dcr
Massachusetts

Mount Holyoke Range State Park
Department of Conservation and Recreation

DECEMBER 2026 & JANUARY 2027 PROGRAMS

Coming Events

All programs are **free** and open to the public. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. All programs meet at the Notch Visitor Center, 1500 West Street, Amherst, MA, unless otherwise noted. To register for programs or get more information, call the Visitor Center (413) 253-2883 or email Holyoke.range@mass.gov.

ADA/Reasonable Accommodation
617-645-0358 | Moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov.

Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, 12:30–4:00 pm.
Saturdays & Sundays, 9:00 am–4:00 pm.

Visitor Center Open Hours.

The Notch Visitor Center at 1500 West Street in Amherst, features trail maps, park orientation and information, exhibits, restrooms, and drinking water. Take a walk or hike in the park. Accessible by PVTA public transit (Amherst R38). Wheelchair accessible. Lobby and restrooms are open daily; Info desk and exhibits may be closed periodically for programming. Also, open Monday holidays 9:00 am–4:00 pm. Closed on Christmas 12/25 & New Years Day 1/1.

Family Friendly Programs.

Fridays, 10:00–11:00 am. Except 12/18, 12/25, 1/1 & 1/22.

Nature Storytime: Kidleidoscope.

For ages 0 to 6+, accompanied by an adult. Enjoy nature themed stories paired with age-appropriate activity or craft. All materials are provided.

Saturdays, 1:30–3:30 pm. Except 1/23.

Hot Cocoa with a Ranger.

All ages. Warm up by the fire, enjoy complimentary hot chocolate while exploring the exhibits inside the Visitor Center. Use this time to ask the Ranger all about the Range. Drop in, chat with staff, stay for five minutes or an hour.

Thursday, January 7, 10:00–11:30 am.

Wild & Mindful: Winter Nature Event.

Best for ages 0 to 10. Join Earth Child New England and DCR for winter family fun! Enjoy a nature story featuring *Over and Under the Snow*, explore animal tracks, and warm up indoors with gentle yoga, mindfulness, and art. Learn winter safety tips along the way! **Registration required:** Call (413) 253-2883, or email holyoke.range@mass.gov.

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Recreation Programs.

Saturday, December 5 & January 30, **9:30 am–12:30 pm.**

Off the Beaten Path Hike.

Ages 12 and up. Discover how wildlife survives winter on a strenuous 3 to 5-mile guided hike over uneven terrain. Dress warmly and bring water, snacks, and extra layers. Hiking poles recommended. Severe weather cancels. **Registration required:** Call (413) 253-2883, or email holyoke.range@mass.gov.

Sunday, December 27, January 3 & January 31, **10:00–11:30 am.**

Cross-Country Skiing Beyond the Tracks.

Ready to take your XC skis beyond groomed trails? Join park staff for a beginner-friendly introduction to off-track skiing on the multi-use trails of Harris Mountain Road. Practice basic techniques, navigate natural terrain, and learn winter trail safety. Bring your own classic XC ski equipment. Snow and weather dependent. For ages 10 and up. Capacity is limited, **for registration and location** call (413) 253-2883, or email holyoke.range@mass.gov.

Saturday, December 19 & January 16. **10:00–11:30 am.**

Dog Days - Winter Walks.

Enjoy a 1 to 2-mile guided hike with your canine companion while learning dog hiking safety and Leave No Trace principles! All ages welcome. Dogs must be well-socialized, under control, and on a 6-foot leash. No dog? Join us anyway! Severe weather cancels. **Registration required:** Call (413) 253-2883, or email holyoke.range@mass.gov.

Special Events.

Saturday, December 12, 1:00–3:00 pm.

Weeds in Winter - Watercolor Workshop.

Discover the beauty of winter plants through watercolor painting! Join local artist Meaghan Schwelm at the Notch Visitor Center to learn basic watercolor techniques while identifying plants in winter. Free. Watercolor supplies are provided. Recommended for ages 8 and up. **Registration required:** Call (413) 253-2883, or email holyoke.range@mass.gov.



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Friday, December 18. 4:00 pm–6:00 pm.

Winter Solstice on the Range.

Celebrate the longest night! Decorate a luminaria then enjoy a self-guided, illuminated ¼-mile walk. Warm up with hot drinks and activities by the wood stove. All ages welcome. Dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes and bring a flashlight. Severe weather or icy trails may cancel outdoor activities. Visitor Center and trail open until 6:00 pm.

Winter Gear Swap: Give what you can, take what you need! Browse and exchange winter clothing during the event. No donation required! Donations accepted 12/17 & 12/18 during Visitor Center hours.

Sunday, January 10. 1:00–2:00 pm.

Raptors of the Range, with Tom Ricardi.

Get a close-up look at owls, hawks and other birds of prey with Tom Ricardi, licensed rehabilitator and wildlife biologist. Learn about the great work being done at the Massachusetts Birds of Prey rehabilitation Center which cares for injured birds. For all ages. Sponsored by the Friends of the Mount Holyoke Range.

Ongoing Programs.

December 5 through January 3.

Community Gallery exhibit: Midst of Winter.

The Community Gallery welcomes local artist Meaghan Schwelm and her exhibit, *Midst of Winter*, featuring paintings of winter birds and botanical studies. Inspired by the idea of an “invincible summer” within us, her work explores how nature and people persevere through winter. Viewable during open hours. For all ages.

Sunday, December 13. 1:00–2:00 pm.

Read the Range: A Book Club.

Cozy up by the wood stove at the Notch Visitor Center for a relaxed book discussion exploring nature, wildlife, and conservation. Read the selected book in advance and join the conversation! For ages 16+.

The Winter People, by Jennifer McMahon.

Discuss *The Winter People* by Jennifer McMahon, a haunting Vermont mystery blending family secrets, New England folklore, and the eerie winter landscape. Explore how winter transforms familiar places and the stories we tell about them.

The next Read the Range title for February is:
Swift River, by Essie Chambers.

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1500 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002. Tel. (413) 499-4262