

Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

Monroe State Forest

Main Road, Monroe, MA 01247, (413) 339-5504

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Monroe 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/monroe-state-forest-trail-map/download>

Introductory Hike Raycroft Lookout

Trailhead: Take Monroe Road off of MA Rte. 2 and Whitcomb Hill Road in Florida. Follow Monroe Road for 2.1 miles. Turn right and follow dirt road for 0.2 mile, under powerlines. Parking is at dirt turn around. Trail enters woods here.

Lat/Long: 42.692170, -72.984657

Distance: 0.56 mile round-trip **Difficulty:** Easy

Brief Description: This short out and back hike features a stunning scenic view of the Deerfield River valley from the rampart-like stone lookout built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1941.

Signature Hike Dunbar Brook Trail

Trailhead: Begin at the parking area on River Road in Monroe.

Lat/Long: 42.704495, -72.952650

Distance: 3.2 miles **Difficulty:** Difficult

Brief Description: Dunbar Brook Trail is an out and back hike that climbs 700 vertical feet through shaded stands of old-growth eastern hemlock and northern hardwood trees. Pristine Dunbar Brook tumbles and drops over and around huge moss-covered boulders forming entrancing waterfalls, rapids and pools. Follow the trail up towards the powerlines as it soon enters the woods along a singletrack. The route

follows the stream to the intersection with Smith Hollow Trail (on left, uphill). Descend the stone stairs here and cross the stream. The trail turns left onto a doubletrack and continues upstream. then turns left towards the shelter and crosses a foot bridge. The trail passes beneath powerlines and by a jumble of boulders. As the trail approaches Raycroft Road, it passes the site of a sawmill. The trail ends near the bridge. You may return by the same route.

Signature Hike

Spruce Mountain Trail

Trailhead: Park at the dirt pull off at the junction of Main Road and Raycroft Road.

Lat/Long: 42.720235, -72.991721

Distance: 5.2 miles **Difficulty:** Difficult

Brief Description: This adventurous woodland hike takes you to the top of Spruce Mountain for scenic views. Great for wildflowers, wildlife viewing, fall colors, and some rock scrambling. Beware, the trail may not be well marked in places. Best done in a counter-clockwise loop. From Raycroft Road take the blue-blazed Spruce Mountain Trail as it gradually climbs up the ridge to the summit. At the intersection with a snowmobile trail, continue straight. At the summit a spur trail takes you to the view. Retrun to the trail and turn right to go back downhill. When you meet Raycroft Road turn left and follow the road back to the parking lot.

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.*