

# Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

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## Connecticut River Greenway State Park

136 Damon Rd., Northampton, MA 01060, (413) 586-8706 x12

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Connecticut River Greenway State Park, we offer the following suggested experiences that we think you might enjoy.

- **“Introductory”** are short and appropriate for most users, including families with children.
- **“Signature”** are recommended trail experiences. These may be longer or more difficult but highlight some of the best park features.

For a safe and enjoyable park experience please review the **Things to Know Before You Go** section at the end of this document. Download a map before you go:

## Signature Hike

### Mount Toby-Robert Frost Trail, North

**Trailhead:** From the intersection of Routes 116 and 47 in Sunderland, follow Rt. 47 north 3.9 miles to the town line with Montague. Just after the town line sign, turn right onto Reservation Road. The Tower Road gate, parking area and kiosk are a half-mile on the right. **Lat/Long:** 42.503836, -72.531118

**Distance:** 3.2 miles round-trip **Difficulty:** Moderate

**Brief Description:** This short section of the 47-mile-long Robert Frost Trail climbs up to Mount Toby summit (elev. 1,269). Elevation gain is about 800 ft. The hike is mostly wooded throughout, you are rewarded at the summit from a DCR fire tower, offering panoramic views of the surrounding Connecticut River Valley landscape. The trail is primarily used for hiking, running, nature viewing, and snowshoeing. Accessible year-round this can be a moderately-well used trail. The conservation property comprises both DCR and University of Massachusetts-Amherst lands; this hike is entirely within UMass' Mount Toby Demonstration Forest. Begin your hike on Tower Road. The Robert Frost Trail (RFT) immediately veers off to the right. continue to follow the RFT orange trail blazes to Mount Toby summit. Return by the same RFT route (3.2 miles), or for a loop hike with gradual descent, take the Tower Road back to your starting point (4.3 miles). About 3+ hours total time.

## Signature Paddle

### Circumnavigate Elwell Island

**Trailhead:** launch site at lower Elwell recreation area **Lat/Long:** 42.33513, -72.62036

**Distance:** Approx 2 miles **Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** Launch from the river access at the lower Elwell Recreation area. Paddle up the western "quiet" side of the island, going under the Norwottuck Rail Trail Bridge. Turn right at the top end of the island and follow along the eastern shoreline. At lower end, above the Rt 9 bridge, turn right to return to launch site. The island is a natural sandbar and was once a pasture for cattle! Now it is a special wild conservation area.

## Signature Paddle Connecticut River Water Trail, Sunderland- Hadley

**Trailhead:** Put-in: Sunderland public boat ramp, at end of School Street in Sunderland. The boat ramp is through a gate on the left. Take-out: Hatfield public boat ramp, Kellog Hill Road **Lat/Long:** 42.46745, -72.58326

**Distance:** 6 miles one-way **Difficulty:** Moderate

**Brief Description:** Paddlers can choose to go up and back, or just go with the flow, downstream. This is a quiet section of the river. Power boats are limited to 15 mph. About a mile upstream of the Hatfield launch, around the bend on a point on the north (east) shore, is "The Bashin." This is a lovely sandy spot where you can beach and relax. Along the way, notice the high bluffs, marshes, flood plain forests, and maybe glimpse of a farm or wildlife.

## Signature Hike Rail Trail walk

**Trailhead:** 400 Damon Rd, Northampton, junction with Route 9 **Lat/Long:** 42.33518, -72.62166

**Distance:** 3 miles round-trip **Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** Begin by crossing the historic lattice truss bridge of the MCRT-Norwottuck Rail Trail. You will go over the southern end of Elwell Island, once a pasture, it now is a conservation and wildlife area. Continue east over the river then view the farmland on the north side of the trail. At the turnaround point of this walk, you will come to the historic Hadley Common. Look for the monument, which tells its story. Relax a few moments, then return.

## Things to Know Before You Go

- **Time, distance, difficulty.** The average hiker pace is estimated at 1.5 miles per hour. Most distances are round-trip. Plan conservatively, start early. Be aware of

weather and sunset. Trail difficulty ratings based on ruggedness and gradient are ***easy, moderate, or difficult.***

- **Wear weather appropriate clothing**, layer for temperature changes. Bring sunblock. Wear appropriate and sturdy footwear.
- **Parking at trailheads.** [Parking fees](#) may apply. Space may be limited. Be courteous to avoid blocking in others. Do not leave valuables in your car.
- **Bring a map and share your plans with someone.**
- **Drinking water** may not be available on site. Bring plenty!
- **Stay on designated trails.** Follow painted blazes and signs if available. Generally, double blazes indicate an intersection or direction change.
- **Pace & group size.** [Keep your group together](#); hike only as fast as your group's slowest hiker or rider. Limit your group size to 12 people or fewer to lessen impacts.
- **Carry-in, carry-out all trash and personal belongings.** Follow the Leave No Trace outdoor ethics. [More information here.](#)
- **Know which parks are pet friendly.** Dogs are not permitted in DCR Water Supply Protection areas (such as Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs) and certain state parks. Always keep your dog leashed, 10-foot maximum. Always pick up after your dog and dispose of waste properly. [Complete guidelines here.](#)
- **Be aware of hunting seasons.** Wear blaze orange when appropriate. [More information here.](#)
- **Wear a bicycle helmet** while biking. Riders age 16 and under must wear a helmet. It is the law. [More information here.](#)
- **Wear your PFD** while boating. A Personal Flotation Device (PFD), or life preserver, must be worn by boaters age 12 and under; and canoeists/kayakers from Sept. 15-May 15. [More information here.](#)
- **Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers.** Prevent the transport of nuisance species. Clean all recreational equipment. It is the law. [More information here.](#)
- **Be aware some trails may not be well marked, and some may not be identified on a trail map.**

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) oversees over 450,000 acres of state parks, forests, beaches, bike trails, parkways, watershed lands, and dams across the Commonwealth. DCR's mission is to: *Protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all.*