



# Thru-Hiking in the Whites

# Essential Information

## The Appalachian Mountain Club welcomes you to the White Mountains!

AMC is dedicated to the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, waters, and trails of the Appalachian region. Since the late 1800's, we have been exploring, mapping, protecting, and maintaining trails within the White Mountains, many of which are now a part of the Appalachian Trail. We are proud to maintain the majority of the AT in the region through the combined efforts of our volunteers, professional trail crews, and shelter caretakers.

As one of the most popular hiking destinations in the Northeast, the White Mountains are stewarded by several organizations, including the US Forest Service, New Hampshire State Parks, AMC, and many other key partners. We recognize that the land-use regulations here may differ from those that you have previously encountered on the trail.

**We have assembled this information to make your journey through the region as seamless as possible.**

## Land Management in the Whites

### Overview:

The White Mountains see more than two times more visitors than Acadia National Park, resulting in a high potential for impact. Please review the resources and regulations maintained by local land stewardship organizations to help preserve this incredible landscape.

### Forest Service:

The majority of the Whites is managed by the US Forest Service as the White Mountain National Forest. Please be aware of **Forest Protection Areas**, which are implemented to protect high-impact areas. FPAs prohibit camping, and are found around huts, shelters, trailheads, and other resources. Camping is also forbidden in the alpine zone.

### New Hampshire State Parks:

Franconia Notch and Crawford Notch are maintained by NH State Parks. Camping is permitted only within designated campgrounds in these areas.

### Appalachian Mountain Club:

AMC operates shelters, campsites, and huts on federal and state lands under special-use agreements with the USFS and NH State Parks. AMC encourages adherence with Forest Service and NH State Parks regulations.

### Randolph Mountain Club:

Similar to AMC, the RMC operates campsites, shelters, and huts on public lands in the Whites.

## AMC Facilities and Programs

### Tentsites and Shelters:

AMC maintains 13 shelters/tentsites along the AT, which provide low or no cost camping to thru-hikers and backpackers alike. Some shelter locations regularly host large counts of visitors, often exceeding 50 people per night. To accommodate these crowds, some locations are staffed with caretakers, who perform upkeep on the site, composting toilet systems, and nearby trails, as well as provide information and education to hikers.

Shelters with caretakers have a fee to offset costs; however, thru-hikers may use these sites at a heavily discounted rate. See the attached **Thru-Hiker Pass** page.

### Huts and Lodges:

For well over a century, AMC has operated full-service backcountry huts that provide lodging, meals, and educational programming to guests. Hut amenities and costs often exceed the desires of thru-hikers; however, **Huts Work for Stay** lets up to two thru-hikers per hut sleep on the floor and eat leftovers. See the attached page.

AMC also operates two frontcountry facilities, Joe Dodge Lodge and the Highland Center. While Work for Stay is not available at these locations, thru-hikers who choose to book a room will be offered the discounted member rate. This deal also applies at the huts.

### Itinerary:

An example \$20 budget **Thru-Hiker Itinerary** is attached.



# Thru-Hiking in the Whites Huts Work for Stay

The AMC's White Mountain Huts are pleased to welcome and support the AT thru-hiker community! The information below provides a thorough overview of our thru-hiker Work for Stay program, which returned successfully in 2022.

## What is “Work for Stay”?

At each hut during the full-service season, two thru-hikers per night may perform two hours of work in exchange for a dry place to sleep inside on the hut floor and a hot meal!

## Details:

- **Work for Stay is available to 2 thru-hikers per night** at all huts except *Lakes of the Clouds*, which may accept 4 thru-hikers (due to local camping restrictions implemented by the USFS to protect the fragile alpine ecosystem).
- **Each hiker is expected to perform two full hours of work.** This work is completed on a schedule that enables you to support hut operations, meaning that morning work ending as late as 10:00 am may be required. Please coordinate with the hut staff when you arrive regarding work to be completed.
- **Work for Stay is on a first-come, first-served basis.** It cannot be reserved ahead of time.
- **Please limit yourself to 1 to 2 Work for Stays**, due to the limited number of opportunities each night (18 across the entire hut system) and large number of thru-hikers who would like to participate.
- **Lakes of the Clouds Shelter (“The Dungeon”) can sleep up to 6 thru-hikers** each night at a cost of \$10/bunk. This fee must be paid to hut staff upon your arrival. The Dungeon cannot be reserved in advance.
- **Always have a back-up plan for a safe and legal campsite** in case Work for Stay/Dungeon bunks are filled.
- **During the off-season**, a modified Work for Stay may be available at huts with caretakers.

AMC reserves the right to suspend Work for Stay should changes in the COVID-19 situation, in either the AT or White Mountain community, make it necessary. Any change will be communicated as quickly as possible via the ATC, AMC and FarOut.

## Planning Your Hike:

AMC is pleased to support the thru-hiking community through our trail work, facility & shelter management, search & rescue operations, and Work for Stay program. With over 3,000 AT hikers each year, however, Work for Stay unfortunately cannot grow to meet the ever-increasing demand. We encourage hikers to treat the program as a bonus on top of the other shelters and campsites maintained in the Whites. (Please note: except for emergencies, lodging hikers beyond the two Work for Stays may exceed the occupancy limits of the huts as per our Special Use Permit and often violates fire codes.) This capacity/use mismatch poses a challenge for thru-hikers and AMC staff alike!

To aid you in the often difficult process of navigating the Whites, we have developed an itinerary for the region which, enables you to bypass the huts completely. Additionally, hut staff are familiar with the best campsites near each hut, though some may require you to deviate from the AT. We understand that this is not desirable; however, we ask that thru-hikers consider this action to protect these incredible mountain places we are all out here to enjoy.

**Thank you** for helping AMC protect the White Mountains through responsible use. We are looking forward to seeing you out on the trail!

– The AMC Huts Team



# Thru-Hiking in the Whites

## Shelters Thru-Hiker Pass

AMC's Shelters team is excited to host and support thru-hikers as they trek through the White Mountains. This page contains details about our popular Thru-Hiker Pass Program, which we created to minimize your camping costs.

### What is the "Thru-Hiker Pass"?

AMC operates backcountry shelters and tentsites throughout the White Mountains. These locations are popular destinations among thru-hikers and weekend backpackers alike. In order to maintain these sites, their composting toilets, and the nearby trails, some sites are staffed with a caretaker. These sites have an associated fee to help offset the cost of this stewardship work.

Our Thru-Hiker Pass is a program specifically for the thru-hiking community, which provides substantial discounts to our shelters and ensures that you have access to high-quality, low-cost camping options throughout the region.

### How does it work?

As a thru-hiker, your first night at an AMC tentsite will cost \$10.00 (33% off the standard \$15.00 fee), and you will receive a Thru-Hiker Pass that is valid for the next 14 days. With this pass, each following stay at an AMC shelter will cost only \$5.00 per person per night (66% off). The Thru-Hiker Pass provides additional benefits and discounts as noted below. Passes are non-transferable, non-refundable, and will not be replaced if lost.

**Note:** The Thru-Hiker Pass does not impact eligibility for Work for Shelter, in which up to 2 thru-hikers perform 1 hour of work in exchange for free camping. Work for Shelter operates during the staffed season (first-come, first-served).

### Purchase and Use Locations:

- Kinsman Pond Shelter
- Liberty Springs Tentsite
- Garfield Ridge Shelter
- Thirteen Falls Tentsite
- Guyot Shelter
- Ethan Pond Shelter
- Nauman Tentsite
- Imp Shelter
- Speck Pond Campsite

### Thru-Hiker Pass Benefits:

- **\$5.00** off your first tentsite stay
- **\$10.00** off all following tentsite stays
- Member rates at AMC's White Mountain Huts and Lodges
- Two free baked goods and one free soup (total) at AMC Huts
- 10% off merchandise at AMC Huts, Highland Center, and Pinkham Trading Post
- Highland Center: \$6.00 bread, soup, and beer combo (11:00am – 3:00pm, subject to closures)
- Pinkham Notch Visitor Center: \$2.00 bread & soup combo (9:30am – 4:00pm)
- Mohican Outdoors Center: discounts on lodging and camping, \$6.00 half-sandwich, half-soup combo.

 outdoors.org	<b>Campsite Program</b>	Garfield	13 Falls	Guyot	Ethan	Nauman	
\$10 for your first night, then 50% off every AMC campsite 10% OFF all merchandise at Huts, Highland Center and Pinkham Notch Center		Liberty	AMC Thru Hiker Pass				
Pinkham Notch Visitors Center – \$2 bread and bowl of soup 11 am - 3 pm only			Date: _____ Expires Two Weeks After Purchase				
Highland Center – \$6 bread, soup and beer combo 11 am - 3 pm only			Name: _____				
Mohican Outdoors Center – \$6 ½ sandwich and soup deal + discounts on lodging		Kinsman					Imp
HUTS			Respect each other, Respect the trail.				Speck
BOWL OF SOUP • BAKED GOOD • BAKED GOOD							



# Thru-Hiking in the Whites

## The \$20 Budget Route

This itinerary outlines an 11-day route through the 122.2 mile stretch of the AT from Kinsman Notch to Grafton Notch. It will cost \$20 in camping fees, including the AMC *Thru-Hiker Pass*. Variations on this route, which may have additional costs associated with them, are also provided.

Day 1	Hike	Kinsman Notch (NH Route 112) to Eliza Brook Campsite   Distance: 7.5 miles
	Stay	Eliza Brook Campsite: Free   Shelter, tent pads, and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear box
Day 2	Hike	Eliza Brook Campsite to Liberty Springs Tentsite   Distance: 10.9 miles
	Stay	Liberty Springs Tentsite: \$10 as your first night with the AMC <i>Thru-Hiker Pass</i>   Platforms and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear boxes
	Other Option	Hike 8.3 miles from Eliza to I93. Then, hitchhike to Lincoln (5.7 miles) and back. Lincoln has stores, hotels, a hostel, and a post office. Hike 2.6 miles to Day 3 Stay.
Day 3	Hike	Liberty Springs Tentsite to Garfield Ridge Campsite   Distance: 7.9 miles
	Stay	Garfield Ridge Campsite: \$5 with <i>Thru-Hiker Pass</i>   Shelter, platforms, and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear boxes
Day 4	Hike	Garfield Ridge Campsite to Zealand Valley Impact Zone (outside FPA)   Distance: 10.2 miles
	Stay	Zealand Valley Impact Zone (outside FPA): Free   Impacted ground space   Reliable water
Day 5	Hike	Zealand Valley Impact Zone to Nauman Tentsite   Distance: 13.6 miles
	Stay	Nauman Tentsite: \$5 with <i>Thru-Hiker Pass</i>   Platforms and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear boxes

**Please Note** *Days highlighted with grey require extensive hiking above tree line. These areas are home to extreme weather conditions and sensitive species found nowhere else on earth. Camping is illegal above tree line to minimize impact. Please hike carefully.*

Day 6	Hike	Nauman Tentsite to USFS Osgood Tentsite   Distance: 14.6 miles
	Stay	USFS Osgood Tentsite: Free   Impacted ground space and hammock options   No water (fill at Madison Spring Hut)
	Other Option	Hike 12.3 miles from Nauman to USFS Valley Way Tentsite (free   0.7 mi. off AT   ground & hammock options   no water, fill at Madison Spring Hut). Hike 14.2 miles to Day 7 Stay.
	Other Option	Hike 11.8 miles from Nauman to RMC Perch Tentsite (\$15 fee   1.2 miles off AT   shelter, platforms, and hammock options   reliable water). Hike 16 miles to Day 7 Stay.
Day 7	Hike	USFS Osgood Tentsite to Carter Notch Impact Zone (outside FPA)   Distance: 10.4 miles
	Stay	Carter Notch Impact Zone (outside FPA): Free   Impacted ground space   Reliable water
	Other Option	Hike 4.7 miles from Osgood to Pinkham Notch. Hitchhike to Gorham (10.6 miles) and back. Gorham has stores, hotels, a hostel, and a post office. Hike 5.7 miles to Day 7 Stay.
Day 8	Hike	Carter Notch Impact Zone to USFS Rattle River Shelter   Distance: 13.1 miles
	Stay	USFS Rattle River Shelter: Free   Shelter, platforms and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear box
	Other Option	Hike 14.8 miles from Carter to Route 2. Hitchhike to Gorham (3.5 miles) and back. Gorham has stores, hotels, a hostel, and a post office. Hike 11.8 miles to Day 9 Stay.
Day 9	Hike	USFS Rattle River Shelter to Gentian Pond Shelter   Distance: 13.7 miles
	Stay	Gentian Pond Shelter: Free   Shelter, tent pads, and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear box
Day 10	Hike	Gentian Pond Shelter to Full Goose Shelter   Distance: 9.6 miles
	Stay	Full Goose Shelter: Free   Shelter, platforms and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear box
Day 11	Hike	Full Goose Shelter to Maine ATC Baldpate Lean-To   Distance: 12.0 miles
	Stay	Maine ATC Baldpate Lean-To: Free   Shelter, platforms and hammock options   Reliable water   Bear box
	Other Option	Hike 9.7 miles from Full Goose to Grafton Notch (State Road 26). A few options are available within hitchhiking distance. Consult a guidebook for additional information.
Please Note		Days highlighted with grey require extensive hiking above tree line. These areas are home to extreme weather conditions and sensitive species found nowhere else on earth. Camping is illegal above tree line to minimize impact. Please hike carefully.