



HANOVER CONSERVANCY

*Protecting land & water
in our community*

HANOVER HIKE OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY - Mill Pond Forest & Dana Pastures

*A gentle walk through excellent wildlife habitat, offering
extraordinary views*

Two options

- ½ hour visit to the pond, pastures, and views, retracing your steps
- 1-hour loop, with visit to the three Dana pastures, exceptional views, and tour around the pond

Driving directions:

- From Etna village, turn R onto Ruddsboro Road
- Follow Mink Brook as the road curves up its narrow valley
- Pass Three Mile Road
- At 2.0 miles from Etna, turn L onto Old Dana Road
- At 2.4 miles from Etna, turn R onto Moose Mtn. Lodge Road (marked with carved wooden sign) just past the historic Dana Barn
- Head up Moose Mtn. Lodge Road 0.9 miles to its end
- Bear R at a fork and park at the marked trailhead parking area



What you should know:

- If there are ski tracks in the path, please walk beside rather than in them.
- Dogs are welcome; please pick up after your pet and do not allow it to chase wildlife. Porcupines active.
- Please do not block driveways to the neighboring homes.
- Times are approximate.

HIKING DIRECTIONS

For both options: Begin at the trailhead sign for Mill Pond Forest and Huggins Trail Access. You are standing on privately owned property that was conserved in November, 2015 with the Hanover Conservancy.

- Pass signs of remarkable beaver activity as you cross onto the Dana Pasture Natural Area, jointly owned by the Town of Hanover and a private heir.
- After two minutes' walk, you'll arrive at a fork. Bear L for a quick visit to the pond shore.
- Just past the fork, you'll see the early 19th century cellar hole of the Woodward home. David Woodward was a miller who built a stone dam at Mill Pond and a saw and gristmill on Mink Brook as it tumbles down the mountainside beyond where you parked.
- Continue on this short path to the shore, where you'll find a bench at the water's edge.
- Return to the cellar hole and trail junction, turning L onto what becomes Pasture Road, an old Class VI road traced by a handsome stone wall.
- Two minutes from the cellar hole, look for a break in the wall with an old sign on a tree above.
- Turn R, head up the path; cross small drainage; bear L toward an old fencepost silhouetted against the sky.

- Suddenly the world opens up to a stunning vista that reaches to the spine of the Green Mountains of Vermont. Killington and Pico peaks dominate the horizon. At your feet is Moose Mountain Lodge. Now a private home, it was built 1937-8 for skiers. www.moosemountainlodgetalestrailsandhistory.com
- The fence posts and old barbed wire remind that this was one of the Dana family's summer pastures.
- After you've inhaled the view, turn up the hill (L) toward a second pasture, following orange flagging.
- Continue as the trail runs gently uphill toward the third and highest pasture.
- Note barbed wire fencing and clumps of juniper on L, more signs of the land's grazing history.
- Head up the gentle slope to a line of white birches that marks the southern boundary of the Dana Pasture Natural Area. After cattle were no longer pastured here, these meadows were kept open by Elisha Huggins, who mowed them with a hand scythe.
- At the top of this pasture, you can extend your hike by continuing south on the orange-blazed Ridge Trail to ledges that offer remarkable eastern views. Today, we'll return to Mill Pond.
- Retrace your steps for 10 minutes through the three pastures to Pasture Road, all the way to the stone wall. (A path to the L, well before the wall is reached, leads to a private home).
- At Pasture Road, turn L to return to your car (5 minutes) or take the ½ hour loop around Mill Pond.

For the pond loop:

- Turn R on Pasture Road and immediately L at blue flagging.
- A few steps beyond the old road you'll reach the pond loop. Bear R at a weathered sign on a tree.
- Follow this path as it meanders among the spruce a short distance from the pond, keeping the pond on your left. You'll cross small drainages that feed the pond; step carefully.
- In about 10 minutes, a short spur to the left leads to the shore; bear R up the hill to a blue marker just visible ahead. A short distance above the pond, northern hardwoods take over for the red spruce and hemlock that cling to the water's edge where cold air settles.
- Turn L at the blue marker and follow the trail north to the gravel road that serves a nearby communications tower. The trail is not frequently blazed in this area. Keep the pond on your left. You will reach the tower road in about seven minutes after leaving the blue marker.
- Turn L on the tower road and walk down it along the north shore of the pond.
- After 5 minutes, reach a gate and turn L onto Moose Mtn. Lodge Road to return to your car.
- Send a silent message of thanks to the generous landowners who made your visit possible!

New Hampshire's oldest local land trust, the Hanover Conservancy is a private, non-profit membership organization. We protect land and water in our community, offer free public outdoor trips and programs, and care for hundreds of acres of land and trails we open to the public.

Join us!

www.hanoverconservancy.org

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