

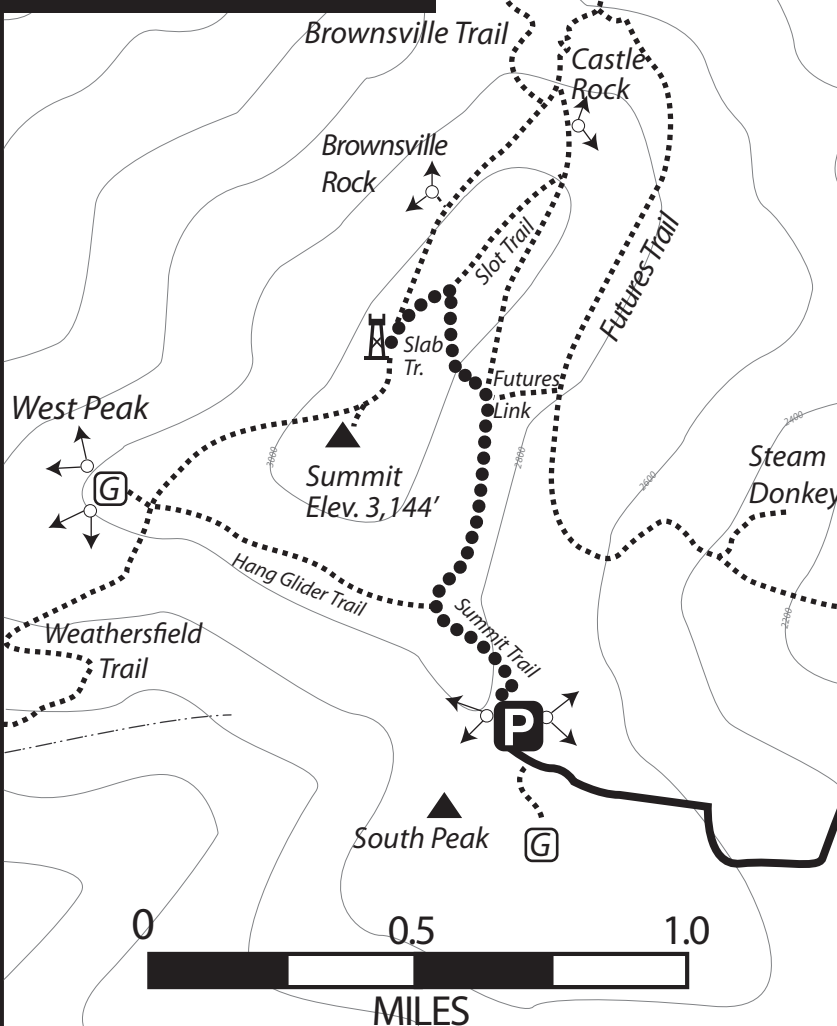
MT ASCUTNEY STATE PARK RECREATIONAL GUIDE

LEGEND

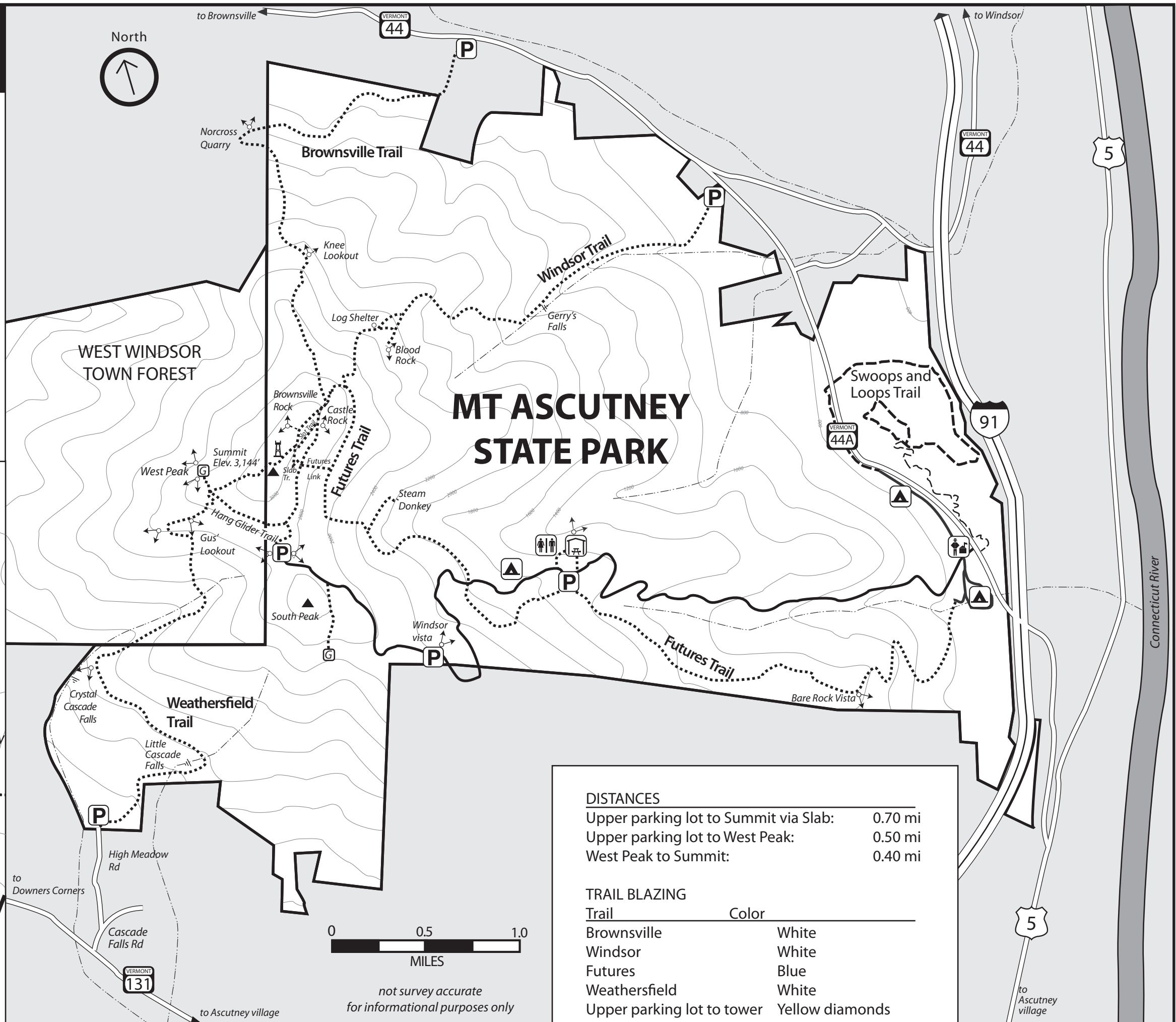
- Hiking trail (foot traffic only)
- Best route from parking area to tower
- Mountain bike trail - doubletrack/singletrack
- - - Stream
- ↗ Vista
- == Highway
- Mount Ascutney Parkway (toll)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- 🗨 Observation tower
- 🏠 Park office
- 🚻 Restrooms
- 🍷 Picnic shelter
- 🚀 Hang glider launch
- ⬆ Campground



Summit Trails Inset



ephelps - revised 02/2018



DISTANCES	
Upper parking lot to Summit via Slab:	0.70 mi
Upper parking lot to West Peak:	0.50 mi
West Peak to Summit:	0.40 mi

TRAIL BLAZING	
Trail	Color
Brownsville	White
Windsor	White
Futures	Blue
Weathersfield	White
Upper parking lot to tower	Yellow diamonds



not survey accurate
for informational purposes only

SUMMIT TRAILS

From the upper parking lot on the Mt. Ascutney Parkway, visitors can hike to the summit of Mt. Ascutney via the *Slot* (.64 miles) or *Slab* (.55 miles) Trails. These trails connect with the *Windsor*, *Weathersfield* and *Brownsville* Trails. Excellent views are enjoyed from **Brownsville Rock**, **Castle Rock**, **West Peak** and the **observation tower**.

The slab trail is recommended for hikers seeking the least strenuous route. It is marked with yellow diamond blazes. Although this is the easiest route to the top, sturdy shoes and water are still necessary, as hikers will gain nearly 350 feet in elevation on this short trail. If you follow this route to the summit, return the same way.

Observation Tower – The 24.5 foot tower provides hikers with a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. It is located near the summit on the *Windsor* and *Brownsville* Trails just north of the intersection with the *Weathersfield* Trail. This tower was constructed from sections of the original Mt. Ascutney fire tower which was used for fire surveillance until 1952.



BASE TO SUMMIT HIKING TRAILS

Four trails start at the base of Mt. Ascutney and ascend to its summit. Three of these trails are maintained under a cooperative agreement with the Ascutney Trails Association.

FUTURES TRAIL – 4.6 miles

The *Futures Trail* starts alongside campsite #22 in the Mt. Ascutney State Park campground (day use fee required). Total distance to the summit is 4.6 miles (at 4.1 miles the *Futures Trail* connects to the *Windsor Trail*). Highlights of this trail include **Bare Rock Vista** (1.0 mile) and the **Steam Donkey** (3.5 miles) – a steam powered machine used for cable logging in the early 1900s. Several sections of this trail can also be accessed by parking areas located along the Mt. Ascutney Parkway. Parking is available during the park operating season.

WEATHERSFIELD TRAIL – 2.9 miles

The trail head parking (maintained all year) is located off Route 131 in the town of Weathersfield. From the Mt. Ascutney State Park office, go 2.3 miles south on Route 44A and Route 5 to intersection with Route 131. Turn west on Route 131 and go 3.5 miles to intersection with **Cascade Falls Road**, turn north on **Cascade Falls Road**, follow signs to trail head.

Total distance from trail head to summit is 2.9 miles. Highlights of this trail include **Little Cascade Falls** (0.4 mile), **Gus’ Lookout** (2.3 miles) and **West Peak Vista** (2.5 miles).

Cascade Falls - there is no direct trail access to the falls. The falls are primarily surface flow; water flow is minimal unless there is significant rain. If you decide to go to the falls, use extreme caution; wet rock surfaces can be slippery and dangerous. The area becomes extremely slippery and icy in the winter.



BROWNSVILLE TRAIL – 3.2 miles

The trail head parking (maintained all year) is located off Route 44 in Windsor. From the Mt. Ascutney State Park office, go 1.8 miles north on Route 44A to junction with Route 44. Turn west on Route 44 and travel 1.0 mile to trail head on the left.

Total distance from trail head to summit is 3.2 miles.

Trail highlights include the **Norcross Quarry** (1.1 miles) – excellent views and a look at an early 1900s granite quarry, **Quarry Top Lookout** (1.2 miles), **Knee Lookout** (2.0 miles), **North Peak Lookout** (2.4 miles) and **Brownsville Rock** (3.0 miles).

WINDSOR TRAIL – 2.7 miles

The trail head parking (maintained all year) is located off Route 44A in the town of Windsor, 1.6 miles north of the park entrance on the left.

Total distance from trail head to summit is 2.7 miles. Trail highlights include **Gerry’s Falls** (0.8 mile), **Castle Rock** (2.4 miles) and **Brownsville Rock** (2.5 miles).

MT. ASCUTNEY PARKWAY

This 3.7-mile paved toll road winds its way up from the park entrance on Route 44A to the parking lot in the saddle between the south peak and the summit. The road has an elevation gain of nearly 2,300 feet. The CCC built the parkway over the course of six years; it incorporates many scenic views and pullouts. Three picnic areas are located along the road, one with a stone picnic shelter and restrooms.

Driving up the Parkway – The posted speed limit is 15 MPH. Take all corners well on your own side of the road. If your car overheats, pull off in a turn out area and run the car at ¼ throttle to cool the engine.

Driving down the Parkway – Drive all the way down in low gear; this will cause the engine to act as a brake and help slow your car’s descent. Do not ride your brakes. Instead apply a pumping action of the foot pedal. This allows the brakes to run cooler. If the brakes overheat, stop at the next turnout and allow the brakes to cool for 15 to 20 minutes. Cars going down the road should give the right of way to cars going up.



HANG GLIDING

Mt. Ascutney is considered one of the premier hang gliding sites in New England. Most hang gliding activities occur at the West Peak launch site located on the West Windsor Town Forest or at the South Peak launch site located within Mt. Ascutney State Park. Both areas are reached by trails originating from the upper parking lot on the Mt. Ascutney Parkway. Hang gliding within the park is managed by rules and regulations adopted by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Vermont Hang Gliding Association.

For More Information, Please Contact:

Mt Ascutney State Park
1826 Back Mtn Rd
Windsor, VT 05089
(802)674-2060 (May-Oct)
www.vtstateparks.com

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VT TDD Relay Dial 7-1-1
Printed on recycled paper
02/2011 RW/ERP/RRA



SAFE HIKING TIPS

- Wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes. Weather on the summit can be very different than weather at the trail heads; there is an average elevation gain of 2,500 feet from base to summit.
- Weather can change quickly on the mountain so be prepared for adverse conditions. Bring an extra layer and a waterproof jacket.
- Carry a cell phone when possible. *Set your ringer to “vibrate” to respect other hikers.* If you feel lost or need other assistance, contact the park office at (802) 674-2060 (May-Oct). Call 911 in the event of an emergency.
- Potable water and bathroom facilities are not available on the trail system. Plan accordingly. Bring extra water with you.
- If you feel lost, stop immediately and look around. All trails on Mt. Ascutney State Park are marked with blue, or white blaze marks (paint markings on trees alongside the trail). The Bicentennial Trail on the West Windsor Town Forest (NOT part of the park trail system) is marked with yellow painted blazes. The best route from the parking lot to the summit is blazed with yellow plastic diamonds. At each blaze mark, you should be able to see at least one blaze mark ahead and one blaze mark behind you. If you cannot see any blaze marks, turn around and retrace your steps.



MT. ASCUTNEY STATE PARK GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

- Overnight camping and campfires are allowed only at designated sites in the developed campground. Inquire at the park office for more information.
- Stay on marked hiking trails. Hiking off trails causes erosion and destroys vegetation.
- Limit hiking during mud season and especially rainy periods. This will allow the trails to dry out, and reduce the amount of maintenance required each year to keep them safe and enjoyable. If you are hiking during mud season, walk through the mud, not around it. If a trail is so muddy that you need to walk on the vegetation beside it, turn back, and seek an alternative area to hike.
- Keep the trails free of litter. Carry out what you carry in.
- Keep pets on a leash at all times. There are many porcupines on the mountain.
- Trails are for foot travel only. ATVs and mountain bikes are not permitted in the park or on the trail system.
- Leave all wildflowers and plants in their natural environment for others to enjoy.
- Keep away from all transmitter towers and buildings located on the South Peak and north summit of Mt. Ascutney.

Mt. Ascutney State Park offers a wide variety of recreational activities for all levels of outdoor enthusiasts. The park includes a campground, picnic areas, scenic auto toll road, observation tower, hang glider launch sites, historic sites and an extensive hiking trail system. User fees are charged for activities in the park. The peak stands at an elevation of 3,144 feet above sea level and is surrounded by more than 3,000 acres of state park land.

Mt. Ascutney dominates the landscape of southeastern Vermont and southwestern New Hampshire, rising sharply from the surrounding gentle hills. The mountain has a complex and unique geological history. The mountain formed over 100 million years ago when magma was forced up several times into surrounding metamorphic rocks. The magma intrusion complex cooled slowly into an igneous granitic rock. Over time, the surrounding metamorphic rock was worn down by weather and ice ages but the granitic dome persisted. The Mt. Ascutney we know today is a *monadnock*; it is not related geologically to surrounding hills, but rather stands alone and shares a geologic history more closely with the White Mountains of New Hampshire than that of the surrounding Green Mountains of Vermont.

Park development was carried out by the Civilian Conservation Corps, a Depression-era public works program aimed at putting young men to work. CCC Company No. 129, which was stationed at the park 1933-1938, constructed the northern campground, auto road, picnic areas, shelter, fire tower and summit hiking trails.



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view of Mt Ascutney, from Knapp Pond, circa 1860
courtesy Vermont Historical Society