

The trailhead is located on the west side of Vermont Route 102 in Lemington approximately 500 feet north of the Lemington-Colebrook bridge. Parking is available on the left side of the clearing, at the edge of an active gravel pit operation. Please use caution in this area and be careful not to block truck access.

From the trailhead parking area (0.0 mi.), the trail follows a gravel maintenance road to a trail sign located at the western edge of the gravel pit. Here, the trail bears left through an open meadow before turning right near a fenceline, climbing over a high berm and crossing a local snowmobile trail in the back corner of the clearing (0.2 mi.). Here, the trail enters a young forest and climbs briefly before turning left and entering an older softwood forest (0.3 mi.).

## Northern Essex County

**NOTE:** While the upper slopes of Monadnock Mountain are publicly owned, the lower portions of the trail are located on private property and made available to the public through the generosity of the landowners. Please help maintain good landowner-hiker relations and respect private property: Keep the trailhead/parking area clean; pack out all trash; no fires, overnight camping, or motorized vehicles.

Descending briefly, the trail approaches a mountain stream and parallels it briefly before turning slightly and passing by a large rock outcropping (0.5 mi.). Returning to the brook, the trail enters a mountain hollow, turns sharply left and climbs steeply up a short wooded slope. At the top of the slope, the trail crosses the stream and climbs briefly before reaching a stone cairn and the old fire access road (0.7 mi.).

**NOTE:** Remember this junction on the return trip.

Turning right, the trail follows the woods road as it climbs steadily uphill, levels briefly and then approaches the mountain stream, now confined within a deep, scenic gorge. Bearing left and turning uphill again, the woods road becomes increasingly rough until, passing a small turnaround, it climbs into a recent clear-cut and begins to resemble a rough skidder trail and, finally, a small footpath. Passing through dense young growth, berry cane and regeneration, and at times climbing over bare rock, the trail soon reaches the top of a rise and, at a pleasant cascade, crosses a timber bridge over the stream (1.0 mi.).

From here the trail begins a persistent climb up the mountain, paralleling the narrow stream valley to the left and closely following the crest of the ravine as it approaches the summit from the northeast.

After crossing the timber bridge, constructed on old telephone poles, the trail crosses a secondary flood channel (actually part of the old trail) and turns sharply left, entering an older hardwood forest and climbing steadily over a number of drainages and waterbars. Passing closely by the nearby stream, the trail turns right (1.1 mi.) and begins its brisk climb towards the summit.

Climbing over exposed bedrock at times, the trail becomes increasingly rocky and soon crosses a subtly marked boundary (1.2 mi.) into the Town Forest parcel that surrounds much of the upper mountain. Soon the trail rounds a bend to the left, levels briefly and then passes

## Northeast Kingdom Mountain Trail Guide

through a short grassy section located under a gap in the forest canopy. Above, there is a great deal of evidence remaining from the 1998 Ice Storm, an influential weather event that left its mark on the northern landscape.

***NOTE:** For five days from January 5-9, 1998, a major ice storm struck much of southeastern Canada, northern New England, and northern New York. The event was the most significant natural disaster to strike the area in recent memory, coating nearly everything in its path with a thick layer of ice that crippled trees and power lines, coated homes and roadways, left residents without power for as long as two weeks, and brought much of the Northeast region to a standstill. Over 600,000 acres of forestland were damaged in Vermont alone. Vermont forests, particularly hardwoods, suffered extensive crown damage, but the event confirmed the understanding that natural disasters are routine in forests and these ecosystems do recover.*

*Many forest species were damaged by the accumulated ice, especially at higher elevations. On Monadnock, white birch was the most heavily affected tree species, and its limbs still litter the edges of trail, providing evidence, over ten years later, of the storm's impact and the Herculean local effort taken to re-open the Monadnock Mountain Trail.*

Continuing on, the trail passes the remains of several log retainer steps that have been preserved in the mountain's wet soils for decades. Climbing a rock slab (1.6 mi.), the trail turns right, crosses a sidehill slope and then swichbacks left near several rock outcrops.

At this point the trail begins to show signs of increased erosion despite the recent efforts to create drainages, waterbars and retainer steps and is incised as much as eighteen inches below the surrounding terrain. Passing alternately over soft mountain soils and open bedrock, the trail briefly returns to the stream valley, now a series of wetland headwaters, before scrambling steeply up a small talus slope and reaching a fresh spur trail on the left (2.0 mi.).

**Boulder Spur-** From the main trail, a relatively new spur trail created in 2007 leads a short distance to a large boulder that rests atop a steep slope. The site, in addition to being a unique natural feature, provides limited views eastward towards Colebrook, New Hampshire and northern Coos County.

## Northern Essex County

From the lookout spur (2.0 mi.), the main trail continues and, nearing the summit, becomes increasingly dominated by the sub-alpine spruce and fir forest. As it makes its final approach to the summit, the trail passes the remains of an old spring and soon emerges in the summit clearing (2.5 mi.) with the fire tower looming above. The remains of the former summit station are evident, including the foundation of the summit cabin, its stone chimney, a stone firepit, and the old outhouse. Also nearby are the piled stair treads that were removed from the tower and replaced in 2005.

From the fire tower there are extensive views in all directions, but two striking features are more local in their scope- the incredibly dense spruce-fir forest surrounding the summit and the broad Connecticut River Valley that stretches north-south along the Vermont-New Hampshire border. The pastoral river valley stands in stark contrast to the rugged mountain landscape that extends as far as the eye can see.

To the east lie the northern White Mountains of New Hampshire, the rugged hinter lands and least populated region of the state. On a clear day, the northern Presidentials are visible to the southeast as well as the Kilkenny Range to the north, the northern Nash Stream mountains (including Mount Blue and Sugarloaf Mountain), Dixville Notch (due east), and the boundary mountains in the Connecticut Lakes region, particularly Magalloway Mountain in Pittsburg.

The Eastern Townships, located across the border in Canada are visible to the north and, continuing west, Wallace Pond, Averill Mountain, the Averill Lakes, Brousseau Mountain, Gore Mountain, and the Bluff Mountain Ridge. Sable Mountain is in the foreground.

Looking southwest, Monadnock offers views into the Nulhegan Basin and beyond where, from right to left, Bald Mountain in Westmore, the Seneca Range, East Mountain, West Mountain, Notch Mountain and the Potash and Bloomfield Ranges all stand out.

While the features visible from Monadnock's fire tower are too numerous to list here, the views are extensive and provide one of the best vantage points in the Northeast Kingdom.

**Total distance:** approximately 2.5 mi., elevation gain: 2137 feet

**Monadnock Mountain**  
Lemington, VT

Monadnock Mountain  
3148'

Town of Lemington

Monadnock

Mountain

Trail

Canaan  
Lemington

Vermont  
New Hampshire

Connecticut

River

Bridge St

Colebrook

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