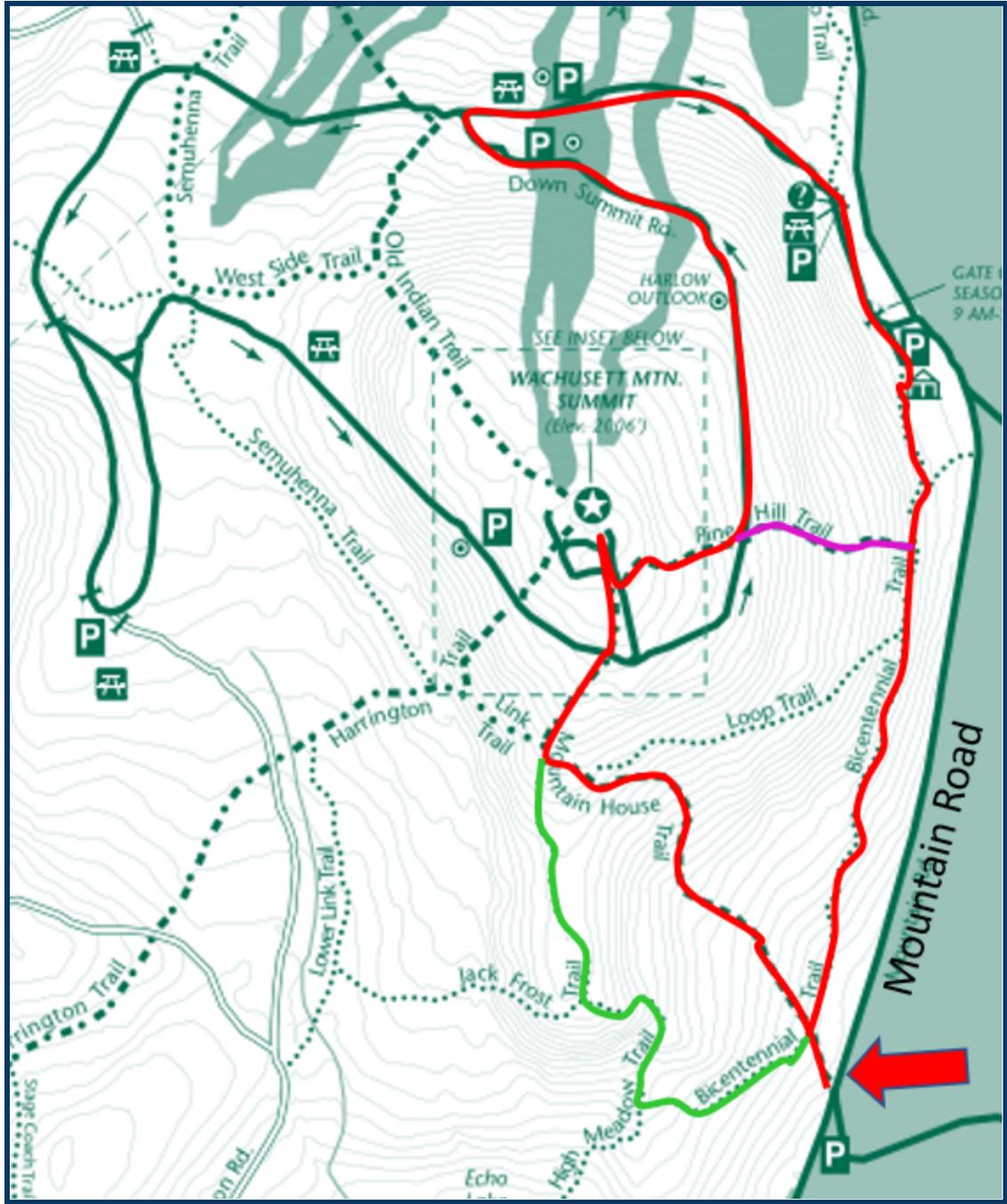
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Trailhead



Download Wachusett Mountain Map



Wachusett Mtn North Loop

HIKE NAME: Wachusett North Loop **DISTANCE:** 5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Difficult

Restrictions: Dogs must be leashed. No bikes or horses.

Trailhead: Bolton Pond Trailhead, which is off Bolton Pond Road, just west of the entrance to the ski area. <https://goo.gl/maps/gyn63vpk2EoQV3H76>

Hike Description: This is a difficult hike from the north side of the mountain, past Bolton Pond, Balance Rock, and the North Road lookout to the summit. The return is via Pine Hill and Donbrow Trails, and then across Balance Rock Road. Elevation gain is 1200 feet in total. There are several alternate hikes available including a shorter route that goes halfway to the summit.

Links: [Full Wachusett Mountain Map](#)

Hike Details:

From the Bolton Pond trailhead, climb up and bear right on Bolton Pond Trail. This drops down to follow a pretty brook and then passes Bolton Pond, a small beaver pond on the right.

Continue on Bolton Pond Trail through an often-muddy section and ascend up to and past Balance Rock, a great photo spot. The path can be difficult to follow up this section...watch for the blue markers.

Shortly past Balance Rock take a right onto Balance Rock Road, a wide gravel road that gradually ascends up to North Road, and is very pretty, particularly in the fall. This goes past the Needham Pool.

Take a left on North Road and ascend to the North Road Lookout, which has a great view off to the north to Mount Monadnock. The Wapack Range is also visible to the right of Monadnock, and Gap and Little Wachusett mountains are visible to the left.

Bear left on the paved road and then take Semuhenna trail off to the right. This middle section of Semuhenna goes through a pine grove and can be quite pretty but also wet in places.

Just before Semuhenna hits the paved road again, take a left onto the West Side Trail to cross over to the Old Indian Trail.

Take a right on Old Indian Trail onto a steep and rocky path, and follow it to the summit. Enjoy the 360 degree views from Wachusett Summit, and spend some time checking out the surrounding peaks and features from the maps in each direction from on top of the viewing platform.

To descend, start down the paved road and take a left onto the Pine Hill Trail. This is a steep, well maintained trail with many steps, and can be slippery in fall and winter. Follow Pine Hill Trail to the Visitors Center, where visitors can learn about the mountain flora and fauna, and geological history.

Continue from the Visitor Center down to the gate area, and take a right through the fence to the Donbrowo Trail. Descend on Donbrowo, passing an old cellar hole (the Roper Homestead) just off to the left about halfway down, to the ski area.

Take a left onto Balance Rock Road and follow it back to Balance Rock Trail. Balance Rock Road is a pretty road that provides some nice lower level overlooks and passes by the Bullock Lodge.

Return on Balance Rock Road to Balance Rock Trail, and then take Bolton Pond Trail to the left, just past Balance Rock.

Other Options to Consider

When the ski area is operating, bypass Balance Rock Road at the end, and continue from Donbrowo Trail down to the ski area parking lot. Turn left and follow the edge of the lot to the back end, near the maintenance buildings. A small trail from the back corner will take you back to Bolton Pond Trail (purple line on the map, above). This is also a shorter way back!

A shorter way to hike up the north side is to take Balance Rock Trail to Old Indian Trail, and either take that or Semuhenna Trail up toward the summit. The Balance Rock Trailhead is in the Wachusett Ski Area parking lot, and is a popular place to start the hike when the ski area is closed. These routes are not as scenic. Old Indian Trail does cross the ski trails and so should be avoided during ski season.

There are also options to shorten the hike by using the paved roads. A much shorter, easier, and less crowded walk can be accomplished by bearing left at the top of the North Road and following the 'up road' down to the gate, then proceeding on Donbrowo Trail. Princeton Hikes has used this route during the busy Columbus Day weekend, to avoid the crowds. This way does not go to the summit, but does have nice views from the North Road lookout and over the ski trails.

Another option is to walk the 'down' road from the summit, passing by the Hartlow Outlook, which is a pretty spot to have lunch or to view sun rises and moon rises, with a great look out to the east and the skyline of Boston.

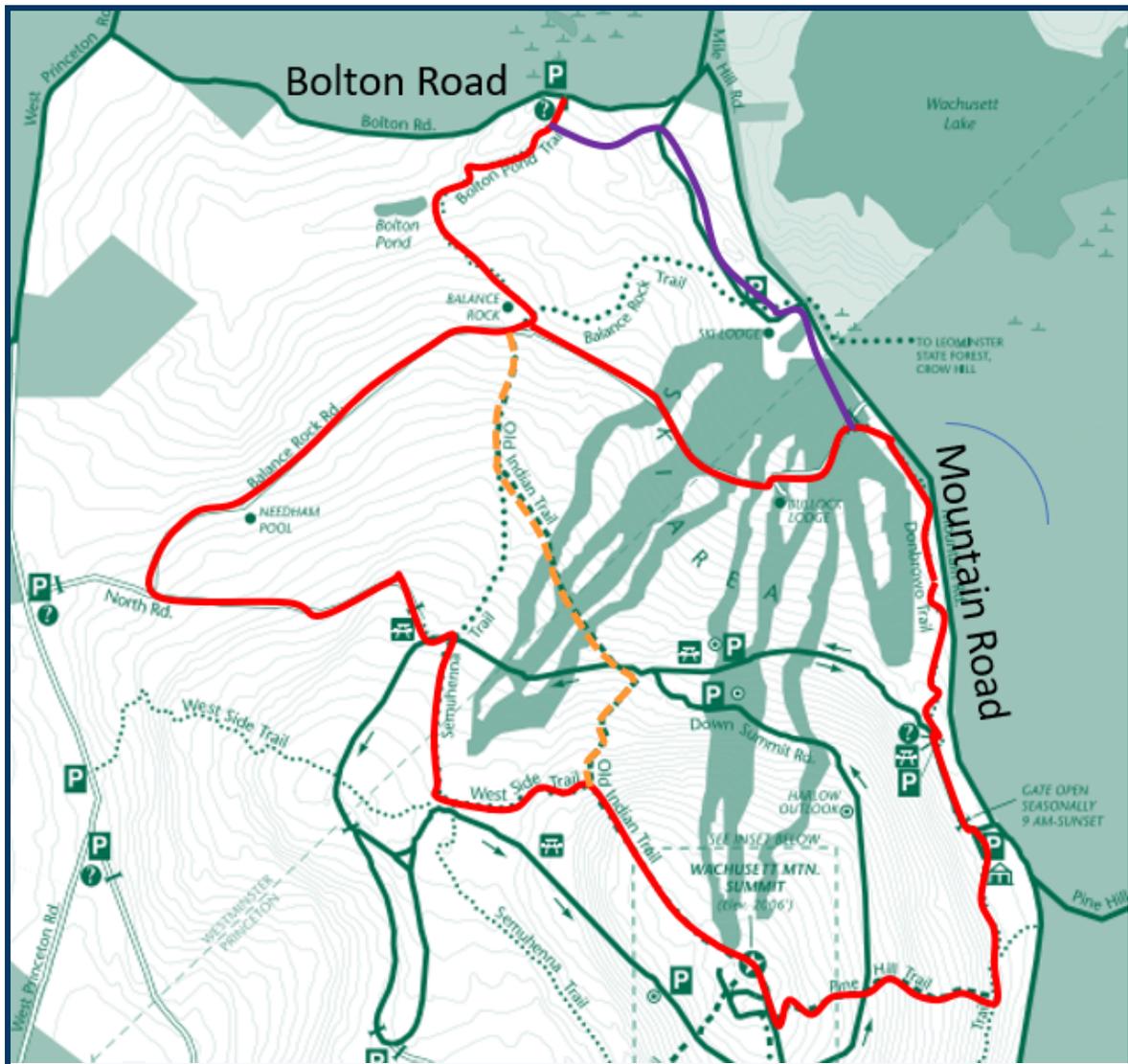
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Trailhead



Download Wachusett Mountain Map



Wachusett Mtn Redline

HIKE NAME: Wachusett Redline Hike **DISTANCE:** 17.5 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Very Difficult

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles, No bikes

Trailhead: Princeton. Westminster Road / Administration Road trailhead, which is about 1 mile up Westminster Road from Mountain Road. <https://goo.gl/maps/KJdDtXXXSpmCw73N8>

Hike Description: The Wachusett Redline hike is a 17.6 mile hike that completes all trails on the Mountain (not including the roads). The route presented involves over 4,400 vertical feet of hiking, and is normally done in between 7.5 and 10 hours.

This hike can be done in a single day or over multiple days. Both one-day and four-day versions of the hike are shown below.

Hike Details:

The map and steps documents provided for the one-day hike (above) show one way to complete the redline walk in a single day, minimizing the number of redundant steps and arriving back at the starting point. The table shows a way to do it in four days, with four hikes that each start and end at the same place. The redline can be completed in many ways, over any amount of time, but a record must be kept of date for each trail in order to get a patch..

The Wachusett Hikers Facebook Page has more information about this hike and hiker comments.

People completing this hike may apply for a patch by filling out the [application form](#) and sending it in.

Due to the length of the hike, consider caching water and other supplies along the way.

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Links to maps and step-by-step instructions

One Day Route	Map	Step-By Step Guide
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Day 1 Map	Day 1 Steps
Day 2 Map	Day 2 Steps
Day 3 Map	Day 3 Steps
Day 4 Map	Day 4 Steps



Starting Trailhead



Links to all maps and sheets



Patch Application Form

Wachusett Mtn South Loop

HIKE NAME: Wachusett South Loop **DISTANCE:** 3 miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: Dogs must be leashed. No bikes or horses.

Hike Description: This is a heavily trafficked loop trail that is moderate in difficulty with some steep sections. It reaches the summit and passes through some lovely forests and a section of wildflowers. 1,000 feet of elevation gain.

Links: [Full Wachusett Mountain Map](#)

Trailhead: Princeton. The gate at the intersection of Westminster Road and Administration Road (about one mile up Westminster Road from Mountain Road). Park along Westminster Road. <https://goo.gl/maps/NQJWHCQ2zfGfLBHn7>

Hike Details: From the gate on Administration Road, hike up the gravel road to the Jack Frost Trail sign (0.4 miles on the right).

Hike Jack Frost Trail through a nice stand of Mountain Laurel (can be wet in spring, beautiful in June), cross some bridges and then ascend the steep rocks to get to the top of the ridge and the intersection with High Meadow Trail. This can be a challenging climb with multiple possible ways through the rocks. Follow the blazes to stay on track.

Continue on Jack Frost, to the left, along the Wachusett ridge and through a nice stand of pine trees, until the intersection with the Mountain House Trail. Turn left and cross the 'Up' paved road to reach the summit. Enjoy the view and kiosks at the summit.

Return down Mountain House Trail and then (0.5 miles from the summit at a major trail junction) take a right on Jack Frost Trail. Pass through the stand of hemlocks and out to the ridge. At the intersection with High Meadow Trail, turn left onto High Meadow and descend sharply down from the ridge. As you are reaching level ground, note a section of wildflower diversity on both sides of the trail, especially the right, that is beautiful in the spring. Continue on the level trail to High Meadow and its open field with views and a bench.

There are two options from High Meadow. One is to walk through the meadow and bear left before the trees to an access road, which leads to Mountainside Cafe, a convenient stop for baked goods, coffee, or lunch. From there, cut across the back to Echo Lake Road (gravel) and back up (right) to Echo Lake. Or a second option from High Meadow: continue on the High Meadow Trail down to Echo Lake. This section requires stepping over downed trees and can be quite wet.

Echo Lake offers a place for picnicking and nice views.. From here, continue on Echo Lake Road past the pond, and a little beyond take a left onto Echo Lake Trail. This will return you to the parking area.

Other Options to Consider

Several alternatives can be considered to lengthen or shorten the hike.

From the trail head you can take a short (but uphill) walk up Stagecoach trail to the Princeton Windmills. Then continue on Stage Coach Trail down to the Harrington Trail and turn right to wrap back around to Jack Frost by way of West Road. See green dotted line

From Administration Road, you can go past Jack Frost Trail to avoid the rock climb, and take the next right onto Harrington Trail and follow it to the summit. Harrington Trail has a steep uphill section and also a nice outlook to the west part way up the steep section. See purple solid line.

- Alternatively on the Harrington Trail you can take the Upper Link Trail to bypass the steep section of Harrington on the way to the summit.

Two miles can be added to this route by heading down West Road and then back up West Side Trail and across Semuhenna Trail to connect to Harrington. See purple dotted line.

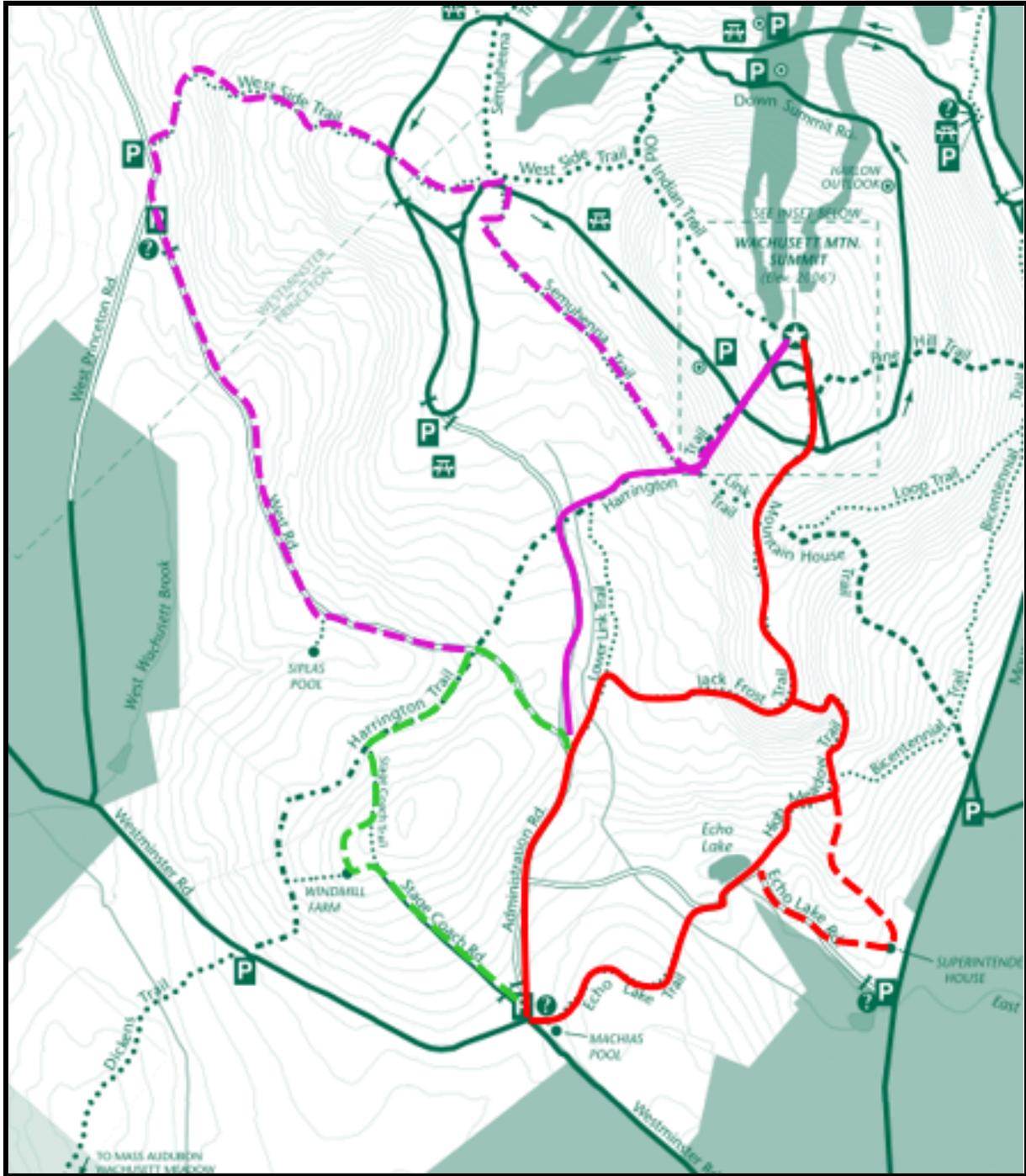
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Trailhead



Download Wachusett Mountain Map



Wachusett Mtn West Loop

HIKE NAME: Wachusett West Loop **DISTANCE:** 4.5 miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: Dogs leashed only. No Horses or Bikes on trails

Trailhead: Princeton. The gate at the intersection of Westminster Road and Administration Road (about one mile up Westminster Road from Mountain Road). Park along Westminster Road. <https://goo.gl/maps/NQJWHCQ2zfGfLBHn7>

Hike Description: This loop goes about halfway up the mountain on gradually inclined gravel, roads and trails. It does not go to the summit, but there is a nice view from the North Road on the way down. 790 feet of elevation gain.

Hike Details: From the parking area on Westminster Road proceed up Administration Road to Jack Frost Trail. This section of the trail goes through close laurel bushes which can be pretty in June.

Shortly after starting on Jack Frost, take a left onto the Lower Link Trail, and then a right when it intersects with Harrington Trail (the Midstate trail). This area can be wet in the spring.

At the top of the second little hill, take a left on Semuhenna Trail and follow it along the shoulder of the mountain and then over the paved 'up road', past the West Side Trail then out to the paved road, near North Road. This second section of Semuhenna can be muddy and can best be navigated to the right side. Go to the left on the paved 'Up road', and then turn right onto North Road.

Take North Road down to a vista (great place for photos) and continue on North Road to West Princeton Rd (Westminster). North Road is a pretty gravel road with some areas of pine needles. There is a kiosk where the North Road hits West Princeton Road.

Take a left on West Princeton Road and then, in a half mile, another left through the gate onto on West Road. West Road has some slight elevation changes, but is otherwise a pleasant gravel road. There is a small 'Siplas Pool' (so named for a local resident) a hundred feet or so off the trail. Also on the north side of the west road, shortly after leaving West Princeton Road, there are some nice ice ledges about 200 yards up at the (steep) embankment. These have lovely icicles in the winter and are worth a bushwack!

After close to a mile on West Road, turn right onto the Harrington Trail and then take Stagecoach Trail left up past the windmills and back to the parking area. There is a nice view from the huge windmills area...this is a spot to check out!!

Other Options to Consider:

Echo Lake can be added to the start or end of this hike. It is a one mile loop from Administration Road, normally using Echo Lake Road for one direction and Echo Lake Trail (from Westminster Road) for the other direction. Consider stopping at Mountainside Cafe, a short walk from Echo Lake.

When you reach the paved road near North Road, consider taking a short walk to the right and crossing the west-side ski trails. There is a view to the north from the ski trails.

A summit run can also be added. This adds a mile but also another 400 feet of climb, continuing past Semuhenna up Harrington Trail, and returning down Old Indian Trail to West Side Trail to Semuhenna.

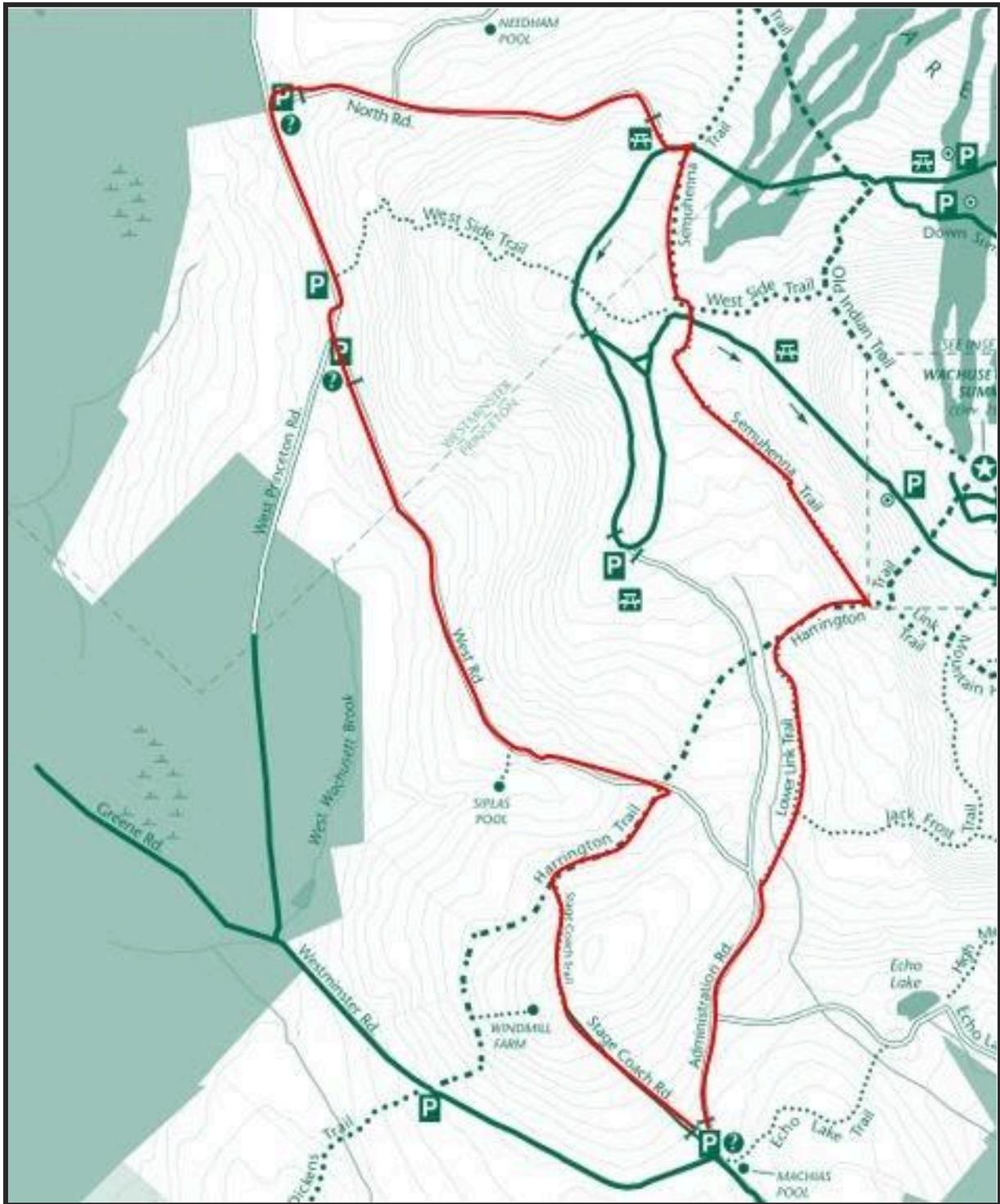
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Trailhead



Download Wachusett Mountain Map



Wachusett Ski Area to Redemption Rock

HIKE NAME: Ski Area to Redemption Rock Trail **DISTANCE:** 4 Miles **DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

Restrictions: No motorized vehicles

Trailhead: Princeton. Ski area parking lot, near the small pond, on the Midstate Trail (near Mountain Road). <https://goo.gl/maps/86trVeWztKFH1Kqm9>

Hike Description: Walk up Donbrowo Trail and across Old Pine Hill Road, then down through a pretty but unmarked path to Redemption Rock, a historical landmark on Trust of the Reservation Property. Return on the Midstate Trail. Total elevation is 300 feet.

Links: [Redemption Rock History](#)

Hike Details: Start at the pond at Wachusett Ski Area. Hike up the Donbrowo trail (parallel to Mile High Road), past the Balance Rock Road and to a second abandoned road (Old Pine Hill Rd) about halfway to the Wachusett Mountain visitors center.

Go left through the gate and then across Mountain Road and follow the trail down through the woods. The first part of this wide trail can be wet in the spring. Take a well-defined but unmarked trail to the left and descend until the intersection with the Midstate Trail, and then take a right to Redemption Rock.

The large rock is a great place to climb, take some photos, and enjoy a snack!

To return, reverse direction and hike back along the Midstate Trail to the ski area.

Other Options to Consider:

An alternative hike is to follow the Midstate Trail out and back from the Ski Area (or from Redemption Rock). In addition, a longer hike can be taken by following the Midstate Trail over to Crow Hill in Leominster State Forest. Alternatively, the hike can start at Crow Hill and hike to the Ski Area and back.

From Redemption Rock, a half-mile walk can be taken over to the shore of Wachusett Lake, which traverses an area of Princeton once known as Everettville.

Historical Notes:

Redemption Rock is a colonial-era historic site in Princeton, Massachusetts. In 1676, during King Philip's War, the release of Mary Rowlandson from her Native American captors was negotiated atop this granite ledge (see the link above). This site is maintained by the Trustees of the Reservation, and there is a small sign describing the history around this event.

Everettville was a small village in back of Redemption Rock which was a station on the underground railway in the mid 1800s. If you take the optional spur trail down to Wachusett Lake, you will pass by the tomb of Elder Everett and his wife, whose remains were later moved to Princeton's North cemetery..

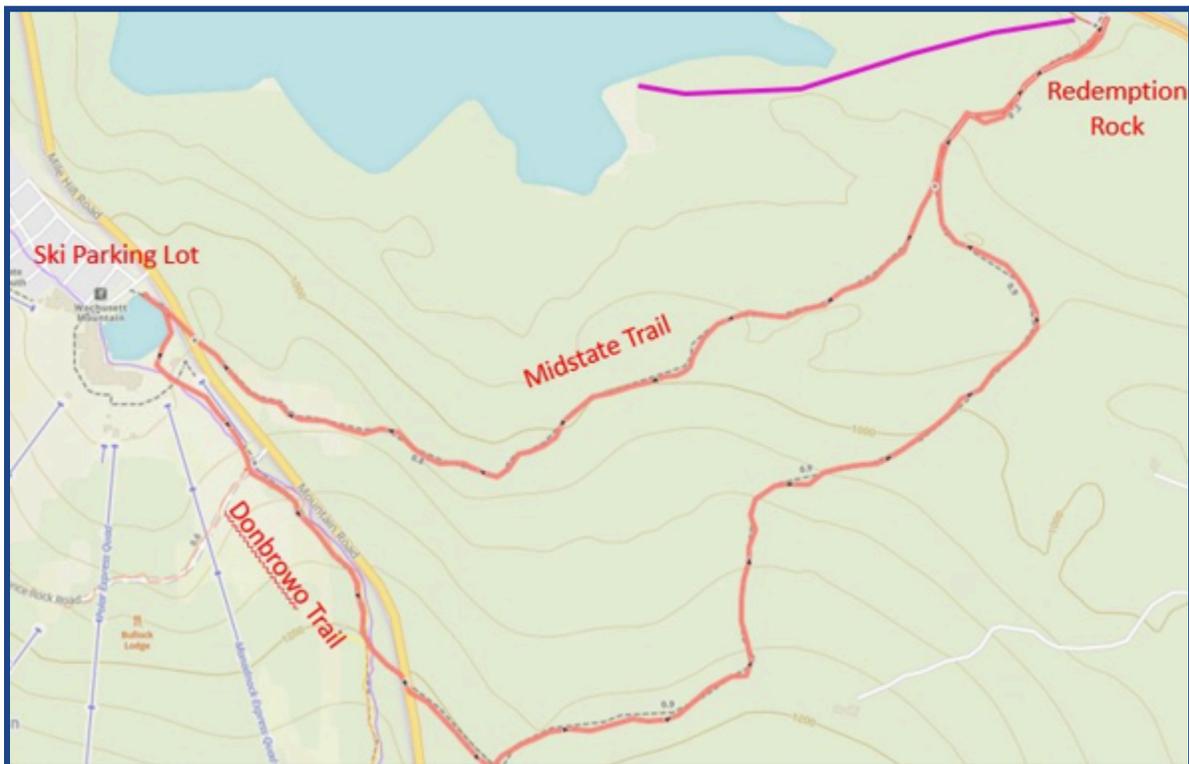
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Trailhead



Redemption Rock History



Points of Interest

There are many interesting natural features along Princeton's trails. If you're looking to find a specific feature, here's which trails to find them on! Click on the link to jump right to the trail, or navigate back a few pages to see what page it's on.

Feature Type	Feature	Hike to Take
Scenic Views	Wachusett Mountain Summit	Wachusett North Wachusett East
	North Road	Wachusett North Wachusett West
	Harlow Outlook	Wachusett East
Waterfalls	Keyes Brook	
	East Wachusett Brook	
Cliffs and Ledges	Crow Hill Ledges	LSF Crow Hill North
	Wolf Den Ledges	LSF Wolf Den Loop
Glacial Features	Redemption Rock Glacial Erratic	Ski Area-Redemption Rock
	Balance Rock Glacial Erratic	Wachusett Mtn North Loop
	Crow Hill Trail Glacial Erratic	LSF Crow Hill North
	Glacier Boulder	Wachusett Meadow North
Beaver Dams	Wachusett Meadow Ponds	Wachusett Meadow South
	Jones Meadow Beaver Pond	PLT Russell Corner
Old Growth Forest	Wachusett Mountain	Wachusett Mtn West Loop
Wetlands and Bogs	Poutwater pond	Poutwater Pond from Esty Road
	Wachusett Meadow	Wachusett Meadow South
Marsh	Calamint Hill	Calamint Hill
Wetlands	Cobb Brook Wetlands	Cobb Brook Trails

Get Involved!

More Hiking

We're constantly updating our trail guides; please check our website for the latest guided hike documentation:

<https://www.town.princeton.ma.us/open-space-committee/pages/princeton-hikes-documentation>

In addition, many other local towns and groups have hiking resources. Here are a few:

- Sterling Trails
- Leominster State Forest
- Wachusett State Forest
- Wachusett Audubon
- Holden Trails

Learn more

You can contact the OSC by emailing: trailaroundprincetonma@gmail.com In addition to our own team of trail stewards, we rely on input from trail users with suggestions for improvement or to make others aware of changing conditions or to report notable observations, including wildlife sightings. Please contact us via an email that can be forwarded to us from here. Attach photos if applicable.

Volunteering

The work of the Open Space Committee, particularly the development and maintenance of trails, requires many hands! Princeton is fortunate to have a number of groups working on these issues, and we are always looking for help. We have a great group of volunteers in town, and many have had the satisfaction of creating new trail systems. For example, we had over 20 volunteers helping with the creation of both the Calamint Hill and Cobb Brook trail areas in the past two years.

Contact a member of the Open Space Committee or [Princeton Land Trust](#) (PLT) if you would like to help. for the Open Space Committee, email to TrailAroundPrincetonMA@gmail.com or call Rick Gardner at 978-660-8664.

Some opportunities to get involved include:

1. Join the Open Space Committee or the Princeton Land Trust to work on higher level planning of open space protection
2. Join the Trail Stewards or the Trail Workers email list. Trail Stewards work on planning for trail projects and organize trail building or maintenance projects. The Trail Workers group is called into action when a project has been organized and hands are needed to

cut brush, prepare trails, prepare signage and kiosks, or perform other work on a trail event day.

3. Participate in the annual earth month cleanup by adopting a trail area, park, or road for the spring cleanup, or work on keeping an area clean during the year.
4. Join the PLT Land Steward group. Each land steward adopts a PLT property to monitor, clean trails, check boundaries, and report back on work as needed.

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