Suggested Hikes, Rides and Paddles!

Willard Brook State Forest

599 Main Street, Townsend, MA 01474, (978) 597-8802

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Willard Brook 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/willard-brook-state-forest-trail-map/download

Introductory Hike
Friends' Pearl Hill Loop

Trailhead: Begin at the parking lot near Pearl Hill Pond. **Lat/Long**:

Distance: 2.5 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: Begin on the Friends' Trail (Yellow Blaze) and then connect to the Friends' Pearl Hill State Park loop. This will loop back to the contact station.

Signature Hike
Friends Trail (Orange) Loop

Trailhead: Begin at Damon Pond parking area off Route 119 **Lat/Long**: 42.661748, -71.790443

Distance: 5.2 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: Follow the Friends Trail (Orange-Blazed) to up to Fort Hill, then loop back down to Damon Pond..

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.*

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