

Doggin' Connecticut

***The 57 Best Places
To Hike With Your Dog
In The Nutmeg State***

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Cruden Bay Books



There is always a new trail to look forward to...

**DOGGIN' CONNECTICUT: THE 57 BEST PLACES TO HIKE
WITH YOUR DOG IN THE NUTMEG STATE**

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*“Dogs are our link to paradise...to sit with a dog on a hillside
on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden,
where doing nothing was not boring - it was peace.”
- Milan Kundera*

Ahead On The Trail

No Dogs!	14
The 57 Best Places To Hike With Your Dog	15
Camping With Your Dog	130
Your Dog At The Beach	139
Index To Parks, Trails And Open Space	142

Also...

Hiking With Your Dog	5
Outfitting Your Dog For A Hike	9
Low Impact Hiking With Your Dog	12

Introduction

Connecticut can be a great place to hike with your dog. Within a short drive your canine adventurer can be climbing hills that leave him panting, trotting on some of the most historic grounds in America, exploring the estates of America's wealthiest families or circling lakes for miles and never lose sight of the water.

I have selected what I consider to be the 57 best places to take your dog for an outing in Connecticut and ranked them according to subjective criteria including the variety of hikes available, opportunities for canine swimming and pleasure of the walks. The rankings include a mix of parks that feature long walks and parks that contain short walks. Did I miss your favorite? Let us know at www.hikewithyourdog.com.

For dog owners it is important to realize that not all parks are open to our best trail companions (see page 14 for a list of parks that do not allow dogs). It is sometimes hard to believe but not everyone loves dogs. We are, in fact, in the minority when compared with our non-dog owning neighbors.

So when visiting a park always keep your dog under control and clean up any messes and we can all expect our great parks to remain open to our dogs. And maybe some others will see the light as well. *Remember, every time you go out with your dog you are an ambassador for all dog owners.*

Grab that leash and hit the trail!

DBG

Hiking With Your Dog

So you want to start hiking with your dog. Hiking with your dog can be a fascinating way to explore the Nutmeg State from a canine perspective. Some things to consider:

Dog's Health

Hiking can be a wonderful preventative for any number of physical and behavioral disorders. One in every three dogs is overweight and running up trails and leaping through streams is great exercise to help keep pounds off. Hiking can also relieve boredom in a dog's routine and calm dogs prone to destructive habits. And hiking with your dog strengthens the overall owner/dog bond.

Breed of Dog

All dogs enjoy the new scents and sights of a trail. But some dogs are better suited to hiking than others. If you don't as yet have a hiking companion, select a breed that matches your interests. Do you look forward to an entire afternoon's hiking? You'll need a dog bred to keep up with such a pace, such as a retriever or a spaniel. Is a half-hour enough walking for you? It may not be for an energetic dog like a border collie. If you already have a hiking friend, tailor your plans to his abilities.

Conditioning

Just like humans, dogs need to be acclimated to the task at hand. An inactive dog cannot be expected to bounce from the easy chair in the den to complete a 3-hour hike. You must also be physically able to restrain your dog if confronted with distractions on the trail (like a scampering squirrel or a pack of joggers). Have your dog checked by a veterinarian before significantly increasing his activity level.

Weather

Hot humid summers do not do dogs any favors. With no sweat glands and only panting available to disperse body heat, dogs are much more susceptible to heat stroke than we are. Unusually rapid panting and/or a bright red tongue are signs of heat exhaustion in your pet.

Always carry enough water for your hike. Even days that don't seem too warm can cause discomfort in dark-coated dogs if the sun is shining brightly. In cold weather, short-coated breeds may require additional attention.

Trail Hazards

Dogs won't get poison ivy but they can transfer it to you. Some trails are littered with small pieces of broken glass that can slice a dog's paws. Nasty thorns can also blanket trails that we in shoes may never notice. At the beach beware of sand spurs that can often be present in scrubby, sandy areas.

Ticks

You won't be able to spend much time in Connecticut woods without encountering ticks. All are nasty but the deer tick - no bigger than a pin head - carries with it the spectre of Lyme disease. Lyme disease attacks a dog's joints and makes walking painful. The tick needs to be embedded in the skin to transmit Lyme disease. It takes 4-6 hours for a tick to become embedded and another 24-48 hours to transmit Lyme disease bacteria.

When hiking, walk in the middle of trails away from tall grass and bushes. And when the summer sun fades away don't stop thinking about ticks - they remain active any time the temperature is above 30 degrees. By checking your dog - and yourself - thoroughly after each walk you can help avoid Lyme disease. Ticks tend to congregate on your dog's ears, between the toes and around the neck and head.

Water

Surface water, including fast-flowing streams, is likely to be infested with a microscopic protozoa called *Giardia*, waiting to wreak havoc on a dog's intestinal system. The most common symptom is crippling diarrhea. Algae, pollutants and contaminants can all be in streams, ponds and puddles. If possible, carry fresh water for your dog on the trail - your dog can even learn to drink happily from a squirt bottle.

At the beach, cool sea water will be tempting for your dog but try to limit any drinking as much as possible. Again, have plenty of fresh water available for your dog to drink instead.

🐾 Rattlesnakes and Copperheads, etc.

Rattlesnakes and their close cousins, copperheads, are not particularly aggressive animals but you should treat any venomous snake with respect and keep your distance. A rattler's colors may vary but they are recognized by the namesake rattle on the tail and a diamond-shaped head. Unless cornered or teased by humans or dogs, a rattlesnake will crawl away and avoid striking. Avoid placing your hand in unexamined rocky areas and crevasses and try and keep your dog from doing so as well. Stick to the trail and out of high grass where you can't see well. If you hear a nearby rattle, stop immediately and hold your dog back. Identify where the snake is and slowly back away.

If you or your dog is bitten, do not panic but get to a hospital or veterinarian with as little physical movement as possible. Wrap between the bite and the heart. Rattlesnakes might give "dry bites" where no poison is injected, but you should always check with a doctor after a bite even if you feel fine.



🐾 Black Bears

Are you likely to see a bear while out hiking with your dog? No, it's not likely. It is, however, quite a thrill if you are fortunate enough to spot a black bear on the trail - from a distance.

Black bear attacks are incredibly rare. In the year 2000 a hiker was killed by a black bear in Great Smoky National Park and it was the first deadly bear attack in the 66-year history of America's most popular

national park. It was the first EVER in the southeastern United States. In all of North America only 43 black bear mauling deaths have ever been recorded (through 1999).

Most problems with black bears occur near a campground (like the above incident) where bears have learned to forage for unprotected food. On the trail bears will typically see you and leave the area. What should you do if you encounter a black bear? Experts agree on three important things:

- 1) *Never run. A bear will outrun you, outclimb you, outswim you. Don't look like prey.*
- 2) *Never get between a female bear and a cub who may be nearby feeding.*
- 3) *Leave a bear an escape route.*

If the bear is at least 15 feet away and notices you make sure you keep your dog close and calm. If a bear stands on its hind legs or comes closer it may just be trying to get a better view or smell to evaluate the situation. Wave your arms and make noise to scare the bear away. Most bears will quickly leave the area.

If you encounter a black bear at close range, stand upright and make yourself appear as large a foe as possible. Avoid direct eye contact and speak in a calm, assertive and assuring voice as you back up slowly and out of danger.

Porcupines

Porcupines are easy for a curious dog to catch and that makes them among the most dangerous animals you may meet because an embedded quill is not only painful but can cause infection if not properly removed.

Outfitting Your Dog For A Hike

These are the basics for taking your dog on a hike:

▶ **Collar.**

It should not be so loose as to come off but you should be able to slide your flat hand under the collar.

▶ **Identification Tags.**

Get one with your veterinarian's phone number as well.

▶ **Bandanna.**


Can help distinguish him from game in hunting season.

▶ **Leash.**


Leather lasts forever but if there's water in your dog's future, consider quick-drying nylon.

▶ **Water.**

Carry 8 ounces for every hour of hiking.

 *I want my dog to help carry water, snacks and other supplies on the trail. Where do I start?*

To select an appropriate dog pack measure your dog's girth around the rib cage. A dog pack should fit securely without hindering the dog's ability to walk normally.

 *Will my dog wear a pack?*

Wearing a dog pack is no more obtrusive than wearing a collar, although some dogs will take to a pack easier than others. Introduce the pack by draping a towel over your dog's back in the house and then having your dog wear an empty pack on short walks. Progressively add some crumpled newspaper and then bits of clothing. Fill the pack with treats and reward your dog from the stash. Soon your dog will associate the dog pack with an outdoor adventure and will eagerly look forward to wearing it.

🐾 *How much weight can I put into a dog pack?*

Many dog packs are sold by weight recommendations. A healthy, well-conditioned dog can comfortably carry 25% to 33% of its body weight. Breeds prone to back problems or hip dysplasia should not wear dog packs. Consult your veterinarian before stuffing the pouches with gear.


🐾 *How does a dog wear a pack?*

The pack, typically with cargo pouches on either side, should ride as close to the shoulders as possible without limiting movement. The straps that hold the dog pack in place should be situated where they will not cause chafing.

🐾 *What are good things to put in a dog pack?*

Low density items such as food and poop bags are good choices. Ice cold bottles of water can cool your dog down on hot days. Don't put anything in a dog pack that can break. Dogs will bang the pack on rocks and trees as they wiggle through tight spots in the trail. Dogs also like to lie down in creeks and other wet spots so seal items in plastic bags. A good use for dog packs when on day hikes around Connecticut is trail maintenance - your dog can pack out trash left by inconsiderate visitors before you.



 *Are dog booties a good idea?*

Dog booties can be an asset, especially for the occasional canine hiker whose paw pads have not become toughened. In some places, there may be broken glass. Hiking boots for dogs are designed to prevent pads from cracking while trotting across rough surfaces. Used in winter, dog booties provide warmth and keep ice balls from forming between toe pads when hiking through snow.

 *What should a doggie first aid kit include?*

Even when taking short hikes it is a good idea to have some basics available for emergencies:









- ▶ 4" square gauze pads
- ▶ cling type bandaging tapes
- ▶ topical wound disinfectant cream
- ▶ tweezers
- ▶ insect repellent - no reason to leave your dog unprotected against mosquitoes and yellow flies
- ▶ veterinarian's phone number

"I can't think of anything that brings me closer to tears than when my old dog - completely exhausted after a hard day in the field - limps away from her nice spot in front of the fire and comes over to where I'm sitting and puts her head in my lap, a paw over my knee, and closes her eyes, and goes back to sleep. I don't know what I've done to deserve that kind of friend."

-Gene Hill

Low Impact Hiking With Your Dog

Every time you hike with your dog on the trail you are an ambassador for all dog owners. Some people you meet won't believe in your right to take a dog on the trail. Be friendly to all and make the best impression you can by practicing low impact hiking with your dog:

-  Pack out everything you pack in.
-  Do not leave dog scat on the trail; if you haven't brought plastic bags for poop removal bury it away from the trail and topical water sources.
-  Hike only where dogs are allowed.
-  Stay on the trail.
-  Do not allow your dog to chase wildlife.
-  Step off the trail and wait with your dog while horses and other hikers pass.
-  Do not allow your dog to bark - people are enjoying the trail for serenity.
-  *Have as much fun on your hike as your dog does.*

The Other End Of The Leash

Leash laws are like speed limits - everyone seems to have a private interpretation of their validity. Some dog owners never go outside with an unleashed dog; others treat the laws as suggestions or disregard them completely. It is not the purpose of this book to tell dog owners where to go to evade the leash laws or reveal the parks where rangers will look the other way at an unleashed dog. Nor is it the business of this book to preach vigilant adherence to the leash laws. Nothing written in a book is going to change people's behavior with regard to leash laws. So this will be the last time leash laws are mentioned, save occasionally when we point out the parks where dogs are welcomed off leash.

Visiting Connecticut Parks

A couple of notes before heading out to the park with your dog. The State of Connecticut has embraced the Internet age and encourages park visitors to print out maps from their website before arriving. Finding a map on site has become increasingly rare and even though these are day hikes, nothing ruins a day out with your dog like getting lost when you don't want to. If you can't pre-print maps on your home computer make a habit of keeping a notebook in the car so you can sketch a map from the information boards found at most parks.

Many public lands in Connecticut allow hunting. If you can only hike with your dog in such places during hunting season, outfit yourself and your dog in blaze orange and stick to the trails. There is no hunting anywhere in Connecticut on Sundays so that is obviously the best day to plan an expedition during hunting season.

No Dogs

Before we get started on the best places to take your dog, let's get out of the way some of the trails that do not allow dogs:

Burnham Brook Preserve - East Haddam
Dinosaur State Park (trails) - Rocky Hill
Greenwich Audubon Center - Greenwich
Haley Farm State Park - Groton
Indian Well State Park - Shelton
Lucius Pond Ordway/Devil's Den Preserve - Weston
Selden Preserve - Old Lyme
Sharon Audubon Center - Sharon
Sherwood Island State Park - Westport (April 15 to September 30)
Squantz State Park - New Fairfield (April 15 to September 30)
Weir Nature Preserve - Wilton



O.K. that wasn't too ba. Let's forget about these and move on to some of the great places where we CAN take our dogs on Connecticut trails...

*The 57 Best Places
To Hike With Your Dog
In Connecticut...*

I

Steep Rock Reservation

The Park

More than any other architect, Ehrick Rossiter, working in the late 19th century, gave Washington its distinctive look. He designed over 20 buildings in the town, many in a rambling Colonial Revival style. In 1889, just as he was about to break ground on his own country house he discovered that the wooded hillsides that would be his view were slated for clear cutting. Instead of building the house he bought the threatened land from the timber company.

Rossiter caressed his 100 acres for 36 years, building carriage roads and small river crossings. In 1925 he donated the land, which included the Steep Rock overlook, to a carefully chosen group of trustees, thus ensuring its preservation. Over the years additional landowner donations have swelled the Steep Rock Association's holdings to 4,500+ acres.

The Walks

Attractive woodlands, a sporty trail, a one-of-a-kind view, a long riverside ramble - Steep Rock Reservation has it all for your dog. The *Steep Rock Loop* leaves from the west side of the Shepaug River on a wide, switchbacking path into the hills. When the hemlocks give way to hardwoods the path gets rockier but is still easy on the paw.

Litchfield

Phone Number
- (860) 868-9131

Website
- www.steeprockassoc.org

Admission Fee
- None

Park Hours
- Sunrise to sunset

Directions
- *Washington Depot*; from Route 47 in town, turn down River Road on the west side of the Shepaug River. In a mile, when the road turns right, bear left onto the wide dirt Tunnel Road. Parking is on both sides of the river.



An avenue of massive, multi-trunked Eastern hemlock trees give your dog a special place to rest.

Bonus

The Shepaug Valley Railroad began operation in 1872, bringing vacationers up from New York City. The Holiday House was a rambling hotel built in 1893 as a retreat for young working women. To reach the resort the trunk line required a tunnel to be blasted 238 feet through solid rock, barely wider than the tracks themselves. The Steep Rock trails use the railbed which ceased operation in 1948, including a walk through the craggy tunnel.

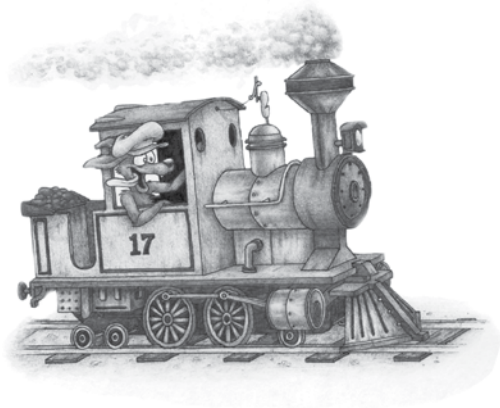
The destination is the overlook of the Clam Shell, where the river loops back on itself. Your dog can stay well back of the fence and soak in the dramatic view from a rock outcropping.

Heading back down the wooded slopes, you'll be using carriage roads, passing through a striking series of multi-trunked hemlocks. At the river your dog will cross on the Hauser Footbridge,

a cable-and-wood suspension bridge in the fashion of the Brooklyn Bridge.

The last half of this 4.2-mile loop follows the old rail bed along the Shepaug River. There is plenty of opportunity for your dog to slip in for a swim on this easy stretch. There are more trails that hug the tranquil river and elsewhere in the hills to extend your dog's hiking day in this magical place.

Trail Sense: The mapboard is on the west side of the river even though the main parking lot is on the east side. The main trails are blazed but be careful at the intersections.



Dog Friendliness

Dogs are allowed to hike around the Steep Rock Reservation.

Traffic

Bikes are not permitted but horses are.

Canine Swimming

The beautiful Shepaug River is just deep enough for joyful dog paddling.

Trail Time

Less than an hour for an easy walk along the river to several hours in the Steep Rock hills.

2

Sleeping Giant State Park

The Park

Most of the basaltic ridges in Connecticut run predictably from north to south but one rogue two-mile band of hills runs east-west. The ridge is easily recognized, especially from the original settlements on the southern coast, even more so because the ridge resembles a giant man resting on his back.

American Indians shied away from the ridge, considering it an evil spirit. Early settlers did some milling here but its history has been mostly for recreation. Summer cottages were common on the ridgetops beginning in the mid 1800s.

One of those cottages belonged to Willis Cook, who had started work in a Mt. Carmel axle shop at the age of 10 and in forty years of time came to own the business. He was appointed postmaster and a Hamden judge. He owned the ridge that formed the Giant's head. Dismayed by vandalism, he leased his land for quarrying the mountain's traprock. As blasting began to transform the Giant's silhouette, horrified residents began laying the foundation for the Sleeping Giant Park Association.

The Walks

Just about any kind of canine hiking fare is on the menu in this cherished park. There are more than 30 miles of trails running from the feet to the head of the Giant, the first trails in Connecticut to be designated a National Recreation Trail. Most are rocky and tricky but even the novice trail dog can tackle the gently

New Haven

Phone Number
- (203) 789-7498

Website
- www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325264&depNav_GID=1650#map

Admission Fee
- None except seasonally on the weekends and holidays

Park Hours
- 8:00 a.m. to sunset

Directions
- *Hamden*; across from Quinnipiac University on Mt. Carmel Avenue. From I-91 take Exit 10 to Route 40 to Route 10 North and turn right on Mt. Carmel. From I-84 take Route 70 South to Route 10 South and left on Mt. Carmel.

Bonus

Without question, the greatest tree in America prior to 1900 was the chestnut. Rot resistant with fine-grained wood, the chestnut tree supported both vibrant wildlife populations and entire rural economies.

It was estimated that one in every four trees in the eastern forests was a chestnut tree - some as old as 600 years. But in 1904 an Asian fungus was discovered in the Bronx Zoo and the blight soon decimated the chestnut population. By 1950 millions of acres of woodlands were left with dead, standing trees.

The chestnut blight remains 100% fatal - young chestnuts may reach 20 or 30 feet but are doomed to succumb to the disease. In 1949, Dr. Arthur Graves sold 8.3 acres of his land for The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for tree breeding. The Chestnut Plantation at Sleeping Giant, east of the park, hosts specimens of all of the species of chestnut and is one of the finest in the world.

ascending road that makes up the 1.6-mile *Tower Path*. Your destination on top of the 739-foot Mount Carmel summit is a hulking four-story stone observation tower that would not be out of place in King Arthur's time. Experienced dogs can reach the tower, located near the hip of the Giant, via the difficult *Blue Trail*.

The wooded ridges obscure the rocky nature of the ground. Many of the ascents are pick-your-way passages. At some spots around cobbles of jumbled boulders like Hezekiah's Knob the trail narrows enough to demand care with your dog. Even the *Nature Trail* involves some rough going a ways into it. This detailed, one-hour exploration is a stand-out of its kind, offering an excellent background to your visit to the Giant.

Trail Sense: There is quite a tangle of trails visiting every body part of the Giant. Pick a destination, plot a course from the trailhead kiosks and set out.

Dog Friendliness

Dogs are allowed throughout the state park and forest.

Traffic

Head down some of the more challenging trails and you can find long stretches of solitude; on some of the less steep paths you may see a horse or two so keep your dog close.

Canine Swimming

Water is not the attraction here; the small ponds tend to be swampy.

Trail Time

Plan to spend the day with your dog enjoying these trails.

3

Bluff Point Coastal Reserve

The Park

Bluff Point is the last remaining undeveloped public land of any size along the Connecticut coastline. That is an irony since it was one of the first to be developed.

Connecticut Governor John Winthrop (1698-1707), grandson of the founding governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, made his home on the peninsula and subsequent generations farmed the land for more than a century.

Over the years more than 100 vacation homes were built around the headlands of Bluff Point. Each and every cottage was destroyed during the Hurricane of 1938 and none was rebuilt.

The State had eyed the bluff as a possible recreation site since before World War I but the first land here was not acquired until 1963. In 1975 Bluff Point was designated a "Coastal Reserve" to preserve its unique ecological integrity.

The Walks

Most of your dog's trotting around Bluff Point will take place on a wide, level cart road that serviced the long-gone agricultural fields. The trip from the parking lot to Bluff Point in the Long Island Sound is 1.6 miles through alternating maritime forest and open shore land. Easy grades take you up to your ultimate destination atop the pink granite rocks of the bluff.

A short detour leads to a one-mile wide sand spit that connects to the small Bushy Point Beach. Your dog will salivate at the chance to romp across

New London

Phone Number
- (860) 444-7591

Website
- www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325178

Admission Fee
- None

Park Hours
- 8:00 a.m. to sunset

Directions
- *Groton*; Take Exit 88 from I-95 onto Route 117 South to Route 1 South. Turn right and make a left at the first light onto Depot Road. Follow to the end, bearing right under the railroad underpass into the large parking lot.

Bonus

The mile-long Bushy Point Beach shelters the Poquonnock River that has developed into an estuary rich in shellfish and the shorebirds that feast on them.

The windswept salt waters attract human shell fishermen as well. A permit is required to ply the waters with your clam rake and one can be obtained in the Groton town offices located on the corner of Route 1 and Depot Road where you turned into the park. Don't be surprised if your dog wades in to help out with the clamming.

the open sand but it is closed to dogs during the plover nesting season from April 15 to September 15.

The loop back travels along a forested ridge. The highlight on this trail segment are stone ruins of the 300-year old Winthrop homestead.

There are more nooks and crannies to explore on Bluff Point, including a cut-off to the full 3.6-mile loop.

A side trail wanders along the Providence & Worcester Railroad from the parking lot to Mumford Cove. This trail reaches Haley Farm State Park in about one mile but dogs are not allowed in that park.

Trail Sense: Map boards guide the way both at the parking lot and at Bluff Point before you head back.



Expect your dog to join the fun shell fishing in the sheltered Poquonnock River.

Dog Friendliness

Dogs are allowed everywhere except Bushy Point Beach 4/15 to 9/15.

Traffic

Regular trail users take advantage of this seaside hike, including bikes and the occasional horse but nothing keeps a beach crowd down like a one-mile walk to the surf. No motor vehicles are allowed.

Canine Swimming

There is plenty of easy access to superior dog paddling in the Poquonnock River.

Trail Time

More than one hour.

4

Bear Mountain

The Park

Through much of the 19th century reference books stated confidently that no part of Connecticut was higher than 1,000 feet. No one living in the remote Litchfield Hills probably paid what was printed in books much mind but Robbins Battell of the prominent musical family of Norfolk wanted to set the record straight.

He identified Bear Mountain as the highest point in the state, negotiated a long-term lease on the property and had it surveyed to make it official. But having set out in his quest for accuracy, Battell actually muddied the waters more. Long after the expert flutist, state senator and philanthropist died in 1894 modern surveying techniques identified the side of Mount Frissell, four miles away, as the highest point in Connecticut. Bear Mountain, however, is the state's highest summit.

The Walks

Every Nutmeg state dog should get a chance to stand on the state's highest summit. The most popular route is via the blue-blazed *Undermountain Trail* to the *Appalachian Trail*, tagging the peak in just under three miles. Bear Mountain is an honest mountain - there is scarcely a downhill step on the ascent to the top - no depressing drops into saddles and ravines that set tails to drooping when you know you should be headed up. You are gaining over 1,500 feet in elevation on this canine hike but the serious panting does not begin until the final half-mile.

Litchfield

Phone Number
- None

Website
- None

Admission Fee
- None

Park Hours
- Sunrise to sunset

Directions
- *Salisbury*; head north on Route 41 from the intersection with Route 44 in town. Go 3.5 miles to a large parking lot on the left for the *Undermountain Trail* (it is signed).

Bonus

Robbins Battell hired local mason Owen Travis to erect a tower on the roof of Connecticut in 1885.

Without the aid of any roads, Travis spent the next three years hauling 350 tons of stone to the summit. He built a pyramid 20 feet square and 22.5 feet high in the rural tradition of New England stone fences with no mortar. A lightning rod extended another 17 feet above the surrounding countryside. Over the years the tower has crumbled but you and your dog can still scramble up ten feet of stabilized rubble and think about what it took to bring all these stones to the top of the state.

Across Bear Mountain you'll find view-blocking stretches of blueberry and huckleberry struggling with pitch pines and oaks in the stingy mountaintop soils. The views come soon enough, first to the west, then to the south and finally in all directions.

You can continue across the summit and return on the 2.1-mile *Paradise Lane Trail* that crosses upland forests with small ups and downs. The drop down the north slope is steep, quick and rocky and will challenge the most cautious of dogs so take your time here. The full loop with a backtrack on the *Undermountain Trail* will cover about 6.6 miles.

Trail Sense: After studying the map on the information board, the blazes will be sufficient to get you to the top and back.

Dog Friendliness

Dogs are welcome on these mountain trails.

Traffic

Foot traffic only and you can expect to see other hikers any time of the year. Some weekends it can seem like a parade.

Canine Swimming

Seasonal streams and a vernal pond are the best you can hope for.

Trail Time

About half a day.



After climbing to the state's highest peak your dog has earned a rest.

5

Macedonia Brook State Park

The Park

The Scatacook Indians were the first to settle in the hills around the confluence of the Housatonic and Ten Mile rivers. Not much changed when the British founded Kent in 1738. In fact, when the American Revolution broke out in 1775, Scatacook volunteers operated a signal system up on the ridgetops.

The valley around Macedonia evolved into an important early American iron center. Every tree for miles around was cut to feed the hungry forges of the Kent Iron Company. By 1848 there were none left. Not that it mattered since more productive iron mines were putting eastern forges out of business. Kent survived to the end of the Civil War before its forge went cold.

The core lands for the state park came to Connecticut in 1918 from siblings Alain and May White, dispersing a family fortune made when Danbury was the fur hat capital of the world. Federal Conservation Corps workers during the Great Depression of the 1930s reforested and built the park.

The Walks

Any level of canine hiker will delight in Macedonia Brook State Park. Dogs looking for a ramble down a shady country lane can set out on dirt roads and grassy paths that run along and across Macedonia Brook. You can spend over an hour hiking in the valley and past the campground.

The prize for adventurous dogs is Cobble Mountain with its splendid views to the west across the Hudson River to the Catskill Mountains. From the center

Litchfield

Phone Number
- (860) 927-3238

Website
- www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325234&depNav_GID=1650

Admission Fee
- None

Park Hours
- 8:00 a.m. to sunset

Directions
- *Kent*; from Route 7 in the center of town take Route 341 west to Macedonia Brook Road. Turn right and stay left to the park.