

# Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

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## 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:** To the house site and back 1 mile. Around the pond 1.7 mile loop

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** This scenic route takes you around the pond perimeter. Cross Rt. 126 at the crosswalk signal, turn right at the bottom of the ramp onto the Pond Path, continue a half mile, going over a small wooden bridge, follow signs to the Thoreau House Site. Rejoin the Pond Path to complete the loop around the pond.

## Introductory Hike Accessible Woods Path Trail

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

**Distance:** 1/2 mile each way **Difficulty:** Easy – accessible. Good for families and visitors with physical or sensory disabilities (grading meets U.S. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines).

**Route:** Walden Pond Visitor Center to the original Thoreau House Site

**Brief Description:** Start at the Visitor Center deck. Go down the wooden ramp. Cross Rt. 126 at the crosswalk signal. Turn right and follow the crushed stone path along Rt. 126. Enter the forest at metal gate #2. Follow the crushed stone path onto the Woods Path to Wyman Path to Wyman Road to Thoreau's original House Site. Rustic benches are set at intervals along the trail. StoryWalk® changes monthly along the Woods Path, weather permitting. Enjoy family fun as you read pages of the book posted along the route. No dogs or bikes on trails.

# Signature Hike

## Esker Trail to Heywood's Meadow

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

**Distance:** To Heywood's Meadow and back: 1 mile. Return by Emerson Cliff Trail: 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 signal, take an immediate left onto the sidewalk until you turn right onto the boat ramp's dirt road, then left to enter the woods on the Esker Trail out to Heywood's Meadow Road (sharp left turn). Heywood's Meadow is a scenic wetland with beaver lodges. You can return the way you came or 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.
- **Pets are not allowed at Walden Pond**
- Be aware of hunting seasons. Wear blaze orange when appropriate. More information here.
- **Biking on trails at Walden is not allowed**

- **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.*