

# Welcome to the Blue Hills!



Listed in this brochure are Ranger Tom's favorite hikes. The following hikes can be completed in one to three hours and vary in difficulty from easy to challenging. Reservation Rangers recommend that you carry water (for longer hikes) and a trail map (always). Note that many trail intersections are numbered in the field with 4 digit marking system (four black numbers on a small white marker. Example: 1141). These numbers are shown on the DCR trail map. Maps can be purchased on the side porch at Reservation Headquarters. DCR Reservation Headquarters is located at 695 Hillside St. next to the State Police Station, ¼ mile north of Houghton's Pond.

## 1. Hikes from Reservation Headquarters

**Skyline Loop** 3 miles  
(1.5 to 2.5 hours) *challenging*  
*Blue Blazes*

This popular loop trail crosses several summits offering panoramic views. The highlight of the hike is Great Blue Hill, the highest peak on the Atlantic coast south of Maine. The North Skyline Trail begins at Reservation Headquarters. Follow the blue

blazes up the woodland trail across from the porch. Turn right on the footpath 50 yards away from the headquarters. An alternative is starting from the South Skyline Trail which begins near 725 Hillside St., 200 yards south of Reservation Headquarters in the direction of Houghton's Pond.

**Hancock Hill** .5 miles  
(30 minutes) *moderate*  
A wonderful summit view for those with limited time. Begin to follow the North Skyline Trail at Reservation Headquarters and ascend the first hill, stopping at the first summit. Return on the same trail.



**Wolcott & Border Path** 2.5 miles  
(1 to 1.75 hours) *easy*  
A relatively level hike through beautiful woodlands. Scenic highlights include majestic stands of pines and hemlocks. Follow the woodland lane that starts at Reservation Headquarters (Wolcott Path) approx. ½ mile to the Five Corners intersection (five trails converge). Angle right on the green dot trail. Upon reaching Border Path (intersection 1135), turn right and continue to intersection 1175. Turn right and follow the path past intersection 1178 and back to Wolcott Path.

## 2. Hikes from Houghton's Pond

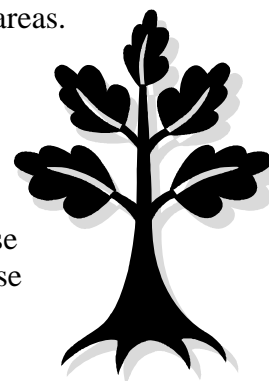
**Houghton's Pond Loop** .75 miles  
(30 minutes) *easy*  
*Yellow Dots*

A short scenic hike around popular Houghton's Pond. This walk is very picturesque during the fall foliage season. Walk from the bulletin board at the main parking area and head down to the pond; circle the pond using the paths and roadway. Yellow marks on trees guide the way.

**Dark Hollow Loop** 2 miles  
(1.5 hours) *easy or moderate with the Tucker Hill addition*  
*Green dot trail*

This mostly level forested loop trail takes you through oak-pine woodlands. For the more adventurous, a side trip up Tucker Hill provides fine views of Houghton's Pond and surrounding areas.

From the Houghton's Pond bulletin board, walk towards the bathhouse. Follow the green dots which begin past the bathhouse and loop around the base of Tucker Hill. To climb Tucker Hill, follow the green dots to the Skyline Trail (blazed in blue) and head uphill to the summit of Tucker Hill.



**Buck Hill Loop**  
3.5 miles  
*Red dots*  
*challenging*

(2 to 3 hours)  
The rocky summit of Buck Hill offers a stellar 360 degree view of the surrounding region and is an invigorating climb. From the Houghton's Pond bulletin board follow red dots toward the beach and pass the bathhouse. Follow the red dots over Breeze Hill to the intersection of the red dot and green dot trails. Here you have the option of following the red dot loop either direction. To begin with a more rigorous climb follow the red dot trail headed north over Tucker Hill via the Skyline trail. For the more leisurely approach to Buck Hill follow the red dot trail east via Doe Hollow and finish with the more rugged terrain as your return route. Either direction will loop over Buck Hill and back to the red and green dot intersection. Then follow red dots back over Breeze Hill to the parking lot.



## 3. Hikes from Trailside Museum

**Wolcott Path Loop** 2 miles  
(1 to 2 hours) *easy*

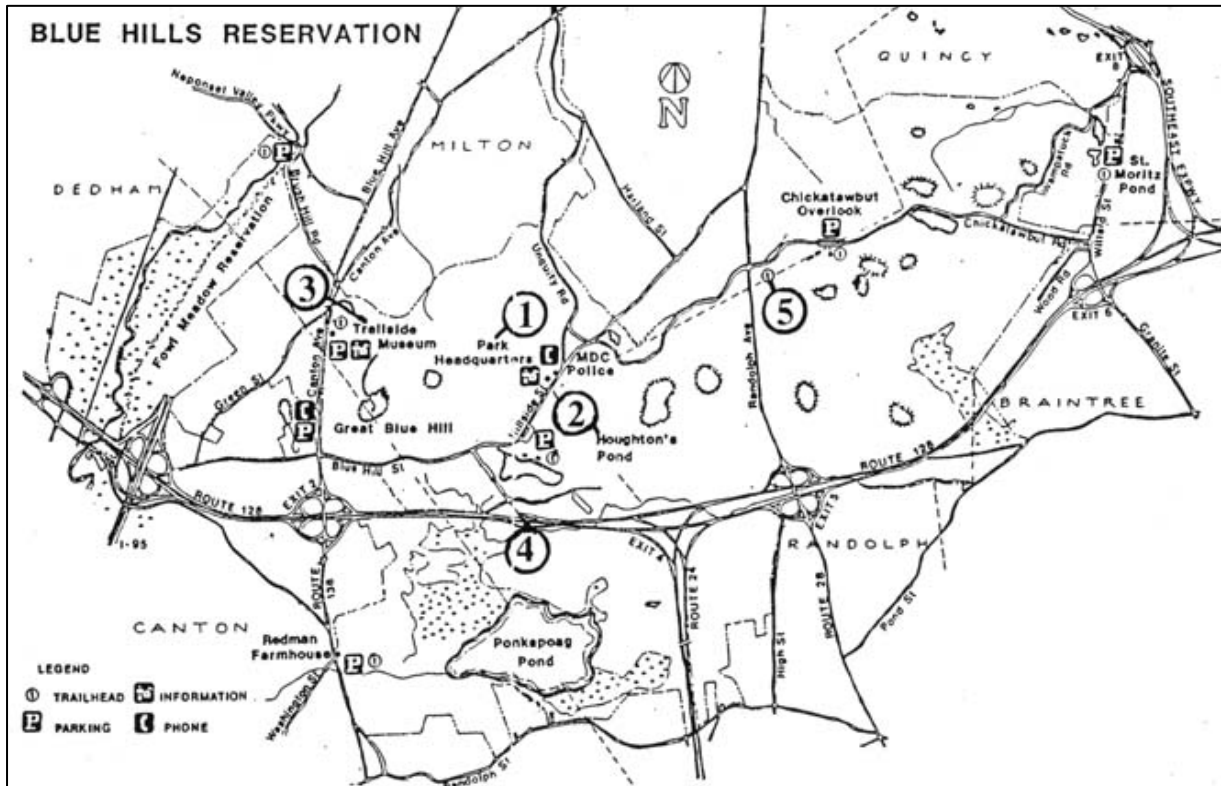
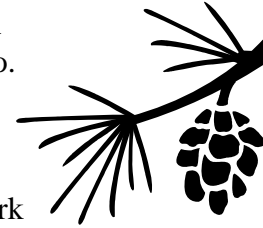
This relatively level trail through large hardwood forests begins in the parking area, 500 feet north of Trailside Museum. Follow the green dots starting at the bulletin board.

**Great Blue Hill** 1 mile  
(1 to 1.5 hours) *moderate*  
Thousands of hikers ascend Great Blue Hill each year to enjoy the fantastic view. On a clear day, Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire is visible close to 70 miles away! This moderately steep trail begins from the Trailside Museum and is marked by red dots. The paved access road to the summit is an easier alternative route. This road is reached at the parking area just north of Trailside Museum. Follow the green dot trail starting at the bulletin board and turn right at the paved road.

## Other hikes within the reservation

**4. Ponkapoag Pond** 3.75 miles  
(2.5 to 3 hours) *moderate*  
*Green Dot Trail*  
Follow the green dot trail around the reservation's largest and most remote body of water. Rangers highly recommend an optional exploration over the Ponkapoag boardwalk. The bog is located across from the YMCA camp site. Park at the Rt. 93 exit 3 pull-off on Blue Hill River Rd. Do not block the gate.

**5. Braintree Pass Path** 3 miles  
(2 to 2.5 hours) *easy*  
This hike is one of the gems of the reservation. The trail passes by stands of majestic hemlocks, slopes covered with mountain laurel and an Atlantic cedar swamp. An old cellar hole along the way marks the Glover Homestead where settlers farmed hundreds of years ago. The trail begins at the intersection of Rt. 28 and Chickatawbut Rd. Park in the small pull-off and walk by the bulletin board down Braintree Pass Path. After passing intersection 3072 take the next trail that bears left and follow it downhill to intersection 3121. Go left again and follow the path skirting the swamp to your right. Return to Braintree Pass Path via Bouncing Brook Path.



*Happy trails!*

*Enjoy your day in the Blue Hills Reservation!*



# Ranger Tom's Suggested Hikes

*Blue Hills Reservation*

