

Emerging HORIZONS

Know Before You Go

New Accessible Trails at Crotched Mountain

Candy B. Harrington

On June 25, 2011 the Crotched Mountain Foundation marked the completion of their Outdoor Recreation Master Plan, with the grand opening of two new wheelchair-accessible trails on their main campus in Greenfield, New Hampshire. Located just 75 miles from Boston, these trails are open to the public and present an excellent opportunity for wheelchair-users and slow walkers to get out and enjoy Mother Nature.

The trails were built to US Forest Service access specifications and constructed by Peter Jensen and Associates, one of the country's leading accessible trail designers. The funds to build the trails were raised by the Crotched Mountain Foundation, in keeping with their mission to support people with disabilities through education, rehabilitation and residential services.

Dutton Brook Trail

The Dutton Brook Trail, which is the longer of the two trails, features a hard-packed dirt surface and a series of wheelchair-accessible boardwalks. It travels through a variety of forest habitats, before it winds around a beaver pond and through some wetland areas. Interpretive signs are located along the way, and the two-mile round trip hike is a great way to get a good overview of the Monadnock Region. And if you'd like to cut the hike in half, just turn around at the first overlook and return to the trailhead.

Gregg Trail

Named for the founding family of the Crotched Mountain Foundation, the Gregg Trail is just under a mile in length and features a hard packed dirt surface, and an elevation change of 200 feet. It travels over a series of switchbacks, through blueberry fields and open grasslands to a highland knoll, where you'll find a wheelchair-accessible observation deck. From there you'll get a panoramic view of the Contoocook River and the Monadnocks. It's also a great place to get a good view of the migratory hawks that frequent the area.



The Dutton Brook Trail
Photo courtesy of Crotched Mountain Foundation

If You Go

Because of extreme weather conditions, the trails are only open during the summer months, and in years of heavy snows they don't open for the season until early June. The trails are open from 30 minutes after sunrise to 30 minutes before sunset.

There's plenty of accessible parking located near the trailheads, with a barrier-free path to the trails. Directions to Crotoned Mountain are available on the Crotoned Mountain Foundation website

(www.crotonedmountain.org (<http://www.crotonedmountain.org>)).

Once you turn on to Crotoned Mountain Road, continue on for two miles, where you'll find the trailheads on your left. If you hit South View Road and pass the track on your left, you've gone too far. A campus map is also available on the Crotoned Mountain Foundation website.

It's also important to note that the trails may be closed in inclement weather, as excessive rain may make them too muddy. Refer to the Crotoned Mountain Foundation website for trail closure updates. For more information about the accessible trails or any of Crotoned Mountain Foundation's other offerings, call (603) 547-3311.

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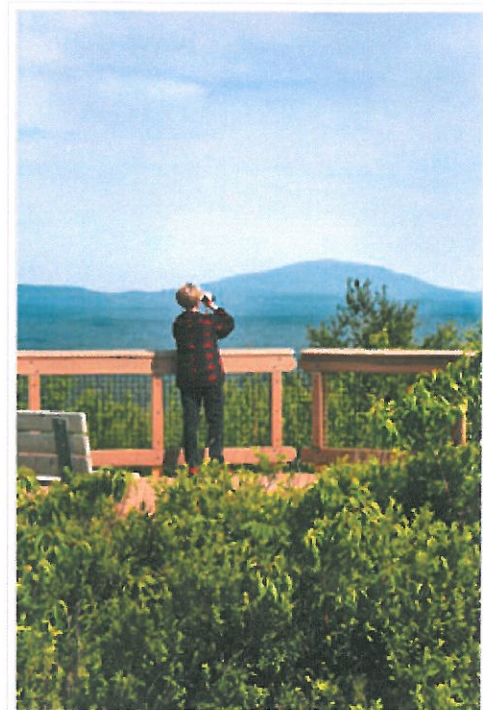
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Enjoying the view on the knoll
Photo courtesy of Crotoned Mountain Foundation