

Great Barrington Trails & Greenways

www.GBLand.org

A Sampling of Winter Hikes & Snowshoe Destinations in the Southern Berkshires

Threemile Hill & CHP Trail

15 Crissey Road • Great Barrington, MA 01230

Berkshire South Regional Community Center

The 2-mile long trail is a moderate up and down path through the woodland, with a surprising view of Monument Mountain from the Fountain Pond end of the trail. The elevation change is 350 feet. Allot 90 minutes for a one-way walk on this trail.

Or enjoy the milder ¾-mile CHP Loop.

<https://www.gbland.org/threemile-hill-trail-fountain-pond>

Lake Mansfield, pond and forest

Lake Mansfield Beach Area, Great Barrington

The Lake Mansfield Recreation Area is a community natural resource area featuring a 29-acre pond and the adjacent 29-acre Conservation Forest with a 1/4-mile easy walking loop trail. The area is a vital natural habitat and treasured community space. Visitors are responsible for their own safety and must be mindful of their impact on the delicate habitat and the enjoyment of others.

<http://gbland.org/lake-mansfield>

Beartown State Forest

69 Blue Hill Rd, Great Barrington

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A winter wonderland, where visitors on cross-country skis, snowshoes or snowmobiles can explore a snow-covered wilderness, 1.5 mile Benedict Pond Loop Trail is a must in any season. Year-round camping is also available. A winter trail map is available at website.

<https://www.mass.gov/locations/beartown-state-forest>

Lime Kiln Farm Wildlife Sanctuary

Sheffield, MA

Mass Audubon

At Lime Kiln, there are two miles of well-marked walking trails including two loop trails and a short spur, highlights include views of the Taconic Mountains and Mount Everett.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/lime-kiln-farm>



Housatonic Flats

RT 7 Great Barrington MA

Berkshire Natural Resources Council

BNRC's Housatonic Flats Reserve is approximately 26 acres, just north of WSBS radio station, between the Housatonic River and Route 7. The mile-long loop trail in Housatonic Flats' 26 acres gets you up close and personal with more than a half-mile of Housatonic Riverbank. The floodplain is now reverting to the forest that prevailed before settlers made it pasture. Attractions include abundant birdlife, fish, otter, beaver and deer.

<https://www.bnrc.org/trails-and-maps/top-10-berkshire-trails/housatonic-flats/>

Bob's Way

Rte. 23, Monterey

Berkshire Natural Resources Council

The looped trails and 263 acres of Bob's Way provide typical New England landscapes: forested small hills, old foundations and stone walls, a wetland, and a beaver pond. The outer loop takes about one hour. Two crossing paths can extend or shorten hikes, and one rises to the land's high point, with a bench and an overlook. <https://www.bnrc.org/trails-and-maps/top-10-berkshire-trails/bobs-way/>

Alford Springs

Mountain Road, Alford

Alford Springs, 899 acres of mostly forested ridgeline, has more than six miles of trails for hikers, snowshoers, seasoned cross-country skiers, hunters and berry-pickers. The preserve, named for feeder streams of Alford Brook and the Green River, offers vistas of Greylock and Tom Ball mountains and Alford Valley. <https://www.bnrc.org/trails-and-maps/top-10-berkshire-trails/alford-springs/>

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Winter Hiking & Snowshoeing Tips:



1. Gear Up 20 items to be comfortable, safe, and active in winter: clothing (base, mid, and outer layers), well insulated gloves, wool socks, gaiters, winter hat, winter boots, light traction (microspikes or crampons), snowshoes, backpack, water bottles, extra food, sunglasses, headlamp, whistle, first aid kit, hand warmers, map and compass, matches/fire starter, emergency shelter, trekking poles.
2. Buy or rent suitable snowshoes. Consider that wet, compact snow is best handled by smaller snowshoes (with less flotation) than you would need in powder snow, which requires larger snowshoes (with more flotation).
3. Carry a larger pack than usual. The extra clothing and gear you need to stay comfortable on a winter day trip can weigh as much as you'd take for an overnighter in summer. A pack with an outer pocket is handy for carrying a snow shovel or for your snowshoes if you should need to take them off and carry them in places. should need to take them off and carry them in places.
4. Use poles. These help with balance and make crossing slopes easier. You can use snowshoe poles, ski poles or trekking poles. If using trekking poles, replace the standard baskets with larger "snow baskets" to improve performance in deep snow. Bring a repair "kit." Wrap some duct tape around one of your snowshoe poles to secure broken binding straps or patch puncture holes.
5. Carry a few plastic tie wraps (used for securing cables) or bailing wire to attach decking back to the frame. If your snowshoes are constructed with grommets, consider getting a grommet repair kit.
6. Warm up your muscles. Walking on snowshoes requires that you take longer steps than normal, especially uphill. You also walk with your feet much wider apart than normal. Lightly stretching your hamstrings (muscles on the backs of the thighs) and hip flexors (muscles in front of the hips that lift the legs) will help your flexibility for snowshoeing.
7. Drink plenty of water. Just like on summer trips, you need to stay hydrated when you're active. To keep hydration systems flowing, use an insulated tube or fill the reservoir with warm water (see video for additional tips). If you bring a small stove to melt snow, be sure to include some water in the bottom of your cooking pot to avoid scorching. Use an insulated vacuum bottle. Fill with hot cocoa, tea or soup when out on a day trip. It can make a cold, wet trip much more enjoyable.
8. Take turns breaking trail in fresh snow. This lets everyone in the group share the extra work. As soon as the leader is tired, he or she brings up the rear and takes a break by walking on the packed snow. Then the next person in line kicks steps for a while, and so on. This is especially important on steep slopes so that no one becomes exhausted.
9. Use hand warmers. These small chemical packets work wonders for keeping your digits happy. Put them next to your camera or flashlight in cold weather to keep them working, too. Carry along an extra shirt. You may want to change into a new top at the turnaround point of your day trip. A dry long underwear top will keep you much warmer when you head downhill again and are not creating as much heat.
10. On long snowshoe trips, eat high-calorie, high-fat foods. Your body will burn them for needed energy and warmth.