

# Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

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## Wendell State Forest

392 Montague Road, Wendell, MA 01379, (413) 659-3797

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Wendell State Forest, 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/wendell-state-forest-trail-map/download>

## Introductory Hike

### Hike the Loop around Ruggles Pond

**Trailhead:** Park at the Main Entrance off Montague Road **Lat/Long:**

**Distance:** **Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** Hike the loop trail around Ruggles Pond. This trail includes part of the New England Trail.

## Signature Hike

### Wicket Pond loop

**Trailhead:** Park near the boat launch on Wicket Pond Rd **Lat/Long:** 42.55529, -72.42727

**Distance:** 2 mi **Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** The trail begins by the boat launch at Wicket Pond. The trail loops around the pond except the southwest end, where it ventures a short distance along Carlton Rd to avoid a very wet area. See what wildlife you see!

## Signature Hike

### Ruggles Pond Loop

**Trailhead:** Park at the Main Entrance off Montague Road **Lat/Long:** 42.55041, -72.45023

**Distance:** 2 mi **Difficulty:** Easy

**Brief Description:** The loop begins on the NET as it follows along the western shore of the pond. The loop turns east at the southern end of the pond and follows around. This first area can be wet. After looping around a stream, the trail is a bit higher before it passes by a picnic area and back to the start.

## Signature Hike

### NET-Hannah Swarton-Laurel Dr

**Trailhead:** Park at the Main Entrance off Montague Road **Lat/Long:** 42.55041, -72.45023

**Distance:** 6 mi **Difficulty:** Moderate

**Brief Description:** From the NET trailhead (WHITE blaze) at the end of Ruggles Pond, proceed north, pass by Lyons Brook and onto Damon Camp Rd and to the end of Davis Rd, and turn onto the Hannah Swarton Trail. This narrow trail passes the Whale's Head-a distinctive glacial erratic! When you reach Baker Rd turn right and head SE and remain on old dirt roads back to the start.

## Signature Hike

### NET-Hannah Swarton-Damon Camp Rd

**Trailhead:** park @ NET trailhead on Mormon Hollow Rd **Lat/Long:** 42.57962, -72.43712

**Distance:** 4.25 mi **Difficulty:** Moderate

**Brief Description:** From the NET trailhead (WHITE blaze) on Mormon Hollow Rd, proceed south on the trail. Cross the brook and continue on the NET to the Hannah Swarton Trail. This narrow trail passes the Whale's Head-a distinctive glacial erratic! When you reach Baker Rd turn right, then right again onto Damon Camp Rd. When you meet the NET, head north back to parking.

## Signature Bike Ride

### South Park Ride

**Trailhead:** Park at the Main Entrance off Montague Road **Lat/Long:** 42.55041, -72.45023

**Distance:** 7.5 **Difficulty:** Moderate

**Brief Description:** The ride heads south from the main entrance, then skirts on the trail parallel to Montague Rd. It follows up Dirth Rd to Carlton and up the Wicket Pond "escape" trail to Brook Rd. A quick turn onto Laurel Dr, ride up the Maple Leaf to Nipmuc Trail and up! Cross Baker Rd, then left at Hannah Swarton to Maple Leaf to Laurel Dr and back to start. A nice diversity of terrain!

## 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.*