

Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

Walden Pond State Reservation

915 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742, (978) 369-3254

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Walden Pond State Reservation, 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/walden-pond-state-reservation-trail-map/download>

Introductory Hike Pond Path

Trailhead: Begin from the Visitor Center **Lat/Long:** 42.440912, -71.335306

Distance: 1.7 mile loop **Difficulty:** Easy

Brief Description: Take the Esker Trail out to Heywood's Meadow. This is a lovely hike in all seasons providing varied woodland and wetland views. Return via the Emerson Cliff Trail which includes some steep slopes.

Introductory Hike Thoreau House Replica to Goose Pond

Trailhead: Begin at the Visitor Center **Lat/Long:** 42.440278, -71.333611

Distance: 0.5 miles **Difficulty:** Easy

Brief Description: Walk to the back of the Visitor Center, through the parking lot, and past the solar panels. Enter the woods and turn left on the Pine Hill Spur Trail. At the end of this trail, turn right onto the uneven and steeper Goose Pond Trail, a narrow spit surrounded by black huckleberry bushes to the end. You will get a panoramic view of 11-acre Goose Pond, which flows east through the ground to Walden Pond. Retrace your steps to return to the parking lot. Tick check recommended after you return to parking lot due to low lying vegetation.

Introductory Hike

One-way Pond Path (counterclockwise)

Trailhead: Begin from the Thoreau House Replica **Lat/Long:** 42.4405261, -71.3345185

Distance: 1.7 mile loop **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: From the Thoreau House Replica near the main parking lot, cross Route 126 at the crosswalk, take the ramp down to the pond, make right onto Pond Path, proceed one way counterclockwise, keeping the pond on your left.

Signature Hike

Esker Trail to Heywood's Meadow

Trailhead: Begin from the Thoreau House Replica **Lat/Long:** 42.4405261, -71.3345185

Distance: 1.5 miles round trip **Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

Brief Description: From the Thoreau House replica near the main parking lot, cross Route 126 at the crosswalk, walk left on the sidewalk, cross the boat ramp's dirt road, and take the Esker Trail out to Heywood's Meadow Road (sharp left turn). You can return via the more challenging Emerson Cliff Trail which includes some steep slopes and vistas.

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.*