

Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

D.A.R. State Forest

78 Cape Street, Goshen, MA 01032, (413) 268-7098

To help you plan your visit to DCR's D.A.R. State Forest, 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:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dar-state-forest-trail-map/download>

Introductory Hike Highland Lake Trail

Trailhead: Park at the lot near the entrance to the campground road, a half-mile from the park entrance contact station. The trailhead is directly across the road. Look for trail sign. **Lat/Long:** 42.456899, -72.791187

Distance: 0.35 miles **Difficulty:** Easy

Brief Description: This easy Universal Access Trail is a packed gravel path that winds along the shores of Upper Highland Lake, between the lake's two canoe/boat launches.

Introductory Hike Long Trail to the Hemlock Trail

Trailhead: Park at the lot near the entrance to the campground road, a half-mile from the park entrance contact station. The Long Trail trailhead is about 250 feet further down the campground road, on the left. **Lat/Long:** 42.456899, -72.791187

Distance: 1.6 mile loop **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: Take the Long Trail from the Camper's Beach along the western shore of Upper Highland Lake. Turn right on the the Hemlock Trail to return to the campground. Walk back along the campground road, past the Nature Center and wildlife viewing station, to your starting point.

Signature Hike

Fire Tower Loop Hike

Trailhead: Park at the lot at the campground entrance near Upper Highland Lake.

Lat/Long: 42.456903, -72.791150

Distance: 3.1 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: This loop hike covers some ground, culminating with the a panoramic view from the Fire Tower atop Moore Hill. From the parking lot walk up the campground road, past the boat ramp, and pick up the Long Trail on the left. Follow the Long Trail along Upper Highland Lake and through woods all the way to Moore Hill Road (paved). Cross over Moore Hill Road and continue to follow the foot trail to the summit of Moore Hill. Return via the Darling Trail to the campground and your starting point at the parking lot (3.1 miles); or a more circuitous route via the NEMBA Trail back to Moore Hill Road and the campground road parking lot (3.6 miles).

Signature Paddle

Kayak Upper Highland Lake

Trailhead: There are two car-top boat ramps. One off Moore Hill Road, just past the Contact Station, this launch is universally accessible. The second is near the campground entrance, with plenty of parking if the first one is full.

Lat/Long: 42.456903, -72.797041

Distance: Varies **Difficulty:** Easy

Brief Description: Upper Highland Lake is 53-acre with a maximum depth of around 14 feet. The 2-mile long shoreline is undeveloped with evergreens, mountain laurel and native azalea.

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.**

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.*