

2026 First Day Hikes

Massachusetts is where the American Revolution began, and it is also where the First Day Hikes started. On New Years Day in 1992, 380 people gathered at Blue Hill Reservation to welcome the new year with a walk in the woods. That simple idea grew into something big. Today, all 50 states offer First Day Hikes on January 1. As we prepare to honor the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026, DCR is proud to celebrate this Massachusetts tradition that continues to inspire the nation. Scroll down to find your First Day Hike, with locations, times, and details for DCR parks across Massachusetts.

CENTRAL

Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-11:30am

Meeting Location: 287 Oak Street, Uxbridge

GPS: 42.094066706755356, -71.6238228755519

Celebrate the New Year at the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park on a First Day Hike! Walk along the waterways and woodlands of the canal towpath and experience the sights and sounds of the Blackstone River in winter. Join us after the hike for hot chocolate in the Visitor Center and firepits out on the patio.

The hike is ~1.5 miles over a compacted gravel surface with no inclines. Meet at the River Bend Farm Visitor Center. All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is required and begins at 9:30 a.m. Appropriate for ages 10 and up. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Leashed dogs are welcome. Dress for the weather. Programming is subject to change. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 278-7604 or visit bit.ly/blstupdates. For ADA/reasonable accommodations, call (617) 645-0358 or email moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov.

Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center

January 1, 2026, Registration: 9:30am-10:00am, Hike: 10:00am-11:30am

Meeting Location: 3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester

GPS: 42.236362426653436, -71.79572796441792

Registration required: [Registration for First Day Hike at Blackstone River Greenway Visitor Center at Worcester](#)

Celebrate the New Year at Blackstone Heritage Greenway Visitor Center in Worcester on a First Day Hike! We will hike from the Visitor Center to the Millbury St. satellite parking lot and back, minimal elevation changes on a paved bikeway, accessible and easy. Enjoy views of the Blackstone River and keep your eyes peeled for both urban wildlife and evidence of the area's industrial past. At the

turnaround point (Millbury St.), you will find the northernmost intact segment of the Blackstone Canal. The hike is 3 miles, about 1.5 hours in duration. Dress for the weather and leashed dogs are welcome to join.

Space is limited; registration is required. Registration begins at 9:30 am and hike begins at 10:00am. Join us afterwards at the Visitor Center for hot chocolate. For more information, please call (508) 373-7056.

Wachusett Reservoir

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Location: 168 Temple St, West Boylston

GPS: 42.35303650278069, -71.76495854232945

Celebrate the New Year at Wachusett Reservoir on a First Day Hike! Enjoy scenic vistas of the water supply that provides clean drinking water to about three million people in Massachusetts. Hiking along wide forest access roads with some hills up to 8% incline. This slow-paced hike is approximately 2 miles round trip. Dress for the weather. Dogs are not permitted on Watershed property; service dogs are welcome.

Please meet at Wachusett Reservoir Gate 22 on Rt. 140 in West Boylston (168 Temple Street). For more information, please contact (617) 352-4044.

Willard Brook State Forest

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-1:00pm

Meeting Location: 59 Townsend Road, Ashby

GPS: 42.662843103212374, -71.79173034573975

Registration required: [Registration for First Day Hike at Willard Brook State Forest](#)

Celebrate the New Year at Willard Brook State Forest in Ashby on a First Day Hike! Hike the Brook Trail Loop at Damon Pond. Enjoy scenic views on this moderately paced hike in the heart of the park. Hike is approximately 2.5-miles, about 3 hours in duration. Dress for the weather and leashed dogs are welcome to join.

Enjoy a warming fire before and after the event. Space is limited; registration is required. For more information, please call (978) 597-8802.

NORTH

Breakheart Reservation

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Location: 177 Forest St. Saugus

GPS: 42.48016717477818, -71.0258374027916

Celebrate the New Year at Breakheart Reservation in Saugus on a First Day Hike! There will be two guided hikes offered, a 2-mile hike and a 3-mile hike through the paved loops at beautiful Breakheart. We will see animal tracks, CCC projects, Lower and Upper ponds. Dress for the weather, wear winter boots and leashed dogs are welcome to join.

After the hike, warm up with hot chocolate. This hike is co-sponsored by the Friends of Breakheart Reservation. For more information, call (781) 233-0834.

Halibut Point State Park

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-12:30pm

Meeting Location: Parking lot, 4 Gott Ave., Rockport

GPS: 42.68682577510787, -70.6317506288357

Celebrate the New Year at Halibut Point State Park on a First Day Hike! Join the park staff for a seaside stroll and enjoy the seasonal scenic splendor including wintering ducks and birds along this rocky coastal water's edge. View from Babson Farm Quarry edges the Ipswich Bay and beyond – all the way up the east coast to Maine! Hike is approximately 2.5-miles, about 2 hours in duration. Dress for cold, windy weather and wear sturdy boots. Leashed dogs are welcome.

Meet in the parking lot. Co-sponsored by the Friends of Halibut Point State Park. Inclement weather may cancel. Cancellation message will be left after 3pm the previous day at (857) 268-6024.

Harold Parker State Forest

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Location: Berry Pond, 700 Middleton Road, North Andover

GPS: 42.6215508338235, -71.08764342012866

Celebrate the New Year at Harold Parker State Forest on a First Day Hike! Walking from Berry Pond to Salem Pond and back. Hike is approximately 2-miles, about 1.5 hours in duration. Dress for cold weather and wear winter boots. Leashed dogs are welcome.

After the hike, enjoy some hot chocolate by the warming fire. This event is co-sponsored by the Friends of Harold Parker. For more information, please call (978) 686-3391.

Walden Pond State Reservation

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-2:00pm

Meeting Location: 915 Walden Street, Concord

GPS: 42.440411166877475, -71.33386127695215

Celebrate the New Year at Walden Pond State Reservation with a self-guided First Day Hike! Starting at the Visitor Center, walk down wooden ramp to Henry David Thoreau House Replica, cross at the crosswalk and walk on the ADA Accessible trail/Woods Path to site of Henry David Thoreau's House. The route is a crushed stone surface, ADA approved, and easy. Go at your own pace and follow the interpretive signage along the way. Self-guided hike is approximately 1.5 miles, about 1 hour in duration. Dress for the weather. No pets are allowed at Walden Pond State Reservation. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Warm up with hot chocolate after your hike at the visitor center, which will be open regular winter hours, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. This event is co-sponsored by Friends of Walden Pond.

This program is free, please note that on holidays and weekends, Walden Pond often closes due to capacity. Check DCR Park Alerts for closures at mass.gov/parkalerts.

SOUTH

Blue Hills Reservation

January 1, 2026, 11:00am – 1:00pm

Meeting Location: 840 Hillside Street, Milton

GPS: 42.210096955126595, -71.09613225689925

Celebrate the new year at Blue Hills Reservation in Milton on a First Day Hike! Join DCR Staff for a First Day Hike through the Blue Hills Reservation. Meet around the Houghton's Pond Visitor Center.

Starting at 11 am, watch Blue Hills Trailside live wildlife demo at Houghton's Pond with the Mass Audubon staff, gather around a warming fire and share some New Year's cheer. Please consider bringing a non-perishable food item for Interfaith Social Services. Food and beverages will be available for purchase at the concession stand.

Starting at 12 pm, DCR staff will lead two easy to moderate hikes for a 1-hour to 2-hour trek in the great outdoors. There will also be one self-guided option. Choose the hike to suit your interest and ability. Dress warmly and wear sturdy hiking boots for all hikes. Leashed dogs are welcome to join, for more information, please call DCR Blue Hills office at (617) 698-1802, x4.

Directions: *Take Exit 3 off route 93 and follow First Day signs.* Please arrive early to allow for parking; space is limited. Follow directions from park staff. You may be directed to park in overflow lots. Please respect our neighbors by not parking outside DCR property or along roadways.

South Cape Beach State Reservation

January 1, 2026, 10:00am – 11:30am

Meeting Location: 668 Great Oak Road, Mashpee

GPS: 41.553435115595484, -70.50552383152427

Celebrate the New Year at South Cape Beach State Reservation on a First Day Hike! Hike along the beach with views of Martha's Vineyard. DCR staff will point out any interesting discoveries along the route such as horseshoe crabs, welks and many treasures along the shoreline. Depending on conditions, hike is approximately 1 mile, about 1 hour in duration. Hike will be on loose sand and likely windy. Dress for the weather and sandy terrain. Leashed dogs are welcome to join.

Enjoy the warm fire and hot chocolate after the hike. For more information, please call Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve at (508) 457-0495.

WEST

Chester-Blandford State Forest

First Day Hike to Sanderson Brook Falls

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-1:00pm

Meeting Location: 631 U.S. Route 20, Chester

GPS: 42.256100298551125, -72.94688212550011

Registration required: westernmasshilltownhikers.com under Events, or text/call 1-413-302-0312.

Celebrate the New Year at Chester-Blandford State Forest on a First Day Hike! Walk the Sanderson Brook Falls Trail along the brook to visit scenic Sanderson Brook Falls. Co-Sponsored by the Western Mass Hilltown Hikers. The hike is two miles (2) round-trip, along a gradual uphill gravel road, and then a short footpath to the falls. About 3 hours in duration. Be prepared for cold weather - dress in layers and sturdy cold-weather boots. Hiking poles suggested. Restrooms are not available on site. Appropriate for ages 8 and up. Dogs are welcome on-leash.

Parking is limited; carpooling is encouraged. Pre-registration is required through westernmasshilltownhikers.com under Events, or text/call 1-413-302-0312.

Great Falls Discovery Center

January 1, 2026, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Meeting Location: 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls

GPS: 42.61006109848692, -72.55549150374713

Celebrate the New Year at Great Falls Discovery Center in Turner Falls on a First Day Hike! Enjoy a leisurely stroll along the paved Canalside Rail Trail. This family-friendly hike follows a gentle route and provides an opportunity to discover the abundant natural, historical, and cultural features that make this such a beautiful and unique State Park! Hike is approximately 3-miles, about 1.5 hours in duration. Route may change depending on trail conditions. Dress for the weather. Leashed dogs are welcome, please no dogs inside the Great Hall.

Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Hike begins at 1:15pm. For more information, please call, (413) 863-3221.

Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest

January 1, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Location: 466 West Hawley Road, Plainfield MA 01070

GPS: -72.941611, 42.552040

Registration required: [Registration for First Day Hike at Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest](#)

Celebrate the New Year at Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest in Plainfield on a First Day Hike! Hiking the Pond Loop Trail around the beautiful Hallockville Pond, enjoying evidence of wildlife and remnants of old mill sites. Easy to moderate hike, no major elevation changes. Dress for the weather, in case of snow traction devices / snowshoes are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome.

Space is limited; registration is required. For more information, please call (413) 347-2065.

Mount Greylock State Reservation

January 1, 2026, 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Meeting Location: 30 Rockwell Road, Lanesborough, MA

GPS: 42.553694356777704, -73.21327

Registration required: [Registration for First Day Hike at Mount Greylock State Reservation](#)

Celebrate the New Years at Mount Greylock State Reservation on a First Day Hike! Meet at the Mount Greylock Visitor Center. Hiking the Bradley Farm Trail, easy to moderate in difficulty, with an elevation gain of approximately 450 feet. Along the way, enjoy beautiful scenery and interpretive stations highlighting natural and cultural history. Hike is approximately 2 miles, about 1.5 to 2 hours in duration. Dress for the weather, wear winter boots and leashed dogs are welcome.

Space is limited to 25; registration is required. Before and after the hike, warm up by the fire inside the Visitor Center. For more information, please call (413) 499-4262.

Mt. Tom Reservation

January 1, 2026, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Meeting Location: 125 Reservation Road Holyoke

GPS: 42.26903335952047, -72.61654571569925

Registration required: [Registration for First Day Hike at Mount Tom State Reservation](#)

Celebrate the New Year at Mt. Tom Reservation in Holyoke on a First Day Hike! Meet at the warming hut for a guided 2-mile hike, about 1.5 hours in duration. Hike will start at Bray Lake parking area on our newly redone universal access trail and then we will turn onto the Bray Loop Trail. Hike will be easy to moderate at time with mixed surface of packed gravel, to rocky portions of the trail. There will be about 300 feet of elevation gain along the route. We may see some evidence of wildlife and the beautiful Bray Lake. Dress for the weather, leashed dogs are welcome.

Space is limited; registration is required. For more information, please call (413) 534-1186.