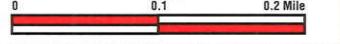


WEEKS STATE PARK

MT. PROSPECT, LANCASTER, N.H.

SCALE 1: 9,000

0 0.1 0.2 Mile



Lancaster (2 mi)

REED ROAD

1200

1300

1400

1500

1600

1700

1800

1900

2000

2055

MOUNT
PROSPECTSummit Lodge
Warden's Cabin
Carriage House

Fire Lookout Tower

Nature Trail

0.2

1400

1500

1600

1700

1800

1900

2000

2100

2200

2300

2400

2500

2600

2700

2800

2900

3000

3100

3200

3300

3400

SNOW MOBILE TRAIL

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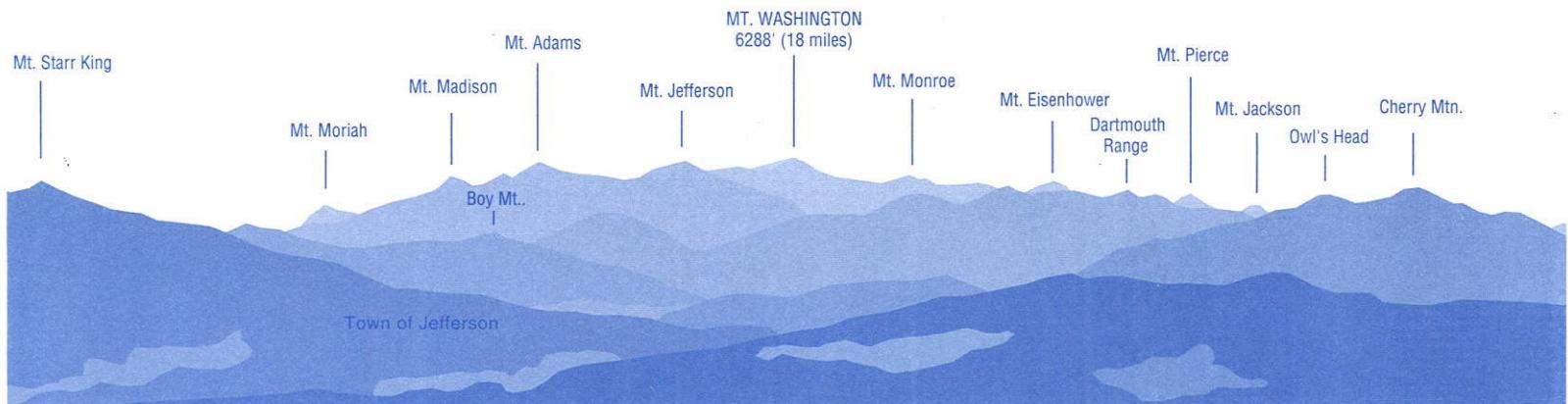
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View East to the Presidential Range from Mount Prospect



WEEKS STATE PARK

Weeks State Park is located on Mount Prospect just south of Lancaster, New Hampshire. This 2058 foot mountain offers one of the finest views in the White Mountains. The summit is reached by a scenic auto road, open in the summer, but popular year round with walkers.

The park is managed as a state historic site by the NH Division of Parks and Recreation. It honors Congressman John Wingate Weeks who sponsored legislation in 1911 to create national forests in the eastern United States. The Weeks Act allowed the federal government to buy the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, now over 780,000 acres in size.

Congressman Weeks built his summer home on Mount Prospect in 1912 consisting of an impressive lodge, a carriage house, an observation tower and a scenic auto road. In 1941 the Weeks family donated the entire estate and 420 acres of land to the "people of New Hampshire." The lodge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 and the lookout tower was placed on the National Register of Historic Lookout Towers in 1992.

The Summit Lodge is open during the summer and offers guided tours (admission charged), an impressive bird collection and free weekly educational programs of natural and local interest. The stone observation tower serves as an active fire lookout and is open to the public when the watchman is present. The Mt. Prospect Ski Area, located off Rt. 3, has been popular with area residents since 1938 and is managed by volunteers from Mt. Prospect Ski Club.

Weeks State Park also offers the public a variety of recreational opportunities. The five miles of trails described below lead visitors through a variety of terrain and habitats. The forest consists of white spruce, red oak, sugar maple, paper birch and many other species of trees including the threatened butternut. Hawks are commonly seen soaring over the summit and many neo-tropical songbirds favor this mountain, their home in the summer.

AROUND THE MOUNTAIN LOOP TRAIL

This wide multi-use trail was designed for hikers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. Skiers will find it safer to ski the trail in a counter-clockwise direction. This avoids a steep downhill section on the east side of the mountain.

From the ski area access road, the Loop Trail heads south and rises moderately to join an old woods road. It passes by an old apple orchard on the right and then crosses the auto road. The Heritage Trail is reached in a few minutes and the Loop Trail enters a stand of large white spruce trees. The trail rises gradually and opens to views of Martin Meadow pond and Cherry Mountain, then gradually descends through an area of interesting northern white cedar trees.

The Loop Trail soon reaches the junction of the Davidge Path; a fine overlook with views of the Franconia and Kinsman ranges. In the foreground is a Christmas tree plantation owned by the Davidge family. (This section of the trail is on private land.)

Beyond this junction with the Davidge Path the Loop Trail continues along a stone wall and through a beautiful grove of red oak trees. The trail gradually ascends the side of Mt. Prospect crossing several small streams along the way. Look for a paper birch and a yellow birch growing together in a small meadow, along with hawthorn and apple trees.

Soon the trail climbs steeply for a short distance to an old road, which it follows before dropping down into a maple sugarbush. (Take care not to damage the tap lines.) Rising and falling several times, the trail passes by a long-since abandoned sugarhouse and soon reaches the junction of the Old Carriage Path.

The Loop Trail continues west and passes an old cellar hole (right), a ski slope (left) and then enters a grove of large white pine trees. The trail ends at the ski area parking lot. The total distance is 3 miles.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HERITAGE TRAIL

The Heritage Trail is a 230 mile walking path through New Hampshire from Massachusetts to Canada; rich in history, culture and natural beauty. The section of the Heritage Trail within the park is 1.3 miles long and is maintained by the Lancaster Heritage Trail Committee.

The Heritage Trail coincides with parts of the Loop Trail and the Old Carriage Path as it passes through Weeks State Park (see map). The trail enters the park from Rt. 3 passing by three cellar holes, a small stone quarry, an apple orchard and a ski slope. The Heritage Trail provides a hiking trail connection with the village of Lancaster in the valley below.

MOUNT PROSPECT SCENIC BYWAY

The historic auto road, built in 1911, leads to the summit of Mount Prospect and was designated as a New Hampshire Scenic Byway in 1995. This status recognizes the many special qualities of this beautiful drive. From the park entrance on the east side of Rt. 3 one enters the forest along a paper birch-lined road. After the first hairpin turn (0.7 miles) is the eastern viewpoint (1.1 miles). The views of the Pilot Range, Jefferson Valley, the Presidential Range and Mount Washington are just a hint of things to come. Continuing on there is another hairpin turn carved out of the rocky hillside. Soon the visitor enters the open summit area where parking is available at the carriage house. Across the way is a magnificent fieldstone fire lookout tower. Visitors can climb the stairs to the lookout level when the watchman is present. A short nature trail starts at the base of the tower.

Beyond the tower, on the very top of the mountain, sit the lodge and visitor center. The front lawn and tables are a welcome picnic site. Visitors are greeted with a spectacular 360 degree view of the Presidential Range, the Franconia Range, the Connecticut River, and the Green Mountains of Vermont.

THE DAVIDGE PATH

The Davidge Path provides a connection between the auto road and the Loop Trail. The path starts on the auto road, 0.6 miles from the park gate, just below the first hairpin turn. It descends to the south passing through stands of white spruce and red pine and ends at the junction with the Loop Trail. The Davidge Path is 0.25 miles long, short but steep. The path is suitable for hiking and snowshoeing but too steep and narrow for skiing.

THE OLD CARRIAGE PATH

The Old Carriage Path was constructed in 1859 to provide horse-drawn carriage access to the (now gone) summit hotel. This path starts just below the upper hairpin turn on the auto road at a small parking area.

The path descends through a beautiful stand of sugar maple, beech and ash where wildflowers abound in May. The path crosses the Loop Trail in 0.4 miles and ends at Reed Road 0.3 miles further.

In the reverse direction, look for the Heritage Trail sign on Reed Road (0.3 miles from Rt. 3). Follow a woods road south, bearing right in 50 yards at a junction. The upper section of the Old Carriage Path is suitable for hiking and snowshoeing but is too steep for skiing.

Help support the trails and programs on Mt. Prospect...

...Join the Weeks State Park Association:

**Weeks State Park Association
P.O. Box 104, Lancaster, N.H. 03584-0104**