



Loons fishing on pristine lakes, canopies of colorful leaves, rocky shorelines and plummeting waterfalls.

Here are five fantastic hikes, mapped with trailhead descriptions, on the Appalachian Trail around the A.T. Community™ of Monson, Maine. From short excursions to daylong treks, discover your perfect way to explore the storied Trail.

Kim Rosenbaum



Upper Doughty Pond  
Little Wilson Stream (cover)

### 1 Shirley / Blanchard Road to Monson 3.0 miles

The three miles of the A.T. between Shirley / Blanchard Road and Pleasant Street are easy to moderate without any substantial elevation change. The Trail travels through a patchwork of deciduous and coniferous forests, near and on old logging roads, and around evidence of historic farmsteads. About one mile from Monson, the Trail skirts the northwestern shore of Lake Hebron. This is the wildest portion of the lake where waterfowl and wildlife sightings are likely.

**Getting there:** From Monson, go south on Route 6/15 for 0.3 miles then bear right onto Blanchard Road. Follow Blanchard Road for 4.5 miles. At the 4-way intersection in Blanchard, turn right onto Shirley Road. Follow Shirley Road for 1.2 miles to the A.T. parking lot on the left. The A.T. crosses 500 feet farther north on Shirley Road.

### 2 Pleasant Street to Route 6/15 3.3 miles

Between Pleasant Street and Route 6/15, the A.T. travels up and over Buck Hill. The elevation gain is greater going northbound, and the climb is moderate. There is a maintained overlook on Buck Hill with views to the south over the town of Monson. The Trail goes over sections of slate ledge between Buck Hill and Route 6/15, which can be extremely slippery when wet. The 0.2-mile Doughty Pond Side Trail, halfway between the two trailheads, affords hikers with an idyllic view of the small pond.

**Getting there:** From Monson, go north on Route 6/15 then turn left onto Pleasant Street just after the General Store. Follow Pleasant Street west for 1.8 miles, pass the A.T. signs, and follow signs for A.T. parking. Lot is on the right.

### 3 Goodell Brook Falls 0.4 miles r/t

Goodell Brook Falls is a lovely 10-foot cascade just downstream from the outlet of Spectacle Pond. To get to the falls, head north on the A.T. from the Route 6/15 parking lot. Take the first right approximately 30 feet down the Trail onto the blue-blazed Goodell Falls Trail. The side trail follows an easy grade down to the falls. Roots and rocks here can still be slippery when wet.

**Getting there:** From Monson go north on Route 6/15 for 3.7 miles. The parking lot is on the right.

### 4 Route 6/15 to Little Wilson Falls 6.6 miles

The A.T. between Route 6/15 and Little Wilson Falls offers hikers classic northern Maine hiking and views. The Trail is moderate with some difficult short but steep climbs that sometimes include ledgy outcrops and require scrambling. Take particular care not to trip on exposed roots. Views of pristine ponds including Spectacle Pond, Bell Pond, and North Pond are scattered throughout the hike.

The Trail passes over several unbridged streams that can swell after rainfall. Hikers must take care when crossing streams. Leeman Brook Lean-to is located three miles north of Route 6/15. A rustic privy is located at the site. For a point to point hike, follow the Little Wilson Falls side trail to the Little Wilson Falls trailhead. Have a shuttle set to return to Route 6/15.

**Getting there:** From Monson go north on Route 6/15 for 3.7 miles. The parking lot is on the right.

### 5 Little Wilson Falls 3.0 miles r/t

This blue-blazed side trail follows a series of waterfalls up Little Wilson Stream culminating in the spectacular 40+ foot upper falls. The hike is moderate with some elevation gain. The trail skirts the edge of the stream until it follows a switchback up the slope to higher ground. Particular care should be taken in this area if the rocks and roots are slippery.

At 1.3 miles from the parking lot, the side trail intersects the A.T. Turn left (southbound) to follow the white-blazed A.T. for 0.2 miles to a series of overlooks of the dramatic slate gorge. Turn right (northbound) to access the stream, 0.2 miles from the intersection.

**Getting there:** From Monson, go north on Route 6/15 for 0.6 miles. Turn right onto Elliotsville Road toward Borestone Mountain. Go 7.6 miles. Turn left onto the dirt road before the bridge over Big Wilson Stream. Low clearance vehicles can park on the left just after this turn and hike in 0.8 miles to the trailhead.

The road to the trailhead may be accessible to high clearance vehicles. Call the Monson A.T. Visitor Center for up-to-date road conditions.

### Monson: An A.T. Community™

Monson, Maine is the gateway to the renowned 100-Mile Wilderness and has welcomed thousands of travelers from Henry David Thoreau in the 1800s to A.T. thru-hikers today.

Visitors can explore the many trails, rivers, and lakes in the area, dine in local restaurants, or visit the Historical Society Museum to learn about the town's history of slate quarrying and wood product manufacturing. Visit the Monson A.T. Visitor Center on Main Street for more information about activities and events around town.

Monson is an official A.T. Community™, a program that recognizes the importance of the trail towns that help support and protect the A.T. Make sure to explore all the town has to offer during your visit!

### Appalachian Trail Conservancy

ATC's mission is to preserve and manage the A.T. – ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come. To learn more about ATC visit: [appalachiantrail.org](http://appalachiantrail.org)

### Volunteer

The A.T. in Maine is maintained by the volunteers of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. Volunteers clear the Trail of blow-downs, paint blazes, and build rock steps, stepping stones, bog bridges, lean-tos, and privies. The A.T. would not be here without them! To help out and volunteer visit: [matc.org](http://matc.org)



### Trail Difficulty Ratings



Easy



Moderate



Challenging



Strenuous

▶ Round trip (r/t) trail mileage refers to the total distance from the trailhead to the destination and back.

### What You Need to Know

The Appalachian Trail (A.T.) in Maine is known for beautiful mountain vistas, clear babbling creeks, and countless lakes and ponds, but it is also known for rocks, roots, steep slopes, and unsure footing. Sturdy footwear is necessary to protect your feet and ankles. The Monson area is known for its quarries, and most of the rocks you will encounter on the Trail here are a form of slate. They are extremely slippery when wet! Take particular care if it has been raining.

The A.T. is managed as a remote and rugged hiking trail. There are no facilities at trailheads. Campfires are allowed only at approved fire rings at designated lean-tos and campsites.

The A.T. is marked with white blazes, 2 x 6-inch painted rectangles on the trees. Side trails to the A.T. are marked with blue blazes of the same dimension. At trailheads and intersections, there are brown and white painted signs with mileages to various points ahead on the Trail.

When hiking on the A.T. always bring:

- Layers of clothing and footwear suitable for conditions
- Raingear
- Sufficient water (Minimum 1 qt. per person)
- Snacks or lunch
- Map (Like this one!)
- Trowel
- First aid kit
- Flashlight/headlamp with fresh batteries
- Whistle for each hiker
- Garbage bag for your trash
- Sunscreen and insect repellent



### Leave No Trace

When you walk on the A.T., you are following in the footsteps of thousands of hikers and leading the way for thousands more. In order to protect the Trail for future hikers, make sure to follow Leave No Trace™ Principles:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Leave what you find
- Be considerate of others