



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Governor Deval L. Patrick
Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray
EEA Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.
DCR Commissioner Edward M. Lambert, Jr.

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For Immediate Release: February 3, 2012

DCR Offers Family Friendly February Vacation Activities

BOSTON—February 2, 2012—The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will offer family-friendly activities for all ages across the Commonwealth during February school vacation week (2/18-2/26). Sail to Spectacle Island for a day of winter activities, snowshoe along the shoreline of the Wachusett Reservoir, find signs of tracks and scat on the South Shore, sled and slide at Elm Bank reservation, and much more. Enjoy a guided experiences or create a park adventure on your own.

“Even in winter, DCR’s parks and forests are welcoming with all kinds of nature adventures,” said DCR Commissioner Edward M. Lambert, Jr. “I hope children of all ages, and their friends and families, will come out to learn about the great outdoors and enjoy the programs DCR has planned.”

Below is a sampling of February vacation week activities on DCR properties, listed by region. All events are free unless otherwise noted. Be aware that seasonal weather and storms affect parks and trails. All events, programs, and activities are subject to change, so please call ahead to confirm. Visit www.mass.gov/dcr/events.htm for a complete list of events.

Greater Boston

Boston Harbor Islands, Boston Harbor

Saturday, February 18, 10:00am-2:30pm

Snow Day on Spectacle Island! *Take a Boat Trip to Spectacle Island for a day of winter fun! Join Park Rangers for activities including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and hiking (snow cover dependent). Bring your own equipment and experience fun on the island in winter. Reservations are required. Fees apply. For more program information call (617) 223-8668. For ferry reservation and tickets please call Boston's Best Cruises at 617-770-0040 x 102.*

Breakheart Reservation

Exploration Hike-Saturday, February 18, 1:00pm-3:00pm

177 Forest Street, Saugus

Bats in Your Backyard-Wednesday, February 22, 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

Sea Turtle Surprise- Thursday, February 23, 10:00 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Sweet Honeybees-Friday, February 24, 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m

1 Eliot Circle, Revere

Winter Campfire Festival- Saturday February 25, 12:00p.m- 2 p.m.

131 Walnut Street, Saugus

Elm Bank Reservation, 900 Washington Street, Wellesley

Sunday, February 19, 1:00pm-2:30pm

Elm Bank Sledding Party - *Grab your sled and join a DCR Ranger for an old fashioned sledding party on the slopes of Elm Bank Reservation. Bring your favorite sledding toy and we'll provide some hot chocolate to keep you toasty! Please meet at parking lot A. For more information, please call (617)698-1802 .*

Charles River Reservation, Boston

Saturday, February 25, 2:00pm-3:00pm

Charles River Dam Tour *Join DCR Rangers for a tour of the facility and learn its important job and function. Please meet at the flagpoles just below the Charlestown Bridge and City Square. Program is suitable for most ages. For more information or directions, please call (617)727-5380.*

Middlesex Fells Reservation, 4 Woodland Road, Stoneham

Sunday, February 26, 1:00pm-4:00pm

Exploration Hike! *Explore Middlesex Fells on this strenuous guided hike. This program is not suitable for children under 10 years. No dogs unless they are working guides. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear. Meet at Visitor Center. For more information, please call (781)233-0834.*

Chestnut Hill Reservation - Reilly Memorial Skating Rink

Sunday, February 26, 2:00pm-4:00pm

355 Chestnut Hill Ave, Cleveland Circle, Brighton

Frozen Fun! *Join DCR Rangers for winter fun! Enjoy some frozen fun on ice or take a stroll with a ranger a look for signs of winter wildlife. Free Ranger led programs and free public skating. Skate rentals are available for a fee. For more information and program details, please call 617-333-7404 x10.1*

Northeast

Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street, Concord MA 01742, Concord

Monday, February 20, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Meet Henry David Thoreau Winter Walk *Meet Henry Thoreau portrayed by historian Richard Smith, 1:00pm-2:00pm at the replica, 2:00pm-3:00pm hike out to the house site. Dress for the weather. All children must be accompanied by an adult. No dogs unless they are working guides. All ages. 1:00pm-2:00pm at the Thoreau house replica, 2:00pm-3:00pm hike out to the house site. Replica is partially accessible, hike is not accessible. For more information please call 978 369-3254.*

Harold Parker State Forest, 1951 Turnpike Street, North Andover

Wednesday, February 22, 10:00am-12:00pm

We Walk the Woods! *Fun, fitness and learning are a great combination! Join Park staff and volunteers for a adventure hike in the park. Discover nature on this fun, family friendly program. Please wear sturdy footwear and dress for the weather. Program is suitable for all ages. Please meet at the Park Headquarters Parking Lot. For more information, please call (978)-821-2828.*

Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street, Concord MA 01742, Concord

Friday, February 24, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Winter Crafts for Kids *Seasonal story book reading and fun craft creation to make and take home, all materials provided. Meet at the Tsongas Gallery at park headquarters. Ages 5-12. All children must be accompanied by an adult. No dogs unless they are working guides. Accessible. For more information please call 978 369-3254.*

Southeast

Myles Standish State Forest, 194 Cranberry Road, South Carver, MA, Plymouth/Carver

Sunday, February 19, 12:00pm - 2:00pm

Winter Campfire Fun *What better to do on a chilly afternoon than to gather around the campfire to learn about the creatures that live in our forest? Come to the Myles Standish Amphitheater where we'll provide a warm campfire, some interesting activities, an optional short hike (1:15pm - 1:45pm), hot chocolate, and marshmallows. Feel free to come and go as you please - stay for a few minutes or join us for the whole time. Bring your family and friends for this program that will surely warm you up! Please dress in warm clothes and winter boots, and you may want to bring some warm blankets to sit on and wrap up in. Rain, snow storm, or very icy conditions will cancel. Program is suitable for most ages. Program meets at the Myles Standish State Forest Amphitheater behind headquarters at 194 Cranberry Road, South Carver. Reasonable accommodations upon request. Please call (508) 866-2580 x 162 for more information.*

Wompatuck State Park, Union Street, Hingham, MA, Hingham

Tuesday, February 21, 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Tracks, Scat, and Nests *Animal signs tell stories if we know how to read them. Watch an interactive slide show in the Visitor Center and guess who made the signs. Afterwards, we will enjoy a hike outside searching for wildlife and the signs they left behind for us to discover. Please dress in warm clothes and winter boots. Rain, snow storm, or very icy conditions will cancel the hiking portion of the program. Program is suitable for most ages. Program meets at the Visitor Center on Union Street in Hingham. Reasonable accommodations upon request. Please call (508) 866-2580 x 163 for more information.*

Borderland State Park, 259 Massapoag Ave, N. Easton, MA, Easton/Sharon

Tuesday February 21, 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Tracks, Scat, and Nests *Animal signs tell stories if we know how to read them. Watch an interactive slide show in the Visitor Center and guess who made the signs. Afterwards, we will enjoy a hike outdoors searching for wildlife and the signs they left behind for us to discover. Please dress in warm clothes and winter boots. Rain, snow storm, or very icy conditions will cancel the hiking portion of the program. Program is suitable for most ages. Meet at the Visitor Center. Reasonable accommodations upon request. Please call (508) 866-2580 x 163 for more information.*

Waquoit Bay Reserve, 149 Waquoit Highway, Falmouth, MA

Wednesday, February 22, 9:30am - 11:30am

Winter Greens Walk *Discover colorful plants in the winter woods and learn why some trees lose their leaves while others stay green all year long. Find out which species of conifers drops all its needles at once and how native pines survive harsh conditions like fire and ice. We'll end the hike with a taste of wintergreen tea. Please consider dressing in layers with hat, gloves and boots. Program is suitable for most ages. Please meet at the South Cape Beach town parking lot. Reasonable accommodations upon request. For more information or directions, please call (508) 457-0495.*

F. Gilbert Hills State Forest, 45 Mill Street, Foxboro, MA

Wednesday, February 22, 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Animal Tracking Workshop *Join Cynthia Menard, expert tracker from Withywindle Nature Programs to learn how to track the animals moving about in the forest! The secret to successful tracking is to never stop questioning. Cynthia will teach participants how to find tracks, scat and browse and how to use what they observe to identify the animals leaving behind their signs. You'll learn how to tell different tracks apart, what other kinds of signs (rubs, lays, browse) to look for and participants will receive a hand-out to take home so you can continue practicing their tracking skills after the program has ended. Please dress warmly with sturdy hiking shoes; snowshoes are recommended if snow is deep as we may go off-trail. Dress in warm winter clothes as we'll be outside for two-plus hours. Rain, snow storm, or very icy conditions will cancel the program; we will reschedule. Program is for adults and children 13-plus. Program meets at Park Headquarters at 45 Mill Street in Foxboro. Reasonable accommodations upon request. Please call (508) 866-2580 x163 to pre-register or for more information.*

Waquoit Bay Reserve, 149 Waquoit Highway, Falmouth, MA

Thursday, February 23, 9:30am - 11:30am

Beach Comber Bingo *Through interactive games we'll identify egg cases, shells, feathers and more. Then we'll take a seaside stroll to find natural treasures along the way. Please consider dressing in layers with hat, gloves and boots. Program is suitable for most ages. Please meet at Reserve Visitor Center. Reasonable accommodations upon request. Please call (508)457-0495.*

Waquoit Bay Reserve, 149 Waquoit Highway, Falmouth, MA

Friday, February 24, 9:30am - 11:30am

Winter Survival *Discover the layers of life in Cape Cod woodlands as we explore Reserve trails and learn how humans and wildlife stay warm in the coldest weather. We'll experiment with insulating materials and find secret hideaways to test if our "jello critters" can survive. Please consider dressing in layers with hat, gloves and boots. Program is suitable for most ages. Please meet at Reserve Visitor Center. Reasonable accommodations upon request. For more information or directions, please call (508) 457-0495.*

Central

Wachusett Reservoir, Gate 8, Boylston MA

Monday, February 20, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Presidents' Day Snowshoe Hike Join *Park Ranger* and explore the shoreline of Wachusett Reservoir. Discover this winter wooded wonderland, learn about the critters of the area and their snowy season survival. The hike is easy to moderate terrain. Please bring your own snowshoes. Please meet at Gate 8 -at the corner of Cross Street and Route 70 in Boylston. For more information, please call (978)365-3800 or 508-792-7423 x231

Quabbin Reservoir, 485 Ware Road, Belchertown MA

Tuesday, February 21, 10:00am-12:00pm

Aquatic Critter Open House Join *DCR Aquatic Biologist Paula Packard* for a hands-on look at small, common water critters that live in Quabbin Reservoir. Please meet at the Visitor Center. For more information please call (413)323-7221.

Quabbin Reservoir, 485 Ware Road, Belchertown MA

Thursday, February 23, 10:00am-11:00am

Quabbin Park History Detectives *Hidden in the Quabbin Forest* are clues to life in the four drowned towns. Join us as we search for signs of the past! Meet at the Webster Road trail in Quabbin Park. Please dress appropriately for the weather and for a forest hike. For more information and directions, please call (413)323-7221.

Visitor Centers & Special Events

Northeast

Lawrence Heritage State Park, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence MA

Open Daily, 9:00am-4:00pm

Visitor Center Exhibit "City of Workers" A restored boarding house with two floors of interactive exhibits tells the tale of Lawrence, one of the nation's first planned industrial cities. Along with stories of Lawrence's mill workers and industry, the workers' role in the 1912 Bread and Roses Strike is relived with images and sounds. Accessible. For more information or directions, please call (978)794-1655.

Southeast

WBNERR Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Rte. 28, Falmouth MA

Tuesday-Friday, 10:00am-4:00pm

The Waquoit Bay Reserve Exhibits on and estuaries including model watershed and large aerial photo of the bay and surrounding areas. Observe bay creatures in the live aquarium tank and enjoy the Children's Discovery Room with shells, puzzles, books and puppets. Trail guides and Discovery Back Packs available to borrow for outdoor exploration. Accessible. For more information or directions, please call (508) 457-0495.

Borderland State Park, 259 Massapoag Avenue, North Easton MA

Open Daily, 8:00am-4:30pm

Visitor Center "Ames Family History Gallery" Borderland is one of the most historically significant tracts of publicly owned land in the Commonwealth. Created in the early 1900s by artist and suffragist Blanche Ames and her botanist husband Oakes. Borderland offers many of the same pleasures that the Ames family enjoyed. Learn about this family through parks exhibits. Then enjoy the many recreational experiences once enjoyed by this famous family at their "Borderland": walking and horseback riding on woodland trails, fishing and canoeing in the ponds, or, in winter, ice-skating and sledding. For more information or directions, please call (508)238-6566.

West

Mount Greylock State Reservation, 30 Rockwell Road, Lanesborough MA

Open Daily, 9:00am-4:30pm

Visitor Center & Exhibits The Visitor Center features park trail maps and orientation, regional tourist information and exhibits on natural and cultural history of the park. For more information or directions, please call (413)499-4262.

Western Gateway Heritage State Park, 115 State Street, Building 4, North Adams MA

Thursday-Monday, 10:00am-4:00pm

Visitor Center & Exhibits *The heart of the park is the Visitors Museum. Imaginative exhibits are designed to reveal the impact that the railroad industry and the Hoosac Tunnel project had on both northern Berkshire County and America. Children and adults can experiment with a vintage floor scale that was used for weighing loads up to half a ton. A 30-minute documentary film provides a history of the Hoosac Tunnel. For more information or directions, please call (413)663-6312*

Central

Holyoke Heritage State Park, 221 Appleton Street, Holyoke MA

Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm

Visitor Center & Exhibits *The park's Visitors' Center features exhibits about paper manufacturing and Holyoke's industrial history. The Children's Museum, the restored antique Holyoke Merry-Go-Round and the Volleyball Hall of Fame are also located within the park.*

Quabbin Reservoir, 485 Ware Road (Rte. 9), Belchertown MA

Open Daily, 8:30am-4:30pm

Visitor Center & Exhibits *Enjoy displays about the history of the Quabbin Valley and how the reservoir was built. Learn about wildlife at the Quabbin and some of the research being done there. Visitors may request viewing one of several short videos about the area as well. For more information, please call 413-323-7221.*

Ongoing Resources

Public Skating. Ice skating is a great winter activity for people of all ages and abilities. Many ice skating rinks have skate rentals and snack concessions. Visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/skating.htm> for a listing a rinks and resources statewide.

Park Passport Program. Create Your Own Adventure! [Get your Park Passport and start exploring your state parks!](#) Collect all 76 stamps in your passport and experience the diverse natural, cultural and recreational resources that span DCR's 450,000 acres. Visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/passport/index.html> for more information and downloads.

Healthy Heart Trails. Trails are the heart of our parks and DCR wants them to be the heart of a healthy lifestyle. Statewide, over 70 trails are designated as Healthy Heart Trails in the hope that Massachusetts residents will make them part of their regular exercise routine. Healthy Heart trails are identified by a green heart symbol, measure approximately 1.5 miles or less in length, and are easy to moderate in activity level. The program offers a great way to have fun and get exercise in a low cost way! Visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/hht/index.htm> for more information, trail listings and downloads.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Edward M. Lambert Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

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