

Crawford Notch State Park

Hiking Information

A few of the more popular family hikes in Crawford Notch State park are briefly described below. For more specific information or for descriptions and maps of lengthier hikes into the White Mountain National Forest and on the Appalachian Trail (AT), consult the Appalachian Mountain Club White Mountain Guide. It is important to wear sturdy walking shoes and remember that in the mountains, weather changes suddenly and darkness falls quickly. Keep close tabs on children, as unforeseen hazards may exist or develop unexpectedly on mountain trails.

Two short, easy walks begin across the road and bridge from the Willey House site. The Pond Loop Trail, 1/2 mile round trip, bears to the left just beyond the bridge and leads through the woods to a viewpoint of the pond then loops back to the bridge. The Sam Willey Trail, one mile round-trip, bears to the right 30 yards beyond the bridge, follows the Saco River through the woods past several beaver dams, and loops back to the bridge.

The Saco River Trail connects the Willey House site, Webster Cliff trail (AT), the Dry River Trail, and the Dry River Campground with easy to moderate grades along the valley floor. It offers scenic river views and mountain vistas. The trail starts at the far end of the Sam Willey Trail, 1/2 mile to Webster Cliff Trail, 2 miles to the Dry River Trail, and 2 1/2 miles to Dry River Campground.

Ripley Falls is a 100-foot high cascade where Avalanche Brook flows over moss-covered sloping granite creating a cool, peaceful spot to relax after the 1/2 mile walk in. The falls are easy to find by following the Ripley Falls Trail, which diverges left from the Ethan Pond Trail shortly after it begins at the end of the access road, which leaves Route 302 one mile southeast of the Willey House site.

Arethusa Falls, at nearly 200 feet high, are the highest falls in the state and certainly worth a visit. The access road to the 1.4-mile trail leads off Route 302, 1/2 mile south of Dry River Campground. The first .6 mile is fairly rocky and moderately steep, while the latter half of the trail ascends through open hardwoods via a new relocation of the trail. Return via the same route or complete the 4-mile loop past Frankenstein Cliff to the start point.

Frankenstein Cliff Trail is a steep 5.1 mile loop that offers several scenic viewpoints including the Frankenstein Trestle and the top of Frankenstein Cliff. CAUTION! The Frankenstein Cliff Trail traverses below a ledge system that forms large amounts of ice. Falling ice may result in injury or death.

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CRAWFORD NOTCH STATE PARK HIKING TRAILS and SUMMITS

