

Hiker Safety Tips

Mount Greylock State Reservation

DAY-USE RECREATION INFORMATION

Enjoy your hike

and learn how to be self-reliant

Mount Greylock State Reservation is a popular destination for outdoor recreation and exploration. At an elevation of 3,491 feet, the summit is the highest point in Massachusetts. Typically, the weather on the summit is 5-10 degrees colder than the base and much windier. Hiking can be fun and rewarding, but adequate preparation is necessary for a safe experience. You must not depend solely on your cell phone. Cell service is not available in many remote locations on the Reservation, and cold weather will drain your phone's battery quickly. This guide will help you be self-reliant and prepare for your hiking adventure. Remember to practice good stewardship; make the outdoors a better place for all to recreate.

Be prepared

and other safety tips

- **Get a map.** Familiarize yourself with the terrain and trail routes.
- **Determine your route, stick to it and let someone know** where you are going and when you plan on returning.
- **Never travel alone**, and stay together when hiking.
- **Hike within your ability.** If you're a novice hiker start off with a short, flat hike.
- **Check the weather and dress appropriately** (see clothing).
- **Carry I.D.** and include emergency contact phone number and any medical alerts.
- **Stay on the blazed Trail.** White blazes indicate Appalachian Trail, blue blazes for other trails.
- **Hike at the pace of the slowest hiker in your group.**
- **Wait for others** at trail junctions before proceeding.
- **Drink water and snack along the way.** Dehydration can cause fatigue and confusion. Never drink untreated water from streams.
- **Take precautions for ticks.** Tuck in your pant legs, use insect repellent, and conduct a thorough tick check upon returning home.

Clothing, footwear *and equipment*

Synthetic fabrics such as polypropylene and fleece are excellent for hiking, allowing body moisture to evaporate quickly so you stay warm when you need to. **Avoid cotton** which provides minimal insulation when wet.

A warm-weather clothing system may consist of two or three layers, Clothing must breathe well so water vapor can escape:

Under layer: polypropylene-synthetic underwear-*keeping you dry.*

Middle layer: fleece pullover loose enough to allow movement yet provide a dead warm air space between layers. *-keeping you warm.*

Outer layer: A wind & waterproof jacket and pants to keep you dry, and gaiters that keep the mud out of your boots-*protecting the under layers.*

Sturdy foot wear with ankle support is recommended for rugged terrain. Boots should be broken in before hitting the trail.

Wear a good pair of hiking socks to reduce friction and avoid blisters.

Trekking pole(s) improve stability. They are also a great knee saver on the descents.

Take a daypack for your essentials:

Cellphone, extra clothing, rain gear, hat, flashlight, first aid kit, map and compass (or GPS), pocket knife or multi-tool, a 10 ft. length of cord/rope, lighter, water, snacks, whistle, insect repellent and sunblock.

Respect wildlife *and minimize your impact*

Encountering wildlife is exciting. Remember that you are a visitor traveling in their backyard. **Enjoy them from a distance.**

Black Bear (the only bear native to New England) are normally shy and reclusive. They often sense you even before you see them, so in most cases they are already headed away from you. Should you encounter one, stay calm and maintain your distance. Slowly back away.

- **Avoid feeding critters or leaving behind food!** Animals that develop a taste for human food can become a problem.
- **Pack out all of your trash and food scraps.**
- **Control your pet.** To prevent potential conflict between pets and wildlife, it's best to keep pets at home, or if you do bring a pet keep them on a leash and under control at all times. Remember to clean up after them.
- **Stay on the established trail** to minimize impacts. Avoid going off trail to circumvent mud or other obstacle.
- **Travel in small groups.** They are generally quieter and have less impact on other hikers and the trail. Groups of 12 or less recommended. Hike single file to minimize trail impacts.
- **Preserve the solitude.** Respect others by traveling quietly. Keep radios at home. Avoid creating unnecessary noise.

- **Please take only pictures** and leave what you found on the trail for others to enjoy.

Should you become lost

stop and think!

If you are on a marked trail refer to your map. Try calling staff at (413)499-4262 who may be able to determine your location. If there is plenty of daylight *and* you are physically able, continue on the trail to the next intersection. Trail intersection signs can help you find your location. Stay together if in a group.

If not on a trail or still lost on a trail and daylight is fading, it's time to conserve energy and stay in one place. Survival is about staying calm, warm and dry while waiting to be found.

Call 9-1-1 if you can. If limited or no cellular service is available, try **texting 9-1-1**. Dispatchers can typically determine your approximate location.

Find a waiting place not a hiding place. Stay out of the wind. If it's raining under a tree is a good spot or try building a shelter.

Put out something bright to attract attention. A fire can help keep you warm and aid searchers.

Lightning!

If a lightning storm approaches while on the trail: avoid open water, avoid high ground and avoid open spaces. Keep distance between other people.

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