

# Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

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## Mount Holyoke Range State Park

1500 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002, (413) 253-2883

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Mount Holyoke Range 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:  
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/mt-holyoke-range-state-park-trail-map/download>

## Introductory Hike The Laurel Loop

**Trailhead:** Begin beside the Notch Visitor Center at the kiosk. **Lat/Long:** 42.305156, -72.527441

**Distance:** 0.75 miles **Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** This short 0.75-mile loop brings you through mixed and open woodland on the north side of the Mount Holyoke Range. The signature Mountain Laurel is mostly present throughout. It flowers in late-May and early-June. From the kiosk next to the Notch Visitor Center, head left (north) and behind the Visitor Center. The Laurel Loop meets the Trolley Bed Trail, turn right and continue to where it intersects with the Robert Frost and Metacomet-Monadnock (New England Scenic) Trails. Turn left follow the Laurel Loop back to the Visitor Center. For a longer option (adding on 1.1 miles), when you meet the Trolley Bed Trail, turn left (head north) to meet the Brook Bank Trail. Turn right (and head south) following Brook Bank Trail and connect back to the Laurel Loop Trail where you left off. Pick up a trail map if you decide to hike beyond these suggested trails.

## Signature Hike Mount Norwottuck & Horse Caves

**Trailhead:** Notch Visitor Center parking lot. **Lat/Long:** 42.305056, -72.528384

**Distance:** 3.4 miles round-trip **Difficulty:** Difficult

**Brief Description:** Hike to a cave and a legend! From Notch Visitor Center follow the New England Trail (NET), white blazed, to the top of Mount Norwottuck (1.2 miles). Continue on the NET down to the Horse Caves. These sedimentary rock overhangs were reputed to be used to shelter rebels' horses during Shay's Rebellion in 1786. Continue down until the NET intersects and joins with the Robert Frost Trail, orange blazed. Turn left, follow the Robert Frost Trail back to the Visitor Center (2.2 miles).

## Signature Hike

### The Seven Sisters via New England Trail

**Trailhead:** Begin at the Notch Visitor Center or Skinner Summit House **Lat/Long:** 42.305056, -72.528384

**Distance:** 4 miles one-way, or 8 miles round-trip **Difficulty:** Difficult

**Brief Description:** Hike the famous Seven Sisters! This is a series of summits and lookouts between the Notch Visitor Center and Mount Holyoke on the New England Trail (NET, white blazes). The NET is rugged and very steep in places, but well worth the trip. Don't be fooled, there are more than just seven! You might consider spotting a vehicle at one or the other end of your hike, if a round-trip is not your thing.

## Signature Bike Ride

### Serpentine Coaster

**Trailhead:** Park at the trailhead lot, appx. 79 Batchelor Street, Granby **Lat/Long:** 42.282458, -72.520461

**Distance:** 3.4 miles **Difficulty:** Difficult

**Brief Description:** These single-track trails off Batchelor Street are fairly technical, riding over numerous conglomerate and basalt rock features. If this is your first ride here, start on the right side of the parking lot. Keep left at the first few intersections to stay on Serpentine. Connect (via Lower Access) to the Pond Trail and then take Roller Coaster back to the parking lot. These trails are not well marked, so be prepared if you get a little lost.

## 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.*