

Suggested MassParks Hikes!

Wachusett Mountain State Reservation

To help you plan your visit to Wachusett Mountain, we offer the following suggested hikes that we think visitors might enjoy. **Introductory hikes** are relatively short and appropriate for most users, including families with children. **Signature hikes** are recommended trail experiences that may be longer or more difficult, but that highlights some of the best features of this State Park.

Introductory Hike

Balance Rock

Trailhead: Park at the Wachusett Mountain Ski Area main parking area (entrance from Bolton Road), between parking lanes 8 and 9.

Lat/Long: 42.508019 -71.888823

Distance: 0.8 miles Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Easy

Suggested Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Brief Description: *Begin at the Balance Rock Trail kiosk. Head uphill to the left on the wide path a short distance before turning sharply right onto the foot path. Continue gradually uphill 0.4 miles to Balance Rock, a geologic formation of two large boulders, one perched upon the other. Return by the same route.*

Introductory Hike

Echo Lake

Trailhead: Park at Echo Lake Road on Mountain Road.

Lat/Long: 42.47494 -71.88372

Distance: 1.5 miles Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Easy

Suggested Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Brief Description: *Follow the Echo Lake fire road to Echo Lake, bearing left to continue to Administration Road. Turn left onto the gravel road and continue to the paved road. Turn left just past the vernal pool (Machias Pool) onto the Echo Lake Trail. Stay on Echo Lake Trail to Echo Lake Road, turning right to pass Echo Lake and return to the starting point.*

Signature Hike

High Meadow and Jack Frost

Old-Growth Hike

Trailhead: Park at the Mountain House Trailhead on Mountain Road.

Lat/Long: 42.480277 -71.881256

Distance: 1 Mile Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Difficult

Suggested Time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Brief Description: *Park at the Mountain House Trailhead on Mountain Road. Hike a short distance on Mountain House, turning left on Bicentennial Trail to High Meadow Trail. Turn right on High Meadow Trail to Jack Frost Trail. Turn left on Jack Frost, descending on the boulder slope. At the bottom of the slope, return by the same route to the starting point. Caution: footing is extremely tricky on the boulders.*

Highlights: High Meadow Trail passes through old-growth forest dominated by Sugar Maple trees; in the springtime this area is a showcase for ephemeral wildflowers such as bloodroot, trout lily, and dutchman's breeches. Jack Frost Trail is dominated by extremely old hemlock trees.

Signature Hike

Jack Frost and Harrington Trails

Old-Growth Hike

Trailhead: Park at the Picnic Area on the Summit Up-road.

Lat/Long: 42.487764 -71.897155

Distance: 2.0 miles Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Difficult

Suggested Time: 1.5 to 2.5 hours

Brief Description: Park at the Picnic Area. Proceed downhill on Administration Road approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the beginning of Jack Frost Trail on the left. Take Jack Frost Trail uphill 0.7 miles to Link Trail. Turn left on Link Trail downhill 0.1. Turn left on Harrington Trail downhill to Administration Road. Turn right and return to the starting point. (Please note that the Summit Road is not available from November 1st until Memorial Day weekend).

Highlights: The steep middle section of Jack Frost Trail passes through old-growth forest dominated by hemlock trees. The Link Trail passes through old-growth forest of mixed species, with some fine examples of ancient yellow birches alongside the trail.

Signature Hike

Old Indian Trail to the Summit

Trailhead: Park in the Wachusett Mountain Ski Area main parking area (entrance from Bolton Road), between parking lanes 8 and 9.

Lat/Long: 42.508019, -71.888823

Distance: 4.0 miles Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

Suggested Time: 2 to 3 hours

Brief Description: *Begin at the Balance Rock kiosk and hike Balance Rock Trail past Balance Rock to Balance Rock Road. Turn right and walk a short distance to the beginning of Old Indian Trail. Hike Old Indian 0.3 mile to Semuhenna Trail. Bear right and hike Semuhenna to West Side Trail. Turn left onto West Side and hike to the juncture with Old Indian Trail. Turn right onto Old Indian and proceed to the summit. From the summit, hike Harrington Trail (steep section) to the juncture with Semuhenna Trail. Turn right onto Semuhenna and hike back to Old Indian Trail and Balance Rock Trail to the starting point.*

Signature Hike

Pine Hill Trail to the Summit

Trailhead: Park at the Visitor Center at 345 Mountain Road.

Lat/Long: 42.491631, -71.879723

Distance: 1.4 miles, **Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

Suggested Time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Brief Description: *Take the Bicentennial Trail to Pine Hill Trail up to the Summit and return via the same route.*

Signature Hike

Semuhenna and Old-Indian Trails Old-Growth Hike

Trailhead: Park at the Oxbow Picnic Parking Area on the Summit Up-road.

Lat/Long: 42.495630 -71.889466

Distance: 1 Mile Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Moderate

Suggested Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Brief Description: *Park at the Oxbow Picnic Area. Proceed uphill on the paved auto road, bearing right at the intersection. Pass the Old Indian Trail crossing and continue on the paved road to the Semuhenna Trail. Turn left onto Semuhenna Trail to West Side Trail. Turn left onto West Side Trail to Old Indian Trail. Turn left onto Old Indian Trail to the paved road and turn right to return to the starting point. (Please note that the Summit Road is not available from November 1st until*

Memorial Day weekend).

Highlights: *Large old-growth hemlock trees are visible on the left side of Semuhenna Trail. The intersection of West Side and Old Indian trails is an area with a variety of old-growth species, especially on the uphill side of Old Indian.*

Signature Hike

Visitor Center to Old Indian Trail Old-Growth Hike

Trailhead: Park at the Visitor Center at 345 Mountain Road.

Lat/Long: 42.491631 -71.879723

Distance: 2.0 miles Round Trip, **Difficulty:** Moderate

Suggested Time: 1.5 to 2 hours

Brief Description: *Park at the Visitor Center. Proceed on the paved road uphill to the intersection with Old Indian Trail. Turn left on Old Indian Trail. Pass West Side Trail and continue steeply uphill until reaching the relatively flat plateau. Return via the same route to the starting point.*

Highlights: *Old-growth trees, including red oaks and yellow birches, are visible on the uphill side of the paved road between the Visitor Center and the ski slopes. Old-growth trees of various species are visible on Old Indian Trail at the juncture with West Side Trail and in the steep section leading to the plateau.*

Things to Remember:

- **Time, distance, difficulty:** 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. Appropriate footwear is a must. Trails can be wet.
- **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** is usually not available. Bring plenty! Trailside sources should be treated.
- **Stay on designated trails:** Follow painted blazes and signs if available. 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 group size to 12 people or fewer to lessen impacts.
- **Carry-in, carry-out all trash:** Leave No Trace outdoor ethics are strongly encouraged. For more information visit <http://www.lnt.org/programs/principles.php>
- **Pets are generally permitted** on 10-foot maximum leash and under at all times. Please clean up after your pet and dispose of all waste outside of park. Be aware of local park rules and that not all users appreciate encountering pets, even when friendly.
- **Be aware that some trails are not well marked.**
- **Be aware of hunting seasons** and wear blaze orange when appropriate. For season info visit:
http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/regulations/abstracts/hunting_dates.pdf



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION