

Emerald Lake State Park Recreational Trails

Nestled between the Taconic mountains to the west and the Green mountains to the east, Emerald Lake has a long history of human habitation. Prior to European settlement, the area was used extensively by Native peoples. In the late 18th and early 19th century, the discovery of marble and iron in the mountains, and construction of the railroad, transformed the valley's economy. Isaac Underhill opened the country's first marble quarry near East Dorset in 1785. More than 30 other quarrying operations would follow. By 1889 however, mine exhaustion, changing economics and other factors had closed most of the industries.

In 1957 the State of Vermont purchased 1,000 acres surrounding Emerald Lake. After several years of development, this became Emerald Lake State Park, which opened 1960.

Hiking

There are a variety of hikes at Emerald Lake State Park. Try them all or mix and match to create loop trail hiking experiences.

Rich Woods Trail System

This area includes a number of trails that when combined offer many miles of hiking within the rich Northern Hardwood forests of Emerald Lake State Park. The Rich Woods Trail begins at the trailhead in the Camp Loop A just south of the recycling center.

Rich Woods Trail; 0.75 miles; moderate. Begins at the kiosk in Camp Loop A and ends at County Road.

County Road Trail; 1.2 miles to Upper Trail, 1.6 miles to the Meadow Trail; easy to moderate. Follows old town road along upper slopes then descends to intersect other trails.

Upper Trail; 0.5 miles; moderate. Follows the slope between Rich Woods Trail and County Road.

Lower Trail; 0.4 miles; easy to moderate. Follows lower on the slope and connects County Road Trail with Rich Woods Trail.

Meadow Trail; 0.4 miles; easy to moderate. Winds through open meadows above the park entrance offering beautiful views of the southern Green Mountains and glimpses of the Route 7 valley.

Vista Trail; 2.4 miles; moderate. Begins at the Nature Center; crosses Otter Creek then crosses the railroad tracks to reach the forest on the east side of Route 7. Use caution on this active railroad crossing. Trail climbs then follows along the ridge east of Route 7. Several beautiful views of Emerald Lake and the Taconic Mountains along the trail.

Lake Trail; 0.5 miles; easy. Lake Trail begins at beach and follows along the shore of Emerald Lake to its southern end. Great views swim spots along the way. Fishing is also popular along this trail.

Campground Trails These connect the camping loops with the Lake Trail and Emerald Lake. Can be used to access the beach or combined to a loop hike.

A Loop Trail; 0.1 mile; moderate.

B Loop Trail; 0.2 miles; moderate.

C Loop Trail 0.4 miles to south end of the lake, 0.9 miles to beach; moderate.

Park Use Guidelines

- Stay on marked trails. Hiking trails are marked with blue blazes.
- Property boundaries are marked with orange blazes.
- Carry out your trash.
- Keep pets under voice control and on a leash in developed areas or if they can't be controlled with voice commands.
- Overnight camping and campfires are allowed only at designated sites in the developed campground. Inquire at the park office for more information.
- Trails are for foot travel only.
- ATVs and other motorized wheeled vehicles are not permitted.
- Leave all wildflowers and plants in their natural environment for others to enjoy.
- Trails are closed during mud season (snowmelt to Memorial Day).

Emerald Lake State Park
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www.vtstateparks.com

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

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*Operating Season:
Memorial Day Weekend -
Indigenous Peoples' Day*

*Hiking
Picnicking
Boat Rentals & Concession
Group Events
Developed Camping*

 VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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