Hiking

There are more than 30 miles of maintained hiking trails on public land in the Coolidge Range area. Trails are identified with colored rectangular signs. Day fee charged during operating season. Do not block gates or roadways. Please contact the Agency of Natural Resources Rutland North Area office for more information.

1. Shrewsbury Peak Trail (1.8 miles to Shrewsbury Peak, 4.0 miles to Long Trail) Blue blazes. This trail begins on the CCC Road with the Long Trail near Little Killington Peak. It begins at the Russell Hill parking lot on CCC Road and ascends steeply to Shrewsbury Peak. There are remnants of Civilian Conservation Corps-era construction including the pavilion, shelter, and CCC roads maintained to the Lenato. The trail begins in northern hardwood forests but enters spruce-fir forests at higher elevations. Views to the south and east from the peak include Pico Mountain, Killington and Mount Ascutney. The trail continues past the shelter and comes out on the Park Road near the parking area and the entrance to the Slack Hill Trail. Day fee charged during operating season. Elevation change: 1,050 to 1,850 feet.

2. Bessoney Trail (1.5 miles) Blue blazes. This is primarily a cross-country ski trail. However, this system of old ski roads can also be used as walking paths in the summer. Parking is available on Old Plymouth Road. The trail head is ½ mile east along the town road on north side. Remnant Norwottuck spruce plantations, lowland spruce-fir forests and northern hardwood forests can be seen all along this trail. Elevation change: 2,200 to 2,400 feet.

3. Long Trail/Appalachian Trail White blazes. A section of the Appalachian Trail/Long Trail (AT/LT) runs through the Coolidge Range. It enters the region near Governor Clemment Shelter and leaves on the north slope of Killington Peak. This trail parallels Killington through private and federal lands before the two trails diverge and the AT continues east through Gifford Woods State Park. The trail travels through high elevation northern hardwoods and spruce-fir forests. There are spectacular views from the summit of Killington Peak accessed by the Killington Spur Trail (0.2 miles). (Elevation change: 3,300 to 4,235 feet). For more detailed information on the AT/LT system refer to the Green Mountain Club’s Long Trail Guide. Public access easements are held by the State on private land for cross-country skiing and hiking. Elevation change: 3,600 feet (Pico Camp) to 2,700 feet (Old Maine Jct).

4. Sherburne Pass Trail (2.9 miles to Route 4) Blue blazes. This is the former route of the Long Trail between Pico Camp and Route 4 at Sherburne Pass, and currently connects to the AT/LT at both its north and south ends. The Pico Link (0.4 miles) leads to the summit of Pico Peak. This trail is on private land with a public access easement. Elevation change: 3,600 feet (Pico Camp) to 2,700 feet (Old Maine Jct.).

5. Kent Brook Trail (1 mile) Yellow blazes. This loop trail follows the perimeter of Gifford Woods State Park through a northern hardwood forest. The route is very old and leads to the summit of Pico Peak. This trail is on private land with a public access easement. Day fee charged during operating season.

6. Gifford Woods Interpretive Trail (0.3 mile). This loop trail has interpretive exhibits exploring the natural and cultural history of the Gifford Woods old-growth forest. Accessible from the park entrance; day fee charged during operating season.

7. Bucklin Trail (3.4 miles). Blue blazes. This popular side trail to the AT/LT begins at Brewer’s Corners on Wheelerlile Road in Mendon and ascends the western flank of Killington Peak. It follows an old logging road for much of its length. The trail ends at an intersection with the Long Trail. Elevation change: 1,800 to 3,600 feet.

8. Tinker Brook Trail (0.4 Miles to Tinker Brook gorge) Blue blazes. This trail begins at a sharp turn on CCC Road in the Town of Plymouth. This moderate hike along an old woods road leads to the Tinker Brook Shelter and the Tinker Brook Nature Area. The Nature Area includes 65 acres of Hemlock-Red Spruce Forest on the rocky slopes of Tinker Brook Gorge. It is thought to be old growth with many of the trees around 200 years old. Elevation change: 1,800 to 2,000 feet.

9. Black Swamp Trail (2.1 miles) Blue blazes. This trail begins at the Black Swamp parking area on the CCC Road and follows the gravel road into Black Swamp. Black Swamp is an important feeding area in spring, is to the northeast. From there the trail ascends through spruce-fir forests to Shrewsbury Peak. There are also more miles of woods roads for walking and exploring.

Mountain Bikes and Horses

Mountain bikes and horseback riding are allowed only on gravel roads within Coolidge State Forest and paved or graveled roads in state parks. Killington Resort has more than 30 miles of mountain bike trails (fees charged) within the ski lease area of Coolidge State Forest; Pine Hill Park in nearby Rutland offers many miles of trails as well. Mountain bike trails are also available on the Green Mountain National Forest to the north of Pitfield, Stockbridge and Rochester.

Camping

Primitive camping is permitted within the following guidelines: no permits are required for stays of less than 4 days or for groups of less than 11 people; camping must be at least 100 feet from a stream or body of water, 200 feet from a trail or property line; and at least 1,000 feet from any traveled road. No camping is allowed within designated Natural Areas. Please practice “leave no trace” or “carry in carry out” policies. There are 3 lean-to shelters available for overnight use (Russell Hill, Shrewsbury Peak and Tinker Brook). Gifford Woods and Coolidge State Parks offer developed facilities for tent, RV, lean-to and cabin camping.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

The Coolidge Range offers over 18,600 acres of public land for hunting, fishing and trapping. This large acreage is well suited to hunting large game including white-tailed deer, black bear, and moose. Ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and turkey hunting is also popular. Several brooks offer fishing opportunities, primarily for brook trout. These activities require a license from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

Trails

Trails in the Coolidge Range are maintained and managed by Parks, Forests & Recreation with many partners, including the Green Mountain Club, Farm & Wilderness Foundation, Killington-Pico Ski Resort Partners, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Catamount Trail Association and the Shrewsbury Outing Club. Public access easements are held by the State on private land for cross-country skiing and hiking. Elevation change: 1,550 to 1,850 feet.

Forest Legacy Easements

Public access easements are held by the State on private land for public use. Several properties within the Coolidge Range lands have these easements. The public access easements are funded through the Vermont Forest Legacy Program.

Parking and Fee Areas

Several improved parking areas as well as pull-offs along roads and old log landings serve as parking for summer recreational activities. The CCC Road provides access for recreational activities including trail, fishing and mountain bike trails (fees charged) within the ski lease area of the park along with additional access in the Killington Resort. Gifford Woods and Coolidge State Parks have parking and modern facilities, and charge entry fees during the operating seasons. Do not block gates or roadsways.

Off-Road Vehicles Prohibited

The use of ATVs, dirt bikes, or any other motorized, off-road vehicle is prohibited on these lands, roads and trails. Public access easements are held by the State on private land for cross-country skiing and hiking. Elevation change: 1,800 to 3,600 feet.

Welcome to the Coolidge Range Area

Coolidge State Forest and Plymilds Wildlife Management Area provide access to more than 18,600 acres of state lands. The area is most noted for its vast, contiguous temperate, expansive forested areas associated with wetlands. Elevations range between 1,900 and 4,235 feet, and include a “high peaks” area containing Killington Peak (Vermont’s 2nd highest peak, 4,235′), Little Killington (3,939′), Shrewsbury (3,729′), Pico Mountain (3,840′) and Smith (3,225′). This area, along with Gifford Woods State Park and Coolidge State Park is referred to as the ‘Coolidge Range.’

The Coolidge Range forms a “bridge” along the Green Mountain spine that connects blocks of Green Mountain National Forest land to the north and to the south. This large block of public remote land provides nearly endless opportunities for low impact, non-dispersed recreational activities including hiking, hunting, fishing, birding, primitive camping and cross-country skiing. Focused parcels provide more intensive recreational opportunities such as downhill skiing (Killington Resort) or snowmobiling. Several nearby state parks offer developed camping and day use facilities.

For More Information


Killington Resort on State Land

Killington/Pico Ski Resort Partners, LLC leases 1,700 acres of Coolidge State Forest at Killington Resort and offers downhill skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking and hiking activities. The company charges fees for use of their lifts and facilities, and may control or exclude public use or access in certain situations. Pico Mountain operates on private land owned by the resort.

To request this publication in Braille or alternate visual format, please contact parks@vermont.gov

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