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PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Announces First Day Hikes at State Parks

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

12/21/2017

Department of Conservation & Recreation

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**BOSTON** — Keeping with tradition dating back 27 years, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced times and locations for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) First Day Hikes. For 2018, family-friendly hikes will be provided at seven state parks across the Commonwealth, as part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes initiative, which is a national effort to get people outside in

all 50 states. This year's guided hikes have been coordinated at Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park; Blue Hills Reservation; Breakheart Reservation; DCR's Carson Beach and NPS's Dorchester Heights; Great Falls Discovery Center; Nantasket Beach Reservation; and Walden Pond State Reservation.

"The Commonwealth is proud to once again offer First Day Hikes to residents and visitors seeking to ring in the new year by spending time together in our beautiful DCR parks," **said Governor Charlie Baker.**

"These seven guided hikes, spread out across Massachusetts, will provide nature enthusiasts with an excellent opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and continue this annual tradition into 2018."

"For 27 years, our state park staff have carried on an important tradition that has gained national recognition for its success," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.** "First Day Hikes are another great opportunity to celebrate the Commonwealth's conservation efforts and enjoy our beautiful natural resources."

First Day Hikes originated in 1992 at the Blue Hills Reservation in Milton, which continues to draw over one thousand participants for the annual event. Launched by the late DCR Park Supervisor Pat Flynn, First Day Hikes encourage year-round healthy living and remind the public that Massachusetts's state parks contain a wealth of recreational activities, with many offering accessible equipment to support people of all abilities. In 2012, America's State Parks adopted this idea and First Day Hikes are now offered in all 50 states. As part of this national initiative, more than 55,000 people participated in guided hikes that covered over 133,000 miles on 1,100 hikes across the United States. This year, First Day Hikes becomes an international movement with the addition of hikes in Ontario parks in Canada.

"Massachusetts has long prioritized the conservation and protection of the state's natural resources, and has ensured that they remain accessible for people of all abilities to enjoy," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton.** "First Day Hikes serve as a great opportunity for us all to get outside, get some exercise, and renew our love for the natural world with friends and family members."

"From the birth of the modern conservation movement at Walden Pond and the establishment of the first regional park system in the nation, DCR has been at the forefront of conservationism that has led to the protection of the Commonwealth's natural resources," **said DCR Commissioner Leo Roy.** "The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to further the legacy of the state parks system as we continue to protect public lands for future generations."

Across the nation, America's State Parks will provide opportunities to explore close-to-home natural resources spanning mountain ranges, grassland reservations, forests, beaches and islands. Visitors will often witness breathtaking vistas or overlooks while being guided by knowledgeable state park interpreters. In Massachusetts, DCR park staff will lead the hikes, which average one to three miles or

longer depending on location. Details about each hike and tips to prepare are provided on DCR's website at [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Social media users are encouraged to share their experiences by tagging @MassDCR or using #FirstDayHikes.

In addition, several Boston ice rinks will hold free public skating hours on New Year's Day from 11:00AM to 4:00PM. Participating locations include Kelly Outdoor Rink in Jamaica Plain, Murphy Memorial Rink in South Boston, and Steriti Rink in the North End. Steriti Rink will also be open noon - 10:00PM on Sunday, December 31. Public ice skating times and locations of DCR managed rinks can be found on the agency's [webpage](#), as well as a full list of all DCR owned rinks.

In Massachusetts, hikes will be offered at the following seven locations and times:

### **Carson Beach and Dorchester Heights, 12:00PM**

#### **165 William J. Day Boulevard, South Boston**

*Participants will meet at the Edward McCormack Bathhouse. Hot chocolate will be available after the hike.*

*The event is being co-sponsored by the National Park Service and Boston Harbor Now.*

### **Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, 1:00PM**

#### **287 Oak Street, Uxbridge**

*Participants will meet at the Visitor Center (registration begins at 12:30PM). Visitors can warm up after the hike at the River Bend Farm Visitor Center with hot cocoa.*

*The event is being co-sponsored by the Blackstone Heritage Corridor and the Blackstone River Watershed Association.*

### **Walden Pond State Reservation, 12:00PM**

#### **915 Walden Street/Route 126, Concord**

*Participants will meet at the New Visitor Center. Hot chocolate and light snacks will be made available after the hike.*

*The event is being co-sponsored by the Walden Woods Project, the Friends Group of Walden Pond State Reservation.*

**Breakheart Reservation, 10:00AM**

**177 Forest Street, Saugus**

*Participants will meet at the Christopher P. Dunne Visitor Center. Clam Chowder will be served following the hike.*

*The event is being co-sponsored by the Friends of Breakheart.*

**Blue Hills Reservation, 1:00PM**

**840 Hillside Street, Milton**

*Participants will meet at the Houghton's Pond parking lot. Please arrive early and allow time for parking. Hot chocolate and snacks on sale at noon by Venture Scouting.*

**Nantasket Beach Reservation, 11:00AM**

**Route 3A, Hull**

*Participants to meet at the MJM Bathhouse at 204 Nantasket Ave. Hot beverages and snacks will be served following the hike.*

*The event is being co-sponsored by the Hull Health Commission.*

**Great Falls Discovery Center, 1:00PM**

**2 Avenue A, Turners Falls**

*Participants will meet in the Great Hall. Hot chocolate will be served following the hike.*

*The event is being co-sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center.*

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[Department of Conservation & Recreation →](#)

DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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