

Hiking Safety

A guide to enjoying your hike



From the High Peaks of the Adirondacks to the shores of Lake Champlain, the Department of Environmental Conservation owns and maintains 2,000 miles of hiking trails throughout the Adirondack Park.

These routes range from challenging mountain treks to easy afternoon strolls. Hiking opportunities abound for people of any interest or ability.

Most trails are marked with color coded disks affixed to trees. Trail guides and maps correspond to these markers. Trail register boxes are generally located near major access points and parking areas.

Although most state-maintained trails are marked, hikers are encouraged to consult topographical maps or other guides when planning to venture into the backcountry.

The Adirondack Mountains of northeastern New York are home to the six-million-acre Adirondack Park, a patchwork of public and private lands protected under state law. More than 2.6 million acres within the park are owned and managed by the state.

New York's Constitution states that these public lands in the Adirondack Park must never be developed and "...shall be forever kept as wild forest lands."

**A publication of the
Lake Placid/Essex County Visitors Bureau
800-447-5224
518-523-2445
foreveradirondack.com**



Edited content courtesy of
the New York State DEC

Access For People With Disabilities



New York's campgrounds, educational centers and other facilities offer many recreational opportunities including camping, picnicking, fishing and nature viewing for people with disabilities. In addition, people with disabilities can obtain special hunting licenses and permits for access to the Forest Preserve. Contact the DEC regional office 5 at (518) 897-1300 or (518) 891-0235 for more information.

Emergency Contacts

To report injuries, accidents or lost hikers in Region 5 (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties), dial 911 for emergency assistance or phone: (518) 897-1300 or (518) 891-0235.

Captain John Streiff, Regional Forest Ranger

PO Box 296

Ray Brook, NY 12977

Phone: (518) 897-1300, Fax: (518) 897-1370

Emergencies: (518) 891-0235

Directions to the Adirondack Park

From the South:

Take Interstate 87 North to exits 20 through 39 (or US Route 9) which lead to various Adirondack communities, state and local highways that provide access to Forest Preserve lands and recreational facilities.

From the East:

A variety of routes are available to visitors from the east. From Massachusetts and points south access Interstate 90 and then Interstate 87 or US Route 9 heading north. From Vermont and New Hampshire, several ferries cross Lake Champlain. You may also cross Lake Champlain at the picturesque Crown Point Bridge connecting Vermont Highway 17 with Essex County Route 8. US Route 4 connects with NY Route 22, providing access to the southeastern portion of the Park.

From the West:

Take the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) to exits 31 through 24 to access various Adirondack communities, state and local highways that provide access to Forest Preserve lands and recreational facilities.

From the North:

A number of bridges crossing the St. Lawrence River provide access to highways that connect to NY State Routes 3, 30 and 812, which provide access to the northwestern portion of the Park as well as connections to the remainder of the region.

Backcountry Hiking and Camping Rules

The rules associated with using Department of Environmental Conservation managed public lands in New York State for recreational purposes are relatively simple and straightforward.

Hiking and backcountry camping are allowed on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park as well as on State Forest areas. Generally, camping is prohibited on Unique Areas, Wildlife Management Areas and other categories of state land. Hiking is generally permitted anywhere but special requirements apply to mountain biking and horseback riding.



For information about specific land areas Contact the DEC regional office 5 at (518) 897-1300 or (518) 891-0235 . For information about State Campgrounds visit that page on the Department's web site. The rules and guidelines for the use of New York State's public lands are in general as follows:

- Except where marked by a "Camp Here" disk camping is prohibited within 150 feet of roads, trails, lakes, ponds, streams or other bodies of water.
- Groups of ten or more persons or stays of more than three days in one place require a permit from the New York State Forest Ranger responsible for the area.
- Lean-tos are available in many areas on a first come first served basis. Lean-tos cannot be used exclusively and must be shared with other campers.
- Use pit privies provided near popular camping areas and trailheads. If none are available, dispose of human waste by digging a hole 6"-8" deep at least 150 feet from water or campsites. Cover with leaves and soil.
- Do not use soap to wash yourself, clothing or dishes within 150 ft of water.
- Drinking and cooking water should be boiled for 5 minutes, treated with purifying tablets or filtered through filtration device to prevent instances of giardia infection.
- Fires should be built in existing fire pits or fireplaces if provided. Use only dead and down wood for fires. Cutting standing trees is prohibited.
- Extinguish all fires with water and stir ashes until they are cold to the touch. Do not build fires in areas marked by a "No Fires" disk. Camp stoves are safer, more efficient and cleaner.
- Carry out what you carry in . Practice "leave no trace" camping and hiking.
- Keep your pet under control. Restrain it on a leash when others approach.
- Collect and bury droppings away from water, trails and camp sites. Keep your pet away from drinking water sources.
- Observe and enjoy wildlife and plants but leave them undisturbed.
- Removing plants, rocks, fossils or artifacts from state land without a permit is illegal.
- The storage of personal property on state land is prohibited.
- Carry an approved flotation device for each person aboard all watercraft.

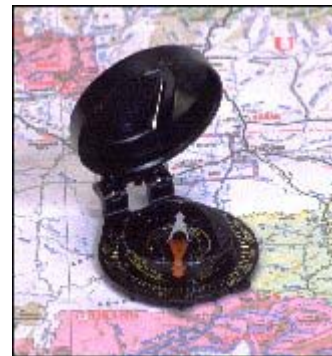


Hiking Safely

Safety is important whether you are day hiking or winter backpacking. Proper planning, preparation, proper clothing and taking appropriate gear along are essential to a safe and enjoyable excursion.

Before You Leave

- Plan ahead. Learn about the area ahead of time. Study the latest guidebooks and maps that give information on highways, trails, streams and other physical features. Plan your trip carefully according to routes and the time you have available. Check weather reports before you set out.
- Prepare yourself physically. If your planned recreation calls for considerable physical exertion, get in shape beforehand. Do not attempt a trip that is beyond your physical capabilities.
- Leave word of your destination and schedule.
- In order to locate you in an emergency or send assistance should you need it, leave word at home or with a friend as to where you are going and when you intend to return.
- Know the rules and guidelines for appropriate behavior for the area you are visiting.



On The Trail

- Dress appropriately for the season and where appropriate hiking shoes or boots. Layered clothing is best to meet changing weather conditions. If cool or wet conditions can be expected it is recommended that you avoid cotton clothing, which insulates poorly when wet and dries very slowly.
- Carry a compass and a topographic map of the area and know how to use both.
- Take along appropriate equipment and supplies. A day pack containing rain gear, extra warm clothing, high energy food, water, first aid kit, pocket knife, whistle and matches in a waterproof container are recommended.
- Sunglasses and insect repellent are also handy.
- Don't drink water from ponds or streams unless you have treated it first by boiling, filtering or using purification tablets.
- You should sign in at any Department of Environmental Conservation trail register you may pass. This will assist us in finding you should we need to search for you.



If You Get Lost or Someone is Injured

- The best thing to do is not get lost in the first place. ***Do not leave the trail.***
- If you become lost, there are four important steps:
 - ⇒ Keep Calm
 - ⇒ Stay Dry
 - ⇒ Keep Warm
 - ⇒ Stay Put
- If it appears that you will need to spend the night in the woods, build a campfire to provide heat, light and comfort. A campfire will be invaluable in locating you if you have been reported missing. Aircraft may be used in searching when weather permits and smoky campfires may be spotted from the air.
- If the weather is particularly cold or bad and you must spend the night in the woods, also build a small shelter using dead branches, hemlock boughs and leaves. The shelter will serve as a "cocoon" and should be just big enough for you to lie in comfortably. Set up camp before darkness falls.
- If you feel you can try and find your way out of the woods, remember that following streams downhill will nearly always lead you back to signs of habitation.

Any person knowing you are overdue should contact the New York State Forest Ranger in the area of your trip.

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- In case of accident, at least one person should remain with the injured person. Know and use basic first aid techniques. Others in the group should carefully note the location and contact the local New York State Forest Ranger.

Useful Websites

Hiking in New York State—DEC

⇒ www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/publands/hike.html

The Adirondack Park

⇒ www.adk.com

Adirondack Mountain Club

⇒ www.adk.org

Guides in Essex County

⇒ www.lakeplacid.com/dbsearch/guidepage.cfm