

PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces First Day Hikes at State Parks

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

MEDIA CONTACT

Olivia Dorrance, Press Secretary

Phone

(617) 626-4967 (tel:6176264967)

Online

Olivia.K.Dorrance@state.ma.us (mailto:Olivia.K.Dorrance@state.ma.us)



BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration will once again offer residents and visitors with the opportunity to participate in the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) First Day Hikes program in celebration of the start of the New Year. Importantly, the thirteen free guided hikes, which have been coordinated throughout the state parks system and start at various times on Wednesday, January 1, 2020, will provide the public with a great opportunity to get outside and enjoy outdoor recreational activities as part of their New Year’s Day celebrations.

“Each year, thousands of people across the Commonwealth ring in the New Year by participating in one of the many First Day Hikes offered at a state park near them,” said **Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Kathleen Theoharides**. “It is with great joy that First Day Hikes have become a time honored tradition for many Massachusetts families, who are greeted every year by passionate DCR staff throughout the state parks system on January 1st.”

First Day Hikes were started over 25 years ago at the Blue Hills Reservation in the Town of Milton in 1992 in an effort to promote year-round outdoor recreation, and to motivate the public to explore the Commonwealth’s awe-inspiring natural resources. A growing collection of participating states culminated in 2012 when all 50 state park systems joined together to sponsor America’s State Parks First Day Hikes Initiative, which has since become the signature nationwide program for the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD).

“For the 29th year, the Massachusetts state parks system has provided First Day Hikes to the public, offering visitors with the opportunity to get outside and incorporate recreation with their friends and family in celebration of January 1st,” said **DCR Acting Commissioner Jim Montgomery**. “Participating in a First Day Hike will serve as a great start for the new year, and is an excellent way for visitors of all ages and abilities to discover the stunning environmental and recreational resources that the Commonwealth has to offer.”

Across Massachusetts, visitors to the state parks system will find opportunities to experience unique and cultural treasures that are close to home. From walking a historic canal to traversing through a forest, visitors will find themselves surrounded by the enchanting natural landscapes contained within the Commonwealth. In Massachusetts, park staff will lead the hikes, which average one to two miles or longer depending on location. Details about the hikes, difficulty, length, terrain, and tips regarding proper clothing are listed on DCR’s

[website \(/orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation\)](#). Hikers are also encouraged to tweet, post, and tag photos on social media using @MassDCR and #FirstDayHikes.

In Massachusetts, hikes will be offered at the following thirteen locations:

CENTRAL

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

287 Oak Street, Uxbridge

Meet at the Visitor Center. Registration begins at 12:30PM. Warm up after the hike at the River Bend Farm Visitor Center with hot cocoa and conversation. Co-Sponsored by the Blackstone Heritage Corridor and Blackstone River Watershed Association.

Wachusett Reservoir, 11:00AM

211 Temple Street, West Boylston

Meet at Gate 22 on Route 140 in West Boylston.

NORTH

Walden Pond State Reservation, 12:00PM

915 Walden Street/Route 126, Concord

Meet at the New Visitor Center. Hot chocolate and light snacks will be available after the hike. Co-Sponsored by the Walden Woods Project, the Friends Group of Walden Pond State Reservation.

Breakheart Reservation, 10:00AM

177 Forest Street, Saugus

Meet at the Christopher P. Dunne Visitor Center. Clam Chowder will be served following the hike. Co-Sponsored by the Friends of Breakheart.

Harold Parker State Forest, 10:00AM

305 Middleton Road, North Andover

Meet at the park headquarters. Warm up with a fire, hot chocolate, and refreshments. Co-sponsored by the Friends of Harold Parker.

Halibut Point State Park, 1:00PM

Gott Avenue, Rockport

Meet at the parking lot.

SOUTH

Blue Hills Reservation, 12:00PM

840 Hillside St, Milton

Activities from 12:00PM to 1:00PM. Hike starts at 1:00PM. Hot chocolate and snacks provided by the Quincy Venture Scouts. Arrive early, parking is limited.

Nantasket Beach, 11:00AM

212 Nantasket Ave, Hull

Meet at Mary Jeanette Murray Bathhouse. Enjoy hot chocolate and light snacks after the hike. Co-sponsored by the Town of Hull.

Nickerson State Park, 1:00PM

3488 Main Street, Brewster

Meet at the Main Lot by the entrance. Enjoy Hot Chocolate after the hike. Co-sponsored by the Friends of Nickerson State Park.

Shawme Crowell State Forest, 10:00AM

42 Main Street, Sandwich

Meet at the Contact Station.

WEST

Great Falls Discovery Center, 1:00PM

2 Avenue A, Turners Falls

Meet in the Great Hall. Hot chocolate will be served following the hike. Co-Sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Granville State Forest, 10:30AM

323 West Hartland Road, Granville

Meet at the Park Headquarters. Warm up afterwards with a fire and warm beverage.

Mount Greylock State Reservation, 9:30AM/12:30PM

30 Rockwell Road, Lanesborough

Meet at the Visitor Center. There will be two opportunities for a hike, pre-registration is required. Visit <https://mountgreylock-first-day-hikes-2020.eventbrite.com>

https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__mountgreylock-2Dfirst-2Dday-2Dhikes-2D2020.eventbrite.com_&d=DwMFaQ&c=IDF7oMaPKXpkYvev9V-fVahWLOC to register.

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Media Contact

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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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